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Party Alignments: Change and Continuity

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Changes in the occupational structure and political economy of advanced capitalism, explained in Daniel Oesch's chapter in this volume, and related shifts in the formation of political mass preferences, examined by Silja Häusermann and Hanspeter Kriesi in the subsequent chapter, are consequential for political partisan alignments, the subject of this chapter. As previously small occupational groups with distinct political preference profiles gained numerical weight in the electorate, particularly highly educated sociocultural professionals, established party families saw their vote shares decline, unless they modified their programmatic appeals. Established parties with new strategies or new party creations went on to capture novel voter coalitions, a process that has played out in cross-nationally diverse ways.

Shifts in electoral partisan coalitions coincided with (1) a steep decline in party membership; (2) a moderate to sharp increase in electoral volatility signaling the availability of more voters to competing party appeals; (3) a decline in voter turnout, as people no longer acted simply on parental party identifications or associational ties; and (4) a corresponding rise of nonpartisan social movements and interest groups. At least three rival theoretical arguments have claimed to make sense of party system change in postindustrial democracies, all consistent with these basic facts: the postindustrial realignment; the postindustrial dealignment; and the cartel party detachment perspectives. Examining empirical trends over time and cross-national variance among party systems, we conclude that a political realignment perspective explains observable patterns best.

7.1. Three Perspectives on Postindustrial Political Alignments

The disagreements on political alignments concern facts about the nature of citizen-politician linkages and causal mechanisms that produce them in

postindustrial democracies. There are three prominent perspectives on this topic:

- **Postindustrial Realignment (PiR):** Voters continue to coalesce around parties on the basis of durable socioeconomic interests and policy preferences, but since political-economic postindustrialization, highlighted by changing occupational profiles, has changed the distribution of preferences, established parties have been compelled to alter their appeals or tolerate the electoral success of new parties that represent voter preferences ignored by established alternatives.
- **Postindustrial Dealignment (PiD):** Most voters have ceased to support parties on the basis of durable and broad configurations of preferences and interests. Instead their partisan support is motivated by specific and temporally variable issue positions, attention to which is induced by exogenous shocks or endogenous issue politics of office-seeking politicians. This process is paired with a substantial rise of partisan disaffection.
- **Cartel Party Detachment (CaPaD):** Faced with eroding sociodemographic moorings and organizational member affiliation, established parties move to a “cartelization” of political power that erects high barriers to the entry of outside partisan challengers and enables insider parties to converge on policy positions that disregard distinctive demands voiced by electoral constituencies.

The three theoretical frames make different predictions about the nature and extent to which political parties express and pursue policies that reflect preferences of their electoral constituencies. They also have different implications for the programmatic appeal of political parties over time. Finally, the realignment perspective postulates durable cross-national differences in party systems configurations, whereas dealignment and cartelization theories predict convergence.

7.1.1. *Realignment (PiR)*

Realignment theorists hypothesize a continued capacity of democratic institutions to impose a modicum of accountability on elected politicians that creates congruence between the policy preferences of a party’s electoral followers, anchored in political-economic and social experiences, and the appeals of that party’s leaders. Moreover, implemented policies of the governing parties reflect elements of party appeals and are not completely washed away by imperatives resulting from global market economics or technological imperatives.

Simplifying Oesch’s and Häusermann/Kriesi’s description of occupational groups and preferences, in devising partisan appeals to capture bits of the electoral marketplace, political strategists have to work with the preference distributions of three major electoral constituency blocs in postindustrial society. The still largest, albeit shrinking bloc is that of *low- to intermediate-skilled*

blue-collar and clerical wage earners with an ideological outlook broadly supporting redistribution (the “greed” to limit the acquisitiveness of the rich), but leaning toward conservative, authoritarian positions on sociopolitical and cultural governance (the “grid” of unquestionable, collectively enforced norms operative in a polity) and opting for culturally and economically exclusionary conceptions of citizenship and national identity as well as clear economic boundaries imposed on the flow of goods and people rather than openness and multiculturalism (the “group” aspect of political preferences).¹ A second broad group consists of *higher-skill managers and professionals in manufacturing, financial, and business services*, who tend to be market-liberal and averse to redistribution on the economic greed dimension, but more libertarian on grid/governance and inclusionary on the group/identity dimensions. The third broad group of *sociocultural professionals* is the fastest growing group since the 1960s. Its members have a tendency to combine preference for income redistribution (greed), even if they are affluent, with libertarian and inclusionary positions on governance and external boundary drawing (grid/ group). A fourth group, low-skilled self-employed small business people (“petty bourgeoisie”), is minor in most postindustrial democracies but still plays an important role in Mediterranean democracies, characterized by less state intervention (capacity) and an orientation to consumption, as outlined in the introductory chapter.

Acknowledging that preference formation is intertwined with not just productive occupational roles in markets and work organizations, but also the sociodemographics of reproduction, let us include age and gender as preference forming constitutive experiences. Women tend to be closest to the preference distribution of sociocultural professionals, particularly if they are younger, while older males tend to gravitate toward the first group, even when we control for occupation.

Abstracting from a great deal of short-term noise that affects victory or defeat in elections, in the long run strategic parties realign with the evolving preference distributions in the population, induced by changing occupational and sociodemographic group sizes. This process involves complicated trial-and-error strategizing that causes electoral volatility and voter alienation, but ultimately may produce fairly durable partisan alignments. Given the rising cognitive sophistication of many postindustrial voters who can discriminate between programmatic partisan appeals and the plausible multidimensionality of the space of salient competitive issues that politicians may strategically invoke, the old mass parties encounter severe difficulties in addressing the trade-offs among disparate elements of the electorate that are attracted by different packages of programmatic appeals. As a consequence, there is a powerful

¹ We adopt here the language of Douglas and Wildavsky (1982), although we believe that people’s grid/group positions may often be orthogonal to their views on economic distribution (greed), thus turning a parsimonious map of preferences into a three-dimensional exercise (Kitschelt and Rehm 2014).

tendency for party systems to fragment through programmatic diversification. Some of the large, never quite “catchall” parties of the industrial era will converge on a programmatically diffuse and amorphous centrism, but they will be complemented by a proliferation of distinctive, ideologically sharply contoured smaller “boutique” parties garnering supporters in the more extreme reaches of the two- or three-dimensional policy space constituted by multiple issues of economic redistribution (greed) as well as sociopolitical governance (grid) and/or the boundaries of citizenship (group). Of course, where institutional rules of proportional representation permit the legislative representation of small parties, this process is likely to advance further than in majoritarian electoral systems.

Building on these foundations, PiR theory would expect that (1) voters gravitate to parties with programmatic appeals congruent with voter preferences. This requires that (2) at least some parties maintain their programmatic distinctiveness and do not converge on the median voter or diffuse “catchall” appeals. Moreover, if political preference profiles vary across polities, whether induced by diversity of political-economic institutions and experiences or legacies of party competition themselves, (3) postindustrial policies may generate cross-nationally quite distinctive party system configurations.

The mechanism here is that existing programmatic parties can only slowly update and change their appeals to remain credible with critical parts of the electorate and constantly face trade-offs in voter support as they move. Credibility of programmatic appeals derives from parties’ past policy achievements, such as participation in shaping major political-economic arrangements, as well as the intertemporal consistency of their messages. Parties therefore cannot evolve suddenly and costlessly from any point in the political preference space to any other point. Party activists and organizations may further restrain even incremental strategic movements but thereby improve parties’ programmatic credibility.²

Decisive evidence that partisan responsiveness still operates in democratic polities would involve showing that partisan governments still deliver diverging policies consistent with voters’ preferences. The intricacies of this exploration would require another paper. But the contributions on policy choices in post-industrial capitalism and political outcomes in the current book speak to this question. While external global and EU regional constraints certainly limit policy choices, at least in the fields of economic and social policy, partisan politics still appears to encounter considerable degrees of freedom at the national level.³

² As efforts to think through theoretically party competition constrained by considerations of credibility and reputation, as well as activists, consider Laver and Sergenti (2011), Budge et al. (2010), and already Downs (Downs 1957, 110), who postulated that ideological immobility was imperative for rational vote-seeking party politicians, unlike contrary assumptions in the formal idealizations of spatial theories of party competition after Downs.

³ Uplifting accounts on the responsiveness of policy to the complexion of partisan governments would include Klingemann, Hofferbert, and Budge (1994); Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson

7.1.2. Dealignment (PiD)

The sociological and political economic moorings of dealignment theory are (1) occupational diversification that makes the organization of collective interests increasingly difficult; (2) accelerating social mobility; (3) declining vertical social differentiation (“embourgeoisement”), generating a broad and leveled “middle-class” society; and (4) educational upgrading resulting in “cognitive mobilization.”⁴ Furthermore, voters have gained access to a greater range of information and experiences through the advent of modern mass media and the transportation revolution of the automobile that made possible the progressive agglomeration of citizens in large metropolitan areas and the breakdown of segmental tight-knit neighborhoods and social “milieus.” More cognitively and physically mobile electorates choose partisan favorites contingent upon salient issue stances that vary from election to election. Vote seeking parties therefore need less a persistent and distinct generalized ideological appeal than a generalized capacity to shape the salience of individual policy issues, thereby assembling electoral coalitions in diverse and ever-changing ways. Competence and issue ownership, not ideological reputation and persistence, count for electoral success.

In terms of political congruence between voters and politicians, PiD theory therefore predicts (1) continued representation of voter constituencies by parties, albeit (2) only on salient issues. Because the issues are disparate and varied, parties should (3) no longer map on durable underlying ideological issue dimensions. Over time, PiD theory expects (4) the erosion of generalized programmatic distinctions across partisan competitors, as partisan rivalry focuses on specific issues rather than general ideological appeals. Issue ownership and the ability to demonstrate high policy valence (“competence” to “solve” an issue) displace spatial positional markers and commitments. In general ideological terms, parties become successively more diffuse and amorphous, with both voters and politicians less and less able to indicate the overall ideological position of political parties.

For this reason, PiD does not consider it a promising or interesting exercise to explore the persistence of differences among party systems in postindustrial democracies, whether at the national, supranational, or regional and local level. The partisan competition has acquired enough flux to make these lateral differences fleeting and ephemeral.

(2002); Soroka and Wlezien (2010); and much of the literature on social policy and the welfare state. Other recent research sees parties’ fulfillment of electoral promises as greater in majoritarian parliamentary systems and under conditions of economic expansion (cf. Thomson et al. 2013). More skeptical findings diagnose a systematic “right-shift” of enacted policy, when compared to responsible partisanship at the level of government declared policy and policy positions of a government’s partisan constituent elements (Warwick 2011).

⁴ The classic exposition of the dealignment perspective is still Dalton, Beck, and Flanagan (1984, esp. 14–17; Dalton and Wattenberg 2002; Dalton 2008).

7.1.3. *Detachment (CaPaD)*

CaPaD seconds the sociological analysis of PiD but adds a principal-agent and lately a political-economic argument. CaPaD sees the agents, the elected politicians, gaining independence from their voters (Katz and Mair 1995, 2009). Politicians “become self-referential, professional, and technocratic, and what substantive interparty competition remains becomes focused on the efficient and effective management of the economy” (Katz and Mair 2009: 755). Valence competition drives out positional competition.

The agents become independent of voters through mechanisms of collusion and legal protection (Katz and Mair 1995). The established parties make the entry of challengers into the party system harder through legal requirements imposed on parties’ registration and internal operation and the exclusion of new contenders from the mass media, but above all through a system of public party finance by the state that excludes new entrants, while making the established parties increasingly independent of the contributions of their activist membership bases that used to serve as a check on the elected politicians’ temptations to secure political survival without accountability to electoral constituencies. With less reliance on membership volunteer work and financial dues, parties then organizationally disempower the activist base by concentrating strategic discretion in leaders of the parties’ legislative caucuses or cabinet members (Katz and Mair 2009: 757, 759).

Having cut off mechanisms of vertical accountability, leaders of different parties then can collude around similar policies. What emerges is a uniform “political class,” whose constitutive elements resemble each other in style, appeal, and rhetoric. On the basis of self-interest, not conspiracy, interparty collusion does not require a premeditated coordination (Katz and Mair 2009: 757). Critical is that the comforts of public funding make collusion the best response of each insider party, as long as external challengers can be effectively barred from entering the electoral arena and prevented from eating into the insiders’ support bases.⁵

Cartel theory has supplemented the original internal organizational-institutional argument for cartelization more recently by an external political-economic argument (Blyth and Katz 2005; Katz and Mair 2009). Globalization and European integration have undermined the parties “room to maneuver” and deliver different policies in national or subnational settings. As positional politics with rival programmatic positions becomes devoid of credibility, politicians see cartelization as their best option for survival. Even then, they might not entirely escape the wrath of the electorate that expresses

⁵ Blyth and Katz (2005, 39) go so far as to invoke the possibility of a Cournot-Nash type oligopolistic equilibrium in favor of cartelization. All of this depends, however, on the strong assumptions made concerning the costs of entry by new competitors (see critically Kitschelt 2000; Koole 1996).

itself in support of populist protest parties against the political class. But to a large extent, voters' preferences are products of party competition themselves, thus holding the potential for rebellion at bay.

Cartel party theory radicalizes the predictions of dealignment theory. In positional terms, parties not only abandon broad ideological representation of electorates, they are also no longer compelled to represent electoral constituencies on salient issue positions. Cartels complete the process of oligarchical control anticipated by Michels (1915) for party organization and the rise of "catch-all" parties replacing ideological "parties of principle" at the systemic level. Combine Michels and Kirchheimer (1966) and infuse a political-economic postulate about the end of domestic politics through globalization – and what you get is partisan cartel theory.

7.2. Programmatic Linkage and Congruence between Voters and Parties

Do parties and their voters show preference/program congruence on overarching policy dimensions, as the realignment perspective would assert, not just on specific issues? At the *individual voter level*, citizens' policy preferences, aggregated to scores on preference dimensions of policy making, should be robust predictors of vote choice. The Häusermann/Kriesi paper (this volume) provides a reasonable benchmark to assert that people's preferences over policy dimensions indeed pattern their choices among political parties. And underlying sociodemographic conditions are substantially associated with policy preferences. Our own explorations with European Social Survey (ESS 2008) and ISSP (1996 and 2006) data permit a similar conclusion (not reported here). In the few countries where a longitudinal comparison of vote choice determinants is possible, it appears that the direct impact of sociodemographic variables, such as income, education, gender, or occupation, unmediated by preferences, has declined over time. But these experiences still work indirectly through their imprint on policy preferences, while relations between such preferences and partisan choices remain as strong as ever or actually strengthen (Knutsen and Kumlin 2005). We demonstrate this in the Online Appendix 1 to this paper with Swedish data (see <http://politicalscience.osu.edu/faculty/rehm/papers.htm> for the online appendix).

The focus of our analysis in this chapter is the *aggregate partisan level*, exploring the congruence between parties' programmatic appeals and their electoral constituencies' preferences. We constructed summary indices for citizens' preferences over income distribution (greed), more authoritarian or libertarian sociopolitical governance (grid), and more inclusive, multicultural or exclusive, national collective identity from the 2008 European Social Survey (see Online Appendix 2). The grid issues would be what Kriesi et al. (2008) characterize as second dimension issues of the 1970s and 1980s (law and order, civil liberties, gender roles, and family moral norms), before group issues of economic and

cultural globalization shifted the attention to questions of boundary drawing between the nation and the rest of the world. While the relative emphasis of the grid/group dimension varies and currently citizens' authoritarian (libertarian) grid preferences also tend to predict their exclusionary (inclusionary) group preferences, these two dimensions may come apart and gain independent momentum. For example, lately some radical Right parties have shifted to more libertarian positions on governance, emphasizing Western individualism and libertarianism, but only to argue for an exclusionary conception of citizenship in order to defend Europe's libertarian values against the immigration of people with more collectivist and authoritarian preferences, claimed to prevail in Islam.⁶

We examine political representation by comparing the average position of a party's constituency on "3G" (greed/grid/group) issue dimensions in the 2008 European Social Survey with experts' scoring of party leaders' appeals on closely related issues in Benoit and Laver's (2006) expert survey. We explore mass-elite congruence in simple bivariate regressions of the standard form:

Position of party elite i on issue j = a + b position of party constituency i on issue j

While this is obviously not an exact science, three elements of this regression are of interest. First, there is no representation, if the *explained variance* of the relationship between mass and elite positions is nonexistent. A high correlation is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for high representativeness (Achen 1978). Second, representation also requires that *partisan differences are similarly large* at the elite and the mass level. If positions are scaled with the same metric at both levels, a *slope coefficient* of around 1.0 would maximize representation. Smaller slope coefficients indicate that the mean positions of competing partisan elites are closer together than those of partisan voters, with very small coefficients signaling convergence among the parties' appeals, as predicted by the cartel theory. Very large coefficients, by contrast, indicate elite polarization relative to partisan electorates. Third, large regression *intercepts* imply that the representation of *most or all party elites* systematically diverge from their voters' preferred policies.⁷

Figure 7.1 displays party constituencies' positions on greed (x-axis) plotted against party elite positions on taxes versus spending, as judged by experts

⁶ Prominent examples of this emerging fusion of elements of libertarian governance views and an exclusionary conception of citizenship and antimulticulturalism are the now-defunct party of the slain Dutch activist Pim Fortuyn and the de facto successor party led by Geert Wilders, as well as the Danish People's Party and the French National Front since Marianne LePen's ascent to the leadership position.

⁷ For example, in most contemporary postindustrial democracies the issue of the death penalty may involve a large intercept, such that it predicts voters to be systematically more in favor of it than the elites of all or most political parties. In a similar vein, it has been suggested that on questions of immigration or questions of European integration the partisan elites are systematically more in favor than their electoral constituencies.

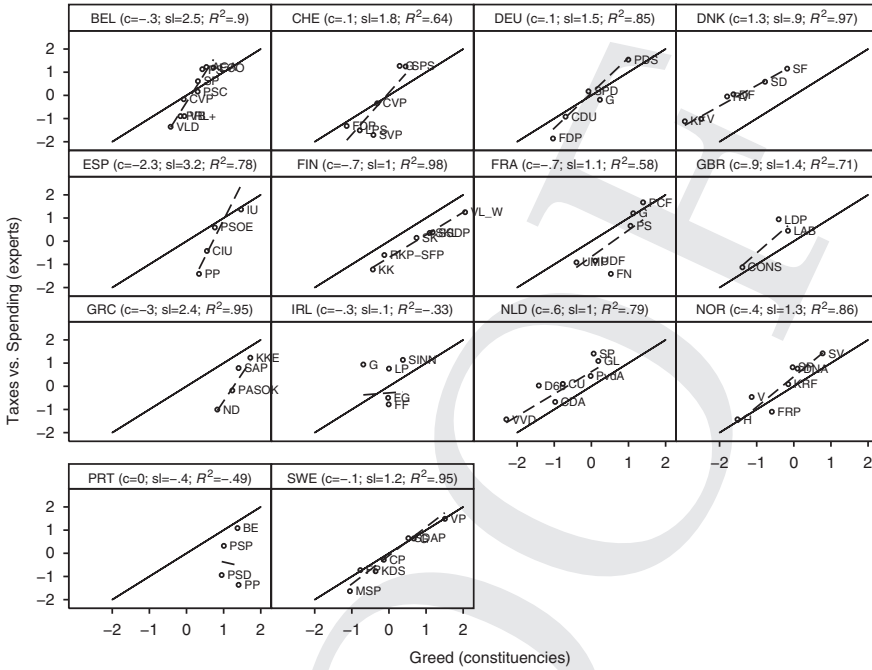


FIGURE 7.1. Representation on the economic-distributive dimension.

(y-axis). This provides a flavor of the relative positions of constituencies and parties, for one particular dimension, that of economic distribution.

The figure suggests that party systems are generally quite representative. One can devise simple rules for scoring a party system’s representativeness, requiring high R^2 and slope coefficients in the vicinity of 1.0 for full representation (Online Appendix 3). On the basis of those rules, eight of fourteen countries show close to perfect representation on the *greed dimension* (the four Scandinavians, Britain, the Netherlands, France, and Germany). Elsewhere the differences among partisan elites are more weakly reciprocated by a differentiation of party electorates corresponding to that of party elites (Belgium, Greece, Spain, and Switzerland) or almost not at all (Ireland, Portugal). Voters here ignore the parties’ policy issue positions or discount what they are saying.⁸

On the *grid dimension*, representation is robust in about half of the countries (see Online Appendix 3). On the *group dimension*, the representativeness of party systems is strong in seven of fourteen countries and moderately strong in an additional four countries. As of this analysis, only Greece, Finland, and Sweden showed no representativeness of party systems on group issues, and

⁸ On discounting and party competition, see Adams et al. (2005) and Tomz and Van Houweling (2008).

TABLE 7.1. *Patterns of representation: The full picture*

		GREED			
		No representation		Perfect Representation	
GRID+GROUP	Perfect representation				Denmark
		Ireland		France Netherlands Britain	
			Spain	Germany Switzerland	
	No representation	Portugal	Greece	Belgium	Norway Finland Sweden

Note: See Online Appendix 3 for scoring rules and country scores on the three dimensions

these are, of course, exactly the countries where new radical Right parties with antiimmigration appeals have succeeded in legislative elections since the 2008 data were collected.

Table 7.1 assembles a summary assessment of political representation by cross-tabling the countries’ representation scores on the distributive dimension with the average score on a “second” dimension, combining sociopolitical governance and citizenship boundary issues. Before discussing cross-national differences, for now, let us observe that in most countries, except those of Southern Europe, party systems appear to be representative of their constituencies on some issue dimension(s). But which dimensions deliver representative strength vary by countries (see Section 7.4).

While the data are purely cross-sectional, let us offer a possible intertemporal implication. If dealignment and cartelization theories were right, we would expect that in the countries with the longest and most durable democratic experience and with the greatest affluence and postindustrialization cartelization or at least the unraveling of representation on ideological dimensions of policy making has gone furthest. The evidence shows just the opposite.

7.3. Intertemporal Changes: Increasing Ideological Diffuseness and Convergence?

The theoretical literature on party system dynamics addresses intertemporal developments, but the available data are typically cross-sectional. Party realignment theory predicts persistent, but substantively changing programmatic diversity among party positions. Party cartelization theory, by contrast, expects a gradual convergence of parties’ policy positions. Dealignment theory

sees diffuseness and convergence on broader programmatic dimensions, albeit with sharp interparty disagreements on individual highly salient issues featured by partisan entrepreneurs.

To explore changes over time, we analyzed ISSP surveys of 1990 and 2006, although their attitudinal items are far from perfect for our purposes.⁹ We paired these mass-level data with the Laver and Hunt (1992) and Benoit and Laver (2006) expert scorings of party appeals for economic distribution and social permissiveness and estimated regressions as in the case of ESS 2008, with parties weighted by electoral size.

We could include twelve countries in the 1990–2006 comparison, albeit calculating regressions only on nine of them, as the United States (1990; 2006), New Zealand (1990; 2006), and Australia (2006) had only two usable parties on which scores could be constructed. Still, except in Australia, in these instances intercepts and slopes of representation can be compared. The results of this exercise are fairly similar, albeit not identical, to the results of the previous cross-sectional analysis of 2008 data.¹⁰ Altogether 50 percent of the cases end up with high representational congruence in 2006, as compared to 42 percent in 1990. Low representation applies to only one case in 1990 (Sweden) and only three in 2006 (Britain, Germany, Ireland). This is clearly not a pattern that would suggest the sharp decline of political representation stipulated by cartel theories of party system dynamics. We therefore conclude that patterns of static cross-sectional representation as well as the glimpses of dynamic intertemporal representation are most consistent with realignment theories.

To obtain a richer cross-sectional longitudinal design, we had to scale back measures of voter preferences and partisan appeals to simple Left-right placements. Empirical public opinion research overwhelmingly suggests that greed, grid, and group positions map onto voters' and parties' Left-right positions, albeit with different weights of substantive policy content contingent upon time and country. As one plausible summary proxy for the continued distinctiveness of broad programmatic party appeals we calculate Left-right party system polarization (Rehm and Reilly 2010). Here we measure polarization with

⁹ The grid index includes survey responses to questions about (1) law and order, (2) military defense, and (3) permissibility of protest marches and demonstrations. It generates an atrocious Cronbach's alpha of .387.

¹⁰ On *economic distribution* ("greed"), all countries but Ireland have medium to high representation in both 1990 and 2006. In seven countries, representation was very high in both periods (Australia, France, New Zealand, Spain, Switzerland, Sweden, and the United States). As is already familiar from the ESS data, Ireland defies representation on economics. On the *grid dimension*, our analysis is impaired by the somewhat inadequate mix of preference indicators at the mass level. Five of twelve cases show high representativeness in both 1990 and 2006 either because all three indicators (intercept, slope, and R²) suggest this (France, Switzerland), or at least the first two with the third missing (United States, New Zealand, Australia 2006). Again, there is a tendency toward elite polarization such that the elites, particularly in the United States, overstate the differences that can also be found among their mass constituencies. In Norway, grid representativeness increased from intermediate to high.

party-size weighted standard deviations of party positions, with three different measures of positions: (i) a “constituency” measure, which positions parties at the average Left-right self-placement of its supporters; (ii) a “perception” measure, which is based on population survey respondents’ placement of parties on a Left-right scale; and (iii) an “expert” measure, which is based on the average positions on a general Left-right scale, as judged by experts.

Table 7.2 contains information on patterns and dynamics of party polarization, based on these three different positional measures (the data are from Rehm and Reilly 2010). Of particular interest are columns (3) and (4) for each observed group, which indicate the change in polarization before and after the fall of the iron curtain and the trend in polarization (assessed by the t-value from regressing polarization on time). While, unsurprisingly, the constituency-, perception-, and expert-based measures lead to somewhat different results, the overall conclusion remains the same: There is no universal trend. Some party systems became more polarized (such as in the United States), others less (such as in the United Kingdom and Germany). And some party systems did not change much (such as in Canada).

Of the eighteen countries for which we have pre- and post-1989 partisan left-right data in the constituency data set, six experienced a significant downward trend in polarization; nine a significant upward trend; and three had no trend (see Table 7.3). Of the ten countries for which we have pre- and post-1989 data on the perception measure, four experienced a downward trend, two an upward trend, and four no trend. Finally, of the thirteen countries for which we have pre- and post-1989 data for on the expert measure, three experienced significant upward trends in polarization, three significant downward trends, and seven no trends.

Related, but not necessarily identical with a process of party convergence on indistinguishable programmatic appeals, may be a *progressively greater vagueness of positions* parties might choose when appealing to an ideologically more and more amorphous electorate. To capture the programmatic precision of partisan appeals, we calculated the standard deviations of the Left-right self-placement of a party’s supporters. Lower standard deviations suggest that constituencies have more homogeneous, precise preferences. There is a *substantively modest, but distinctive pattern of increasing, not decreasing Left-Right Precision in almost all countries*: Within a party, Left-right self-placements by the party’s supporters become increasingly similar. In fact, we find a statistically significant increase in precision (i.e., decrease in average standard deviations) in twelve countries, no significant change in seven, and significantly less precision in only two countries. One of these countries is Italy, which underwent a deep change of its party system. The other country is Norway, which started out with the highest precision in the pre-1989 period. In fact, once again there is a strong pattern of regression to the mean: Systems with fuzzy party positions became increasingly crisp. The regressions for each country are in Online Appendix 4. Table 7.4 assembles levels and change

TABLE 7.2. Party system polarization over time

	Constituency					Perception					Experts				
	(1) <1989	(2) >1990	(3) Change	(4) Trend	(5) first-last yr (obs)	(1) <1989	(2) >1990	(3) Change	(4) Trend	(5) first-last yr (obs)	(1) <1989	(2) >1990	(3) Change	(4) Trend	(5) first-last yr (obs)
Netherlands	0.199	0.137	-0.062	-14.9	72-03 (32)	0.298	0.189	-0.109	-13.4	72-02 (31)	0.198	0.163	-0.035	2.1	93-03 (4)
Iceland	0.235	0.175	-0.060	-4.3	84-03 (12)	0.444	0.244	-5.1	-5.1	99-03 (5)	0.235	0.235	0.000	0.0	93-03 (2)
UK *	0.203	0.152	-0.051	-5.3	72-04 (33)	0.356	0.198	-0.158	-5.2	72-04 (33)	0.386	0.167	-0.219	-4.6	82-03 (5)
Australia *	0.141	0.095	-0.046	-5.5	72-04 (33)	0.125	0.125	0.001	0.6	84-04 (21)	0.270	0.191	-0.079	-1.9	82-03 (3)
Germany *	0.156	0.125	-0.031	-6.5	73-03 (31)	0.279	0.177	-0.102	-11.9	76-02 (27)	0.232	0.173	-0.059	-1.1	82-03 (5)
Belgium	0.158	0.128	-0.030	-4.8	73-03 (31)	0.279	0.177	-0.102	-11.9	76-02 (27)	0.232	0.173	-0.059	-1.1	82-03 (5)
Greece	0.262	0.236	-0.027	-3.2	80-03 (24)	0.102	0.091	-0.012	0.6	72-03 (32)	0.122	0.218	0.096	1.1	99-03 (3)
Canada *	0.055	0.051	-0.004	-0.4	72-03 (32)	0.102	0.091	-0.012	0.6	72-03 (32)	0.122	0.218	0.096	1.1	99-03 (3)
Denmark *	0.157	0.155	-0.002	1.5	73-03 (31)	0.216	0.216	0.000	-4	94-01 (8)	0.226	0.227	0.001	-0.1	82-03 (5)
Italy	0.227	0.231	0.004	-0.1	73-02 (30)	0.287	0.136	-0.151	-15.1	79-02 (24)	0.243	0.234	-0.009	-0.8	82-03 (5)
Spain	0.201	0.209	0.008	0.7	81-03 (16)	0.146	0.142	-0.004	-1.3	72-03 (32)	0.329	0.329	0.000	0.0	03-03 (1)
Switzerland	0.131	0.142	0.011	3.1	72-03 (32)	0.146	0.142	-0.004	-1.3	72-03 (32)	0.329	0.329	0.000	0.0	03-03 (1)
Sweden *	0.175	0.185	0.011	3.6	72-03 (32)	0.287	0.136	-0.151	-15.1	79-02 (24)	0.243	0.234	-0.009	-0.8	82-03 (5)
France	0.198	0.214	0.016	2.7	77-03 (27)	0.204	0.202	-0.002	0.3	81-02 (22)	0.134	0.157	0.024	1.1	82-03 (3)
New Zealand *	0.141	0.162	0.020	1.8	81-02 (22)	0.204	0.202	-0.002	0.3	81-02 (22)	0.134	0.157	0.024	1.1	82-03 (3)
USA *	0.089	0.109	0.021	7.9	72-04 (33)	0.191	0.213	0.022	3.2	72-04 (33)	0.137	0.281	0.144	4.4	82-03 (3)
Ireland	0.065	0.086	0.021	2.5	73-03 (31)	0.191	0.209	0.018	2.8	73-01 (29)	0.251	0.244	-0.007	0.3	82-03 (3)
Norway *	0.124	0.149	0.026	3.8	73-03 (31)	0.191	0.209	0.018	2.8	73-01 (29)	0.251	0.244	-0.007	0.3	82-03 (3)
Portugal	0.147	0.177	0.031	4.5	86-04 (19)	0.180	0.180	0.000	0.0	02-04 (3)	0.160	0.160	0.000	0.0	93-03 (4)
Austria	0.147	0.177	0.031	4.5	86-04 (19)	0.180	0.180	0.000	0.0	02-04 (3)	0.160	0.160	0.000	0.0	93-03 (4)
Finland	0.184	0.184	0.000	0.1	90-03 (14)	0.157	0.157	0.000	0.0	03 (1)	0.181	0.212	0.031	4.8	82-03 (5)

Notes: The table shows information on changes and trends in polarization based on three different Left-right measures: constituency (left-right self-placement of a party's voters), perception (left-right placement of parties by voters), and experts (expert placement of parties on general left-right scale). There are five columns for each of these measures: (1) average polarization (=weighted standard deviation) before and including 1989; (2) average polarization (=weighted standard deviation) after 1989; (3) column (2) minus column (1). This column sorts the tables. (4) t-value of regressing polarization on time. Positive [negative] t-values greater than 2 indicate that polarization went up [down] in a statistically significant way. Column (5) shows the first to last year of observations, as well as the number of years of data in parentheses (which are partially interpolated).
* indicates better data quality

TABLE 7.3. *Diversity in cross-national changes of Left-right polarization: party constituencies*

		Levels of Polarization, Averages post-1990 (Overall Average in All Countries: .153/s.d. .054)		
		<.130	.130 – .175	>.175
Difference between pre-1990 and post-1990 averages (overall average:- .008/s.d. .031)	Less polarization: <-.023	AUS (-.046/.095) GER (-.031/.125) BEL (-.030/.128) CND (-.004/.051)	NLD (-.060/.137) UK (-.051/.132)	GRC (-.027/.236)
	Similar polarization: -.023 + .007	IRE (+.21/.086) USA (+.021/.109)	CH (+.011/.142) NZD (+.020/.162) NOR (+.026/.149)	ITA (+.004/.231) ESP (+.008/.209) SWE (+.011/.185) FRA (+.016/.214) PRT (+.031/.177)
	Rising polarization > +.007			

TABLE 7.4. *Diversity in cross-national changes of precision in Left-right party positions: party constituencies*

		Levels of Precision, Averages post-1990 (Overall Average in All Countries: .172/s.d. .017)		
		<.155 high precision	.130 – .175	>.175 low precision
Difference between pre-1990 and post-1990 averages	<-.010 increasing precision		GER (-.013/.173)	CND (-.027/.187) BEL (-.020/.198) IRL (-.016/.199) UK (-.015/.183) NZD (-.005/.197)
	-.010 + .010 Similar precision	USA (-.004/.142) GRC (+.009/.152)	CH (-.010/.175) FRA (-.004/.155) PRT (-.003/.165) AUT (N.D./173) FIN (N.D./161) SWE (+.001/.152) DNK (+.001/.158) ITA (+.009/.163)	
	> +.010 declining precision		Esp (=015/.166) Nor (+.026/.159)	

rates in Left-right precision, revealing a regional distribution we will address in section 7.4.

In sum, we find that the programmatic positions of parties in postindustrial party systems often remain rather sharply contoured, and that evidence does not support the hypothesis of an accelerating convergence and diffuseness of ideological appeals. These data provide little support for the contentions of dealignment/issue politics or party (system) cartelization postulates. To cement the superiority of the realignment perspective, however, let us see whether that analytical approach can also make sense of the diversity we observe among postindustrial party systems in terms of profiles of representation and trends in the polarization and precision of ideological appeals.

7.4. Differential Dynamics of Partisan Realignment in Postindustrial Democracies

In contrast to dealignment and cartelization theories, realignment theories of postindustrial party systems deem it possible that enduring differences persist between postindustrial party systems in different countries. For dealignment theorists, there is a great deal of volatility and issue contingency of competition within countries over time, obscuring systematic cross-national diversity. For cartelization theorists, cross-nationally postindustrial party systems should converge, and the prime variance may be the speed at which parties approach cartelization. That speed should be governed prominently by the generosity of public party finance, relieving parties of the urgency to seek approval by attracting contributions of time and money from electoral constituencies. The empirical implication of cartelization theory that more generous public funding helps existing parties to make the entry of new competitors harder and less successful, however, appears not to be borne out (Kitschelt 2000).

While the realignment perspective is generally most permissive to cross-national variance in the voter-partisan alignments and party systems of postindustrial democracies, how can they be explained? Demand-side factors (preference distributions in society) and/or supply-side factors (appeals politicians employ to rally electoral coalitions) may come into play. Variance in national preference profiles on the demand side, in turn, may be partially endogenous to long-term supply conditions: In a given polity at an earlier time the political competition among parties may have led to the creation of political-economic realities (such as social policies, trade policies, labor market regulation) that produced a lasting influence on the distribution of popular policy preferences. Moreover, on the supply side, because of their past appeals, policy activities, and competitive strategies, existing parties may credibly commit themselves only to certain stances that are by and large consistent with their past conduct or only marginally and incrementally modify such stances. Both past partisan strategies as well as political-economic institutions and resource distributions may therefore account for cross-national differences

in current preference distributions and partisan realignments of postindustrial democracies.

At any given time, party systems then may not fully capture demand conditions. Debates about how to cope with electoral trade-offs and credibility problems may prevent established competitors from innovating and appealing to unrepresented interests. This, in turn, creates opportunities for fresh political entrepreneurs to launch new parties with good prospects for success. For example, for Sweden and Finland, our analysis of 2008 data for electoral constituencies and politicians discovered rather weak correspondence of voter preferences with political elites on the group (G₃) dimension. It may be no accident that this void eventually enabled skillful political entrepreneurs to stage the electorally successful rise of the Swedish Democrats (2010) and the True Finns (2011), both of which take exclusionary positions on group issues, and especially on immigration, none of the other parties was willing to embrace.

In order to create a bridge between past party competition and political-economic institutions in which their results have been manifested, on the one hand, and cross-national variance in postindustrial partisan realignments, on the other, let us invoke here recent behavioral modifications of spatial competition theory (Adams et al. 2005) and of agent-based behavioral modeling of spatial party competition (Laver and Sergenti 2011). Most importantly, parties cannot move around in the space of policy dimensions as they see fit, but they have to recognize and preserve what already Downs (1957) identified as an important asset of, but also constraint on parties' competitiveness, namely, reputation and consistency in their policy appeals and actions. Voters tend to discount new positions. Parties are therewith in part captives of their own past and policies. In a world with responsible partisan governments, *current* political economic institutions and resource allocations are the sediments of *past* bouts of partisan competition. In order to account for cross-national differences in partisan alignments, we have to identify the political-economic institutions and patterns of party competition that may now constrain the sets of options parties have to reconfigure their electoral coalitions under conditions of postindustrial politics and occupational structures.

Questions of economic distribution (greed) are likely to top the political agenda, where past partisan competition produced political-economic settlements in which social policy leads to sharp income redistribution, here captured not by the aggregate GINI coefficient, but the "*progressivity*" of *welfare states*, understood as the capacity of social policy schemes to concentrate the financial resource extraction on the wealthy, but the provision of transfers on the poor (Beramendi and Rehm 2012). Progressivity is not the same as generosity: Both generous "encompassing" as well as miserly "residual" welfare states may be progressive or not, but it is progressivity that focuses the popular attention on distributive conflict and strategic momentum of party competition on distributive issues.

Progressivity creates visibility of transfer winners and losers in household budgets. The rich will challenge generous, progressive systems and the poor will defend them. Where social transfer policies provide more of a system of insurance rather than redistribution from rich to poor, and where whatever redistribution takes place is more among different middle-income groups and across generations rather than vertical household income extremes, citizens are less disposed to give high salience to distributive partisan conflict, and parties have fewer opportunities to configure competitive strategy around making distributive issues salient through polarization.

Political economies with progressive social policies configure party systems around a free-market liberal and a redistributive pole, regardless of whether the liberal side, pushing for residual welfare states, or the redistributive side, creating comprehensive and equalizing welfare states, is winning. By contrast, party systems with insurance-based, relatively less progressive welfare states historically have featured strong “cross-class” parties running under Christian confessional or ecumenical labels or serving as focus of a national rally (such as the French Gaullists or the Japanese Liberal Democrats). Under postindustrial preference profiles, party systems with this latter trajectory are more likely to crystallize competition around dimensions of political governance (grid, G₂) and economic and cultural boundary drawing (group, G₃).

Not only the progressivity, but also the *generosity of welfare states* may matter for the evolution of partisan configurations. Encompassing welfare states have the tendency to provide and to subsidize a wide range of social and cultural services, in addition to dispensing more generous transfer payments in exchange for proportional taxes. In doing so, encompassing welfare states boost the growth of the occupational stratum of sociocultural professionals, particularly in education, health care, social counseling, and cultural services. While redistributive parties may push for the construction of comprehensive welfare states, they create a specter that then haunts them: The services of the welfare state are being delivered by sociocultural professionals whose intense libertarian grid/inclusionary, multiculturalist group preferences create strategic dilemmas for the old redistributive Left: If such parties do not embrace these demands for fear of losing their more authoritarian electoral bedrock support among lower-skill blue- and white-collar wage earners, postindustrial occupational groups begin to defect from their electoral coalitions in favor of new Left-libertarian parties. If they do embrace the new demands, they might shed many of their old core voters, who migrate to new authoritarian and exclusionary radical Right parties. In the worst of worlds, if they hesitate between both strategies, they lose core voters and remain unable to appeal to new social strata credibly.

A third element that affects the (re)shaping of partisan alignments in post-industrial democracies concerns the *extent to which party competition has been focused on programmatic politics at all, rather than clientelistic targeted benefits*, conditional on citizens' partisan vote and other partisan services.

And there may be an interaction between the two dimensions of welfare state development – progressivity and encompassingness – and clientelism: Southern European welfare states have been residual and proportional, thus not servicing the poor well at all (Ferrera 2010: 620–621). Clientelistic disbursement of benefits may have at least in part filled some of the gaps in the safety net of less well-off people that the formal welfare state left open and thus have helped to reduce the potential for a social explosion.

Where clientelistic bases of partisan competition have been prominent, they make party systems prone to breakdown, when the political-economic mechanisms that supply clientelistic resources, particularly state-governed, -subsidized, and -protected industries and discretionary social benefits (public housing, early disability retirement, etc.) experience financial crises and therefore can no longer provide the material means to sustain clientelistic networks. This has happened in heavily clientelistic party systems of middle-income countries (Greene 2007), but also in more clientelistic postindustrializing polities such as Italy, Japan, and to a lesser extent Austria in the 1980s or 1990s (Kitschelt 2007). At the same time, clientelism and its breakdown do not generate the conditions for the rise of grid/group partisan competition or even fierce party competition on the distributive dimension. Instead, faced with the breakdown of an at least partially nonprogrammatic, clientelistic party system, new political parties form around valence claims – such as quests for better governance, less corruption, and more honesty in the “political class.” But these valence quests bracket people’s preferences on salient policy dimensions and therefore are hard to sustain and institutionalize in partisan alternatives, thus producing highly volatile, personalistic, and programmatically amorphous parties and party systems. Where clientelistic linkages are important, party systems are not only vulnerable to breakdown, but also hard to reconstitute through new institutionalized programmatic partisan alignments, as valence competition trumps positional alignments.

Finally, as a general condition that affects the dynamics of realignment in party systems, consider *electoral systems*. Plurality single-member district systems make the successful legislative representation of new parties difficult, unless they have highly concentrated support. As long as incumbent parties have a stake and leverage to prevent a change of electoral system, postindustrial electoral realignments are less likely to occur here than in systems of proportional representation.

We now have four variables to predict party system realignments in about twenty postindustrial democracies. Rather than analyzing the relative importance of these factors (Huber and Stanig 2010; DeLaO and Rodden 2008) or their historical origins,¹¹ let us engage in a simple *big picture pattern*

¹¹ As indicated, behind the rise of proportional welfare schemes and encompassing, insurance oriented welfare states with subsidiary services stand cross-class parties mostly with a religious, but sometimes a national rally appeal. Greater or lesser persistence of clientelism well into the rise

recognition, distinguishing empirically four constellations. The objective of this more suggestive than conclusive exercise is to predict the extent to which each of four groups of countries is (1) likely to experience a crystallization of political alignments around grid/group divisions rather than primarily distributive greed divisions, and (2) the extent to which in this process rising authoritarian “rightist” parties that offensively fight globalization and multiculturalism as well as libertarian “leftist” multiculturalist counterparts begin to displace the conventional parties of the post–World War II political systems. We measure that decline of established parties by the loss of support they sustained from their combined average in the 1955–1965 decade (in Mediterranean countries: 1975–1985) to their combined average in the 2001–2011 decade. Online Appendix 5 itemizes how calculations were made for individual parties and party families in each country. Table 7.5 provides a grand summary of predictor variables; partisan dynamics as introduced in sections 7.2 through 7.3, but not yet discussed there by regional clusters; and electoral payoffs in terms of party system changes, measured by the rise and decline of party families since the 1950s.

Each partisan competitive configuration, then, is also expected to yield different socioeconomic electoral coalitions configured around partisan alternatives. For example, we would suspect that where Left-libertarian and Right-authoritarian parties thrive, the majority of sociocultural professionals and a large share of the remaining blue-collar working class will defect from established parties to these new alternatives. We do not, however, explore this link between micro- and macrolevel in this chapter.

In *Anglo-Saxon (settler) democracies*, partisan politics has focused on distributive conflict and resulted in narrow, but progressive welfare states. Clientelism has here been a marginal phenomenon since the early twentieth century (with the partial exception of the United States). And electoral systems make the entry of new parties hard, except in the case of New Zealand since the mid-1990s. As a consequence, we expect rather little realignment of parties around grid/group dimensions and few opportunities for new parties to enter the electoral arena successfully and in a sustained fashion. These results are generally borne out. The extreme stability of the U.S. party system, however, may mask the tremendous change the existing parties have undergone in a presidential system with decentralized parties and a growing “sorting” of voters and polarization of partisan elites according to grid/group issues inside the existing parties.

Interestingly, low levels of polarization (weak, except in the United States at the elite level recently) and feeble programmatic precision (diffuse, except

of postindustrial societies is related to the timing of state formation relative to democratization and industrial development, but also to the general level of economic development. Where democratization antedates the formation of professional civil services and industrialization, there is a great chance that party systems become clientelistic (Piattoni 2001; Shefter 1977).

TABLE 7.5. *Erosion and realignment of party systems in postindustrial democracies*

	Anglo-Saxon (Settler) Democracies	Scandinavia	Northern Continental Europe	Clientelistic Democracies and Economic Latecomers
Predictor variables: Where is the propensity to second dimension party alignments strong?	Proportionality of the welfare state? Negative Encompassingness of the welfare state? Negative Low recent importance of clientelism? Positive Electoral System: not plurality single member district Negative(except NZD since 1995)	Negative Positive Positive Positive	Positive Positive Positive/negative Positive	Positive Negative Negative Positive
Representativeness of party elites?	1: 3 Strong (only UK data) Intermediate	3: 1 Strong Weak (except Denmark)	4: oor 3: 1 Intermediate-strong Intermediate (except Belgium)	2: 2 Weak Weak
Dynamics of left-right polarization and precision?	Weak-intermediate Decline (AUS, UK) or rise (NZD, USA) Low (except USA) Increasing	Intermediate-strong Increase Intermediate Stable (except Norway)	Weak-intermediate (except France) Stable-decline Intermediate Increasing	Strong Increase Intermediate-high Stable-decreasing
Party system outcomes	AUS, CND, NZD, UK -14.0 -26.0 -3.5 Change of established parties 1955-1965 - 2001-2011 New Left-libertarian parties (2001-2011) New Right-authoritarian parties (2001-2011)	US DNK, FIN, NOR, SWE -24.7 9.2 11.1	AUT, BEL, FRA, GER, NLD, SWI -24.7 7.7 10.8 - 13.0	GRC, IRE, POR, ESP -2.5 -52.1 1.0 2.6 2.3 2.8

recently in the United States) appear consistent with the Downsian median voter theorem in two-party systems, but the intertemporal dynamics of change in these countries is not: Polarization has been increasing in the United States and the ideological precision of partisan alternatives has been increasing just about everywhere in this group (see Tables 7.2 through 7.4).¹²

In *Scandinavia*, the progressiveness of social policy militates against a realignment of the party system away from distributive politics, but the encompassingness of a service-oriented welfare state with an unprecedented growth of sociocultural professions has favored a postindustrial realignment around grid/group dimensions. The irrelevance of clientelism and the permissiveness of electoral systems further boost the electoral opportunities of new programmatic parties that situate themselves at polar opposites of the grid/group dimensions. These expectations are redeemed by the partisan payoffs: a sharp decline of the established parties since the 1950s (-24.7 percent), almost matched by a rise of new parties to almost one-quarter of the electorate. The high representativeness of the party systems on all dimensions in Denmark is in line with expectations, but not the low representativeness on grid/group issues in other Scandinavian countries (Table 7.1). But those data are from 2008. As noted, the recent success of radical Right parties in Finland and Sweden has corrected this picture and made party systems more accurate reflections of popular policy preferences on the grid/group dimensions in these two countries.

In the *Northern European continental party systems*, the proportionality and the encompassingness of welfare states have dampened the partisan politicization of economic distribution. These policies emerged from and were further reinforced by party systems that always incorporated cross-cutting cleavages on the grid dimension. While controversies about religious issues have faded, the old law-and-order and civil liberties agenda on the grid dimension and the questions of national identity, culture, and citizenship on the group dimension have remained alive and well and gained new salience through postindustrialization. These conditions, plus permissive electoral systems, favor partisan realignments. In a subset of these countries (Austria, Belgium, possibly France) a lingering clientelism through at least the 1980s generated a potential for protest parties invoking valence issues (corruption, quality of governance).

Examining the partisan payoffs, the Northern European continental democracies have indeed undergone as great an average postindustrial realignment as the Scandinavians (-24.7 percent). The French and the German party systems show the relatively smallest reversals (-16.3 and -14.8 percent, respectively).

¹² There is no room to discuss “American exceptionalism” here. The extreme narrowness and progressiveness of the American welfare state, together with sharply rising inequality and concentration of labor market risks in the poorest strata, are most likely responsible for the stability and polarization of the established parties (McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006; Rehm 2011a). Add to this that in the fragmented, decentralized American parties grid/group themes, particularly that of race, have always been incorporated and do not have to be grafted onto a primarily distribution-centered party system.

So the electoral system may not account for this relative restraint, when compared to the rest of the cohort. For the rise of radical right-wing parties, we give a range rather than a single number, because we are uncertain whether to include the *Swiss People's Party* in its entirety (higher value) or only the additional increment of support it has attracted since its programmatic reversal in the late 1980s (lower value). Also party system dynamics is broadly in line with expectations.

Finally, there is a cohort of countries we do not characterize by region, but by economic and political attributes *clientelistic democracies and economic latecomers*. In addition to four Mediterranean polities – Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Spain – we include here Ireland and Japan. All six have proportional, if not regressive, insurance-based welfare states of a residual nature, leaving existential needs uncovered. All of them have more or less permissive electoral systems. In part because of late uneven bureaucratic professionalization and industrialization, all of them also have seen a strong or an at least intermediate impact of clientelism on their citizen-party linkage mechanism that undercuts programmatic representation and hobbles the reformation of programmatic party systems (Kitschelt 2011, 2012).

Examining the parties' electoral payoffs, we find a sharp dualism. In Italy and Japan the old party systems have partly broken down (-52.1 percent), but we see preciously little rise of grid/group based new parties (and for that matter even new parties that would take clear positions on the economic-distributive dimension). But the other four countries in the clientelistic group show much more stable party systems. In part, this may be due to the later starting observation after which party system dynamics could be observed: For the former Mediterranean dictatorships that is only the mid-1970s. More plausible, however, is the explanation that in 2008 when our data were gathered these four countries had not (yet) experienced the political-economic shock to a developmental state-centered growth strategy that precipitated the erosion, if not collapse, of clientelism in Italy and Japan. The crisis of the Eurozone since 2008 constitutes such a shock and has already begun to unravel the existing Greek and Irish party systems, with Portugal and Spain possibly following suit in prospective elections.

To sum up, the dynamics of party systems in at least three groups of post-industrial countries is quite consistent with the realignment perspective, and certainly more so than with dealignment or cartelization perspectives. Partisan politics in the fourth group - countries with a rather vigorous effort of clientelistic voter-party linkage even in post-World War II democracies until the 1990s - looks more caught up in dealignment or party system cartelization, given their weak capacity to represent the party electorates' policy preferences. Yet whereas theories of cartelization and dealignment expect these phenomena to befall the most advanced postindustrial economies, they appear to apply more accurately to relative democratic and postindustrial latecomers that, for reasons related to their pathways of political-economic development and

political institutionalization (civil service, democratic regime), never articulated programmatic alignments on a par with those evident in the other three groups of countries in the post–World War II era.

7.5. Conclusion

For brevity's sake, our chapter has emphasized stark contrasts between theoretical perspectives on the dynamics of party systems and between groups of countries exhibiting differential expressions of partisan realignment. With more space to develop the argument, one would show how the electoral coalitions configured around party systems have changed over time and how they vary in line with the different institutional and political-economic configurations today. Moreover, one would endogenize the differences in postindustrial realignment more rigorously in order to discern which of the four factors we itemized – progressiveness and encompassingness of welfare states, clientelism, and barriers to new party entry through electoral systems – may have the greatest leverage in affecting variants of current partisan realignment. One could then also more clearly trace back current party system dynamics to the prevailing strategic configurations of the post–World War II eras in each country. This would be helpful for exploring the extent to which party realignments in the early twenty-first century are simply a matter of affluence and development, or, as we have argued, a matter of institutions, political economy, and supply-side party strategy.