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New Wine in Old Bottles: Explaining the Dimensional Structure of European Party Systems

Jan Rovny and Jonathan Polk

Abstract

In Europe, non-economic political issues are seen as secondary but significant aspects of political competition. There is uncertainty, however, about the sources of the varying relationships between economic and cultural politics. This paper explains the variance in the correlation of the economic and cultural dimensions in different party systems through the impact of historical religious conflict. Despite the rise of new cultural issues, historical religious divides strikingly predict the relative distinctiveness of the socio-cultural dimension in today's Europe. By demonstrating that economic conflicts did not always supersede religious divides, but were at times brought into standing religious cleavages, we deepen the understanding of cleavage formation and longevity, and dimensional structure of politics in Europe.

Introduction

Politics in advanced democracies extensively revolve around the management of the economy and redistribution of the wealth it generates. The stewardship of the economy is viewed as central to the evaluation of individual political leaders, as well as entire administrations. Simultaneously, many salient political issues – such as: the role of religion in public life; rights of ethnic or sexual minorities; the position of women in society and family; the acceptance of diversity; the type and level of supranational cooperation etc. – are not clearly associated with the economy. Since the 1970s scholars consider these issues as the ‘other’ dimension of politics, and refer to it as either green/alternative/libertarianism versus traditional/authoritarian/nationalism (Hooghe, Marks, and Wilson 2002, Hooghe and Marks 2009); liberal-authoritarian (Kitschelt 1994); new politics (Franklin et al. 1992); or post-materialism (Inglehart 1977, 1990). Whatever its name, multiple analysts and research teams highlight the important role of the cultural dimension¹ in political contestation throughout Europe (Kitschelt 1992, Evans and Whitefield 1993, Zielinski 2002, Marks et al. 2006, Kreisi et al. 2008, Häusermann and Kriesi 2015). Although the political significance of the other dimension is of increasing interest, the profusion of competing names listed above is not accidental. The multiple and diverse political issues potentially connected with this dimension make it much more complicated than economic left-right politics. What remains uncertain is the actual content of the non-economic dimension, as well as how much this bundle of issues forms an independent component of political competition in contemporary Europe.

This article consequently studies the extent to which the economic and cultural dimensions are interrelated or separate in western European party systems. In doing so, it addresses the underlying dimensional structure of European politics, demonstrating and explaining its variance. We argue that despite the primarily non-religious content of the cultural dimension today, its varying independent presence in western European competition is rooted in the religious cleavage of the late 19th and early 20th century. More specifically, we suggest that the historical political chasm caused by the deep secular-religious divide in predominantly Catholic societies opened competition in a non-economic direction, amalgamated economic conflicts, and to a larger extent fused these dimensions with lasting effect.

This article contributes to the study of political competition in Europe in three ways. First, it combines the study of the dimensionality of party competition with cleavage theory developed by Lipset and Rokkan (1967). This approach allows us to demonstrate the

¹To avoid repetition we refer to these issues as the other dimension, the non-economic dimension, the socio-cultural dimension, or simply the cultural dimension interchangeably throughout the text.

historical origins of contemporary cultural divides in Europe, underlining the structural stability and longevity of historical cleavages. Second, this approach avoids the problems of endogeneity by arguing for distal historical causes of current structure of party competition. While many contemporary studies of party competition in Europe focus on the economic left-right (for example, see Ezrow 2005, Adams et al. 2006, Adams, Ezrow and Somer-Topcu 2011, Budge et al 2012, Somer-Topcu 2015), we demonstrate that economic conflicts did not always supersede religious divides. Rather, economic oppositions were brought into standing religious cleavages that continued to structure politics under certain circumstances. The religious cleavage divided some European societies prior to the rise of class politics, and where it arose, the religious cleavage played a formative role in the shaping of class politics and the meaning of the left-right. We thus suggest that religious conflict, as an antecedent to class politics, had an important impact not only on the formation of key policies, such as the welfare state (see Manow and van Kersbergen 2009), but it did so precisely because it had consequences for the structure of party competition. Finally, by theorizing and empirically demonstrating the varying relationship between economic and cultural issues, this article stresses the contextual nature of the role of the ‘other’ dimension in current European politics. We thus build on the work of Lipset and Rokkan (1967) suggesting that the religious cleavage durably shaped political competition and policy outcomes in contemporary European states, even as explicitly religious content of competition has receded from party politics (see, e.g., Lijhpart 1979, Ansell and Lindvall 2013, Tilley 2015).

After discussing previous scholarship on the other dimension, we develop an argument about how the historical legacies of religious conflict shape the structure of political competition in western Europe today. We go on to show substantial variation in how the socio-cultural dimension relates to the economic dimension across these party systems. We present its contemporary content across 16 west European countries included in the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) on party positioning: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. We then test our hypotheses through quantitative analyses, our appendix further highlights the mechanisms by discussing two cases – France and Sweden – in greater depth. Ultimately, our work highlights the striking structural stability – despite the fl y of content – of the main lines of conflict. We suggest that although the contested particulars change with the specific needs and interests of the day, the competitive frame in which they are placed is largely abiding.

The Other Dimension and Politics

The study of the “other” dimension in politics has generated extensive and lively debates. One of the core debates in the literature relates to the historical tenacity of political conflicts or cleavages, addressing the extent to which political divisions create a lasting effect on party systems. Another, yet related, debate focuses on the dimensional relationship between economic and cultural issues.

The seminal work by Lipset and Rokkan (1967) points to the cumulative, long-lasting nature of political divides. Their historical account explains how long-standing conflicts in European societies translated into political competition represented in party systems. They demonstrate how early pre-industrial cultural conflicts, centering on state-church relations and on center-periphery divides, informed the diversity of competition structures in European party systems (Rokkan et al. 1999). These divides were then updated by the dawn of industrialization, which saw the rise of economic contestation in the form of land-industry and worker-owner opposition. The ensuing rise of the worker-owner class cleavage, which mapped onto the previous cultural conflicts, had a uniform impact across the continent. Lipset and Rokkan famously assert that by the 1920s, after the extension of suffrage, and the political mobilization of the class divide, the cleavages of Europe freeze in place (Lipset and Rokkan 1967: 50).

The cumulative longevity of Lipset and Rokkan’s account is called into question by scholars who suggest that the rise of competition over new cultural issues in the final quarter of the twentieth century upset the frozen nature of the party systems of western Europe (see, e.g. Franklin et al. 1992, Oskarson 2005), causing their realignment. Countries that experienced rapid economic growth in the post-war era display increasing interest in personal expression and autonomy on matters of lifestyle and morality (Inglehart 1977, 1990). Kitschelt’s studies (1988, 1994, 1995) illustrate the importance of this non-economic dimension of competition as it creates space for left-libertarian and radical right competitors, and pushes the reorientation of social democratic parties. This dynamic is further reinforced by the politicization of European integration in the last decade of the 20th century (e.g. Hooghe and Marks 2009), and by the increasing salience of cultural issues concerning immigration policy and assimilation, fueling Eurosceptic and radical right populist parties (e.g. Kitschelt and McGann 1995, van der Brug and van Spanje 2009, Rovny 2013).

This debate questions the extent to which historical divides abide, or are replaced by novel political contests. While the historical non-economic competition fundamentally revolved around religion, the contemporarily contested new social issues center on questions

of individual freedoms and collective identity. Nonetheless, some scholars observe that “the mobilization of the new social movements did not add any fundamentally new dimension to the political space, but transformed the meaning of the two already existing ones. The political space remained essentially two-dimensional, defined by a social-economic and a cultural dimension. What changed was the meaning of the conflicts associated with these two dimensions” (Kriesi et al 2006, 924. See also Häusermann and Kriesi 2015).

Another significant debate concerning the ‘other’ dimension focuses on the party or individual level, and concerns the extent to which voters consider economic or cultural preferences when expressing their party support. Many works in the spatial tradition (cf. Downs 1957) tend to limit their scope to the class cleavage as the dominant conflict common to all European societies (cf. Bartolini and Mair 2007 [1990], see Bornschier 2009 for an overview of cleavage-based research in the Lipset and Rokkan tradition), studying behavior on the left-right dimension (e.g. Ezrow 2005, Adams et al. 2006, Adams, Ezrow and Somer-Topcu 2011, Budge et al 2012, Somer-Topcu 2015).

A number of contributions, however, emphasize the importance of the cultural (religious) dimension at the party (van Kersbergen 1995, Warner 2000, Inglehart and Norris 2004: 198) and individual level (Dalton 1990, Dalton 1996: 185, Knutsen 2004; Elff 2007, 2009, Häusermann and Kriesi 2015). This raises the question about the relationship between economic and cultural preferences. While some analyze the economic and cultural dimensions as independent (Roemer 1998, De La O and Rodden 2008), others (Scheve and Stasavage 2006; Inglehart and Norris 2004) suggest that there is one general dimension associating cultural (religious) conservatism with economic right-wing outlooks.

This research, arguing convincingly for considering the impact of cultural issues on contemporary politics, ultimately points to the role of context. Cross-national research on the relationship between religion and party choice finds the connection to be strongest in countries with large Catholic denominations (Knutsen 2004) and for individual Catholic voters (Van der Brug et al. 2009, 1280). Similarly, De La O and Rodden (2008: 441) point out important “cross-country differences that are worthy of further study,” showing that the cultural dimension has “large impact on vote..., even surpassing the economic issue dimension in countries with large Catholic populations...” This highlights the diversity in the dimensional relationship between economic and cultural issues, which, however, remains unexplained.

We will go on to show that there is significant cross-country variance in the extent to which the economic left-right and the socio-cultural dimensions form distinct lines of competition, or combine into a unique conflict axis. In other words, in some countries these dimensions

are almost unrelated, while they correlate quite highly in others (Bakker, Jolly, and Polk 2012). The outstanding question then becomes: what lies behind divergent associations of the economic and the cultural dimensions? Why do economic and cultural politics form relatively independent dimensions in some party systems, while other party spaces feature a more overarching dimension that amalgamates cultural issues and economic positions?

This article consequently addresses the relationship between economic and cultural politics by theoretically explaining and empirically demonstrating its variance across European countries. Our argument suggests that although religion is less salient for the cultural dimension today, it had a lasting effect on the extent to which economic and cultural issues form distinct dimensions in today's European party spaces. We stress that historical cultural divides shaped the current structure of party competition, despite the fact that explicitly religious topics are largely absent from today's cultural conflict. The next section presents our argument about the lasting role of the religious cleavage on European politics, and generates hypotheses we operationalize and test in subsequent sections.

The Religious Basis of the Cultural Dimension

Our argument points to the central importance of religion which created deep religious-secular divides in some societies, but not in others. We argue that where it was reinforced, the religious cleavage proved to be a powerful frame of party positioning throughout the 20th century, incorporating and sometimes even subsuming economic conflict, and coming to structure party competition in line with the other dimension.

At the core of the religious cleavage was the nature of state-church relations which determined the rise and tenacity of religious divides across European societies. Where state-church relations were strained by conflict between a universalistic Catholic church and a modernizing liberal state, deep religious-secular divides persisted well into the 20th century and fundamentally defined the political oppositions of party systems. Where the dominant religious body was a Protestant state church, state-church relations were more cooperative. The church generally accepted and even contributed to the modernization of the state, and religious-secular divides remained politically marginal. Finally, mixed Catholic and Protestant societies see the formation of three-way conflict between these two denominations and the secular, liberal and socialist camp, which dampened the religious cleavage.

Where a deep religious cleavage develops, it proves to have a profound, and lasting impact on the structure in which party competition takes place. We agree with Lipset and

Rokkan (1967: 46) that while the worker-owner divide exerted a homogenizing effect on European party systems, it is the previous cleavages that produced “much more marked, and apparently much more stubborn differences among the national party systems.” However, the Lipset-Rokkanian tradition, as well as the spatial modeling literature, tends to focus on the role of the worker-owner class cleavage in party systems, and its corollary economic left-right politics.² We, however, posit that the religious cleavage combined with the worker-owner cleavage in societies with deep religious rifts creating a more unidimensional environment. Where a deep religious-secular cleavage developed, parties of the left adopted ardent secularism, while the right significantly catered to religious interests, thus leading to a significant association between economic and religious/cultural political preferences. Such an association creates a lasting imprint on party systems. While in the 21st century, religious political issues play a minor role in most western European party systems, political competition in party systems that experienced a deep religious-secular divide is marked by a fusion of competition over economic and non-economic cultural divides.

Religion was not a major source of political conflict in early modern European politics. Liberals and the middle classes in general, were divided between those who were practicing and those who rejected the church, while churchgoers were split into a multiplicity of political camps (Kalyvas 1996: 21, 169, Conway 1997: 14). This situation changed across the continent in the second half of the 19th century. Starting in the 1860s, countries with significant Catholic populations³ experienced what Kalyvas (1996: 26) termed a “liberal attack against the church.” The main goal of this attack was to wrest the control over education, social and family matters from the church, and move them into the secular domain of the state. What ensued in these Catholic or mixed Catholic and Protestant societies was a deep and protracted conflict between the Catholic church represented by the Vatican, as well as the national church hierarchy on the one hand, and the state on the other. The secular-religious engagement produces a vicious cycle which Martin (1978: 16-17) describes as a “spiral of fear and mutual repulsion backed by violence until each side feels its very existence endangered by the other.”

The attacks on the church initiate general Catholic mobilization in its defense. In a number of Catholic and mixed countries, the liberal threat spawns the formation of confessional defense parties (van Kersbergen 1995, Kalyvas 1996.), which is later further accelerated by the mobilization of the secular socialist camp (Ertman 2009: 46). This process of party formation brought religion into the political domain, and led to the “crystallization of the

²Although Lijphart 1979, Ansell and Lindvall 2013, and Tilley 2014 are prominent exceptions.

³That is countries which we generally refer to as Catholic or Mixed in this article.

association between conservatism and religion on the partisan level and the monopolization of the Conservative political space by confessional parties” (Kalyvas 1996: 24), binding religion with the political right (Martin 1978: 37-8). The religious cleavage thus comes to stand “at the center of political life during the formative period of the Western European party landscape” (Ertman 2009: 53).

Where it developed, the religious cleavage became a powerful frame of political competition for three key reasons. First, it integrated a number of other conflicts, becoming a super-divide. In fact, opposition to the church “became akin to fighting for progress against medieval obscurantism; for parliamentarism against absolutism; and for national independence against the supranational domination of the Vatican and its local representatives” (Kalyvas 1996: 172).

Second, religion was a political issue that united otherwise diverse political camps and was consequently strategically useful. It became a pivotal political issue mobilizing conservatives, liberals and Catholics alike. The opening of the religious cleavage presented the conservatives with a deeply appealing issue, as well as with potential access to the organizational resources of the church (ibid: 55). For liberals, the religious issue presented an opportunity to quell internal dissent of various radicals by rallying all against the church. In addition, with the rise of socialism, anticlericalism was “the only issue that could make bourgeois liberalism attractive to the masses” (ibid.: 172-3).

Finally, where present, the religious cleavage was deeply polarizing. It cemented political camps divided over secularism versus religion while amalgamating other divides around this cleavage. Manow (2013: 82) asserts that “[a]n important heritage of this conflict *à l’outrance* between a clerical Right and an anti-clerical Left is the radicalization of the Left due to the lack of plausible reformist option”. The polarizing religious conflict effectively assimilated politics into a dualism where left is synonymous with secularism and right with religion. Together, these three consequences of the religious cleavage make it a strong and long-lasting fracture in European societies, one that continues to determine contemporary political divides. This discussion motivates the first hypothesis.

H1- The religious divide between left- and right-wing parties in Catholic countries tends to be significantly greater than in mixed or Protestant societies.

While the Catholic church and its opposition stand at the root of the religious cleavage, Catholicism does not uniformly lead to deep domestic divides over state-church relations. In cases where Catholicism unites a local population against foreign threat or domination,

Catholicism is a unifying force and “internal conflict over religion is muted or obliterated by the paramount need for unity” (Martin 1978: 42; see also Conway 1997: 13). We follow Martin in treating Ireland and Belgium as cases where the Catholic church acted as such a uniting force, but also perform sensitivity checks for the Belgian case that will be described in more detail below. A similar argument applies to the Orthodox states, in our sample, Greece, that have been historically under Turkish domination (see Martin 1978: 22). Our second thesis thus addresses the impact of an external threat for church/state relations and dimensional correlation.

H2 - The non-economic and economic dimensions of party competition tend to be significantly less associated in Catholic societies where the Catholic church united a local culture against foreign domination.

Protestant countries experience strikingly different state-church relations. Where Protestantism is the overwhelmingly dominant religion, no liberal attack against the church takes place. Manow and van Kersbergen (2009: 19) highlight how Lutheran state churches of northern Europe “did not feel fundamentally challenged when the new nation-state started to take over responsibilities that had previously fallen under the responsibility of the church. Anticlericalism never became a strong political current in the Scandinavian countries.” Furthermore, despite some internal dissent leading to the establishment of ‘free churches’, there is no significant religious confrontation in Protestant societies (see Anderson 2009: 217-218; and Martin 1978: 33-34).

In fact, the church becomes an arm of the modern state apparatus. Morgan (2002) demonstrates how the Lutheran state church cooperatively implemented national education policy, while it was guaranteed a role in managing and overseeing it. Consequently, she concludes that “[i]n many Protestant countries, the national church became a partner of the state ..., rather than a competitor” (Morgan 2002: 124).

In mixed Catholic and Protestant societies, a liberal attack against religious dominance in education takes place akin to dominantly Catholic countries. However, the three-way competition between secular liberals, Catholics and Protestants weakens the tension between the churches and the state. The dominance of the religious cleavage thus comes to resemble that of Protestant societies in the long run. This is caused by the fact that in all mixed societies Catholicism is a minority denomination, and, as such, it is dissociated from the center of political power. Martin (1978: 50-51) suggests that “the Catholic Church assists in stabilizing the political sphere and in removing the issue of religion as such from the

arena of confrontation, because it stands on the center-left, ... [splitting] up the image of unified politico-religious conservatism.” In addition, the pillarization of mixed societies – with Catholic, Protestant and secular social pillars – acts as a conduit for moderation. The different social segments cooperate in sets of changing political alliances where each camp may be needed and thus cannot be ostracized. Finally, the working class movement must limit its secularism in order to not alienate workers integrated in the Catholic or Protestant pillars. Consequently, “secularist propaganda is muted and by the same token religious hostility to the left is also muted” (Martin 1978: 52).

The religious cleavage is thus the strongest in dominantly Catholic counties. In countries with mixed Catholic and Protestant populations an initial liberal opposition to the churches opens a secular-religious divide, but this split is blunted by the three-sided nature of the conflict. Finally, in Protestant societies, where the church assists the state, no significant religious cleavage appears. This leads to our third and final hypothesis:

H3 - The non-economic and economic dimensions of party competition tend to be significantly more associated in Catholic societies than in Protestant or mixed societies.

Religious conflict is thus a catalyst for the combination of economic and non-economic competition. Predominantly Catholic societies experienced deep moral divides between secular and religious positions. Here non-economic religious contest assimilated and at times trumped other cleavages including economics, opening a more unidimensional space of party competition. This manifests in a deep secular-religious divide between the left and the right, as well as in the increased interrelatedness of economic and non-economic issues. The next section introduces a conceptualization of party system structure based on the work of Kitschelt (1994), and demonstrates its variance. It then addresses the data and methods we employ to test our hypotheses.

Operationalization, Data and Methods

Measuring Dimensional Association

Scholars frequently simplify party competition to a two dimensional abstraction spanning economic and socio-cultural issues, and assume that the two dimensions are orthogonal to one another (Kitschelt 1992, Laver and Hunt 1992, Kitschelt 1994, Hooghe et al. 2002, Marks et al. 2006). In practice these dimensions are related to varying degrees (Kriesi et

al. 2008, Häusermann and Kriesi 2015), but the assumption of orthogonality is often useful for representational purposes, allowing empirical placements in this space demonstrate any associations.⁴

To assess the extent to which the economic and non-economic dimensions associate, we summarize party competition into what Kitschelt (1992, 1994) has called the ‘axis of competition’. In a two-dimensional political space, this axis is the relationship between party positioning on the economic dimension x and the socio-cultural dimension y :

$$y_i = \alpha + \beta x_i \quad (1)$$

Here α is the intercept, while β represents the slope of the axis in the two-dimensional political space. This slope is important for our purposes, as it measures the association between the two dimensions (the greater the $|\beta|$, the stronger the association between x and y).

This slope thus represents dimensional association, measuring the relative distinctiveness of the two dimensions in party competition. It, however, fails to reflect the extent to which this trend is representative. It does not capture whether parties are tightly aligned along the axis, or whether they are widely dispersed. This information can be obtained from the root mean square errors (RMSE) of a regression between the two dimensions (expressed in equation 1).

Assessing the competition axis slopes and their RMSEs empirically across western Europe demonstrates a strong relationship between them ($Corr_{|\beta|,RMSE} = -.542$). This means that western European party systems vary between two extremes. On the one extreme, countries possess flat axes ($\beta \rightarrow 0$), coupled with higher RMSEs. This means that party competition occurs in two rather independent dimensions, one economic and another cultural. Here economic preferences are not consistently connected to socio-cultural views. On the other extreme, countries present steep axes ($\beta \rightarrow \pm\infty$), combined with lower RMSEs. Here party systems combine economic and cultural dimensions, which are tightly fused in a unique conflict line that combines economic and cultural positions.

The axis slope, measured as the absolute β coefficient from a regression between economic and socio-cultural party positioning, thus suffices to capture the main divergence of our interest – namely the extent of the independence of the two dimensions in political competition in western Europe. The appendix provides a specific example with more detailed discussion. In addition, we carried out a robustness check, using Pearson’s correlation coefficient instead

⁴Similarly, maps of localities assume that latitude and longitude are orthogonal, even though that is only true along one selected meridian (but not more).

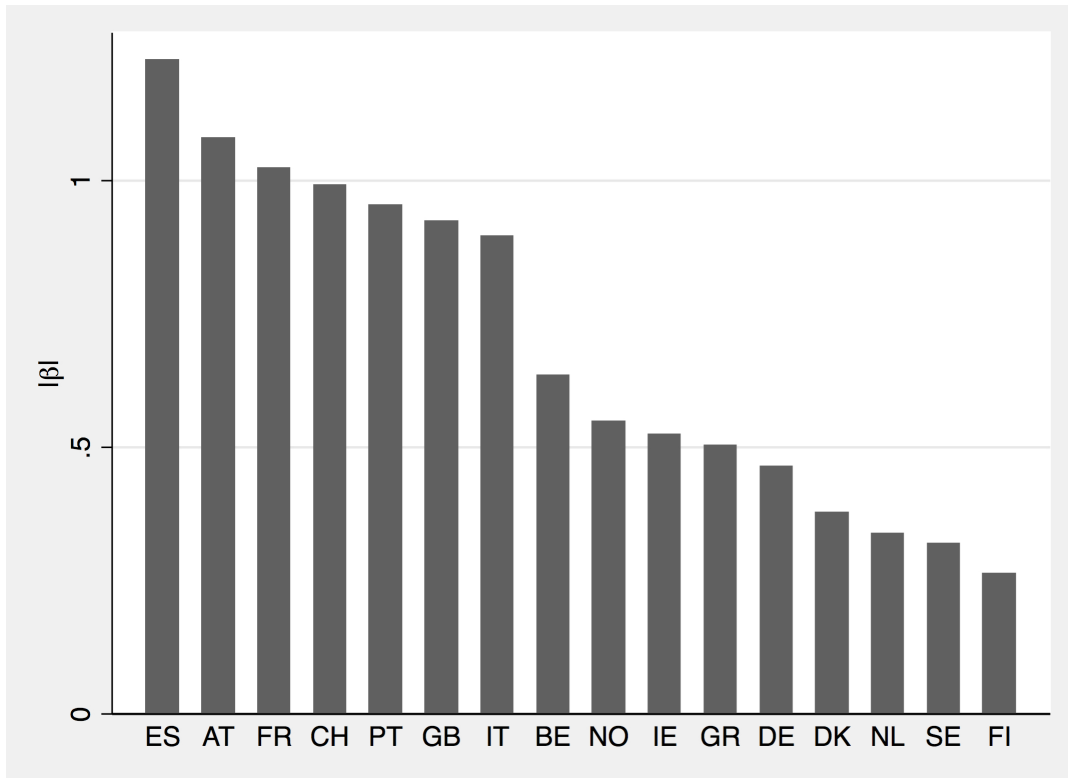


Figure 1: Absolute competition axis slopes

Absolute competition axis slopes obtained from a simple regression between non-economic (tangal) and economic left-right placement of parties weighted by party vote share, and averaged over observed years.

of the regression β , which we report in the appendix. The results are substantively unaltered. To reflect the fact that major parties affect party competition more than minor parties, we additionally weight our analyses by party vote share. Figure 1 summarizes the values of the weighted absolute β coefficients, which were obtained from Chapel Hill Expert Survey data, while the details are in Table 4 in the appendix.

There is considerable variation in the distinctiveness of economic and cultural positions across western Europe. In Figure 1, note the rather flat axes (low $|\beta|$) in Finland, compared with the steep axes (high value of $|\beta|$) in Austria. This suggests that economic and cultural issues are less connected, and thus are more independent, in countries like Finland or Sweden, while they are highly associated, almost forming a unique ‘super’ dimension, in countries like Austria or Spain.

Data

To assess our hypotheses we construct a dataset measuring dimensional association, party systems, and numerous social indicators. Our dependent variable, discussed above, is the weighted absolute slope obtained from a simple regression between non-economic (tangible) and economic left-right placement of parties.

The theoretical discussion above underscores the importance of the predominant religious denomination of a society as a determinant of the nature of religious conflict and thus of the potential for non-economic party competition. We operationalize religious denomination in two ways. First, we use a nominal measure distinguishing between Protestant countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom), mixed countries (Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland), and Catholic countries (Austria, Belgium, France, Italy, Ireland, Portugal, and Spain). We also include Greece in the Catholic category due to the monopolistic nature of the Orthodox church (see Martin 1978: 22). Second, we use a continuous measure of denominational difference that considers the percent of Protestants subtracted from the percent of Catholics (Orthodox in Greece) in a given country, based on latest observations (year 2000) from *The World Christian Encyclopedia* (Barrett 1982). Given our expectation that mixed countries come to resemble the conflict patterns of Protestant countries due to the three-way competition between Catholic, Protestant and secular forces, we model a non-linear effect of denominational difference by also including its squared term. Finally, to operationalize the particular role of Catholicism in cases where it acted as a nationally unifying factor against external threat, we create a dummy variable coded one for countries that Martin (1978: 42) considers as ‘Catholic exceptions’ (Ireland, Belgium)⁵. We also add Greece into this exceptional category given the historical role its Orthodox religion played in the context of Turkish dominance (see Martin 1978: 22, 55).

Clearly, the distinctiveness of the other dimension in party competition should be influenced by a number of more recent socio-economic and political developments, as the literature review suggests.⁶ First, we consider additional historical indicators, particularly the number of years of socialist and Christian democratic government since the second world war⁷, and

⁵Belgium, despite the unifying role that Catholicism played in its independence, experienced a deep religious-secular conflict in the late 19th century (see Kalyvas 1998). To this end we reanalyze all our models with Belgium not included in the ‘Catholic exception’ category. This alternative coding has no substantive impact on the results. See the appendix for details.

⁶We follow Kitschelt and Rehm’s (2014) extensive examination of the determinants of dimensional dominance in our choice of control variables.

⁷Collected from the ParlGov database (Döring and Manow 2012), parlgov.org.

the age of democracy.⁸ Also, we control for income inequality, measured by the Gini index, collected from Solt (2009).⁹ Second, as suggested by the literature, post-industrial societies are likely to develop particular non-economic conflicts. In line with Inglehart's (1977, 1997, 2008) argumentation, greater economic development, measured by GDP per capita (World Bank), should lead to increased post-materialism, reducing conflict over economic redistributive issues, and opening competition over new socio-cultural concerns. Similarly, the tenacity of traditional religious beliefs, captured by the level of religious attendance, may drive competition on the socio-cultural dimension in the 21st century and we therefore include a measure of religious attendance from the European Social Survey data.¹⁰ This variable is coded in such a way that lower values actually indicate more frequent religious attendance. Simultaneously, today's socio-cultural competition is likely to center on ethnic, linguistic and cultural divides. Ethnic fragmentation, operationalized according to Alesina et al.'s ethnic measure (2003), together with net migration per capita¹¹ (World Bank), measure the ethno-linguistic and cultural diversity likely to drive independent competition over the socio-cultural dimension today. Finally, we control for the proportionality of the electoral system as measured by Gallagher's Disproportionality Index (Gallagher 1991, Gallagher et al. 2011).

Methods

To assess the association of the economic and socio-cultural dimensions, we estimate the steepness of the competition axis, measured as the absolute value of the β coefficient from a simple regression between the non-economic (called gal-tan in the CHES survey¹²) and economic placement of political parties. However, this dependent variable is an estimate, subject to sample variation that introduces uncertainty into the measure. To account for

⁸The age of democracy variable subtracts the year a democratic constitution was formed from the election closest to 2006. Constitution information was collected from the CIA World Factbook (<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>).

⁹This control is a proxy for welfare state generosity. We add this control to dispel concerns that competition along the other dimension is caused or facilitated by certain welfare state regimes. Simultaneously, in line with Manow (2013), we believe that the welfare state is to an important degree a product of historical conflicts often centering on religion. Religious competition, which we argue lies behind the opening of competition along the other dimension, is thus also an antecedent to welfare state formation.

¹⁰Observations for missing years have been linearly imputed.

¹¹Observations for missing years have been linearly imputed.

¹²Please note that for reasons of convention we reverse the variable gal-tan to range from conservative to liberal placements, and thus refer to it as tan-gal.

this uncertainty, we apply a two-step estimation method developed by Lewis and Linzer (2005). In the first step, we estimate the β coefficients across the countries and years we have information for using simple OLS regression where observations (parties) are weighted by their vote share. The first step model for each country k , year t , and party p is thus:

$$tangal_p = \alpha_{k,t} + \beta_{k,t}economic_p + E_p \quad (2)$$

In the second step, we estimate our models of substantive interest, predicting the β s obtained in the first step with the above-mentioned predictors, using OLS regression, but weighting the coefficients from the first step regression by their standard errors. Here the units of analysis are country-years. We use the weighting procedure proposed by Borjas and Sueyoshi (1994), and applied by Huber et al. (2005). The second level regression matrix is thus weighted by the matrix

$$\Omega = \mathbf{V}_{\beta_{k,t}} + \sigma_v^2 \mathbf{I}_{k,t} \quad (3)$$

where $\mathbf{V}_{\beta_{k,t}}$ refers to errors connected with the estimate of $\beta_{k,t}$ from the first step model, and σ^2 is the residual variance from the second step model (Huber et al. 2005: 378).^v

In addition, to address the dependence caused by the fact that we include multiple observations from the same country over varying years, we report cluster-corrected standard errors (Primo et al, 2007). As a robustness check, the full models have been re-estimated using hierarchical linear models with random intercepts, so as to account for the country-specific nature of the data (Steenbergen and Jones 2002: 234, Rabe-Hesketh and Skrondal 2008). The hierarchical linear models produce substantively similar results (see the appendix for details).

Analyses and Results

We first turn to address the contemporary content of the cultural dimension. The 2006, 2010 and 2014 waves of the Chapel Hill Expert Survey on party positioning in Europe include policy-specific questions related to three conceptually independent dimensions: economic left-right, socio-cultural politics, and European integration. Using the battery of policy-specific questions related to the positioning of party leadership on cultural politics, we perform a principal factor analysis to examine the contemporary content of the cultural dimension. A single factor explains over 88% of the items' variance (see table 1)¹³. This

¹³Note that this socio-cultural factor correlates with the direct measure of socio-cultural party placement (tan-gal) at 0.94. We thus use the direct tan-gal measure for the subsequent analyses.

factor is primarily determined by party positions on civil liberties, immigration and social lifestyle issues. Questions pertaining to religion, opposing secular modernism versus traditionalism, play a secondary role. This interpretation is further supported by the relatively low salience of the question concerning the role of religion in determining people’s lifestyles.¹⁴ This provides empirical evidence that although the origins of socio-cultural competition may be rooted in religion, tensions between church and state are not the most distinctive features of socio-cultural politics today.

Table 1: The Structure of the Socio-Cultural Dimension

	Factor 1	Salience
Civil liberties	0.94	6.31
Immigration policy	0.93	6.36
Immigrant integration	0.93	6.17
Social lifestyle	0.92	5.91
Ethnic minority	0.92	5.77
Religion	0.80	4.49
Urban-rural	0.62	4.09
Regions	0.17	5.09
Eigenvalue	5.36	
Proportion	0.89	

Principal factor analysis. Salience of each issue assessed by experts on a 0-10 scale. Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2006, 2010 and 2014.

Having explored the current content of the cultural dimension, we now turn to inferential statistics to test our theoretical expectations. To test hypothesis 1, table 2 presents means tests of the differences in placements on the role of religion in politics across the political left and right¹⁵, available from CHES data.¹⁶ The table supports H1 by demonstrating that the difference between the left and the right on religious views increases with the presence of Catholicism in a country. In Protestant societies, with little to no presence of Catholicism it is about 1.5 points (on a 0-10 scale); in mixed countries it is about 2.7; while in Catholic

¹⁴This analysis is consistent with most recent works on party competition in western Europe (cf. Kriesi et al. 2008; Bornschieer 2010).

¹⁵Left parties are operationalized as those belonging to communist or socialist and social democratic party families, while the right is operationalized as parties belonging to liberal, conservative, Christian democratic and Protestant families. See CHES documentation for details.

¹⁶The precise wording of the religion variable is: “position on role of religious principles in politics.” 0 = strongly opposes religious principles in politics and 10 = strongly supports religious principles in politics.

Table 2: Assessing the difference in religious placement across political left and right

Difference in religious placement across left and right			
Country	Obs.	mean	s.e.
Protestant	14	1.464	0.291
Mixed	8	2.731	0.350
Catholic	24	4.066	0.261
Means tests			
Comparison	t	p	
Protestant v. Mixed	t=-2.706	p=0.014	
Protestant v. Catholic	t=-6.368	p=0.000	
Mixed v. Catholic	t=-2.683	p=0.012	

CHES data. Religious preferences scored on a 0-10 scale. Catholic countries include Greece.

countries it is over 4. Furthermore, the lower part of the table shows that the differences between these groups are statistically significant. This finding lends support to our claims that Catholicism produces deeper moral divisions that are likely to last.

This leads us to now assess the determinants behind the axis slope. Turning to hypotheses 2 and 3, the first 6 models in table 3 present the results of OLS regression models assessing the absolute slope with a categorical measure of predominant religious denomination, with Protestantism as the baseline. Given the limited number of countries, we introduce our control variables in blocks. The first block (models 3 and 9) controls for welfare state sources and outcomes, the second block (models 4 and 10) controls for social diversity, the third block (models 5 and 11) controls for economic and institutional characteristics. The final models (6 and 12) include the theoretically most relevant control variables across all blocks.¹⁷ The results of these models support our hypotheses. Model 6 shows that while there is no significant difference between mixed and Protestant countries, the absolute slope in Catholic countries is over 0.37 points steeper than in Protestant countries. This suggests that Catholic societies bundle significantly more conflict over cultural politics into a single dominant dimension than Protestant or Mixed countries.

The latter 6 models in table 3 further emphasize these results. They predict the absolute axis slope with a continuous measure of denominational difference (measured as % Catholic - % Protestant) and its square. The results show that the greater the proportion of Catholics

¹⁷Note that a model including all the control variables simultaneously provides substantively unaltered results.

Table 3: Predicting the absolute axis slope with denomination

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Mixed Countries	-0.0777 (0.247)	-0.0777 (0.248)	-0.0118 (0.172)	-0.245 (0.199)	-0.0807 (0.201)	-0.173*** (0.0577)						
Catholic Countries	0.452** (0.200)	0.519** (0.188)	0.380** (0.139)	0.253 (0.212)	0.771*** (0.0957)	0.378*** (0.0991)						
Denomination difference							0.00333*** (0.00112)	0.00376*** (0.000989)	0.00255** (0.000907)	0.00265** (0.00116)	0.00458*** (0.000687)	0.00255*** (0.000823)
Denomination difference ²												0.0000291*** (0.00000810)
Cathol. w/ external threat		-0.530*** (0.0517)	-0.336** (0.146)	-0.628*** (0.0677)	-0.708*** (0.122)	-0.428*** (0.0783)		-0.521*** (0.0480)	-0.352** (0.151)	-0.586*** (0.0558)	-0.585*** (0.113)	-0.409*** (0.0691)
Socialist gov't years			0.00112 (0.00719)						-0.00109 (0.00636)			
Christ Dem gov't years			-0.000940 (0.00235)						-0.00201 (0.00241)			
Income inequality (gini)			0.0390** (0.0147)			0.0504*** (0.0120)			0.0325** (0.0152)			0.0434*** (0.0124)
Ethnic fragmentation				1.019*** (0.208)		0.581** (0.225)				0.726** (0.254)		0.343 (0.256)
Religious attendance				-0.118 (0.0826)		0.127 (0.112)				-0.0515 (0.0995)		0.152 (0.0958)
Net migration per capita				-2.954*** (0.954)		-1.918*** (0.597)				-2.450** (1.080)		-1.778** (0.715)
Age of democracy					0.00220*** (0.000520)						0.00124 (0.000830)	
GDP per capita					-0.00000105 (0.00000659)	0.0000153*** (0.00000418)					-0.00000320 (0.00000533)	0.0000128*** (0.00000394)
Disproportionality index					-0.00591 (0.00971)	0.00445 (0.00632)					0.00650 (0.0129)	0.0125 (0.00757)
Constant	0.627*** (0.180)	0.627*** (0.181)	-0.521 (0.574)	1.277** (0.547)	0.366 (0.273)	-2.217** (0.996)	0.778*** (0.0932)	0.803*** (0.0905)	-0.126 (0.534)	1.008* (0.511)	0.747*** (0.208)	-2.098** (0.846)
<i>N</i>	74	74	74	74	74	74	74	74	74	74	74	74
<i>Countries</i>	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16
<i>R</i> ²	0.357	0.529	0.637	0.634	0.655	0.748	0.366	0.533	0.627	0.588	0.626	0.728

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

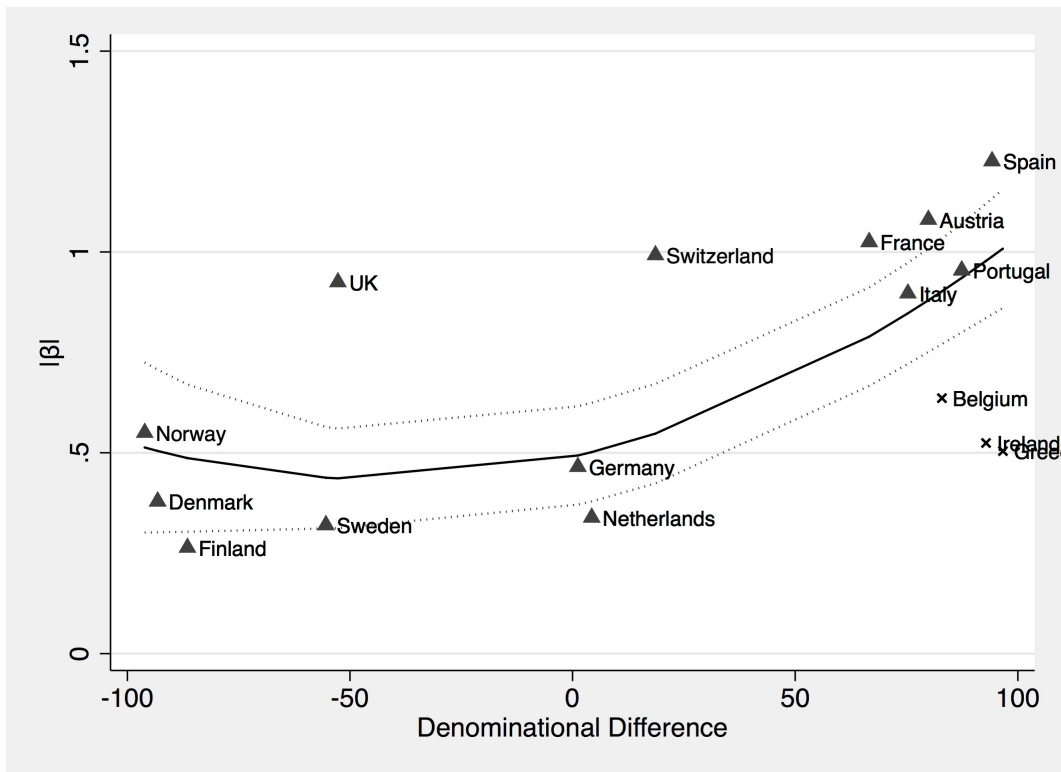


Figure 2: Predicting absolute competition axis slope

Predicted values with 95% confidence interval. Denominational difference measured as % Catholic - % Protestant. Countries marked with 'x' are considered as Catholic/Orthodox countries with religion as a unifying factor against an external threat. Based on model 12 from table 3.

in a society, the steeper the axis of competition. The final model R^2 s of 0.748 and 0.728, the models have a good level of fit though that is also a function of sample size. Note also that in the analyses presented in both tables, the significance and substantive direction of our primary findings hold across model specifications, both with and without a variety of control variables. To demonstrate the robustness of these analyses, we re-estimated our key results using Pearson's correlation coefficient between economic and social positioning of political parties as the dependent variable. The results, leading to substantively unaltered conclusions, are available in the appendix.

To better represent the key relationships postulated in H2 and H3, figure 2 depicts the predicted values of the curvilinear effect of denominational difference while plotting the observed values for individual countries (averaged over the observed years). Figure 2 supports both H2 and H3, demonstrating that denominational difference has a strong, significant and curvilinear effect. The greater the proportion of Catholic population, the steeper the axis.

However, in countries where Catholicism (or in the case of Greece, Orthodoxy) joined the local population against an external threat, there the axes are significantly flatter. In these cases religious conflict was moderated by the need for unity.

Figure 2 further highlights the outlying character of the United Kingdom and to a lesser extent Switzerland. Despite being a predominantly Protestant country, the United Kingdom has a relatively steep axis. Recent research by Ziblatt (2017) provides an explanation of the British anomaly. Ziblatt demonstrates how the British conservative party utilized religious networks that cut across class to build up its political platform in the latter part of the 19th century. Evidence from the CHES data supports these historical findings. The British conservatives are significantly more religious than conservatives in other Protestant countries.¹⁸ Similarly, Tilley (2014) uses two sets of British survey data to show that religion is not only of historical significance, but also currently shapes people's party choice in Britain, suggesting a certain exceptionalism of the UK: "if religious cleavages are alive and well in Britain, then this suggests that the religious cleavage can survive in even the most unpromising of circumstances" (Tilley 2014, 3). We may thus speculate that, for idiosyncratic reasons, the British political system involved greater unidimensionality than those of other Protestant countries.

The somewhat outlying position of Switzerland can be attributed to the fact that Swiss politics have been historically significantly regionalized. Consequently, unlike in other mixed societies, Swiss politics involved different combinations of two-way contests in a number of cantons (Bornschiefer, personal communication). Additionally, the recent rise of the Swiss People's Party which, unlike most other radical right parties, continues to adhere to Kitschelt's 'winning formula' (McGann and Kitschelt 2005), thus connects economic and cultural issues.

Overall, the quantitative results support the argument that a dominant presence of Catholicism creates a deep religious rift between key political actors, combining economic and non-economic conflicts into a more unified dimension. This mechanism makes a lasting impression on party systems, one that seems to be largely impervious to significant historical developments of the post-war era. The structure of party competition framed by religious rifts of the late 19th and early 20th century, continues to last until now. Indeed, countries with historical monopolistic Catholicism exhibit competition over non-economic issues that assimilates economic conflicts today. The appendix considers two illustrative cases – France and Sweden – in greater historical detail.

¹⁸The UK conservatives score 6.1 on the (0-10) religious scale on average, while other Protestant conservatives score 4.0 on average. This difference is highly statistically significant ($t=3.95$; $p=0.002$).

Conclusion

We departed from the observation that extensive scholarship views non-economic political issues as secondary, but significant, sources of political competition in contemporary Europe. The primary finding of this article is the durable power of historical cleavages in explaining when competition over cultural politics amalgamates the economic dimension in contemporary Europe and when cultural and economic politics remain distinct. More specifically, we show that economic and cultural politics are much more tightly interwoven with one another in predominantly Catholic countries, while they are more independent in countries with Protestant or mixed religious traditions. Our analyses suggest that the best explanation of current associations between non-economic and economic politics lies in the religious conflicts in the formative years of the late 19th and early 20th century Europe. By creating deep, morally framed divides between the key political forces of the day, these religious conflicts created a fundamental structure of politics which was erased by neither the coming, nor passing of various political regimes; by neither the cataclysmic armed conflicts of the 20th century, nor the subsequent reconstructions; by neither the post-war stability and affluence, nor the rise of ‘new politics’ after the 1960s. The framework of political spaces in western Europe has remained remarkably stable.

Contemporary views of party competition in Europe generally agree with the assertion that “[i]n the world of today social cleavages of the type defined by Lipset and Rokkan no longer condition the nature of political life” (Franklin et al. 1992, 2). And while we agree that contemporary party politics qualifies our understanding of cleavage theory, our analysis is consistent with the perspective that continues to see cleavage theory as important to our understanding of contemporary politics (e.g. Hooghe and Marks 2017), and suggests that the basic structure of European party systems remains diversified from the rather distant past. Our findings concur with Lipset and Rokkan’s (1967, 35) argument that “[t]he crucial differences among the party systems emerged in the early phases of competitive politics, before the final phase of mass mobilization” based mostly on non-economic divides, before the rise of the worker-owner cleavage, which “tended to bring the party systems closer to each other in their basic structure.” In addition to Lipset and Rokkan, we assert that where religious conflict was significant, the religious cleavage fused with the class divide. Research on party competition should thus take into account that in some countries economic politics may capture meaningful political oppositions only partially.

These findings speak to the fundamental character of European party politics. While those countries dominated by Catholicism, and thus by deep religious-secular conflict, main-

tain a more unidimensional nature combining economic and socio-cultural issues, countries with important influence of Protestantism tend to engender cross-cutting economic and socio-cultural divides. Interestingly, it is in the mixed and Protestant countries where religious conflict had less formative power. Here we witness the rise of independent cultural conflicts, often represented by green, and more recently radical right parties, contesting the niches of this secondary dimension. In Catholic countries, on the contrary, low political dimensionality stems from the encompassing power of the church-state cleavage. Here competition revolves around a unique ‘super’ divide, and cultural issues, more tightly fused with economic conflicts, are extensively contested even by major mainstream political forces.

Simultaneously, our analysis underlines that the content of cultural politics has been altered. Competition over this dimension has little to do with the religious divides pitting Europeans against each other in centuries past. Migration and ethnic diversity, changing the ethno-cultural fabric of European societies, is at the core of the meaning of the other dimension today. Our finding of structural longevity coupled with issue innovation suggests that European politics may not follow biblical wisdom. The new wine of contemporary non-economic issues seems to fit rather well into old bottles of political competition shaped by 19th century glass makers.

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Appendix

Appendix on measure of association

This paper relies on the use of the regression (β) coefficient from a simple regression analysis. As discussed in the paper, this regression analysis is specified as $social\ position_i = \alpha + \beta * economic\ position_i + c_i$. The β coefficient captures the association between economic and social positions that are not standardized and thus retain their original scales and dispersions. As mentioned in the paper, while this coefficient captures the association between the two dimensions, it does not capture its representativeness, which is rather measured by the root mean square error (RMSE). In our sample, the RMSE correlates with the β at $-.543$. The party systems under study thus vary between those with flat competition axes ($\beta \rightarrow 0$), coupled with higher RMSEs; and those with steep axes ($\beta \rightarrow \pm\infty$), combined with lower RMSEs.

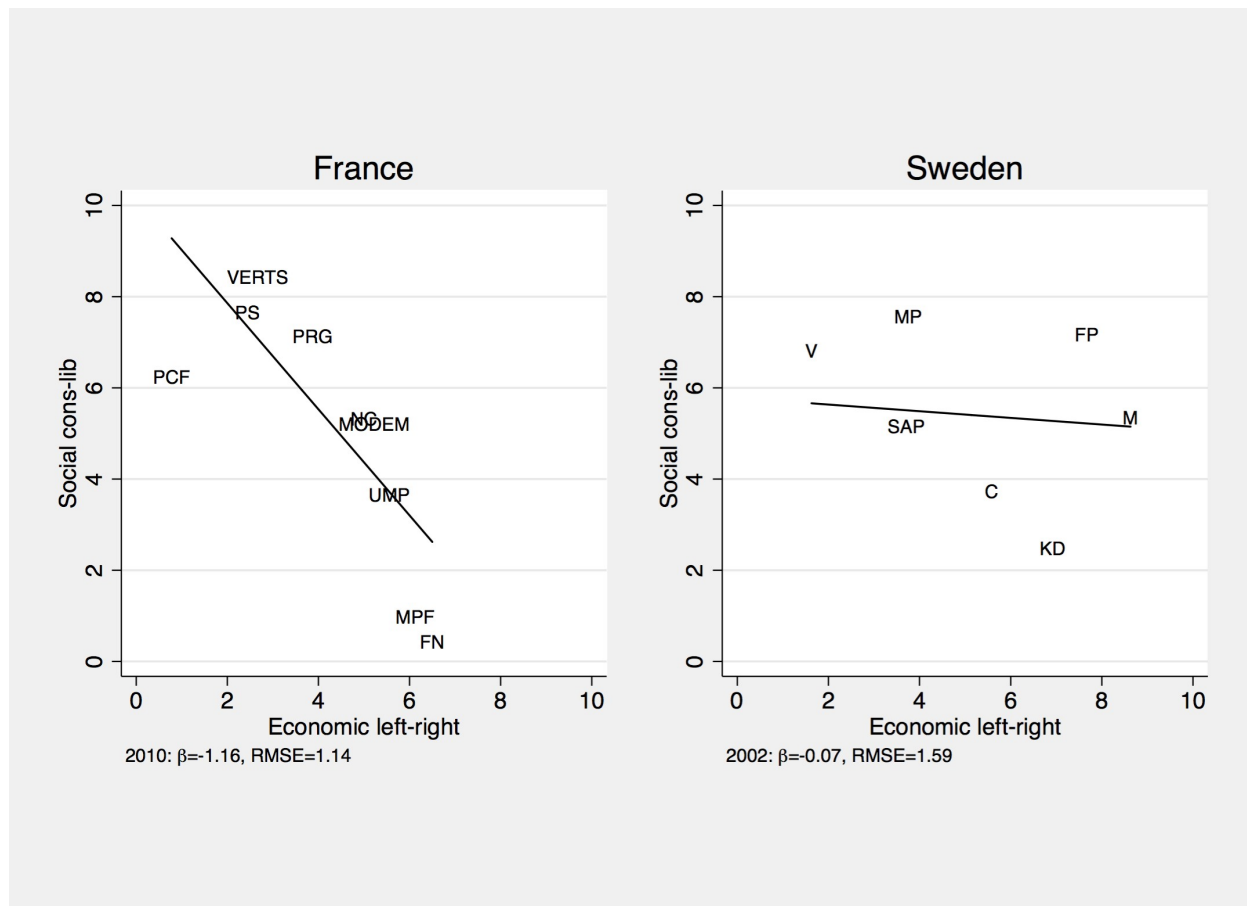


Figure 3: Axis slopes in France and Sweden

CHES data. Weighted by vote.

France in 2010 and Sweden in 2002, depicted in figure 3, illustrate these relationships. The French system is relatively tightly aligned along a steep axis slope (expressed by the regression line), while the Swedish system stretches along the economic dimension, with various minor parties dispersed along the socio-cultural

dimension. While the French system amalgamates economic and cultural issues into a compact bundle, the Swedish system is more loosely structured by the competition axis. However, in both systems, the major parties (PS and UMP in France, and SAP and M in Sweden) lie on the axis, which suggests that while the dominant conflict in Sweden revolves primarily around the economy, the major French rivals differ significantly over their socio-cultural preferences.

An alternative measure of association to the regression β is correlation, measured as Pearson's $r_{xy} =$

Σ

$$\left(\frac{x_i - \bar{x}}{s_x} \right) \left(\frac{y_i - \bar{y}}{s_y} \right)$$

$\frac{1}{N-1}$, where s is the sample standard deviation, and N is the number of observations. While this specification produces a measure bounded between $[-1, 1]$, this measure considers the relationship between standardized variables x and y . The division by s_x and s_y removes the original scaling of the individual variables, and with it information that is meaningful for our purposes – such as, whether the positions over economic and socio-cultural issues have different dispersion.

However, to demonstrate the robustness of our analyses, we re-estimated our key results using Pearson's correlation coefficient between economic and social positioning of political parties as the dependent variable. The results, leading to substantively unaltered conclusions, are available in figure 7.

Table 4: Competition axis slopes

Country	Year	$\beta_{weighted}$	$ \beta_{weighted} $
Austria	1999	-1.024342	1.024342
Austria	2002	-1.282809	1.282809
Austria	2006	-1.260742	1.260742
Austria	2010	-0.9769256	0.9769256
Austria	2014	-0.8571687	0.8571687
Belgium	1999	-0.8205225	0.8205225
Belgium	2002	-0.6770718	0.6770718
Belgium	2006	-0.5803423	0.5803423
Belgium	2010	-0.7336464	0.7336464
Belgium	2014	-0.3708416	0.3708416
Denmark	1999	-0.4287525	0.4287525
Denmark	2002	-0.3861543	0.3861543
Denmark	2006	-0.4677216	0.4677216
Denmark	2010	-0.4547129	0.4547129
Denmark	2014	-0.1584186	0.1584186
Finland	1999	-0.2839435	0.2839435
Finland	2002	-0.5233199	0.5233199
Finland	2006	-0.2790157	0.2790157
Finland	2010	-0.0830977	0.0830977
Finland	2014	-0.1493756	0.1493756
France	1999	-0.633356	0.633356
France	2002	-1.414059	1.414059
France	2006	-0.9280676	0.9280676
France	2010	-1.16358	1.16358
France	2014	-0.9864023	0.9864023
Germany	1999	-0.8597402	0.8597402
Germany	2002	-0.4250943	0.4250943
Germany	2006	-0.413591	0.413591
Germany	2010	-0.0962652	0.0962652
Germany	2014	-0.5305483	0.5305483
Greece	1999	-0.7708135	0.7708135
Greece	2002	-0.4641119	0.4641119
Greece	2006	-0.4025638	0.4025638
Greece	2010	-0.2715483	0.2715483
Greece	2014	-0.6144051	0.6144051
Ireland	1999	-0.2153741	0.2153741
Ireland	2002	-0.4453936	0.4453936
Ireland	2006	-0.7203393	0.7203393
Ireland	2010	-0.7031227	0.7031227
Ireland	2014	-0.5400375	0.5400375
Italy	1999	-0.486511	0.486511
Italy	2002	-0.6338887	0.6338887
Italy	2006	-0.9294118	0.9294118
Italy	2010	-1.306974	1.306974
Italy	2014	-1.12711	1.12711
Netherlands	1999	-0.4526653	0.4526653
Netherlands	2002	-0.5548333	0.5548333
Netherlands	2006	-0.2285075	0.2285075
Netherlands	2010	-0.2209007	0.2209007
Netherlands	2014	-0.2371722	0.2371722
Norway	2010	-0.4814965	0.4814965
Norway	2014	-0.6188669	0.6188669
Portugal	1999	-1.236887	1.236887
Portugal	2002	-0.9769352	0.9769352
Portugal	2006	-0.9670945	0.9670945
Portugal	2010	-1.089944	1.089944
Portugal	2014	-0.5010697	0.5010697
Spain	1999	-1.039778	1.039778
Spain	2002	-1.041365	1.041365
Spain	2006	-1.397525	1.397525
Spain	2010	-1.323291	1.323291
Spain	2014	-1.329088	1.329088
Sweden	1999	-0.4325406	0.4325406
Sweden	2002	-0.0731789	0.0731789
Sweden	2006	-0.402514	0.402514
Sweden	2010	-0.2988808	0.2988808
Sweden	2014	-0.3938017	0.3938017
Switzerland	2010	-0.9774293	0.9774293
Switzerland	2014	-1.007275	1.007275
UK	1999	-0.9729655	0.9729655
UK	2002	-1.263558	1.263558
UK	2006	-0.8674403	0.8674403
UK	2010	-0.6941156	0.6941156
UK	2014	-0.8258399	0.8258399

Robustness Checks: Model Replications

Table 5: HLM replication of models 6 and 12 in table 3

	(1)	(2)
Mixed countries	-0.0417 (0.0878)	
Catholic countries	0.429*** (0.0915)	
Denomination Difference		0.00311*** (0.000618)
Denomination Difference ²		2.95e-05*** (9.62e-06)
Cathol. w/ external threat	-0.493*** (0.103)	-0.520*** (0.101)
GDP per capita	8.87e-06** (4.52e-06)	8.11e-06* (4.43e-06)
Ethnic fragmentation	0.678** (0.287)	0.485* (0.289)
Religious attendance	0.0443 (0.112)	0.0932 (0.114)
Net migration per capita	0.0336 (1.547)	0.581 (1.506)
Income inequality (gini)	0.0290** (0.0135)	0.0217 (0.0133)
Disproportionality index	0.0127* (0.00688)	0.0191*** (0.00638)
Constant	-1.047 (0.978)	-1.095 (0.976)
Observations	74	74
Countries	16	16

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Assumes that dependent variables do not include stochastic error.

Table 6: Replication of results from table 3 with Belgium not coded as ‘Catholic exception’

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Mixed Countries	-0.0777 (0.247)	-0.0777 (0.248)	0.0534 (0.128)	-0.222 (0.212)	0.0300 (0.211)	-0.119 (0.0701)						
Catholic Countries	0.452** (0.200)	0.485** (0.196)	0.362** (0.129)	0.216 (0.241)	0.555** (0.193)	0.419*** (0.102)						
Denomination difference							0.00333*** (0.00112)	0.00358*** (0.00106)	0.00232** (0.000808)	0.00262** (0.00122)	0.00372*** (0.000950)	0.00260*** (0.000774)
Denomination difference ²												0.0000357*** (0.0000101)
Cathol. w/ external threat		-0.515*** (0.0748)	-0.494*** (0.114)	-0.615*** (0.160)	-0.482*** (0.129)	-0.299** (0.108)		-0.530*** (0.0669)	-0.535*** (0.0950)	-0.585*** (0.137)	-0.501*** (0.118)	-0.443*** (0.0986)
Socialist gov't years			0.000388 (0.00728)						-0.00194 (0.00682)			
Christ Dem gov't years			-0.00370 (0.00247)						-0.00454 (0.00266)			
Income inequality (gini)			0.0431*** (0.0114)			0.0742*** (0.0160)			0.0367*** (0.0110)			0.0633*** (0.0133)
Ethnic fragmentation				0.741* (0.365)		0.105 (0.342)				0.420 (0.384)		-0.0767 (0.333)
Religious attendance				-0.198 (0.178)		0.251* (0.138)				-0.107 (0.155)		0.205 (0.118)
Net migration per capita				-2.045 (1.601)		-0.819 (0.680)				-1.564 (1.667)		-1.118 (0.672)
Age of democracy					0.000731 (0.00132)						0.000322 (0.00103)	
GDP per capita					-0.00000560 (0.00000761)	0.0000164*** (0.00000468)					-0.00000436 (0.00000734)	0.0000163*** (0.00000532)
Disproportionality index					0.00884 (0.0180)	-0.00365 (0.00777)					0.0153 (0.0154)	0.00745 (0.00700)
Constant	0.627*** (0.180)	0.627*** (0.181)	-0.614 (0.503)	1.759 (1.094)	0.655* (0.370)	-3.577*** (1.171)	0.778*** (0.0932)	0.789*** (0.0926)	-0.220 (0.433)	1.346 (0.858)	0.817** (0.292)	-3.067*** (1.006)
<i>N</i>	74	74	74	74	74	74	74	74	74	74	74	74
<i>Countries</i>	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16
<i>R</i> ²	0.357	0.444	0.657	0.498	0.507	0.710	0.366	0.459	0.652	0.475	0.533	0.708

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table 7: Replication of results from table 3 using Pearson correlations as dependent variable

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Mixed countries	-0.0389 (0.127)	-0.0848 (0.0554)		
Catholic countries	0.321** (0.109)	0.257*** (0.0777)		
Denomination Difference			0.00226*** (0.000539)	0.00195*** (0.000573)
Denomination Difference ²				0.0000226*** (0.00000561)
Cathol. w/ external threat	-0.275*** (0.0484)	-0.226** (0.0862)	-0.269*** (0.0568)	-0.235** (0.0798)
GDP per capita		0.00000860* (0.00000429)		0.00000777* (0.00000425)
Ethnic fragmentation		0.265 (0.203)		0.0956 (0.206)
Religious attendance		0.112 (0.102)		0.157 (0.0935)
Net migration per capita		-0.202 (1.320)		0.339 (1.293)
Income inequality (gini)		0.0343** (0.0118)		0.0297** (0.0127)
Disproportionality index		0.00425 (0.00476)		0.00915 (0.00551)
Constant	0.523*** (0.102)	-1.442 (0.909)	0.634*** (0.0495)	-1.574* (0.861)
<i>N</i>	74	74	74	74
<i>Countries</i>	16	16	16	16
<i>R</i> ²	0.364	0.559	0.334	0.556

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Case Studies

France: The Secular Republic Built on the Religious Cleavage

France, and its three republican regimes in place since 1870, is the archetype of the modern secular state. However, the French state is fundamentally rooted in state-church conflict and French political competition remains framed by the religious cleavage which was a dominant divide at the birth of modern French democracy. Having incorporated other political conflicts, the secular-religious divide has persisted into the current Fifth Republic.

The Third French Republic was born from the Prussian defeat of France in 1870-1871, and during its initial years seemed to be a weak and temporary regime, likely to see the fate of the previous two short-lived republics. The main aim of the conservative right was the restoration of the monarchy, while the republican liberals were divided between various political strands. What these groups shared, however, was a unifying view on the role of religion in society. While the conservatives hoped to use the state-church conflict as a mobilizing means for returning the monarchy, “anti-clericalism provided the ‘true cement’ of the otherwise divided Republicans” (Kalyvas 1996 p.122).

Consequently, the republican regime made anti-clericalism its central concern, and the creation of secular education became synonymous with building the modern republic. By the late 1870s, the liberals started introducing legislation that would break the traditionally strong role of the Catholic church in education and social support provisions. This included obligatory school attendance, eliminating tuition, and recruiting only devoted republicans to run public assistance administration, replacing all clerics in central advisory bodies by 1880 (Morgan 2002: 129, Manow and Palier 2009: 152). This liberal attack on the church unleashed what Manow and Palier (2009: 153) termed “a veritable *guerrilla scolaire*,” where the church and its supporters fought for state subsidies to private, Catholic schools, and generally against the involvement of the state in education and social policy. Although the French Catholics failed to build a confessional defense party¹⁹, Kalyvas (1996: 115) contends that “the state-church conflict developed into the most salient cleavage and the key ideological issue of the Third Republic. It dominated politics at all levels, from parliament to the last village, and overshadowed every other political and social question.”

The potent religious cleavage in France absorbed economic interests. Anti-clericalism was a powerful political tool of the liberals. It brought together a broad coalition of middle-classes, as well as anti-clerical peasants, opposed to the church due to its historical role in land tenure and the rural economy (Gould 1999: 57, 59). The opposition to the Catholic church generally rallies the political left, as expressed in the words of a radical republican leader, Léon Gambetta: “Le cléricalisme, voilà l’ennemi”(cited in Gould 1999: 62). Similarly, Manow discusses the presence of not only industrial communism in France (and in Catholic southern Europe), but also of ‘backwoods communism’ based on “radicalized, rural population deeply rooted in anti-clericalism” (Manow 2013: 92). The political poles were thus decisively defined by the secular-religious cleavage which dominated the class cleavage in late industrializing France (Manow and Palier 2009: 148).

The deep religious divide continues into the post-war era. The Fourth Republic sees the rise of the

¹⁹Gould (1999) and Kalyvas (1996) attribute this failure to the fact that the Catholic church considered the Third Republic too weak to last, rather calculating with the collapse of the regime and the return of a religiously inclined monarchy.

Christian democratic Mouvement Républicain Populaire (MRP) (van Kersbergen 1995). However, it is Charles De Gaulle – the founder of the current Fifth Republic and its political right-wing – who presents himself as the main defender of Catholic interests in post-war France. By initiating the Barange Law, which grants public payments to students attending Catholic schools, Gaullists “had cleverly presented themselves as the better defenders of the Catholic cause,” (Manow and Palier 2009: 164) than the MRP. De Gaulle’s founding political project is deeply rooted in the religious cleavage. In his own words, a key to Gaullist success is the ability “to consolidate and regroup all the forces of Catholic origin”(De Gaulle, cited in Manow and Palier 2009: 164).

The religious cleavage in France is thus a source of deep and lasting conflict, which has associated the political left with intense opposition to the church, while the right remains at least a tacit defender of religious interests and values. Recent and ongoing political debates on non-economic issues, such as gay marriage, prove highly polarizing and mobilizing, uniting the left behind secular liberal positions, while the right defends socially conservative, religiously-inspired views.

Sweden: The Church-State

Sweden offers an example of a long-standing collaborative relationship between the church and the state. This relative symbiosis dates back to the Reformation, during which the monarch associated the church apparatus to the state (Anderson 2009: 211). In the context of early state-building, the church is fused with the state. Higher education is placed into state hands with the aims of producing educated elites that can serve in the state administration, while the clergy remains deeply involved in lower education and its management (Morgan 2002: 132). Thanks to this secular-religious collaboration in education and social provision, the late 19th century does not see any significant liberal attack on the church which would set off a spiral of conflict, producing a politicized religious cleavage.

The Lutheran church did not oppose state involvement in education and social welfare, it rather viewed the state as a partner (Anderson 2009: 212). Inversely, the state used the church as an apparatus for executing its policies. The church dominated local governing councils, so that the “local church was, in a sense, the local government” (Morgan 2002: 133). Similarly, although poor relief was taken up by the state in the 19th century, the pastor remained a member of the relief board (Anderson 2009: 221). Anderson (2009) on the one hand highlights the conservative nature of the Swedish church which was challenged in the late 19th century by opposition to its state-granted privileges, leading to the foundation of various ‘free churches’. On the other hand, she underscores that the Swedish church was essentially reactive, and by the end of the 19th century did not have significant political influence (Anderson 2009: 219).

In the absence of a state-church conflict over modernization and secularization, the main political impetus of the turn of the 20th century centered around the issue of democratization. The liberals – supported by a collection of urban middle classes and small farmers – ally with the social democrats in a push for universal suffrage and parliamentary government (Rueschemeyer et al. 1992). The social democrats initially intensely oppose the fusion of the church and the state, however, in order not to offend religious workers, they begin to moderate their positions in the first years of the 20th century (Anderson 2009: 130). By the end of the 1920s the social democratic party accepts religion by establishing a party organization “open to SAP members of all ecumenical faiths and [having] the effect of depoliticizing religion within the party” (Anderson 2009: 132). The church similarly moderated its conservatism and accepted social reform (Anderson 2009: 130).

The acceptance of religion on the part of the Swedish social democrats and the social moderation on the part of the church ensured that religion did not reinforce the class cleavage which eventually emerged as central to Swedish politics. The absence of religious conflict in Sweden finally facilitated the formation of the center left, red-green coalition between the social democrats and agrarians in the 1930s which framed Swedish politics as primarily an economic contest between the left and the bourgeois blocks (see Manow 2013). While today the competition between the major Swedish parties revolves primarily around economic issues, smaller challenger parties, such as the Greens and the radical right Sweden Democrats, compete along a separate socio-cultural dimension.