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Ascendancy of Right-Wing Populist Parties in Western Europe**

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Posted at the Zurich Open Repository and Archive, University of Zurich
ZORA URL: <https://doi.org/10.5167/uzh-3050>
Conference or Workshop Item

Originally published at:

Bornschieer, Simon (2006). Cultural Divides, the Transformation of Historical Cleavages, and the Ascendancy of Right-Wing Populist Parties in Western Europe. In: 1st ECPR Graduate Conference, Essex, 7 September 2006 - 9 September 2006.

Cultural Divides, the Transformation of Historical
Cleavages, and the Ascendancy of Right-Wing
Populist Parties in Western Europe

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Paper prepared for the panel
“Controversial politics: The extreme right challenge in democratic societies”
1st ECPR Graduate Conference
Essex 2006, 7-9 September

1. Introduction¹

The continuing or mounting presence of right-wing populist parties in Western Europe's political landscape today is a phenomenon escaping explanations centred on the level of individual countries. Despite some differences in the policies advocated by these parties, there seems to have been a certain convergence in their programmatic profile. This centres on what has been termed "differentialist nativism" and is increasingly combined with a position in favour of economic protectionism, at least in the international domain (Betz 2002, 2004).

Right-wing populist parties should be seen, I suggest in this paper, in the larger context of changing societal structures that have affected party systems since the late 1960s. More specifically, extreme right-wing populist parties represent a counter-offensive to the universalistic values advocated by the libertarian left, which have found their party political manifestation in the emergence of Green party and in the transformation of Social Democratic parties, as Kitschelt (1994) has shown. The mobilization of the libertarian left having caused a first restructuring of political space in the 1970s and 1980s, the populist right has succeeded in setting the political agenda in the 1990s, resulting in a second transformation of the dimensions of political conflict (Kriesi et al. Forthcoming). Whereas Kitschelt has differentiated several types of radical right wing parties, I follow Betz (2004) in arguing that the "identitarian turn" in the discourse of the populist right has resulted in a programmatic convergence of these parties.

An analysis of the dimensions of political space in six countries shows that an economic and a cultural line of conflict structure oppositions within these party systems (Bornschiefer 2005a, Kriesi et al. Forthcoming). While the opposition between state and market characterizes the economic axis, the cultural axis opposes a conception of community based on universalistic conceptions of autonomy and the free choice of lifestyles on the one hand and an emphasis on tradition and an opposition to immigration on the other. From a theoretical point of view, and building on the debate between liberal and communitarian positions in political philosophy,

¹ This paper presents first results from a dissertation project carried out within the project "National Political Change in a Globalizing World", conducted jointly by a team at the University of Zurich (Prof. Hanspeter Kriesi, Dr. Romain Lachat, Timotheos Frey and the author of this paper) and by a team at the University of Munich (Prof. Edgar Grande, Dr. Martin Dolezal). The project is financed by the Swiss National Science Foundation and by the German Research Community (DFG).

these issues can be conceived as lying at opposing poles of an axis of political conflict that runs from a libertarian-universalistic to a traditionalist-communitarian position, as I will argue.

However, if both the universalistic as well as the reactionary potentials were already present at the attitudinal level in Western mass publics in the 1970s, as Sacchi (1998) has shown, then political factors are required to explain the belated manifestation of the traditionalist-communitarian potential. While the cross-national diffusion of the “differentialist nativist” political frame is certainly an important factor (Rydgren 2005), it is insufficient to answer the question why right-wing populist parties have been successful in some countries and not in others. Here, I propose to view the lines of opposition structuring party competition and their relative salience within a party system as a factor mediating the manifestation of latent political potentials. While two axes of competition can already be detected in the 1970s (Kriesi et al. Forthcoming), I suggest that the rise of the populist right is a product (i) of the transformation of the meaning of the cultural dimension under the twin mobilization efforts of the New Left and the populist New Right, and (ii) of the rising salience of cultural as opposed to economic issues in the 1990s, and of a general weakening of the alignments structured by the traditional state-market cleavage.

In the first section, I discuss the advent of the libertarian-universalistic vs. traditionalist-communitarian value divide and its impact on Western European party systems. Where the parties of the established right did not mobilize this potential by taking a clear position regarding cultural liberalism, tradition and immigration, they opened a programmatic window of opportunity for new and marginal political actors of the extreme populist right to gain room. Among the cases where an established party did exploit the programmatic opportunities related to the new cultural divide, some parties have actually adapted so strongly to the profile and strategies characteristic of the extreme populist right parties that they can be considered part of this party family, a prime example being the Swiss People’s Party (see Kriesi et al. 2005).

Obviously, this raises the question how members of the extreme right-wing populist party family can be clearly distinguished from mainstream parties. Here, I use three criteria: (1) A location at the extreme of the ideological axis running from libertarian-universalistic to traditionalist-communitarian positions; (2) a populist anti-

establishment discourse, in which they draw a political dividing line between them and the established parties both of the left and right, and (3) a hierarchical internal structure, which sets them apart from pluralist mainstream parties. While my focus here is not on an exploration of which parties qualify as members of the extreme right-wing populist party family (see Bornschier 2005b: 21-24), the relevance of these three criteria will be highlighted in the theoretical part of this paper.

After an outline of the background of the populist right's mobilization since the late 1980s and early 1990s, I develop a conceptual framework that allows for an empirical exploration of the conflicts structuring oppositions in party systems and the resulting programmatic opportunity structures for new political parties. The aim of the model is to assess the capacity of traditional lines of conflict such as the class or religious cleavage to structure voting decisions, thereby limiting the room for the emergence of new conflicts. The approach combines an analysis of parties' programmatic positions and voters' issue orientations. To determine the conflicts that structure oppositions in contemporary party systems, I propose to focus on the programmatic statements put forward by parties in election campaigns. Comparing parties' political positions with those of their voters, we can then determine to which degree the party system is responsive to the electorate. Furthermore, voters' loyalties to the ideological party blocks formed by political divides allow an assessment of the strength of the collective identities that these divisions entail. This results in a typology of different types of divides that have varying consequences for the mobilization of right-wing populist parties.

While the main focus of this paper is theoretical, I provide an empirical application of the model to France for illustrative purposes. The last section thus seeks to explain the emergence and the subsequent institutionalization of the Front National, which still represents something of a "prototype" of an extreme populist right party, and clearly conforms to the three criteria mentioned above. The analysis of parties' programmatic positions relies on a coding of the media coverage of the French election campaigns of 1978, 1988, 1995 and 2002. This data has been collected within the research project in which I participate and is based on a sentence-by-sentence coding of the newspaper coverage and parties' advertisements in election campaigns. After having determined the lines of conflict that structure party competition in these elections, I use survey data to measure voters' positions on these dimensions. The

combined analysis of the parties' political "supply" and voters' political "demand" allows an assessment of the degree to which the party system is responsive to the preferences of voters. The results show that due to favourable opportunity structures, the Front National has succeeded in entrenching itself firmly in the French party system already in the late 1980s, resulting in a triangular political space that closely mirrors the orientations of the electorate.

2. Value-based conflicts and the transformation of traditional cleavages

The advent of value-based conflicts in the late 1960s

The enduring success of right-wing populist parties in a number of European countries suggests the existence of some common potential underlying their rise. My claim is that the underlying causes of this rise can best be understood in terms of the general transformations witnessed by European party systems since the late 1960s, when new political issues arose that had more to do with values and life-styles than with traditional, materialist questions of conflict. As Inglehart (1977) has put it, a "silent revolution" took place that led segments of society to question traditional societal values and forms of politics. As a result, a "postmodern political conflict" has developed, which was initially described as an opposition between materialist and post-materialist values by Inglehart.

Differing somewhat from this initial emphasis on political styles (e.g. Offe 1985), the resulting conflicts are now more often described as cultural and value-based in character. As Flanagan and Lee (2003) have recently shown, an opposition between "libertarian" and "authoritarian" values continues to polarize the inhabitants of advanced industrial countries. The two authors conceive the shift from authoritarian to libertarian values as representing a long-term process of secularization, which leads from theism over modernism to postmodernism. In theism, the localization of authority is external and transcendental, and truth and morality are based on absolute principles. In modernism, it is still external, and universal, but based in and constructed by society. Finally, in postmodernism, the location of authority "has become internal and individual" (Flanagan, Lee 2003: 237). The authors conceive the

resulting cultural conflict as a result of the mobilization and counter-mobilization around the new social issues that have replaced economic issues on the political agenda.

Consequently, after distributive issues had structured the left-right divide for a long time, the movements of the left brought value and identity issues on the political agenda. Dalton, Flanagan, and Beck (1984), together with Inglehart (1984), claimed early on that identity- and lifestyle-politics were transforming the traditional left-right divide, leading to the political realignment of social groups that blurred the socio-structural basis of voting choice. In a similar vein, Kitschelt (1994) has then shown that in the 1980s, the value divide had created a two-dimensional political space in European party systems. Cross-cutting the “old” distributional axis, a line of conflict opposing libertarian and authoritarian values had come to structure the attitudes of voters. At the heart of this conflict, in Kitschelt’s account, are different conceptions of community, where the values of equality and liberty in a self-organized community form the one pole, while on the opposite pole, conceptions of community are structured by values of paternalism and corporatism (Kitschelt 1994: 9-12).

This conception is quite similar to the somewhat broader pattern that Flanagan and Lee (2003) have detected. As a variety of sources of the policy positions of political parties show, political space in advanced western democracies is at least two, if not three-dimensional (Warwick 2002). However, it is not clear to which degree these dimensions are really new or if they have simply been rendered more salient in the past decades. Most probably, this is due to the fact that the new value opposition so far has only been discussed in relation to the traditional class cleavage. But even if most European party systems do not carry the stamp of all four cleavages detected in Rokkan’s (2000) model of the divisions resulting from the national and industrial revolutions, many European countries are characterized by more than just one cleavage. With the religious cleavage representing the second common structuring element of European party systems (Kriesi 1994: 211-234), political space in multiparty systems is likely to have been two-dimensional already before the New Social Movements of the 1960s and 1970s transformed the meaning of „left“ and „right“, as described by Kitschelt. Indeed, Flanagan and Lee’s (2003) explicitly relate today’s libertarian-authoritarian value divide to an opposition between religious and secular worldviews.

On the political left, the prominence of libertarian political issues has given rise to the establishment of Green parties and a transformation of Social Democratic parties early on in the 1980s, as Kitschelt (1994) has shown. As a result of this change, they have attracted an increasing number of votes from the middle class, especially in certain constituencies of it such as among the so-called social-cultural professionals (Kriesi 1993, 1998, Müller 1999). On the political right, however, the impact of this new axis of conflict has had less of a uniform impact, although Kitschelt and McGann (1995) have argued that radical right parties constituted the opposite pole on the new libertarian-authoritarian axis of conflict. Similarly, in Ignazi's (1992, 1996, 2003) interpretation, radical right parties are a "by-product of a Silent Counter-revolution", in other words an equivalent on the right to Inglehart's "Silent Revolution". However, the process these authors sketch out for the rise of the radical right is much more country-specific than the process on the left, although there too, there were differences in the timing of the emergence of Green parties.² Similarly, the political orientations of right-wing extremist supporters seem to have varied between countries as well (Gabriel 1996). Due to these differences in the programmatic profile of the radical right, as well as in its support base, it is debatable if its rise can be considered an equivalent transformation of the political right to that of the left in its move towards libertarian positions.

I would argue that in the 1980s, the "winning formula" of right-wing populist parties consisted not so much in a specific programmatic profile, as Kitschelt argued, but in a *strategic flexibility*, which allowed them to capture issues that other parties had neglected. Right-wing populist parties' main commonality in their first mobilization phase in the 1980s was, therefore, primarily their anti-establishment discourse (Betz 1998 and the country chapters in Betz and Immerfall 1998, Schedler 1996). This was combinable with advocating issues which the established parties did not take up, in the 1980s for example neo-liberal demands (in the domestic realm), and allowed right-wing populist parties to present themselves as "anti-cartel-parties" in Katz and Mair's (1995) terminology. Their prime advantage in seizing such changing programmatic opportunity structures was their hierarchical internal structure. This allows them to repeatedly revert their policy-positions in response to sentiments in the populace, setting them apart from the pluralist character of the

² For an explanation linking this to the positions of the established parties, see Hug (2001).

established parties. Immigration policies, on the other hand, did not play a prominent role until the early 1990s (Betz 2004: Ch. 2).

Hence, to the degree that oppositions on the cultural axis of political competition are likely to develop into a reconfiguration of existing cleavages, this process has probably only started in the late 1980s or early 1990s. While empirical studies have shown that an authoritarian potential arose at approximately the same time as the libertarian potential (Sacchi 1998), this has not immediately resulted in strong support for traditionalist stances. For this traditionalist or authoritarian potential to be politicized in a way that mobilizes broad segments of society, it probably has to be connected with more concrete political conflicts that are conducive to collective identity formation. Both social movement theory, as well as Cleavage-theory teaches us that a durable organization of collective interests requires the prior construction of a collective identity (Melucci 1996, Klandermans 1997, Tarrow 1992, Pizzorno 1986, 1991, Rokkan 2000, Bartolini, Mair 1990, Bartolini 2000).³

Underlying my argument is the assumption that right-wing populist parties' communitarian-exclusionist discourse is successful because it is conducive to the formation of an exclusionist collective identity. For one thing, right-wing populist parties can be seen as part of a broader movement of the right, which has its origin in broad societal transformations that oppose social groups for structural and cultural reasons, similarly to the New Left (Kriesi 1999). Accordingly, and as is not so often noted, the movements of the right – such as religious, fundamentalist and nationalist movements – are equally manifestations of identity politics, and are just as much concerned with *recognition*, as Calhoun (1994: 22f.) points out.⁴ Nineteenth century European nationalism, for example, represents a rather “old” form of identity politics according to Calhoun. The fact that movements of the right are also manifestations of identity politics is perhaps not so evident since the underlying pattern is more diffuse. Whereas the libertarians' quest for recognition is often associated with specific goals, such as those which the New Social Movements have been fighting for, the

³ For reasons of space, I omit a more in-depth discussion on the role of collective identity in the formation of political cleavages as well as their transformation in political realignments. Although the element of collective identity is usually acknowledged in the cleavage literature, it is then often unduly neglected in theoretical considerations concerning the possible emergence of new cleavages and even more in empirical analyses of cleavages. For a more detailed discussion, see Bornschieer (2005b).

⁴ See also Honneth (2003), who provides a detailed account of the concept of recognition, derived both from philosophy and from social psychology.

traditionalist-authoritarian pattern is essentially conservative, rather than liberating. As a conservative movement, its values and goals are probably relatively diffuse, and therefore more dependent on political elites than the libertarian goals. For this reason, I assume the formation of a collective identity to be more a matter of deliberate moulding of political elites than the grass-roots mobilization of the movements of the libertarian left.

I would argue that in the 1990s, right-wing populist parties in a number of European countries have found a programmatic stance that is conducive to collective identity formation. As a consequence, they can be considered as a common party family that represents the counter-pole to the libertarian left. While I assume the underlying potentials to be country-specific, depending mostly on the programmatic position of the established parties, this does not rule out Rydgren's (2005) quite plausible suggestion that the success of the populist right owes a lot to cross-national diffusion of political frames.

Following from the discussion so far, I take the programmatic profile right-wing populist parties have converged on to have two constituting elements. The first centres on the new issues or discourses embodied in their anti-immigration stance, which does not involve ethnic racism, but rather what Betz (2002, 2004) has called "differentialist nativism" or "cultural racism". The second group of issues brought up by the populist right, including the rejection of the multicultural model of society as well as universalistic values in general, primarily represent a reaction against the societal changes brought about by the libertarian left. However, both groups of issues are theoretically as well as empirically situated at one pole of a new axis of conflict that may be labelled libertarian-universalistic vs. traditionalist-communitarian (Bornschieer 2005c).

In other words, I expect the potential for right-wing populist parties to be constituted by a relatively well-defined group of citizens located at the traditionalist-communitarian pole of the universalism-traditionalism axis of conflict. If these voters are distrustful of the established parties, then this does not imply that their vote for the populist right is primarily a protest vote, but rather that their distrust results from the perception that the established parties fail to represent their views. Furthermore, differing from Kitschelt's (1995) claim that the most successful right-wing populist parties mobilize by means of a combination of authoritarian and free-market issues, my argument implies that these parties almost exclusively mobilize on the cultural

axis. In fact, there is some evidence to suggest that right-wing populist parties such as the French Front National or the Austrian FPÖ are increasingly elected by citizens who can be considered as the losers of mobilization due to their lack of education and their low or obsolete skills (Oesch 2006, Plasser, Ulram 2000, Betz 2001, Perrineau 1997, Mayer 2002). Studies of the ideological profile of the Front National's electorate suggest that its lower-class component has strongly "leftist" or state-interventionist preferences concerning economic policy, contradicting Kitschelt's proposition (Perrineau 1997, Mayer 2002). Ivarsflaten (2005) also presents evidence that those voting for the populist right in France and Denmark are fundamentally divided on the economic axis. By implication, the enduring success of the populist right crucially depends on the prevalence of culturally, as opposed to economically defined group identifications among its rows. Before I present a research strategy that aims at verifying these claims, the next section will briefly substantiate the claim that the issues advocated by the libertarian left and the populist right are indeed polar normative ideas.

The libertarian-universalistic vs. traditionalist-communitarian axis of conflict

From a theoretical perspective, Rokeach (1973) has suggested early on that the space of possible ideological positions is two-dimensional. While Rokeach finds a number of values to structure people's belief systems, there are severe limits to the number of combinations that are effectively viable when it comes to politically relevant values. For one thing, Rokeach (1973: 23) claims that there is a limited number of common human problems for which peoples must find a solution. And the range of possibilities is limited, for one thing, because not all combinations of values are possible, and for the other, because most combinations devoid of "human activity", as Wildavsky (1987: 6) puts it. That is, they are not viable because they have no cultural or historical material to draw upon, no relevant paradigms or blueprints. In Moscovici's (1988) terms, one could say that they lack corresponding social representations.

As a consequence, Rokeach proposes a model where politically relevant ideologies are ultimately combinations of two values: freedom and equality. The model is validated by a quantitative content analysis of Socialist, Communist, Fascist and Capitalist texts, which each represent a different combination of the emphasis of

freedom and equality, respectively. Similar dimensions are found in the accounts of Wildavsky and his colleagues (Wildavsky 1987, 1994, Thompson et al. 1990), and while there is disagreement concerning the labelling of the two dimensions, they essentially correspond to those propagated by Kitschelt (1994): Conflicts over the value of equality structure the state-market axis, while differing emphases on freedom structure the universalistic vs. communitarian or libertarian vs. authoritarian axis of conflict. In other words, these issues are not new as such; only their rising salience is intrinsic to post-industrial societies, a point I shall return to later on.

A synthesis of normative models of democracy provided by Fuchs (2002: 40-43) suggests that our conception of viable value-combinations indeed draws on existing blueprints or normative substantiations. In Fuchs' mapping, a first dimension that is observable within political thought represents the responsibility of citizens' life, opposing self-responsibility and a strong role of the state in achieving material equality, corresponding to the established state-market line of conflict. The second dimension concerns the nature of the relationship between individuals. It is exemplified by libertarian or liberal conceptions of democracy on the one hand and republican conceptions on the other.

This latter dimension is at the centre of the ongoing philosophical debate between liberals and communitarians, opposing individualist and communitarian conceptions of the person (see Honneth 1993). Implicit in this discussion is an opposition between universalistic and traditionalistic values. Although communitarian thinkers such as Walzer (1983) and Taylor (1992) only propose a (modest) communitarian corrective to liberal universalism, this debate has provided theoretical grounds for a more far-reaching critique of the universalistic principles established by Rawls (1971). As an example of the liberal account, Dahl (1989) denies any substantive values as constituting the common good. In his conception, the common good consists in the conditions of equal participation – in the universalistic democratic process itself, in other words.

Even moderate communitarians such as Michael Walzer (1983, 1990) and Charles Taylor (1992) have argued that universalistic principles may violate cultural traditions within an established community and therefore engender the danger of being oppressive. If humans are inherently social beings, the application of universalistic principles may lead to political solutions that clash with established cultural practices.

And since the liberal-universalistic theory no less than other accounts ultimately depend on the plausibility of this conception of the individual, this view cannot be considered as more objective than a communitarian approach, as Taylor (1992) argues. Communitarians, on the other hand, urge us to acknowledging the fact that our identities are grounded in cultural traditions, and that an individualistic conception of the self is misconceived.

Philosophical currents of the European New Right have borrowed from communitarian conceptions of community and justice in their propagation of the concept of “cultural differentialism”, claiming not the superiority of any nationality or race, but instead stressing the right of peoples to preserve their distinctive traditions. In turn, this discourse has proved highly influential for the discourse of right-wing populist parties (Antonio 2000, Minkenberg 2000). As Antonio (2000: 57-8) summarizes:

“[...] New Right opposition to African, Middle Eastern, or Asian immigration stresses the evils of capitalist globalization, resistance to cultural homogenization, and defense of cultural identity and difference. Their pleas for »ethnopluralism« transmute plans to repatriate immigrants into a left-sounding anti-imperialist strategy championing the autonomy of all cultural groups and their right to exert sovereignty in their living space. [...] They contended that modern democracy’s melding of diverse ethnic groups into a mass »society« destroys their distinctive cultural identities. In their view, it dissolves cultural community into atomized, selfish, impersonal economic relations.”

Thus, the liberal-communitarian debate may well have rendered such ideas more plausible, although I would not go as far as suggesting a substantial affinity between the two currents, as Birnbaum (1996) has claimed.⁵ However, what seems plausible is that communitarian arguments have provided a “blueprint” (in the above-mentioned sense) or a broader justification for the right-wing populist parties’ differentialist discourse, which is much harder to attack intellectually than biological racism.

From a theoretical point of view, then, the defence of cultural tradition and a rejection of the multicultural model of society represent a counter-pole to individualistic and universalistic conceptions of community. Immigration is directly linked to this conflict since the inflow of people from other cultural backgrounds

⁵ Antonio (2000: 63) argues that the expressed sympathies of Alain de Benoist, a leading thinker of the French New Right, towards North American communitarians is rather one-sided.

endangers the cultural homogeneity that thinkers of the New Right as well as exponents of right-wing populist parties deem necessary to preserve. Equally present in communitarian thinking is an emphasis of the primacy of politics over abstract normative principles. In Walzer's (1983: Ch. 2) account, the right to self-determination within a political community includes the right to limit immigration in order to preserve established ways of life.⁶

If the reasoning so far is correct, one thing that is left to explain is the timing of the hypothesized convergence in programmatic profile. If the populist right represents a reaction to the values of the New Left, why was this reaction not immediate? And if right-wing populist parties' common programmatic profile after their "identitarian turn" (Betz 2004) was "invented" by the French Front National in the early 1980s and then adopted by other parties in a process of cross-national diffusion of frames, as Rydgren (2005) has argued, why did it take parties such as the *Swiss People's Party* or the Austrian *Freedom Party* several years to reach their high levels of electoral success? Here, I suggest that we have to address is relationship between traditional political dividing lines, such as the class and religious cleavages, whose importance has declined, and the rise of new cultural divisions. The country-specific timing of the rise of the populist right thus needs to be embedded in an in-depth analysis of the patterns of party competition, taking into account both the positions of voters as well as the programmatic stances of parties. The next section seeks to develop an analytical model to analyse these patterns.

3. Different types of divide and the transformation of the cultural line of opposition

Cleavages and lines of opposition

The historical cleavages that have led to the formation of European party systems continue to play an important role in the structuring of political competition. Indeed, "the party alternatives, and in remarkably many cases the party organizations, are older than the majorities of national electorates" (Lipset, Rokkan 1990 [1967]: 134).

⁶ It has to be emphasized that Walzer merely conceives universalistic principles (everyone is allowed to move where he/she wants to) and the preservation of established traditions as conflicting goals.

However, this does not mean that there is no change in the content of the conflicts carried out between parties. On the contrary, as Mair (1997) has insisted, the historical party organization's remarkable resilience over time is precisely due to their ability to adapt to structural and cultural changes, and thereby to remain responsive to the preferences of the citizenry. However, building on the notion that conflict has group-binding functions (Coser 1956), we can expect the stability of group attachments underlying a cleavage to depend on the degree of conflict between parties regarding the issues tied to traditional cleavages. Accordingly, a perceived de-emphasis of traditional conflicts in the eyes of voters opens the way to a rising salience of other dimensions of conflict. An assessment of the structuring power of the established cleavages therefore requires an analysis of the policy opposition that structure interactions in the party system.⁷ As Schattschneider (1975: Ch. 4) has put it, every form of political organization has a bias to the mobilization of some conflicts while not being receptive to others. More specifically, political identities related to traditional cleavages based on class and religion have typically crosscut broader ascriptive or identity categories based on ethnicity. However, if the established cleavage structure no longer "organizes" issues cutting across established lines of division "out of politics", in Schattschneider's famous words, then new issues can ascend.

The aim in this section is briefly to present a conceptual framework that allows for an empirical examination of the content of oppositions in party systems and the strength of political alignments that these oppositions entail. This results in a typology of different types of divides that have varying consequences for the mobilization of new conflicts, such as the antagonism between libertarian-universalistic and traditionalist-communitarian conceptions of community. At the same time, the approach presented in this section is not specifically focused on right-wing populist parties, but provides a general model to assess the chances for new political conflicts to gain room.

In order to analyse political conflicts, I use the term *line of opposition* to denote a polarization which structures party competition in a given election. Through its tight conjunction with the policy level of party competition, it denotes something clearly distinct from a cleavage. Such a dividing line can, but does not necessarily exhibit a

⁷ This argument is presented in more detail in Bornschier (2005b).

homogeneous social structural base, however defined. First of all, the number of lines of opposition does not necessarily coincide with that of the cleavages underlying the party system. A cleavage is something we do not necessarily encounter in everyday politics: Representing a (durable) pattern of political behaviour of social groups, linking them to specific political organizations (Bartolini and Mair 1990: 213-220), it cannot be observed without analyzing the social structural basis or the stability of political preferences of social groups. In principle, a number of cleavages may be present within an electorate, but not every cleavage finds expression in a separate line of opposition.

At the same time, the contemporary impact of the historical cleavages lies primarily in having shaped party systems in the crucial phase of mass enfranchisement and mobilization, which led to their subsequently “freezing”, and not so much in the immutability of a cleavage’s social structural basis (Lipset, Rokkan 1990 [1967], Sartori 1968, Mair 2001, Bornschier 2005b). I therefore propose to lay primary emphasis on the stability of the links between social groups and parties, and pay less attention to the social structural homogeneity of the groups underlying a cleavage. A cleavage structure then denotes a *durable pattern of political behaviour of social groups*.⁸ In the model presented here, I regard the *stability of alignments over time* as the crucial factor distinguishing short-term alignments from cleavages. To the degree that we find durable alignments, it is highly probable that they represent a transformed or a new cleavage. Unstable alignments, on the other hand, be they structural or not, are either short-term deviations from the established patterns of cleavage politics, or a herald of an unfreezing party system.

Different types of divide and resulting mobilization potentials for new conflicts

Starting from the assumption that existing alignments condition the room for new conflicts to emerge, different types of cleavage are likely to have variable consequences for the mobilization capacity of new conflicts. While some may be at the centre of political disputes, others presumably have a more identitarian role, and stabilize alignments because the social groups divided by them (still) share a

8 I draw on David Easton, who states that “structure is a property of behaviour” (1990: 43).

collective identity. Drawing on the work of Bartolini and Mair (1990: 19-52, 68-95) and Kriesi and Duyvendak (1995), we can differentiate cleavages along two dimensions, namely, salience and closure. Salience denotes the importance of a cleavage relative to other divides within a party system, while closure refers to the stability of the social relationship represented by the cleavage. Together, they condition the stability of political alignments. A cleavage, according to these authors' conceptualization, is important if it structures party preferences to a high degree (relative to other cleavages) and if voters do not change allegiances for a party on one side of the cleavage to one belonging to the opposite camp.

While retaining the notion that the closure of the social groups opposing one another along a line of cleavage can be analytically grasped by means of the stability of partisan alignments, I depart from Bartolini and Mair in using programmatic differences between parties to determine the salience of a division. I thus propose to *determine the saliency of a divide as a function of the polarization* regarding the issues constituting its political content. If parties' positions are far apart along a line of opposition, it represents a salient dimension within the party system. The next step then is to relate oppositions in the party system to the attitudes of voters. In determining the chances for a realignment to occur as a consequence of a new dimension of conflict, the match between the positions of parties and that of their electorate is crucial: It allows an estimation of the degree to which the party system is responsive to the policy-positions of the electorate. Because the term cleavage has usually been reserved for relationships where political parties represent durable oppositions in the preferences of social groups, I consider a rough match in the positions of parties and their voters as a defining feature of a cleavage. Over the long run, a miss-match between the two will presumably lead to an erosion of the link between parties and their social constituencies. This leads to a waning of the cleavage and opens space for new alignments based on other group attachments.

This leads to an analytical schema combining three elements: (1) The *polarization of parties' positions* along a line of opposition, and (2) the *match between the positions of parties and their voters* along this line of opposition. The second element allows an estimation of the degree to which the party system is responsive to the preferences of the electorate. Polarization, on the other hand, is indicative of the salience of the line of opposition. (3) The third element is the dimension of closure of

the divide in terms of the organizational loyalties of social groups it engenders. Like Bartolini and Mair (1990), I am not interested in partisan loyalties to individual parties, but in the *stability of preferences for ideological blocks of parties along a divide*. Stable preferences indicate closure and strongly rooted political identities, while instable preferences are an indication of a fluid line of opposition or cleavage. Closure gives an indication of the collective identity component of an alignment. If this component is strong, it will delay the manifestation of a new opposition even if parties have converged in their positions and if the conflict is pacified (on this point, see Kriesi and Duyvendak 1995: 5-10). Figure 1 shows the possible combinations of these three elements. The starting point for analysis is a single dimension structuring political competition in a particular election in a country. The analysis of a number of elections can then reveal either dominant patterns or evolutions in the types of divides. I now explain the content of the cells in Figure 1 and briefly state what the implications of the various types of alignment are for the mobilization capacity of new political oppositions.

Starting at the top left of the figure, we find a situation combining high polarization and a match in positions of parties' and voters, indicating that voters' preferences are also polarized. With parties and voters being durably aligned along a line of opposition, this corresponds to a highly *segmented political cleavage*. The term segmentation comes from the theory of consociational democracy and there denotes deeply rooted identities such as language or religion. However, following Mair (1997: 162-171), it can fruitfully be used for any kind of deep political opposition entailing strong loyalties and party preferences of certain social groups. As a consequence, the electoral market is tightly restrained and leaves little room for the emergence of new lines of opposition or new political parties. At the extreme, such a structure of opposition rules out any real competition between parties. Political systems characterized by pillarization, where the Netherlands at least used to be a prominent example, each party has its own constituency, and they do not really compete at all. Presumably, therefore, this is the structure of conflict that *most strongly inhibits the emergence of a new conflict* at the centre of the party system. In this category we find on the one hand established cleavages that have either preserved their salience or have been reinvigorated by new issues, or, on the other hand, highly salient new divides that have come to structure politics.

Figure 1: Types of Divide: Polarization of parties' positions along divides, match between positions of voters and parties, and stability of alignments

	Match		Mismatch	
Polarization of parties	Stable alignments	Unstable alignments	Stable alignments	Unstable alignments
high	<p>SEGMENTED CLEAVAGE</p> <p>both parties and voters highly polarized and durably aligned along the dimension</p>	<p>EMERGING LINE OF OPPOSITION</p> <p>segmented opposition cross-cutting other dimension and lacking closure</p>	<p>UNRESPONSIVE PARTY SYSTEM (organizational cartellization)</p> <p>OUT-DATED CLEAVAGE/ SECONDARY POLITICAL DIMENSION</p> <p>Different dimension or established loyalties check emergence of new conflicts</p>	<p>UNRESPONSIVE PARTY SYSTEM (organizational cartellization)</p> <p>UNANCHORED PARTY SYSTEM</p> <p>High potential for realignments or anti-cartel parties</p>
low	<p>IDENTITARIAN CLEAVAGE</p> <p>Alignments stabilized by strong political identities, historically formed</p>	<p>COMPETITIVE POLITICAL DIMENSION / SCHUMPETERIAN COMPETITION</p> <p>Performance of government decisive for voting choices</p>	<p>UNRESPONSIVE PARTY SYSTEM, possibly: NEW DIMENSION OF POLITICAL CONFLICT (Issue-cartellization)</p> <p>Party identification checks emergence of new conflicts/ realignments</p>	<p>UNRESPONSIVE PARTY SYSTEM, possibly: NEW DIMENSION OF POLITICAL CONFLICT (Issue-cartellization)</p> <p>High potential for anti-cartel parties/ realignments</p>

A corresponding case where preferences are volatile, exemplified by the field to the right, points to an *emerging line of opposition*. Competing with other, crosscutting divides, it lacks strong partisan loyalties. Voting choices are therefore dependent on the relative salience of this line of opposition as opposed to the importance of other

divides in a given election. If the division proves to be temporary, patterns of party competition will not change much. If, however, the conflict remains salient on the side of the voters, it is likely to lead to realignments resulting in a political structuring and then stabilization of alignments along this divide. The driving force of such realignments is either an outsider-party or an established party reorienting itself in order to attract new voters beyond its traditional constituency.

Moving to the right, we find two situations of a miss-match between the positions of parties and voters. In both cases, parties' positions are far apart on the dimension, but the *party system is unresponsive* to the positions of voters. Supposedly, these constellations are related to Katz and Mair's (1995) thesis of party system cartellization. Cartellization can either refer to the established parties keeping specific issues off the agenda, a situation that will be dealt with in a moment, or to their ability to inhibit the entry of new competitors, partly due to their privileged access to state resources. The latter case, which may be termed *organizational cartellization*, is relevant for cases of polarized, but unresponsive party systems, where the established parties manage to restrict competition. At the same time, grass root party members or parties' clinging to their old core constituencies make impossible an ideological moderation. If alignments are stable, this indicates that parties either represent (i) an *out-dated cleavage*, which is pacified on the voter side, but still engenders loyalties, or (ii) that the dimension is of *secondary relevance* for voters who are more concerned with the stances parties take regarding a different dimension. As a consequence, the mismatch between voters' preferences and the positions of parties does not lead to realignments. If, on the other hand, party preferences are not stable, the same situation has already led to a waning of partisan attachments. In this case, the hypothesis of a different political dimension stabilizing alignments can be ruled out – the *party system does not reflect voters' preferences and is unanchored* in the electorate. Hence, the *emergence of a new line of opposition is possible either due to the reorientation of an established party, or to the entry of a new competitor de-emphasizing the established line of opposition for the benefit of a new one.*

I now turn to the two cases in the bottom-right corner, where the party system is feebly polarized and at the same time fails to represent the electorate, implying that voters are characterized by more diverging policy preferences. This can be the case in two contrasting situations: Either the established parties have converged along a line

of opposition and are thus *unresponsive* to their voters, for whom the dimension remains salient, as some would argue concerning the state-market dimension. The other possibility is that the established parties have not (yet) taken clear positions along a *new dimension of political conflict*. Parties can try to avoid doing so for various reasons, for example because they are internally divided concerning new issues, as it appears to be the case regarding parties' stances towards European integration (Bartolini 2005).

In these cases, in which parties converge, while voters are polarized, we have evidence for what I propose to call *issue-specific cartellization*. This is probably the *case most advantageous for anti-establishment parties* to emerge, since they can on the one hand advocate the programmatic positions that are not represented within the party system, and on the other hand denounce the other parties for not being responsive to the preferences of voters. This corresponds to a prominent explanation for the rise of right-wing populist parties in the 1980s (Katz, Mair 1995, Kitschelt 1995, Ignazi 1992, 2003, Abedi 2002). If party alignments are stable, and social closure is high, existing political identities will retard processes of realignment. But since the positions of the established parties are similar, and because no visible policy oppositions or conflicts reinforce group attachments, existing party preferences can be expected to decline, opening the way for new conflicts to gain room.

Finally, in those situations represented by the two bottom-left cells, the distances between parties are low. Congruence with their electorates' preferences being given, this means that electorates are not far apart either. The first case is that of an *identitarian cleavage*, where party preferences are stable due to strong collective identities of social groups, perpetuating strong sub-cultures. In either case, closure remains high due to enduring group attachments that carry the imprint of historical conflicts. But since the underlying collective identities are not reinforced by contrasting programmatic stances of parties, preferences are likely to remain stable only as long as new oppositions do not gain in importance relative to the old ones. However, even if this happens, and if the new oppositions crosscut existing constituencies, the rise of a new line of opposition will at least be tempered or delayed by the force of existing loyalties. A *competitive political dimension*, on the other hand, denotes a kind of competition that is close to Schumpeter's (1942) characterization of party competition: Elections serve to elect competing teams of

politicians that try to convince voters on the electoral market. As Downs (1957) has argued, this results in their targeting the median voter (but see Barry 1978, Powell 2000). Such a model only represents an adequate description of reality if voters' average preferences do not diverge much either. In a situation conforming to these criteria, voters can choose among parties by virtue of their performance in office. If new potentials were to arise, newcomers could in principle find fertile ground, because there is little party identification to check the emergence of new conflicts. However, since the established parties do not have any strong links to specific constituencies that keep them accountable, they are relatively free to re-orient themselves, limiting the chances for challengers to gain success. An exception to this scenario would be if the established parties agreed not to address issues evolving around new oppositions, which would open space for anti-cartel parties.

While the primary aim of this typology is to study patterns of opposition in the party system as a whole in a given election, it is applicable at various levels of specificity. On the one hand, one can move up to a more general level and identify dominant patterns over a number of elections within a country. On the other hand, it is possible to move down and to characterize the more specific nature of oppositions for certain parties or groups of voters. In what follows, I present an application of the model to France. The aim is to classify the French party system at four points in time, namely, in 1978, 1988, 1995 and 2002. Due to restrictions of space, I omit a discussion of the broader context that allowed the Front National to ascend. Nonetheless, if my premises are correct, the model should provide an explanation for the emergence of the Front National in the early 1980s. At the same time, the concepts developed above should help to determine to which degree the rise of the Front National is a symptom of the emergence of a new dimension of political conflict that could institutionalize and develop into a new cleavage.

5. Applying the Model to France: The Reshaping of Cultural Conflicts and the Rise of the Front National

Determining the dimensionality of political space

To be able to identify the lines of conflict structuring political competition in democratic elections, I rely on data based on the media coverage of election campaigns in six European countries. This data has been collected within the research project “National political change in a denationalizing world” (for a presentation of the project, see Kriesi et al. Forthcoming). For each of the six countries – France, Switzerland, Austria, Germany, the Netherlands and Britain – the data covers one election in the 1970s and three elections in the 1990s or early 2000s. Parties’ programmatic offer is coded in the two months preceding each election. The election in the 1970s serves as a point of reference before the restructuring of conflicts in the party system took place. More specifically, in the 1970s we expect a situation in which the first transformation of the traditional political space has taken place under the mobilization of the New Left. The second transformation, driven by the rise of the New Right, on the other hand, will be traced in the three more recent contests.

In France, presidential contests are studied, with the exception of the 1978 parliamentary campaign, which was chosen because no suitable surveys were available for the presidential elections of the 1970s. For each election, we selected all articles related to the electoral contest or politics in general during the last two months before Election Day in a quality newspaper and a tabloid, namely, *Le Monde* and *le Parisien*. The articles were then coded sentence by sentence using the method developed by Jan Kleinnijenhuis and his collaborators (see Kleinnijenhuis and De Ridder 1998 and Kleinnijenhuis and Pennings 2001). For the present purposes, only relationships between political actors and political issues are considered. The direction of the relationship indicates whether the actor is in favour or opposed to the issue and is coded either as -1 or as $+1$.

Political actors were coded according to their party membership. In France, a number of small parties were grouped, such as the parties of the extreme left and some smaller centre parties were regrouped into the UDF category. We coded about

400 specific political issues in the case of France and then regrouped them into 12 broader categories. The categories have been defined so as to correspond to the central theoretical concepts used in this research and are specified in the following. All categories have a clear direction, and actor's stance towards them can be either positive or negative. The abbreviations in brackets refer to the ones used in the figures later on. Note that the differentiation between state-market, cultural and residual issues is provided as an orientation and does not determine the empirical analysis.

State vs. market issues

Welfare. Expansion of the welfare state and defence against welfare state retrenchment. Tax reforms that have redistributive effects, employment programs, health care programs. Valence issues such as “against unemployment” or “against recession” were dropped if there was no specification if this was to be achieved by state intervention or by deregulation.

Environment. Protection of the environment, pollution taxes, against atomic energy.

Budget. Budgetary rigor, reduction of the state deficit, cut on expenditures, reduction of taxes that have no effects on redistribution.

Economic liberalism (ecolib). Support for deregulation, for more competition, and for privatisation. Opposition to market regulation, provided that the proposed measures do not have an impact on state expenditure – this is the distinguishing criterion from the Welfare-category. Opposition to economic protectionism in agriculture and other sectors.

Cultural issues

Cultural liberalism (cultlib). Support for the goals of the New Social Movements, with the exception of the environmental movement: Peace, solidarity with the third world, gender equality, human rights. Support for cultural diversity, international cooperation (except for the European Union), support for the United Nations. Opposition to racism, for the right to abortion and euthanasia, against a restrictive drug policy.

Coded negative: Cultural protectionism. Patriotism, calls for national solidarity, defence of tradition and national sovereignty, traditional moral values.

Europe. Support for European integration.

Culture. Support for education, culture, and research.

Immigration. Support of a tough immigration and integration policy, for the restriction of the number of foreigners.

Army. Support for the army and for a strong national defence, for nuclear weapons. Support for NATO.

Security. Support for more law and order, fight against criminality and political corruption. Fight against national and international terrorism.

Residual categories

Institutional reform (iref). Support for various institutional reforms such as the extension of direct democratic rights, modifications in the structure of the political system, federalism and decentralization, calls for the efficiency of government and public administration, New Public Management.

Infrastructure (infra). Support for the improvement of the infrastructure (roads, railways etc.).

The first step in the analysis is to determine the dimensionality of political space by identifying the issue categories that structure oppositions in a given election. To this aim, parties' political offer is analysed using the unfolding variant of Multidimensional Scaling (MDS) that allows a representation of parties and issues in a low-dimensional space for each election. MDS allows objects to be represented graphically according to measures of similarity or dissimilarity between them (Coxon 1982, Rabinowitz 1975). The analysis is based on the mean distance between the individual parties and each of the 12 categories. To give those relationships most weight that are based on a large number of observations, a Weighted Metric Multidimensional Scaling (WMMDS) has been used.⁹ There are always distortions between the "real" distances and their graphical representation resulting from the MDS analysis, but the weighting procedure ensures that the distances corresponding to salient relationships between parties and issues will be more accurate than less salient ones. Furthermore, only categories are represented that total at least 3% of the sentences per election. Parties with less than 30 actor-issue sentences are equally dropped from the analysis.

The political space constituted by the parties and issues in each of the four elections are presented in Figures 2a-d. In all four cases, the solution is clearly two-dimensional.¹⁰ It has to be emphasized that the dimensions resulting from the MDS analysis are not substantially meaningful. The only relevant information provided is

9 Weighted Metric Multidimensional Scaling can be carried out using the algorithm Proxscal, which is implemented in SPSS.

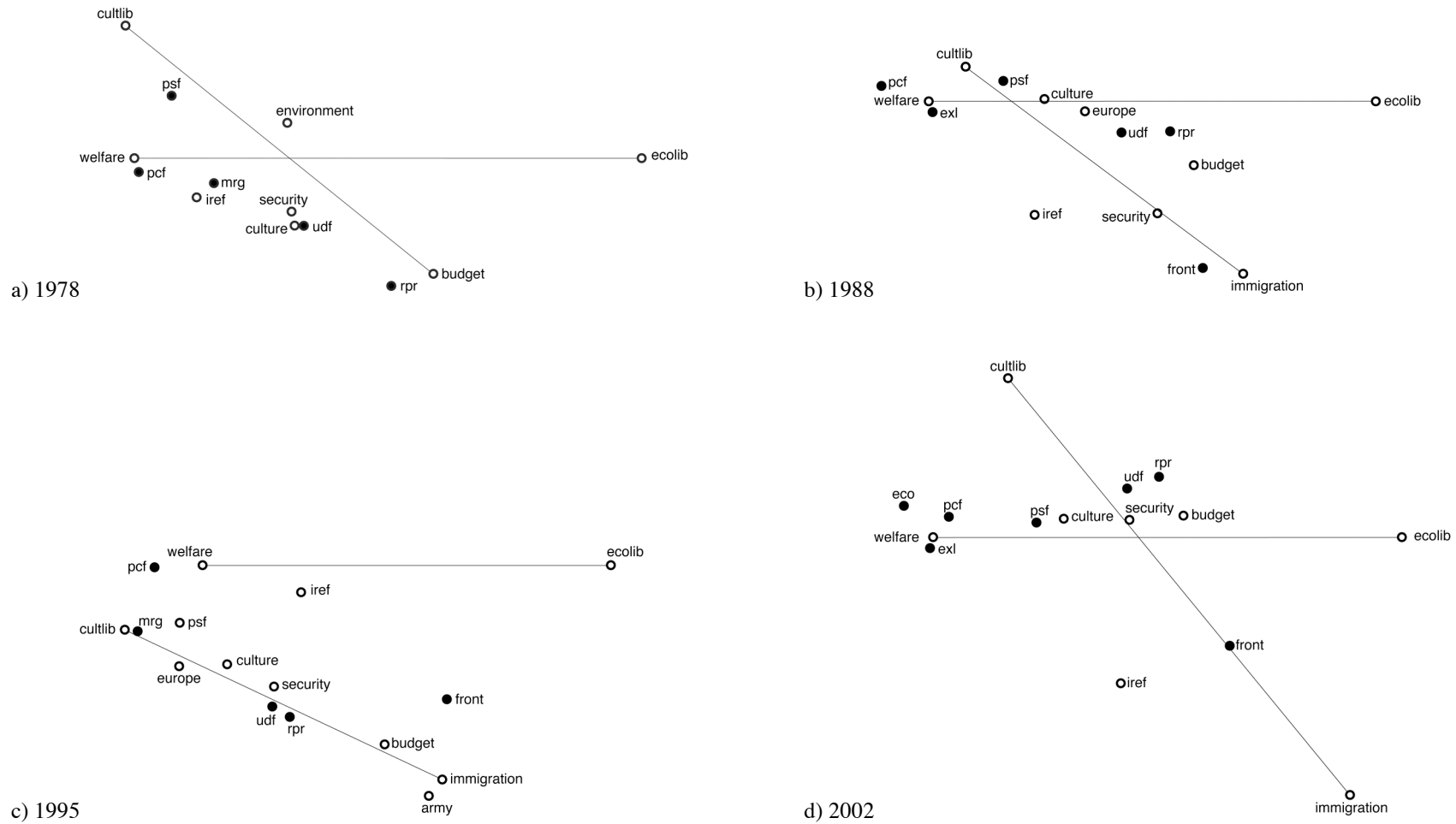
10 The move from a one-dimensional to a two-dimensional representation results in the clearest reduction in the Raw Stress statistic, which is a measure for goodness-of-fit. The Stress I statistic, which is more appropriate for the estimation of the goodness-of-fit of the final configuration, is 0,13 for 1978, 0,30 for 1988, 0,19 for 1995 and 0,27 for 2002.

the relative distance between the parties and the issue categories. This means that the solution can be freely rotated. In interpreting the configurations, it is also important to keep in mind that distances can only be interpreted in relative, and not in absolute terms. For example, right-wing populist parties may not be just next to subject of immigration in absolute terms, because their proximity to other issues also “pulls” them in another direction. However, to facilitate the interpretation, it is possible to lay axes into the distribution that are theoretically meaningful. In determining the axes, I apply two criteria. First of all, the opposition constituted by the poles must make sense theoretically. Secondly, the categories constituting the poles should lie at the extremes of the distribution, since this is an indication of polarization.

As expected, the opposition between “welfare” and “economic liberalism” emerges as one dimension, and can be interpreted as the political content of the traditional state-market cleavage. The second axis visible is a cultural opposition. In the late seventies, the libertarian-universalistic pole of the new divide has already emerged. This is visible in the extreme position of cultural liberalism, which regroups the issues relating to the goals of the New Social Movements. It can also be seen that of all parties, the Socialist PSF is located nearest to this category. The counter-pole of the cultural dimension is formed by budgetary rigor. This can be interpreted as a neo-conservative position, which is liberal in economic terms, but traditionalist in cultural matters (see Habermas 1985, Eatwell 1989). The Gaullist RPR is situated at the traditionalist pole of this divide, close to budgetary rigor and furthest away from cultural liberalism. However, it is interesting to note that the two dimensions are partially integrated, as all parties but the Socialists are situated on a single dimension running from the support of the welfare state to budgetary rigor. This conforms to the established wisdom that economic and cultural conflicts overlapped to a large degree in France, and together formed a laicist-communist vs. Catholic-traditionalist divide (Parodi 1989). It is important to note for the further analysis that the traditional left-right divide in France was traditionally even more an expression of the religious, rather than the socio-economic conflict (Rokkan 2000: 376, Bartolini 2000: 494-497, Knutsen 2004: 228).

While the economic divide remains stable over time, the analysis reveals a transformation of the cultural divide. In 1988, a traditionalist-communitarian counter-pole to the universalistic principles embodied in cultural liberalism has emerged,

Figures 2a-d: Political Space in France, 1978-2002. Positions of parties and issue-categories



Legend: *front*: Front National; *rpr*: Rassemblement pour la République (later UMP, Union pour un mouvement populaire); *udf*: Union pour la Démocratie Française, small center parties; *mrg*: Mouvement des Radicaux de Gauche; *psf*: Parti Socialiste Français; *pcf*: Parti Communiste Français; *ecolo*: Greens, ecological parties; *exl*: various extreme left parties.

represented by exclusionist anti-immigration stances. This accords with the hypothesis of a second transformation of the cultural divide in the late 1980s and 1990s, resulting in a conflict centring on a libertarian-universalistic position opposed to a traditionalist-communitarian world-view. And while the positions of parties evolve somewhat, the basic structure of conflict is reproduced in 1995 and 2002. Like in 1978, there is a tendency for the two dimensions to be integrated, as cultural liberalism is associated with a left-wing position on the state-market dimension and anti-immigration stances are closer to economic liberalism.

But nonetheless, with the only partial exception of the 1995 election, the tripartition of political space put in evidence by Grunberg and Schweisgut (2003) is clearly visible in the solutions, and it is the Front National's position that escapes the one-dimensionality of the established parties' locations. All the parties of the left combine the support the welfare state with an endorsement of universalistic values, annihilating the differentiation between Old Left and New Left that was visible in 1978. The UDF and RPR have largely converged in their position as well and are generally situated closer to the market pole of the state-market divide. However, looking at the cultural divide, we observe a change in strategy of the established right vis-à-vis the populist challenge: Whereas the UDF and RPR had been situated halfway between the left and the Front National on the cultural divide in 1988 and 1995, they have converged with the parties of the left on a relatively universalistic position in the most recent contest. As a consequence, the structure of opposition turns more clearly two-dimensional: The established left and right diverge primarily in their economic, and not in their cultural positions, with the consequence of leaving the entire traditionalist-communitarian political space to the populist right. In how far these stances correspond to the orientations of voters is an open question that will be addressed on the analysis of the demand side of competition.

The positions of parties and voters

The next step is now to calculate the position of the parties along the three dimensions identified and then to position voters along the same dimensions. The position of parties is calculated as their weighted mean position regarding the relevant issues for each axis, using the respective number of sentences in the two categories as a weight. For each axis, I have excluded parties with less than ten observations to ensure a

certain reliability of the results. Turning to the demand side, Table 1 shows which of the relevant categories can be operationalized using survey data.¹¹ A listing of the indicators used to construct the issue-categories can be found in the Appendix.

Table 1: Relevant issue-categories per election and those operationalized on the demand side

	Economic dimension		Cultural dimension	
	Welfare	Ecolib	Cultlib	Budget
1978	X	X	X	–
1988	Welfare	Ecolib	Cultlib	Immigr
	X	X	2 dim.	X
1995	Welfare	Ecolib	Cultlib	Immigr
	–	2 dim.	X	X
2002	Welfare	Ecolib	Cultlib	Immigr
	–	X	X	X

Note: X denotes that one dimension emerges from the factor analysis. In two cases, the solution is two-dimensional (“2 dim.”), and both underlying variables are used for the construction of the axis.

Where several issue questions related to the same category, they were combined into a single index using factor analysis. Although the classification is theoretically defined, this also allows an estimation if the single variables measure the same dimension. Concerning the economic dimension, we lack items for voters’ orientations regarding support for the welfare state in 1995 and 2002. Consequently, this dimension is calculated using only voters’ positions regarding economic liberalism. However, this lack of information is not such a problem: From a theoretical point of view, these categories can be expected to form one dimension, and empirically, attitudes regarding the welfare state and economic liberalism are highly correlated at the individual level in 1978 and 1988. Regarding the cultural dimension, only cultural liberalism is available in 1978.

In a second step, the issue categories constituting an axis are integrated into a single measure of the position on each axis, again using factor analysis. Individuals’ factor scores are then used to determine the mean position of each party’s electorate. It is

¹¹ The datasets are available from Socio-Political Data Archive (www.cidsp.com/bdsp). The titles and reference numbers of the surveys used are: Enquête post-électorale française, 1978 (Reference: BDSP-CIDSP q0062), Enquête post-électorale française, 1988 (Reference: BDSP-CIDSP q0601), Enquête post-électorale française, 2002 (Reference: BDSP-CIDSP q0891), Panel électoral français 2002.

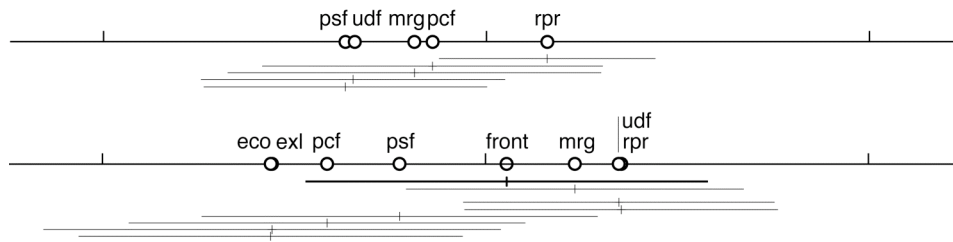
important to keep in mind that proceeding this way, the correspondence between parties and voters can only be judged in relative and not in absolute terms since the possible range of variation is different in the two cases. Unfortunately, it is difficult if not impossible to make the two scales strictly comparable. While the positions of parties deriving from the media data can be interpreted in absolute terms, the positions of the electorates are standardized as a result of the factor analysis and can therefore only be interpreted in relative terms.

Parties and Voters on the Cultural Divide

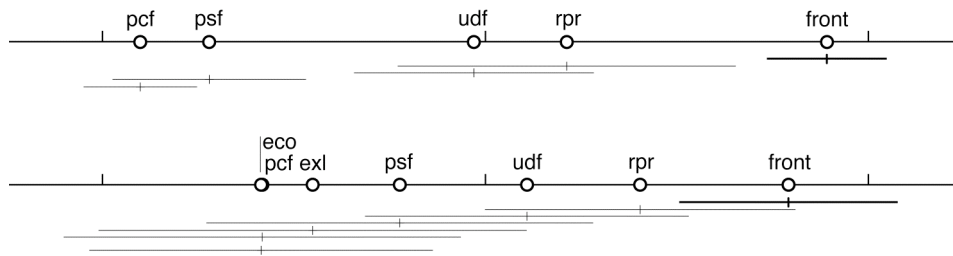
Position, match, and polarization

Two of the elements necessary to implement the schema presented in Figure 1 are measured in this section: The positions of parties and voters, from which we can calculate, first, the degree of polarization, and second, the match between political demand and political supply can be calculated. Figure 3 shows the *positions* of parties and their electorates along the cultural dimension. The graphical representation of the positions of parties and voters allows a substantial interpretation of positions and patterns of opposition. Informative as they are, however, the mean locations say little about the homogeneity or heterogeneity of these positions. Different political actors belonging to the same party may issue diverging policy stances, while the preferences of voters making up a party's electorate may be spread out along the ideological spectrum to quite varying degrees. On the voter side, considerable heterogeneity is in fact the rule, because it is not ideology alone that influences voting decisions. To compare and visualize the ideological spread within parties' electorates and in parties' positions, we can calculate the standard deviations. In the following figures, bars are used to indicate the spread around average positions.

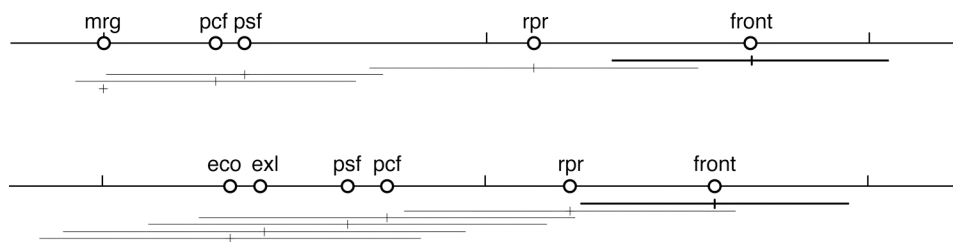
To classify elections according to the degree of *polarization* they entailed, however, we need an overall measure of polarization. Here, we can use the standard deviations of parties' and voters' positions along a dimension. On the party side, we can do this with and without the populist right challenger (if there is one), in order to assess how strongly the latter contributes to the polarization of the party system. If we want to estimate how much space there is for a right-wing populist challenger, the value



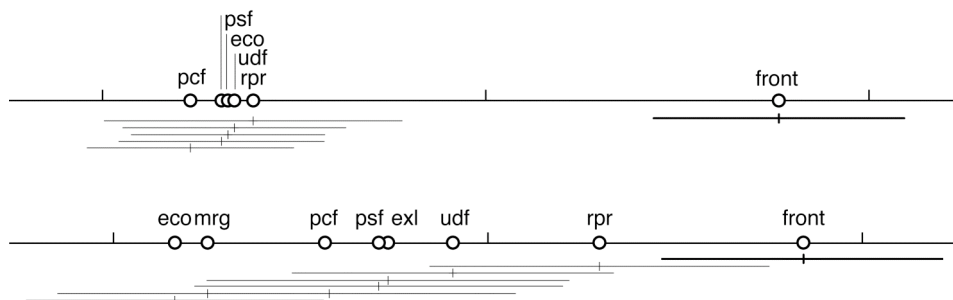
1978: parties (above) and voters (below)
 match (5 parties): 0.29
 polarization parties: 0.21 | polarization electorates: 0.33



1988: parties (above) and voters (below)
 match (5 parties): 0.98
 polarization parties: 0.73 | without FN: 0.54 | polarization electorates: 0.47



1995: parties (above) and voters (below)
 match (4 parties): 0.99
 polarization parties: 0.62 | without FN: 0.44 | polarization electorates: 0.44



2002: parties (above) and voters (below)
 match (6 parties): 0.80
 polarization parties: 0.59 | without FN: 0.06 | polarization electorates: 0.47

Figure 3: Parties and voters on the cultural divide, 1978-2002: position, match, and polarization
 Legend: see Figure 2.

indicating only the polarization of the other parties is obviously most instructive. If on the other hand such a party is already sufficiently strong and forms part of a situation of segmentation, the classification of the party system should rely on the values including all parties. As a rule of thumb, I take standard deviations below 0.5 as evidence that the system is weakly polarized along this dimension, while values beyond 0.5 indicate relatively high levels of polarization. Because positions have been measured on different scales, it has to be kept in mind that the polarization figures for parties and voters cannot be compared directly. What is possible, however, is a comparison over time and between dimensions.

Finally, to arrive at a measure of the *match in positions of parties and voters*, we again have the problem that the mean positions of parties and voters cannot be compared directly. However, it is possible to measure their congruence by calculating correlations. Because the correlation taps only the covariance between positions, the differing scales are irrelevant here. Again as a rule of thumb, I take correlations below 0.80 to indicate unresponsiveness and higher values as an indication of congruence. Values above 0.80 are in fact quite common, and indicate that more than two thirds of the variance in the positions of parties can be explained with the positions of their electorates. The results from the correlations are also displayed below the figures for each election.

In Figure 3, a position on the left indicates a libertarian-universalistic position, while a position on the right denotes a defence of tradition as against these universalistic principles. The latter ideological syndrome from 1988 on is coupled with exclusionist stances regarding foreigners, as we have seen. In the 1978 election, the positions of the parties of the left and of the centrist UDF do not differ very much, while the RPR pursues a more polarizing strategy by issuing more traditionalist stances. In fact, the Gaullists are the only party that is nearer to the traditionalist than to the universalistic pole of the divide. It is also quite evident that a number of parties fail to represent their voters adequately. While the UDF takes the second-most libertarian-universalistic position after the PSF, its voters are situated at the opposing end of the distribution, virtually at no distance to those who voted for the Gaullist RPR. In this sense, the RPR's rise at the expense of the UDF in the 1970s is not that surprising. The Communists and the MRG are similarly out of touch with their voters, resulting in a very low overall match in positions on the supply side and on the demand side, as indicated beneath each of the graphics. In other words, the party

system is clearly unresponsive to the electorate. The Front National's position cannot be determined in 1978 due to an insufficient number of statements. The position of its voters, on the other hand, is very dispersed along the cultural dimension, resulting in a centrist average position. It thus seems as if the party did not mobilize a ideologically extreme electorate on this dimension at the beginning of its rise.

Between 1978 and 1988, polarization surges, and the parties are now much more spread out along the spectrum. This is attributable both to the more clearly libertarian-universalistic discourse of the left, as well as to the rise of the Front National at the traditionalist-communitarian pole of the cultural divide, set far apart from the moderate right. While the RPR has not changed its position very much, the UDF lies at quite a distance from the parties of the left, resulting in a programmatic convergence of the established right.¹² As in 1995, the location of the parties now closely resembles the relative positions of their electorates. The most important finding is that the Front National mobilizes an electorate whose location is similarly extreme to the party itself. *From 1988 on, and also in the most recent contest, the populist right has an electorate of its own.* Although there is some overlap between relatively traditionalist supporters of the RPR and the less traditionalist followers of the populist right, a large number of the latter's voters are located at the extreme of the dimension. The relatively large spread of the RPR's issue statements underlines the party's difficulty in defining its position on the cultural dimension, and its voters are also more dispersed along the spectrum than those of the Front National. While the electorates have also become more polarized than in the 1970s, it is the strong increase in polarization of the party system that restores the responsiveness of the party system, resulting in a close match of the positions of parties and voters. Overall, we face a situation of *deep segmentation* of which the Front National is an integral part: *The party system is responsive with or without the Front National.* Both the Front National, as well as its voters lie at the extremes on the cultural divide and they strongly contribute to the segmented nature of opposition on this axis.

On the party side, however, the 2002 election marks a change in strategy of the established right regarding the right-wing populist challenger: While the polarization of the party system is more or less maintained due to the presence of the Front National, the parties of the established right have converged on a relatively libertarian-

12 In 1995, the UDF does not appear in the figure because the party did not present a candidate of its own, but called to support Balladur, a second RPR-candidate who ran against Chirac.

universalistic position, close to the parties of the left. Without the Front National, the polarization of the party system is minimal. This quite extraordinary result could be attributed to the last two weeks of the campaign, when it was clear that Le Pen would stand in the second round. However, there is no change in this picture if we omit all articles that appeared in the two weeks between the first and the second round of the elections. And if the parties of the established right have moved towards the libertarian-universalistic pole, their voters have not followed suit. The electorates of the established parties are much more evenly spread out along the dimension than the parties, and the correlation of 0.8 marks a comparatively low match, indicating that the party system is only on the verge of responsiveness. The Gaullist RPR is especially detached from its electorate, and risks to lose those voters to the Front National who attach great importance to the issues associated with the cultural divide. To which degree this danger is real depends, in conjunction with the RPR's future strategy, on the strength of the loyalties of the voters of the established right, to which I now turn.

The stability of alignments along the cultural divide

In analyzing the stability of alignments, I am interested in the degree to which ideological divisions on the cultural dimension engender loyalties among voters, or, put differently, to which degree they entail collective political identities. Theoretically, we can expect up to four ideological blocks on the cultural dimension, corresponding to an Old Left vs. New Left division on the one hand, and an established right vs. extreme populist right divide on the other hand. With this expectation, the 1978 election is rather difficult to interpret, the largest distance being the one between the RPR and the other parties. From 1988 on, however, the picture changes, and several common features can be identified in the elections between 1988 and 2002: First of all, a division between the established right and the populist right is observable both on the demand and on the supply side. Consequently, the Front National represents a first ideological block. Except for the extraordinary pattern on the supply side in 2002, a division between the moderate right and the parties of the left is also visible. Within the left, however, no clear division emerges between Old Left and New Left, and the overlap both in parties' programmatic stances, as well as in their voters' preferences indicates that they compete for voters with similar cultural outlooks.

Consequently, I form three ideological party blocks: a left-libertarian family, a centre-right group and a block constituted solely by the Front National. The division between the left and the centre-right breaks down in 2002, but only on the party side, and I will therefore use the same blocks over the entire time-span. For the 1978 election, only two blocks can be formed because too few respondents declare having voted for the still marginal extreme right. To determine the stability of alignments, i.e. the proportion of voters that chose the same ideological block in two consecutive elections, I use recall questions from the surveys. Asking people which party they voted for in a prior election is non unproblematic since declared choices are known to be inaccurate at times (Himmelweit et al. 1978), and I am conscious of the limitations of this approach. However, the alternative, using aggregate measures of volatility, as for example employed by Bartolini and Mair (1990), is equally problematic. Because abstention from voting may be an antecedent to the reconfiguration of preferences, it is crucial also to take into account non-voting in assessing the stability of alignments. Loyalty or stable alignments in my conception then imply that a voter regularly turns out to vote for his/her ideological block.

The first striking feature in Figure 4 is the high level of partisan loyalty exhibited by the electorate of the Front National. Around 80% of those who declare having voted for the extreme populist right in the preceding election have done so again directly before the survey was carried out.¹³ On the other hand, cross-tabulations of actual and previous votes (results not shown here) also demonstrate that in all elections, considerable parts of the Front National's electorate come from voters who previously did not vote, who were non yet eligible to vote in the previous election, or voted for other parties, mostly for independent candidates and the established right. Voters coming from the left are a marginal category in all years. These results show that *at least concerning the hard core of the Front National's electors, the structure of opposition is indeed highly segmented*. Looking at the left-libertarian block, we see a decline of loyalties between 1978 and 1995, but a stabilization at about 72% thereafter. In the first election, loyalties on the left were still stronger than those exhibited by Front National voters, but they are now somewhat weaker. The stability

13 This result has to be taken with a grain of salt, since the number of respondents who declare having voted for the Front National in the preceding election is always lower than the number of those who declare having done so in the more recent election, the one actually under examination. However, the analysis by Swyngedouw et al. (2000), which uses more sophisticated methods such as iterative proportional fitting to correct for the effective voting shares of parties, supports the results presented here.

of alignments to the centre right, on the other hand, has always been the weakest. From 1988 on, alignments have declined further from the comparatively low levels. In 2002, loyalties have dropped to a low of 59%.

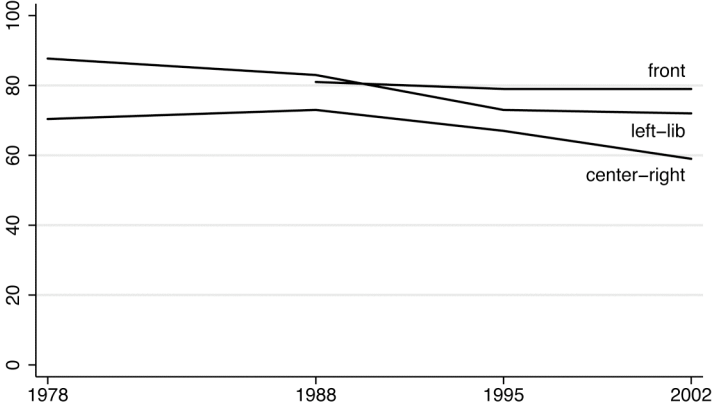


Figure 4: Stability of alignments to the left-libertarian block, the centre-right and the Front National (in percent)

Summary: emerging types of cultural opposition

According to my analytical schema, the French party system was in the wake of the emergence of a new dimension of political conflict in 1978. Polarization was low, indicating that the parties’ positions were feebly structured by conflicts over libertarian-universalistic values and neo-conservative calls for drawing back the state, exemplified by the cultural liberalism and budgetary rigor categories. The left-wing libertarian movements of the late 1960s and 1970s do not seem to have led to a strong opposition around questions of libertarianism vs. tradition moral values at the level of the party system in that election, even if the RPR emerges as the most traditionalist party. However, strong alignments related to traditional laicist-communist vs. Catholic-traditionalist divide still checked realignments along the transformed cultural dimension, corresponding to the situation in the second cell from the right at the bottom of the schema in Figure 1.

By 1988, a new and more extreme pole has emerged in the shape of the Front National. An authoritarian cultural potential was not only present, it already formed a loyal constituency of the Front National. At the same time, the parties of the left adopted a more decisively libertarian-universalistic stance in the 1980s. While the

centre-right did not move much, the rise of the immigration question marks the mobilization of a traditionalist-communitarian political potential in favour of the preservation of an (imagined) traditional community. Polarization growing both at the party and the voter level, the party system is responsive to the citizenry and oppositions have become highly segmented since 1988. This is especially true for the Front National's traditionalist block, which maintains the highest levels of loyalty of the three blocks. And while the left-libertarian block, too, seems to have stabilized its alignments, the centre-right block displays declining levels of loyalty, pointing to ongoing processes of dealignment.

Overall, the libertarian-universalistic vs. traditionalist-communitarian divide represents a segmented "emerging line of opposition", according to my theoretical model (see Figure 1). Positions are polarized both on the supply, as well as on the demand side. At the same time, the decline of partisan loyalties to the centre-right block indicates that the opposition still lacks closure and that, consequently, the divide is not yet settled. However, the 2002 election has changed this situation of congruent segmented representation: With all parties converging on a rather universalistic stance, and polarization declining starkly, the party system has become rather non-responsive *and* party support rather volatile as far as the centre-right block is concerned, opening a wide potential for the Front National's anti-cartel rhetoric (this corresponds to the bottom-right cell in Figure 1). This is crucial not only because the established right's voters' cultural preferences are not adequately represented, but also because parts of the RPR's electorate have cultural preferences that overlap with those of the Front National's clientele anyway. Consequently, much depends on the centrality of the economic vs. the cultural divide for the voters of the centre-right, and what the nature of opposition is on the economic dimension. These are the questions I now turn to.

Parties and Voters on the Economic Divide

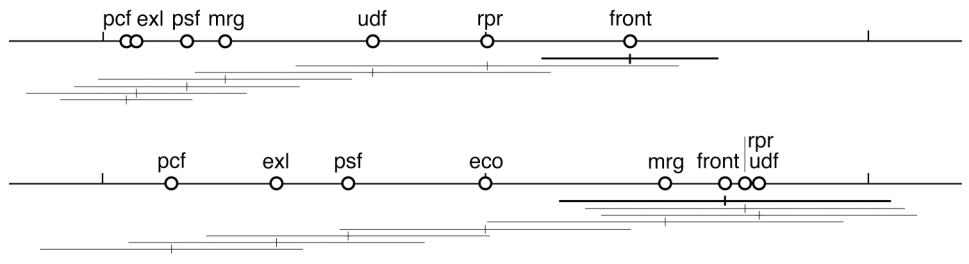
Position, match, and polarization

Turning to the political manifestation of the traditional state-market cleavage, Figure 5 shows the respective positions of parties and voters on the economic axis. A position on the left corresponds to a programmatic stance or preferences in favour of the

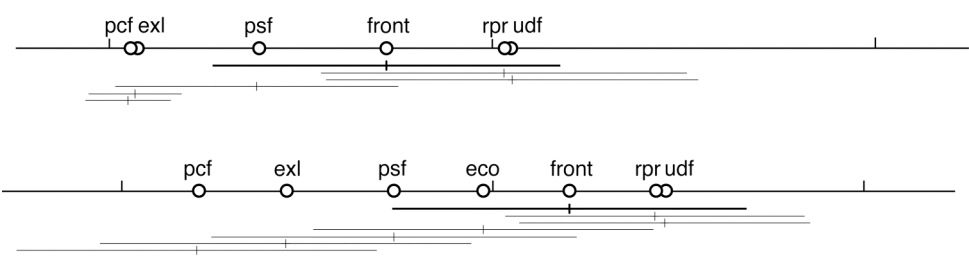
welfare state and against economic liberalism, while a position on the right represents the opposite set of preferences. Starting with the election of 1978, we find that the space of political competition is skewed to the left, with the RPR being positioned in the middle of the spectrum and the UDF to the left of it. Without the Front National, polarization is at 0.38 and therefore low. This is somewhat surprising, because it is generally held that only Mitterand's abandonment of Keynesianism has resulted in a convergence of the left and right along the economic dimension of conflict. Here, we find that the rhetoric of the right is relatively market-hostile, which in the late 1970s reflected its fears of the left gaining office for the first time in the Fifth Republic.

Taking into account the position of the Front National, on the other hand, makes polarization rise considerably. Contrary to the cultural dimension, there are enough statements to position the Front National on the economic dimension in this election, which is an interesting finding as such. And at the end of the 1970s, the party did in fact have the most clear-cut market-liberal profile of all. In other words, we do find some evidence for Kitschelt's (1995) claim that the party at the beginning of its ascendancy targeted voters with neo-liberal preferences. The party's electorate does not differ much from the voters of the established right, but we have to keep in mind that extremely few people voted for the populist right and that the results are therefore less reliable.

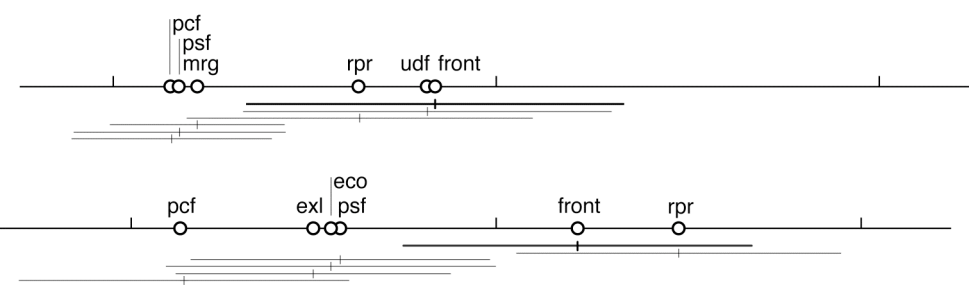
However, by 1988, both the Front National, as well as its voters are situated quite differently. In this election, the party lies halfway in between the Socialists and the established right. The voters of the Front National lie to the left of those of the established right as well. Behind this average position lie quite divergent individual preferences, as the large spread of positions indicates. The heterogeneity of economic preferences within the Front National's electorate in this as well as in later elections contrasts starkly with their comparatively homogeneous cultural orientations. The dispersion of the Front National's voters is especially large in 2002, reaching far into the grounds of the left. This is strong evidence for my hypothesis that the voters of the populist right are drawn together by their cultural orientations, while their divergent economic preferences make it difficult for the party to define its position on this dimension. After the centrist location in 1988, the Front National has returned to a more market-liberal position in 1995 and especially in 2002. However, the party no longer contributes significantly to polarization and furthermore, this position clearly



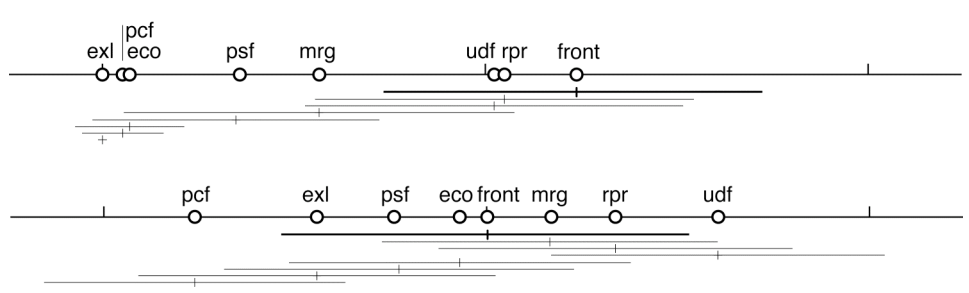
1978: parties (above) and voters (below)
 match (7 parties): 0.79
 polarization parties: 0.50 | without FN: 0.38 | polarization electorates: 0.46



1988: parties (above) and voters (below)
 match (6 parties): 0.98
 polarization parties: 0.45 | without FN: 0.49 | polarization electorates: 0.52



1995: parties (above) and voters (below)
 match (4 parties): 0.88
 polarization parties: 0.35 | without FN: 0.32 | polarization electorates: 0.46



2002: parties (above) and voters (below)
 match (8 parties): 0.76
 polarization parties: 0.50 | without FN: 0.45 | polarization electorates: 0.36

Figure 5: Parties and voters on the economic divide, 1978-2002: position, match, and polarization
 Legend: see Figure 1

does not correspond to the preferences of the majority of its voters. Neo-liberal appeals thus seem to play a less important role in the Front National's success than Kitschelt (1995) has claimed. More plausibly, the Front National's shifting positions reflect the party's difficulty in satisfying the preferences of a heterogeneous electorate, where some segments are in favour of strong government intervention in the economy, while others have free-market preferences, as Perrineau (1997) and Mayer (2002) have shown.

As far as the party system as a whole is concerned, polarization generally lies around 0.5, except for 1995, where it is considerably lower. At the same time, the relatively close match of positions between parties and voters indicates that the party system is by and large responsive to the electorate. There is a decline in match in the 2002 election, however, in part caused by the two political formations that have resulted from the new value conflicts that emerged since the late 1960s: the Ecologists and the Front National, who both do not adequately represent their voters on the economic dimension. Both electorates are quite centrist on average, while their parties lie close to the extremes. The following analysis of voter loyalties will allow us to estimate how large the potential for realignments is that results from this situation of incongruent representation.

The stability of alignments along the economic divide and resulting types of opposition

The distinction between the ideological party blocks divided by the class cleavage is quite straightforward in France. The only question left to settle is how to classify the parties of the New Left and of the New Right, which are the product of post-industrial conflicts. Even here, however, the case is quite simple for the French Ecologists, which are clearly situated at the interventionist pole of the state-market divide, and for the Front National, which leans more to the market pole of the cleavage, even if both of these parties inadequately represent their voters. Loyalties to the left and right blocks are presented in Figure 6. The stability of alignments on the left is in decline since 1978, and loyalties are lower than those to the right block since 1988. Between 1995 and 2002 however, alignments on the right have started to decline as well. Overall, and compared to the cultural divide, levels of loyalty seem quite high,

however, and the economic divide appears to exert a continuingly strong influence on partisan alignments.

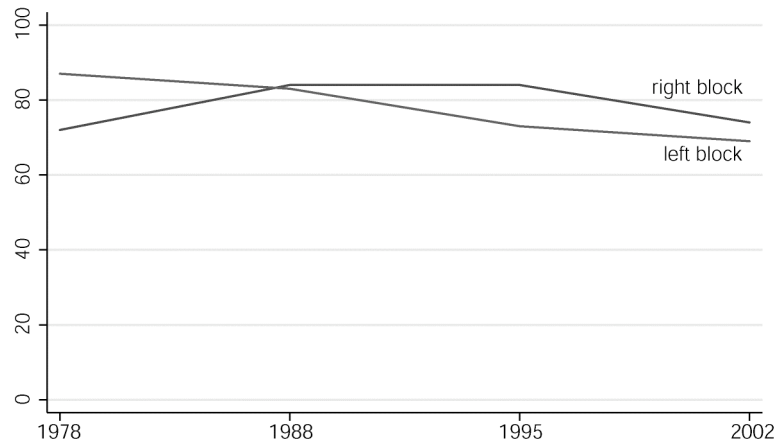


Figure 6: Stability of preferences for the left and right blocks (in percent)

Putting together the three elements of the schema presented earlier on, we can now draw some (tentative) conclusions regarding the character of economic divisions within the French party system. Polarization is generally rather low on the party side, and especially in 1995. Much therefore depends on whether or not this is an adequate representation of their voters. In 1978, this is not the case. With match being low, but loyalties being very high, we thus face an unresponsive party system in which party identification checks realignments (the third cell from the left at the bottom of Figure 1).¹⁴ In 1988 and 1995, match is restored, and the party system has regained responsiveness. The high stability of alignments in conjunction with moderate levels of polarization indicate that the class cleavage is an identitarian political dimension, where alignments are at least as much structured by political identities than by real-world policy-differences between the left and the right blocks. There is a difference between the voters of the left and the right, however: The former exhibit declining loyalties, indicating that at least for some segments of the electorate, the class cleavage is moving in the direction of a competitive political dimension, where the performance of governments is at least in part decisive for voting choices. This is plausible in the light of the similarity of the basic liberalizing thrust of the economic reforms pursued by governments of the right and the left in the 1980s and 1990s (Levy 2000, 2005).

¹⁴ The classification is not straightforward because the match in positions lies close to the cut-off points I have defined for the present. I hope to be able to settle less arbitrary cut-off points for match and polarization after the analysis of the other countries.

The erosion in loyalties of the voters of the right is less marked. There is no decline until 2002, where the party system no longer mirrors voters' positions very well. Since the loyalties of the Front National's voters are constantly high, this appears to be a problem of the parties of the established right. As in 1978, the party system has become to a certain degree non-responsive to voters. At the same time, we should remember which parties were most clearly out of touch with their voters in that election: The Ecologists and the voters of the Front National, whose creation is linked to the emergence of post-industrial conflicts. To the degree that economic stances matter for these electorates, there would be a potential for realignments to take place. But much depends on the relative weight these citizens attribute to being congruently represented on the economic and the cultural dimensions, respectively. In particular concerning the Front National, constantly high levels of loyalty despite misrepresentation in the economic domain indicate that for this group of voters, the economic divide represents a secondary political dimension, again employing the analytical schema presented in Figure 1.

In the light of the high levels of loyalty of the left and right blocks along the economic dimension, we can now conclude that the declining loyalties of the centre-right block are not due to left-right migrations, but to recompositions inside the right block. On the one hand, the dividing line between the established right and the populist right remains permeable, as noted before. On the other hand, this decline is related to a surge in the number of independent candidacies in presidential contests in the 1990s, which are in part related to divisions concerning European integration within the right (Meunier 2004). While an application of the model employed here to the patterns of oppositions regarding the EU show that the Front National's voters are the most eurosceptic in France, it is still an open question to which degree the Front National will be able to exploit the potentials related to the growing importance of the European question in French politics.

6. Conclusion

The main aim of this paper has been to present a model that links the rise of right-wing populist parties to the lines of conflict that structure oppositions in party systems. Because established cleavages entail collective identities and provide cognitive schemata for the interpretation of politics, they condition the room for the mobilization of new conflicts that cut across the old divisions. As a first step in an analytical procedure that seeks to differentiate between different types of divide that leave varying room for the mobilization of the populist right, I have proposed to empirically determine the lines of opposition between parties in election campaigns. The analysis of the French case shows that, similarly to other Western European countries, political conflicts in the 1970s as well as in more recent elections are structured by an economic and a cultural dimension of conflict. While the economic dimension reflects the traditional state-market cleavage, the meaning of the cultural dimension has been transformed under the twin mobilization efforts of the New Left and the extreme populist right. In the 1970s, it was no longer intimately linked to religion, but reflected an opposition between the libertarian goals brought up by the New Social Movements of the 1960s and 1970s and neo-conservative calls for the preservation of tradition and cutting back the state. Due to the counter-mobilization of the extreme populist New Right, the conservative pole of the cultural divide is now not only characterized by an opposition to the universalistic conceptions of the New Left – the latter including the right to difference, societal permissiveness and support for supranational integration in the European Union – but also by an anti-immigration stance. The latter represents an attempt at community construction based on the exclusion of culturally different citizens. Drawing on various theoretical perspectives, I have argued that the issues associated with the resulting conflict can be interpreted in terms of an opposition between libertarian-universalistic and traditionalist-communitarian values or conceptions of justice.

To examine the evolution of the economic and cultural divides in France, I have classified them in four elections according to three criteria. These are, first, the degree of polarization they entail; secondly, the degree of correspondence between parties and the voters along a divide; and thirdly, the degree of closure exhibited by the group division represented by a line of opposition, measured by the stability of alignments to the party ideological blocks on either side of the divide. The application of these

criteria shows that the state-market cleavage and the older cultural divide have indeed conditioned the emergence of the opposition between libertarian-universalistic and traditionalist-communitarian values. Figure 8 summarizes the results by showing the character of the divides that have structured interactions in the French party system in 1978, 1988, 1995 and 2002.

Figure 8: Types of Divide in France, Elections of 1978, 1988, 1995 and 2002

	Match in positions of parties and voters		Mismatch in positions	
Polarization of parties	Stable alignments	Unstable alignments	Stable alignments	Unstable alignments
high	SEGMENTED CLEAVAGE	EMERGING LINE OF OPPOSITION <i>Cultural divide 1988, 1995</i>	SECONDARY POLITICAL DIMENSION <i>Economic divide for voters of the Front National in 1995 and 2002; for voters of the Ecologists in 2002</i>	UNRESPONSIVE/ UNANCHORED PARTY SYSTEM
low	IDENTITARIAN CLEAVAGE <i>Economic divide 1988, 1995</i>	COMPETITIVE POLITICAL DIMENSION / SCHUMPETERIAN COMPETITION <i>Economic divide for parts of the electorate of the left in recent elections</i>	UNRESPONSIVE PARTY SYSTEM <i>Economic divide 1978</i> NEW DIMENSION OF POLITICAL CONFLICT <i>Cultural divide 1978</i>	UNRESPONSIVE PARTY SYSTEM <i>Parties of the established right on the cultural divide 2002</i>

Even before the left abandoned Keynesianism in the early 1980s, the French party system was not strongly polarized along the economic dimension, which reflects the welfare statist discourse of the established right in the wake of the left’s first electoral victory. In 1978, the party system was not very responsive to voters, but since 1988, it has regained responsiveness and represents an identitarian cleavage. In other words, the relevance of this cleavage in terms of policy differences has diminished, but

nonetheless, loyalties linked to the class cleavage remain rather strong, thereby limiting the room for new lines of opposition. However, loyalties have weakened on the political left, pointing that the divide is moving in the direction of a competitive political dimension for some segments of the left's electorate. On the other hand, the two political parties that have emerged from post-industrial conflicts, the Ecologists and the Front National, inadequately represent their voters on the economic divide. In the case of the populist right, whose voters display the highest loyalties of all ideological blocks, this means that the economic divide is a secondary political divide. The analysis has shown that the Front National's electorate is among those most internally divided along the economic dimension. In other words, large parts of these voters support the Front National not because, but rather *despite* its rather market-liberal profile.

Turning to the cultural divide, the mismatch between the positions of the major parties and their voters in 1978 indicates that the party system failed to represent the electorate along the cultural conflict dimension of the 1970s, which carried the imprint of the mobilization of the New Left, similarly to other Western European countries. However, strong collective identities related to the traditional laicist-communist vs. Catholic-traditionalist divide persisted, and checked the rise of a conservative counter-pole to cultural liberalism. Ten years later, in 1988, the Front National had succeeded not only in altering the meaning of the cultural dimension, but also in rallying behind itself a loyal group of voters that closely mirrors the party's extreme position at the traditionalist-exclusionist pole of the cultural dimension. In this as well as in the later elections, the general polarization of the party system, both on the voter, as well as on the party side have turned the libertarian-universalistic vs. traditionalist-communitarian dimension into a deeply segmented line of opposition. Astonishingly high levels of loyalty characterize the electorate of Le Pen's political formation. At the same time, the voters of the established right exhibit declining loyalties, pointing to ongoing processes of realignment between the established and the extreme populist right.

The distinct political profile of Front National voters makes a vanishing of the populist right in France seem unlikely in the near future. At the same time, Le Pen's inability to progress between the first and second rounds of the 2002 presidential election shows that there are severe limits to the growth of the party. Furthermore, the Front National's success crucially depends on the prevalence of culturally, as opposed

to economically defined group identifications among its voters, which covers their strong division along the economic dimension. In part, however, its electoral fortunes also depend on the strategies pursued by the other political actors in the light of their challenger. One may have doubts concerning the implications of the RPR/UMP and UDF's de-emphasis of traditionalist-communitarianist stances, and their shift to a more universalistic position in the 2002 campaign. The Gaullists' electorate lying between that of the left and the populist right, the RPR/UMP's relatively universalistic stance may well put part of its voters into reach of the populist right.

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Appendix: List and classification of the items used from the post-election surveys

France 1978

var	description	category
t26	supprimer avantages pour réduire inégalités sociales	welfare
t27	élargir le secteur nationalisé	ecolib
t29	limiter augmentation du niveau de vie pour lutter contre l'inflation	ecolib
t30	interdire les licenciements	ecolib
t71	supprimer le droit de grève ?	ecolib
t64	fier d'être français ?	cultlib
t73	pouvoir prendre la pilule avant la majorité ?	cultlib
t77	rôle de l'école : discipline ou esprit critique ?	cultlib
t87	envoyer les enfants au catéchisme	cultlib

France 1988

var	description	category
q1a6	Salaires égaux: n'encouragent pas à travailler	ecolib
q4	Difficultés économiques: Etat doit-il contrôler entreprises ?	ecolib
q31a2	Etat : devrait garantir revenu minimum	welfare
q31a9	Rétablir impôt sur grandes fortunes	welfare
q2a1	Couple non marié : condamnable ?	trad. values
q2a2	Avortement : condamnable ?	trad. values
q2a3	Infidélité : condamnable ?	trad. values
q2a4	Homosexualité : condamnable ?	trad. values
q31a6	Femme : faite pour élever les enfants ?	trad. values
q31a7	Société : il faut une hiérarchie	cultlib
q10	Rôle de l'école : discipline ou esprit critique ?	cultlib
q1a4	Fier d'être français	cultlib
q31a5	Juifs ont trop de pouvoir en France	cultlib
q31a8	Normal que les musulmans en France aient des mosquées	cultlib
q1a9	Trop d'immigrés en France	immigration
q31a3	On ne se sent plus chez soi comme avant	immigration

France 1995

var	description	category
q36	priorité: compétitivité ou situation des salaires	ecolib
q20a2	l'Etat intervient-il trop ou pas assez dans la vie économique	ecolib
q7a1	trop d'immigrés en France	immigration
q7a6	on ne se sent plus chez soi comme avant	immigration
q7a3	homosexualité est acceptable	cultlib
q7a5	normal que les musulmans en France aient des mosquées	cultlib
q7a7	normal qu'une femme puisse avorter	cultlib
q22a1	rôle de l'école : discipline ou esprit critique	cultlib
q20a1	rôle de la femme (à la maison ou même rôle que hommes)	cultlib

Positive/negative feelings

var	description	category
q21a4	compétition	ecolib
q21a5	profit	ecolib
q21a6	syndicat	ecolib
q21a7	nationalisation	ecolib
q21a12	privatisation	ecolib

q21a2	féminisme	cultlib
q21a8	autorité	cultlib
q21a13	islam	immigration

France 2002, Wave 2

var	description	category
xq237	interdire les licenciements	ecolib
xq239	Difficultés économiques: Etat doit-il contrôler entreprises ?	ecolib
xq255	recherches sur le génôme humain	cultlib
xq58	rôle de l'école : discipline ou esprit critique	cultlib
xq39p2_4	les juifs ont trop de pouvoir en France	cultlib
xq39p2_1	trop d'immigrés en France	immigration
xq39p2_3	immigrés : source d'enrichissement culturel	immigration