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*Published in:*  
Welfare Democracies and Party Politics

2018

*Document Version:*  
Peer reviewed version (aka post-print)

[Link to publication](#)

*Citation for published version (APA):*  
Polk, J., & Rovny, J. (2018). Welfare Democracies and Multidimensional Party Competition in Europe. In P. Manow, B. Palier, & H. Schwander (Eds.), *Welfare Democracies and Party Politics* Oxford University Press.

*Total number of authors:*  
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# Welfare Democracies and Multidimensional Party Competition in Europe

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Key Words: political parties, party competition, political economies, welfare capitalisms, challenger parties

## **Abstract**

This chapter explains the relationship between the four European welfare democracies (Scandinavian, Continental, Southern, and Liberal) and multidimensional party competition. It examines the systematic variation of the relationship between party positions and salience on economic and cultural politics. The expectation is that Southern welfare democracies facilitate closer association between economic and cultural issues, whereas Nordic welfare democracies produce party systems where competition between mainstream parties has been defined by economic politics. The Continental welfare democracies stand between the two extremes. The argument is tested with the most recent (2014) waves of data from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) and the European Elections Studies (EES). The analysis suggests different political opportunity structures,

and consequently different behavior of radical challenger parties of Western Europe. Here, the diverse types of welfare democracies again correlate with the flavors of radicalism.

# Introduction

Building from Esping-Andersen's (1990) typology of three worlds of welfare capitalism, Manow, Schwander, and Palier (2015) identify four distinct welfare democracies in European societies, and argue that there is an interdependent and reinforcing relationship between these welfare democracies and multidimensional party competition across Europe.<sup>1</sup> The addition of a separate Southern form of welfare democracies (see also Manow 2015), is based on the understanding that if 'countries cluster on policy because they cluster on politics' (Shalev 2007, 289), then this happens differently in the Southern Europe.

In this chapter, we demonstrate that the four types of welfare democracies do indeed correlate with different types of party systems. Specifically, the form of welfare capitalism affects the relationship between the socio-economic and socio-cultural dimensions of competition within party systems, leaving redistributive questions more independently prominent to mainstream party contests in some, while economic and cultural issues fuse in others. The association between these dimensions, in turn, creates patterns of mainstream party competition that are more or less conducive to the particular mobilization strategies of political entrepreneurs, and this differs across the welfare state types.<sup>2</sup> The four part welfare democracy classification thus enhances our understanding of patterns in multidimensional competition and the issue entrepreneurial strategies employed by European parties.

The chapter is innovative in its use of recently available data from 2014 and in providing empirical support for the importance of the Southern welfare democracies designation in explaining electoral competition. Variation in the relationship between socio-economic and socio-cultural party competition is consistent with expectations derived from the four welfare

capitalisms, and the Southern welfare democracies display patterns of electoral behaviour that clearly differentiate them from Esping-Andersen's other worlds of welfare capitalism.

In the Scandinavian welfare democracies, the economic dimension primarily structures mainstream party competition and electoral choice, whereas the cultural dimension is more thoroughly intertwined with the economy in the party systems of the South. This is evident in both the salience of socio-economic and socio-cultural politics for parties, as measured by the 2014 Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) (Polk, Rovny, et al. 2017), and in the determinants of electoral choice for the respondents to the 2014 European Election Study (EES) (Schmitt, Hobolt, and Popa 2015; Schmitt et al. 2015). In the Scandinavian welfare capitalisms, socio-economic preferences strongly predict vote choice for either the major left or major right party, and voter positioning on the socio-cultural dimension is a weaker predictor of mainstream party choice. In Southern welfare democracies, however, cultural attitudes exert relatively greater influence on the decision to vote for the major left or right party, and socio-economic preferences are substantially less powerful predictors than in the Scandinavian systems.

We combine this understanding of variation in the association of the socio-economic and socio-cultural dimensions with insights from the niche party literature (Meguid 2005, 2008) and scholarship on issue entrepreneurship (De Vries and Hobolt 2012; Hobolt and De Vries 2015) to further explain differences in the political opportunity structure for the radical, anti-establishment parties of the Scandinavian, Continental and Southern welfare democracies. In Sweden, for example, a country where economic issues have structured mainstream competition, new parties that mobilize voters along a previously non-dominant dimension of competition, such as the Sweden Democrats, are more likely to be electorally

successful than a new party that focuses on economic left-right politics. We show that non-mainstream parties are much more attentive to socio-economic politics than the major parties in the Scandinavian welfare democracies and that vote choice for radical right parties in this region is strongly driven by voters' cultural preferences. In the countries of the Southern welfare democracies, by contrast, where the socio-economic and socio-economic dimensions are more closely connected, populism is based more on a combination of economic and cultural concerns. The strength of culturally liberal, radical left parties in these systems illustrates this phenomenon.

This chapter thus aims to: 1) explain the relationship between the socio-economic and socio-economic dimensions of party competition across the four welfare capitalisms of Western Europe, and 2) use these insights to explain differences in the forms of radical parties in several of these welfare democracies. To do so, our chapter begins with the origins of distinct types of welfare democracies in Western Europe, with particular emphasis on the relevance of a fourth, specifically Southern type of welfare democracy. In the following section, we develop our argument that differences in the four welfare democracies consistently affected the structure of party competition in these regions, leaving the socio-economic and socio-economic dimensions of politics more orthogonal to one another in the Nordic countries while these two dimensions were much more interrelated, almost unidimensional, in the Southern welfare democracies. This, in turn, creates different political opportunity structures for challenger parties across Western Europe, leading to important differences in the form of populism across European welfare capitalism types. After introducing our primary measure of dimensional association in the following section, we move on to two sections of empirical analysis, one using party-level data and the other focused at the individual-level.

Our strategy in these two empirical sections is to highlight the interrelated responses of party supply and voter demand, which together illustrate the association between welfare democracies and party competition in Western Europe. We end by showing how the patterns of party competition across diverse welfare democracies types facilitate distinctive forms of radicalism across Western Europe, before summarizing and discussing the ramifications of our findings in the concluding section.

## **Welfare Democracy and Party Competition**

### **Welfare Democracies in Western Europe, Three or Four?**

A central argument of Esping-Andersen's *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (1990) is that the distinct welfare state types were the product of particular historical-political trajectories in these various societies. The Liberal welfare states came to have this form because of the relative weakness of the political left in the Anglo-Saxon countries. The dominance of Christian Democratic parties in continental Europe contributed to the emergence of Conservative welfare states in this region, and left-wing power brought about the Social Democratic model in the Nordic countries (Huber and Stephens 2001).

These three welfare state types famously also represent different ideological perspectives on the role of government in the provision of welfare, and the size and scope of the welfare state. State intervention in a Liberal political economy is often limited to cases of market failure and primarily need-based, while the Conservative model targets insiders through social insurance. The state takes on a much larger role, involving a larger portion of the

overall population, in the Social Democratic form of welfare capitalism (see Emmenegger et al. 2015 for a recent review).

Esping-Andersen also expected these types of welfare capitalisms to affect politics, economics, and society in systematic and different ways beyond the welfare state as such. In the introduction to this volume, Manow, Schwander, and Palier propose the strong correlation between these welfare democracies and the Anglo-Saxon, Northern, Continental, and Southern European party systems as a promising avenue for research. This research strategy not only maintains the connection between politics and forms of welfare capitalism that was central to Esping-Andersen, it also answers calls for scholarship on developments in the welfare state after its golden age (See, e.g., Pierson 1995, 2001).

The addition of a distinct Southern type of welfare democracy to the three worlds typology critically engages Esping-Andersen and meets the challenge to avoid treating the worlds of welfare as accepted truth without questioning its premises (van Kersbergen and Vis 2015). Although the introduction of the Southern welfare democracies represents an innovation on the original template, it is not without precedent (Leibfried 1993; Ferrara 1996; Hook 2015; Manow 2015). Indeed, within comparative welfare state research there is “broad acceptance of this fourth world” (Emmenegger et al. 2015, 10).

The red-green coalition between farmers and urban workers was crucial to the development of Nordic welfare democracies. In the South, however, strong Church-State conflict undermined the possibility of cooperation between religious farmers and anti-clerical workers (Manow 2015). This produced durable differences between the party systems and the nature of party competition in Northern and Southern European countries, such as the heightened electoral viability of communist parties in the South. We concur with this reading of the



importance of Church-State tension (or its absence) for understanding differences in party systems and welfare democracies.

More specifically, the Church-State interaction is critical to explaining the relationship between the two dimensions that structure the party space of most advanced democracies in Europe (Manow, Schwander, Palier, introduction to this volume). But one must also acknowledge the problem of the relatively long historical period between religious conflict and the structure of contemporary party systems (Kitschelt and Rehm, this volume). We therefore move one link forward in the causal chain, and examine the connection between the four types of welfare democracies and their impact on multidimensional party competition in Europe. As the editors of this volume point out in the introduction, there are patterns to the party competition across welfare democracies. For example, the countries with generous welfare regimes all have proportional electoral systems and multi-party competition, but there is variation in the dominant electoral and party coalitions: red-agrarian in the North, Social and Christian Democracy on the continent, and sharp divisions within the left in the South. We anticipate that the four welfare democracy types also coincide with the shape of the space in which parties compete, namely the relationship between the socio-economic and socio-cultural dimensions of competition. The following section develops this idea.

## **Welfare Democracies and Political Dimensionality**

It is widely known that economic issues shape, at least in part, the politics of advanced democracies around the world. Questions surrounding the levels of government spending and taxation, the appropriate role of the state in regulating the economy, and the amount

of wealth redistribution from the rich to the poor tend to cluster together in a single socio-economic dimension around which the major political parties of Europe organize themselves. The extensive economic voting literature (e.g. Lewis-Beck 1990; Powell and Whitten 1993; Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier 2000) illustrates the enduring relevance of the economic dimension for electoral competition. Yet, since at least the mid-1970s, a socio-cultural dimension of competition has emerged in many advanced European democracies.

The socio-cultural dimension, or what has also been grouped under the heading of ‘New Politics’, is made up of a more diverse set of issues than the economic dimension, and is therefore more challenging to succinctly conceptualize. The salient political issues that form this dimension – such as: the role of religion in the public sphere; ethnic or sexual minority rights; the position of women in society and family; the acceptance of diversity; and the amount of supranational cooperation – vary in content but are all less immediately associated with the economy. Despite different conceptions and names, multiple researchers stress the important role of this cultural dimension in contemporary political contestation throughout Europe (Inglehart 1977, 1990; Franklin et al. 1992; Kitschelt 1992, 1994; Hooghe, Marks, and Wilson 2002, Marks et al. 2006; Kreisi et al. 2006, 2008; Hooghe and Marks 2009; Häusermann and Kriesi 2015).

The existence of multidimensional party competition in European democracies invites examinations of how the economic and cultural dimensions relate to one another across different contexts and requires explanations of any variation that these examinations might uncover. Prior research indicates that in some countries the economic and cultural dimensions are rather independent while in others they are closely related (Bakker, Jolly, and Polk 2012; Rovny and Edwards 2012). Further, the salience of one dimension relative to the other

also differs from country to country (Kitschelt and Rehm, this volume).

Some party systems combine economic and cultural preferences, consequently aligning party placements more uni-dimensionally. Other party systems, on the contrary, feature competition along one dimension between a certain set of parties, while other parties compete on alternative, unaligned issues, thus increasing the dimensional complexity of the party system. We have theoretical reasons to expect that these diverse competitive scenarios are a function of the particular historical trajectories of a given party system, and that these trajectories are associated with the development of particular welfare democracies. As a result, we expect to see distinct patterns of party competition across diverse types of welfare capitalism.

Following Manow's (2015) insight about the central role of the Church-State conflict in the formation of political coalitions in Europe, we expect that these coalitions formulated the dimensional contours of European party systems, while simultaneously initiating the formation of distinct welfare democracies. The absence of Church-State conflict not only facilitated red-green coalitions in the Nordic countries, but also led to the dominance of economic politics. The major left and major right parties of the North differ primarily in their economic views, much less so in their cultural preferences. On the contrary, the tension between Church and State in the Southern welfare democracies led to radicalization and splits in the political left, and it also kept religion – and by extension – cultural politics more firmly on the agenda during the formative years of these welfare democracies and their party systems. Consequently, the party systems of the South fused economic and (anti)religious preferences. Their major parties have traditionally been divided not only by economic differences, but also by distinct views on the role of religion in public life. Here, the

economic and cultural dimensions are much more interrelated, and cultural politics takes on greater significance for electoral competition even among the major competing parties. As we demonstrate below, this remains the case even in the context of an economic crisis that hit Southern Europe particularly hard. Our expectations are therefore that these two types of welfare democracies will be associated with extremely different party systems. Given the importance of Christian Democratic parties for the development of the Continental welfare democracies (Manow and van Kersbergen 2009) and the prevalence of coalitions between Christian and Social Democratic parties, we expect the party systems of the Continental welfare democracies to reside between the Northern and Southern party spaces, much as they do geographically.

These different political configurations stemming from the historical divides that shaped the different welfare democracies produce divergent political environments, and these environments in turn provide alternative spaces for political strategizing. The literature on challenger or niche parties helps to explain how welfare democracies created different political opportunity structures (Kitschelt 1986; Arzheimer and Carter 2006) within the party systems that in turn influenced the electoral fortunes of different political forces and strategies. The next section develops expectations about the diverging characteristics of successful non-dominant or newcomer political parties in the Northern and Southern European welfare democracies.

## Welfare Democracies and Issue Entrepreneurial Strategies

A central insight of the scholarship on niche parties is that these types of parties reject class-based (often economic) politics, emphasize new issues that cut across existing divisions, and are narrower in their issue appeals than mainstream parties (Meguid 2005, 2008). In a related argument, DeVries and Hobolt (2012) stress the lack of previous governing experience – rather than ‘niche-ness’ – in arguing that challenger parties are rewarded for what they refer to as issue entrepreneurship. Building on Riker’s work on issue manipulation and heresthetics (1982, 1986, 1996) and Carmines and Stimson’s research on issue evolution in a two party context (1986, 1989, 1993), Hobolt and DeVries modify these theories for multiparty competition and define issue entrepreneurship as: “a strategy by which parties mobilise issues that have been largely ignored in party competition and adopt a policy position on that issue that is substantially different from the mainstream status quo” (Hobolt and De Vries 2015, 3). In essence, political parties that would be losers on the dominant dimension of competition have an additional – non-ideological – incentive to restructure political competition by introducing and politicizing a previously non-salient issue dimension.

This is not to suggest that challenger parties, such as many radical right parties, are not committed ideologues – most reflect genuine ideological preferences, and have core social bases. The niche and challenger party literature only suggests that the success of these parties is likely to be greater if their primary political preferences lie in a domain uncharted by their mainstream competitors. Challenger parties are thus likely to appear and thrive in particular positions of a given party system, away from the primary line of mainstream political conflict.

These ideas help us understand the differences between the political opportunity structures for challenger parties in the various welfare democracies of Europe. Growing out of the social movements research, the term political opportunity structure refers to the structural or environmental factors that political entrepreneurs encounter, or as Kitschelt (1986, 58) puts it, the “specific configurations of resources, institutional arrangements and historical precedents for social mobilization, which facilitate the development of protest movements in some instances and constrain them in others.” In the Scandinavian setting, the lack of State-Church conflict facilitated the emergence of a political space dominated by economic competition between major parties rather than cultural politics. This created an environment where it is difficult for a new actor to be anything other than a ‘political loser’ on the existing dimension of competition, because the older, more established parties are organized around economic issues and have already positioned themselves throughout the economic left-right dimension. Such a political space is conducive to newer political parties that focus on mobilizing the salience of cultural competition rather than economic politics. Hence, in Northern welfare democracies we find anti-establishment radicalism represented most strongly by parties that are defined by the cultural dimension, for example the strongly anti-immigration stance of the Sweden Democrats (Dahlström and Sundell 2012; Dahlström and Esaiasson 2013; Loxbo 2010, 2014) or the Danish People’s Party (Rydgren 2004).<sup>3</sup>

Yet, the cultural dimension is associated with the economic dimension in the party systems of the Southern welfare democracies, which makes cultural competition more central to major party conflict there. This, coupled with the durable division on the left between reformists and radicals, produces a party space that actually rewards an issue entrepreneurial strategy focused more heavily on the economic dimension of competition. Our expectation is

that the economic dimension will be more important for mainstream parties and their voters in the Northern welfare democracies, but that the cultural dimension will be more important to major parties and supporters of these parties in the Southern welfare democracies. However, the perspective changes when looking at contemporary newcomer, or challenger parties across these two types of welfare capitalism. To succeed in the Nordic countries, new parties must focus on cultural politics, rather than economic left-right, which is already dominated by the major parties. For political party newcomers in the Southern European welfare democracies, however, the opportunity structure is such that heightened attention to economic concerns are more central. Our analysis of the variable success of challenger parties in the different welfare democracies is thus consistent with recent research showing that mainstream centre-right parties are more successful at fending off radical right wing challenges on immigration when the economic and cultural dimensions of competition are more closely correlated with one another (Pardos-Prado 2015). In the next section, we introduce the data and method used to measure the relationship between the economic and cultural dimensions of party competition in different welfare democracies.

## **Assessing Dimensional Association**

We begin by examining our expectations about divergent dimensional association by using data from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) on party positioning in Europe to summarize the relationship between the economic and cultural dimensions across the welfare democracies of Europe. The CHES trend file includes party positions on the economic dimension and cultural dimension over five time points, 1999, 2002, 2006, 2010 and 2014

(Bakker et al. 2015). The cultural dimension is measured as a continuum from green, alternative, and libertarian positions on social policies to an opposing pole of traditional, authoritarian, and nationalist stances, or, in the terminology of CHES, ‘GAL-TAN’ (Hooghe, Marks, and Wilson 2002; Marks et al. 2006). We code Ireland and the United Kingdom as Liberal welfare democracies, while Austria, Belgium, Germany, France,<sup>4</sup> and the Netherlands are included as Continental welfare democracies. Denmark, Finland, and Sweden make up the Northern welfare democracies, and the Southern welfare democracies consist of Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Spain.<sup>5</sup>

To evaluate the association between economic and cultural positions, we consider the regression coefficient when economic party positions are regressed on cultural party positions, weighted by party vote share and averaged over the five time points in the dataset. Specifically, we focus on the  $\beta$  coefficient from the regression equation  $y_i = \alpha + \beta x_i$ . This coefficient expresses the extent to which  $y$  and  $x$  are associated. This coefficient also describes the slope of what Kitschelt (1992, 1994) has called the ‘axis of competition’ – the dominant line of political conflict in a given society. The larger the values of  $|\beta|$ , the steeper the slope, which means that economic and cultural issues are more correlated, and when  $|\beta| > 1$  competition tends to occur over the range of cultural preferences more so than over the range of economic preferences.

Figure 1 illustrates this on the cases of Denmark and Spain. In Denmark, the mainstream parties, such as the Social Democrats (SD) and the Liberals (V), differ primarily on their economic stances, while minor (or formerly minor) parties, such as the radical right Danish People’s Party (DF) or the Danish Social Liberal Party (RV), stand aside. Here, the correlation between economic and cultural preferences is low, and the  $\beta$  value is closer to 0. In Spain,



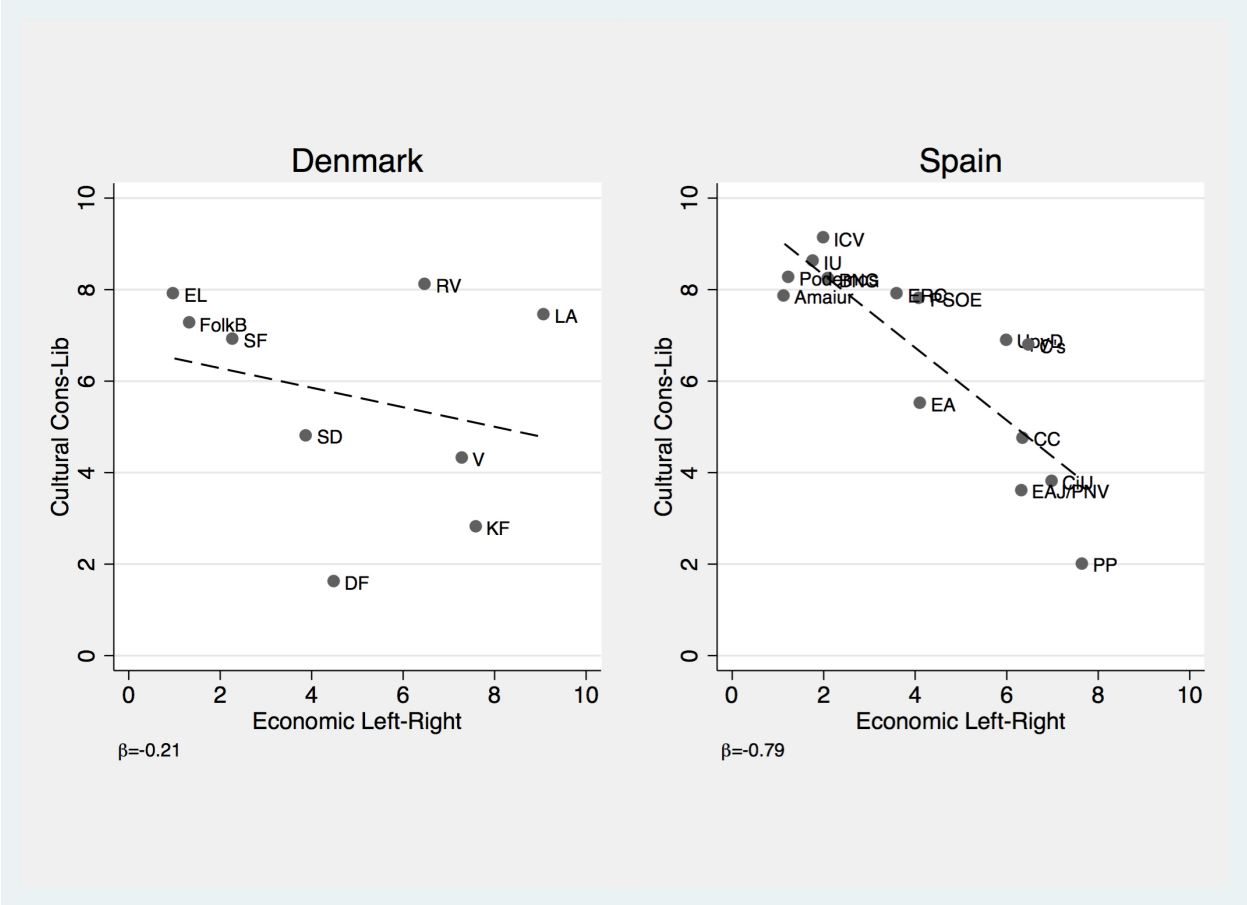


Figure 1: Denmark and Spain

CHES 2014

on the contrary, political parties align along the axis of competition which spans cultural issues almost as much as economic issues. The major parties, the Socialists (PSOE) and the People's Party (PP), differ on cultural placements more than on economic placements. Here economic and cultural preferences associate more strongly, and  $|\beta|$  is significantly greater.

We can now turn to consider the structure of party competition expressed by our  $\beta$  measure across western European party systems. Figure 2 demonstrates the correlation between economic and cultural party positions across the different types of welfare democracies, including 95% confidence intervals. We see that Liberal and Continental welfare democracies tend to have moderately large  $|\beta|$  scores, or what we would identify as moderate correlation between economic and cultural positions. Contrary to these, and consistent with our expectations, Nordic welfare democracies tend to have very flat competition axes, meaning that competition tends to occur primarily along economic issues, while cultural issues form a secondary, orthogonal dimension. Almost the opposite is true in Southern welfare democracies where competition axes tend to be very steep, meaning that cultural issues amalgamate economic issues, and competition is significantly infused with cultural conflict.

Figure 2 thus provides support for the expectation that the various welfare democracies of advanced European democracies are associated with consistent patterns in the multidimensional party space of these countries. This should also have an impact on party strategies and electoral choice. We turn to these analyses in the next section.

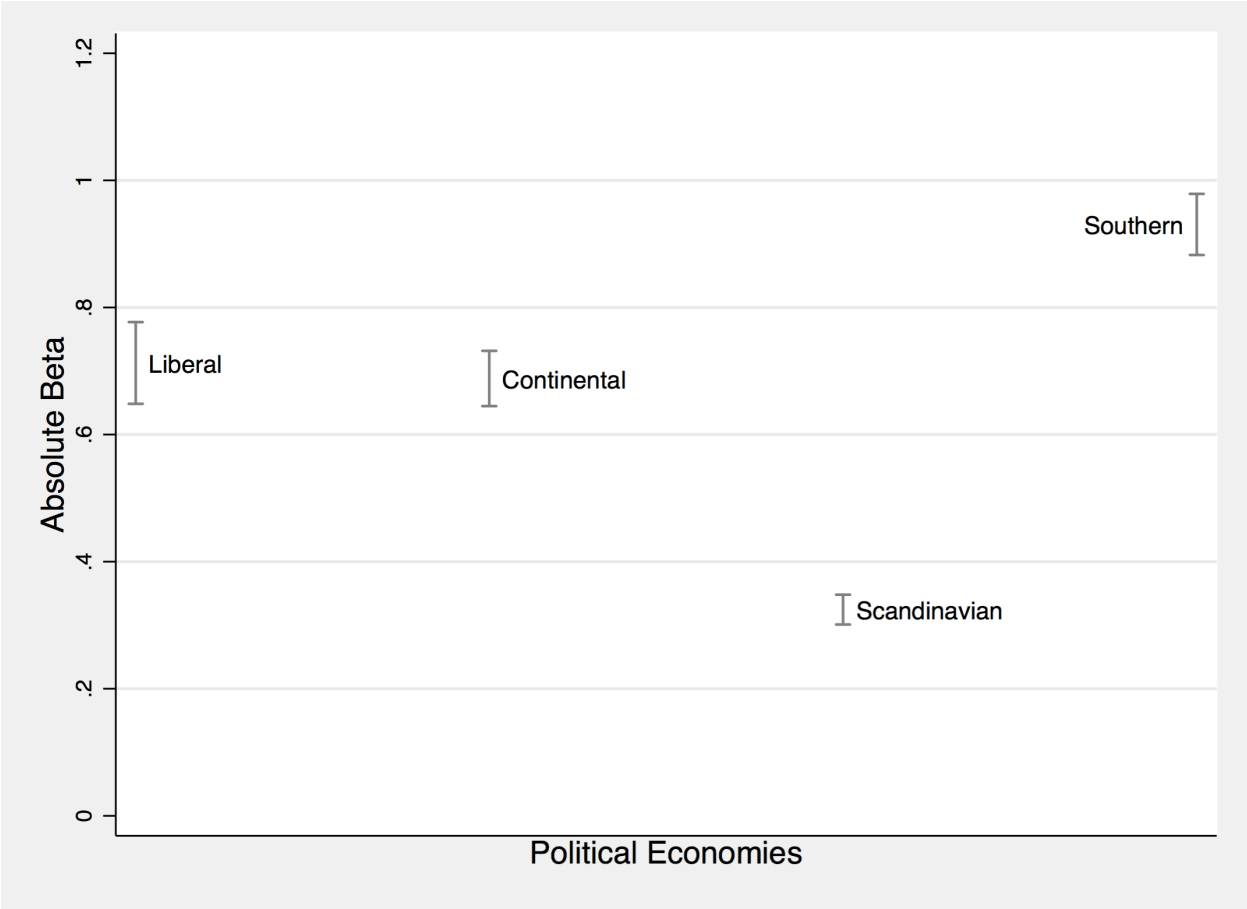


Figure 2: Absolute competition axis slopes

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

# Party Strategies and Political Outcomes Across Welfare Democracies

For the reasons described above, the parties included in the radical party families of the CHES coding scheme frequently contest orthogonal political issues that do not easily fit the mainstream discourse of the political context. Similarly, political parties tend to ‘own’ certain issues or issue dimensions that are closer to their political identity (Budge and Farlie 1983; Petrocik 1996; Green-Pedersen 2007; Stubager and Slothus 2013). In addition to a party’s position on various dimensions and policies, the CHES asks respondents to assign a salience score related to three dimensions for each party. These 11-point salience scales run from 0 ‘no importance’ to 10 ‘great importance’. Figure 3 displays the salience of economic issues in 2014 for parties of the radical left, mainstream left, mainstream right, and radical right within each of the four clusters of European welfare democracies, including 95% confidence intervals. The figure demonstrates that while radical left and major parties (both of the left and right) tend to emphasize economic issues, radical right parties –not surprisingly– emphasize them significantly less.<sup>6</sup> Simultaneously, while radical right parties in the Southern welfare democracies tend to discuss economic issues more, radical right parties in the Scandinavian welfare democracies tend to be least vocal about them, which is consistent with our expectations.

Turning to cultural issues, figure 4 shows that while radical left and major parties tend to deemphasize cultural issues, radical right parties tend to stress them. Here, again, there are interesting differences across the European welfare democracies. In the Nordic countries both radical right and radical left parties place greater salience on cultural issues than major

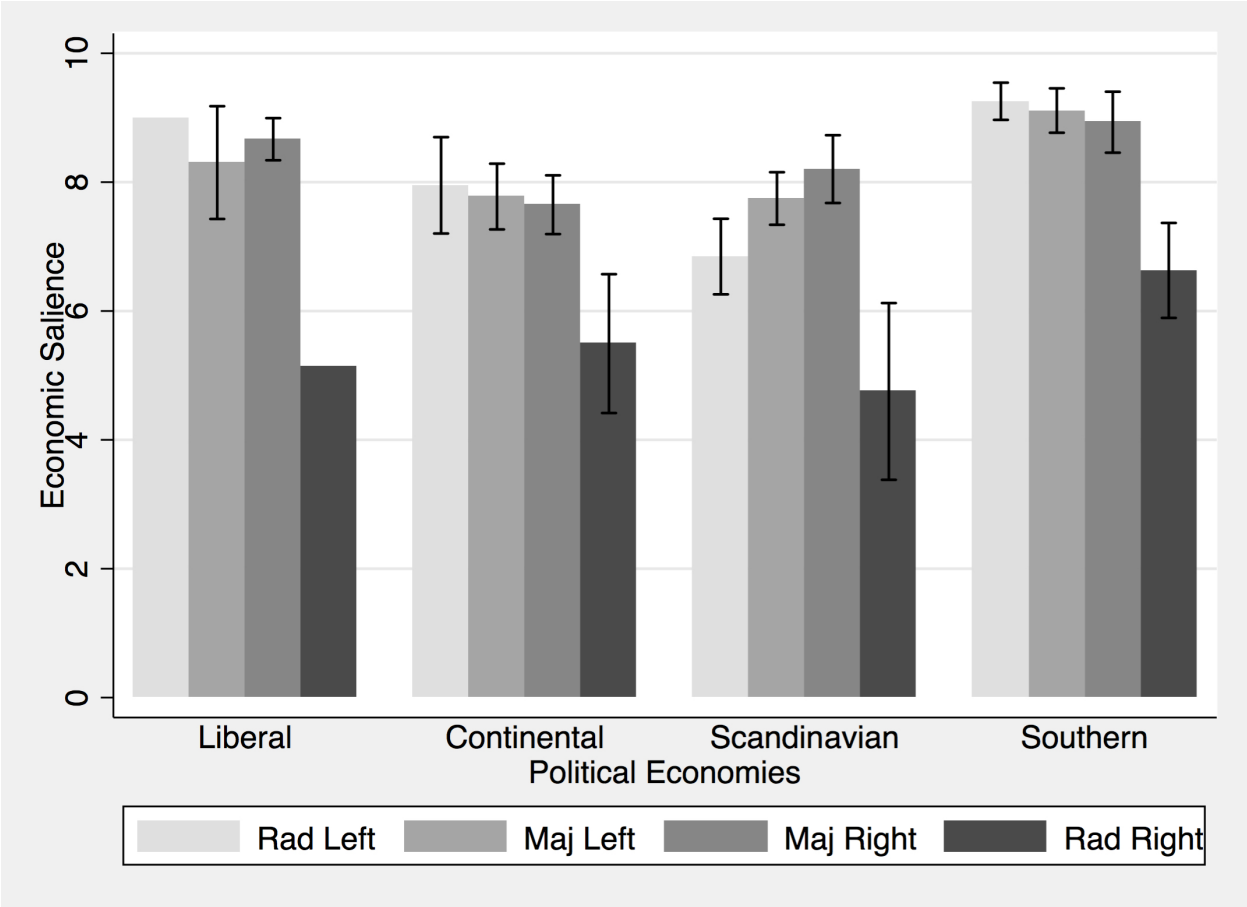


Figure 3: Economic Salience

Economic issue salience of parties averaged over observed years by political economy (CHES 2014).

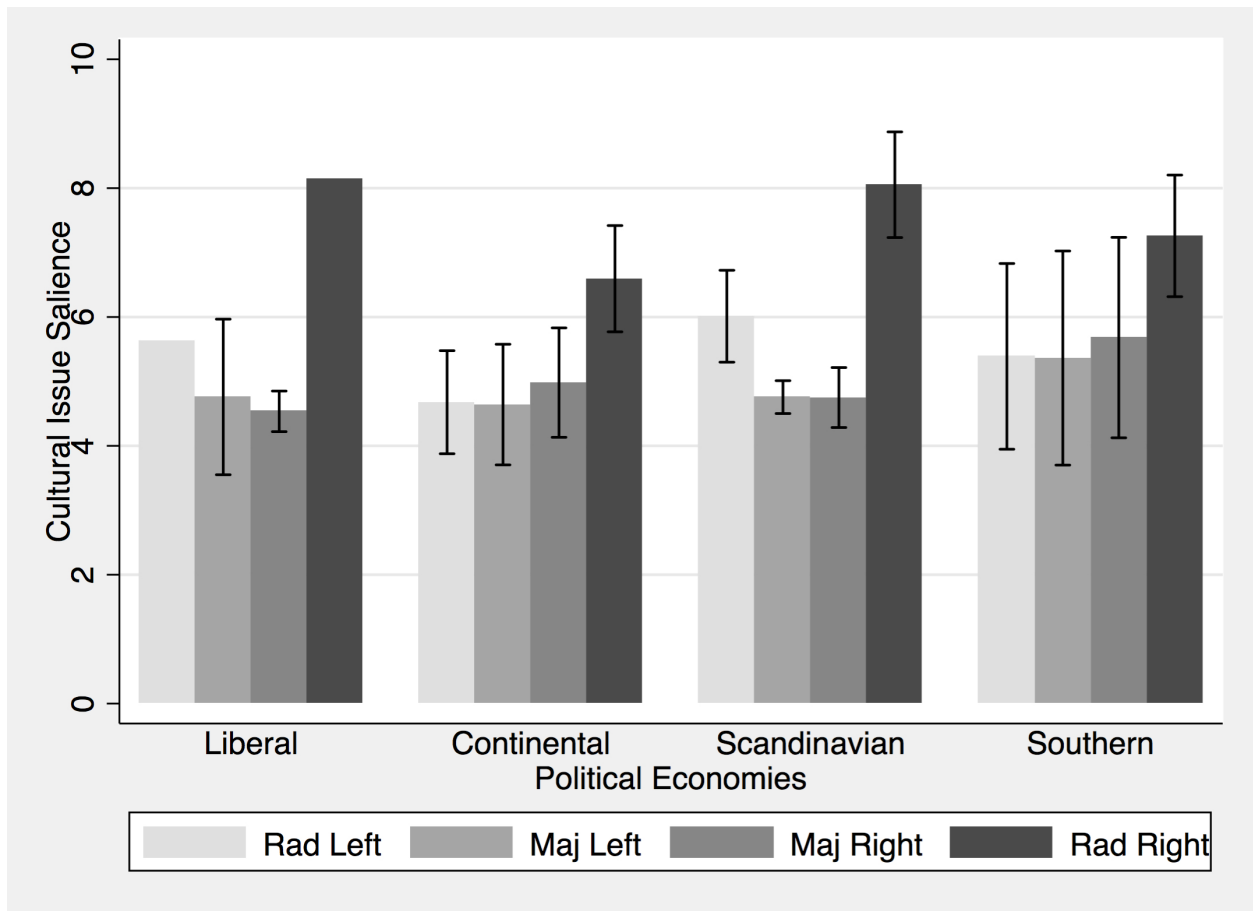


Figure 4: Cultural Salience

Cultural issue salience of parties averaged over observed years by political economy (CHES 2014).

parties, but this difference is not significant in the Southern welfare democracies. Radical parties in Scandinavia distinguish themselves from their major rivals, fundamentally vying over the economy, by trying to shift attention to the cultural dimension. In the South, where cultural and economic issues are more fused, the differences between radical and major party emphasis are more obscured.

These differences are also apparent in the electoral fortunes of radical parties across welfare democracies. Figure 5 demonstrates that while radical left parties have gained extensive

electoral ground in Southern welfare democracies, it is the radical right that has been particularly successful in the Scandinavian and the Continental welfare democracies. Given the particularly negative impact of the recent economic crisis on Southern welfare democracies, it is here that we see a striking electoral breakthrough of challenger parties, particularly of the radical left variety.

On the whole, the differences we observe in the relative salience of the economic versus cultural dimensions across party type are consistent with our expectations about the connection between welfare democracies and multidimensional party competition. We further see evidence of variation in the growth of non-mainstream parties between the Northern and Southern welfare democracies. The increasing presence of the radical right party family in the Scandinavian, Continental, and Liberal welfare democracies contrasts sharply with the particular rise in support for the radical left in the South. We now move on to explore these relationships at the individual level. If the four types of welfare democracies produce durable patterns in the political competition of these countries, these patterns should be present in both the supply side of the representation relationship, i.e. the positions that political parties take and salience that political parties attribute to the economic and cultural dimensions, and in citizen demand as articulated through individual vote choice. The preceding section provided evidence supporting this assertion from the perspective of party supply, and the next section will do so for voters.

## Radical Vote by Political Economies

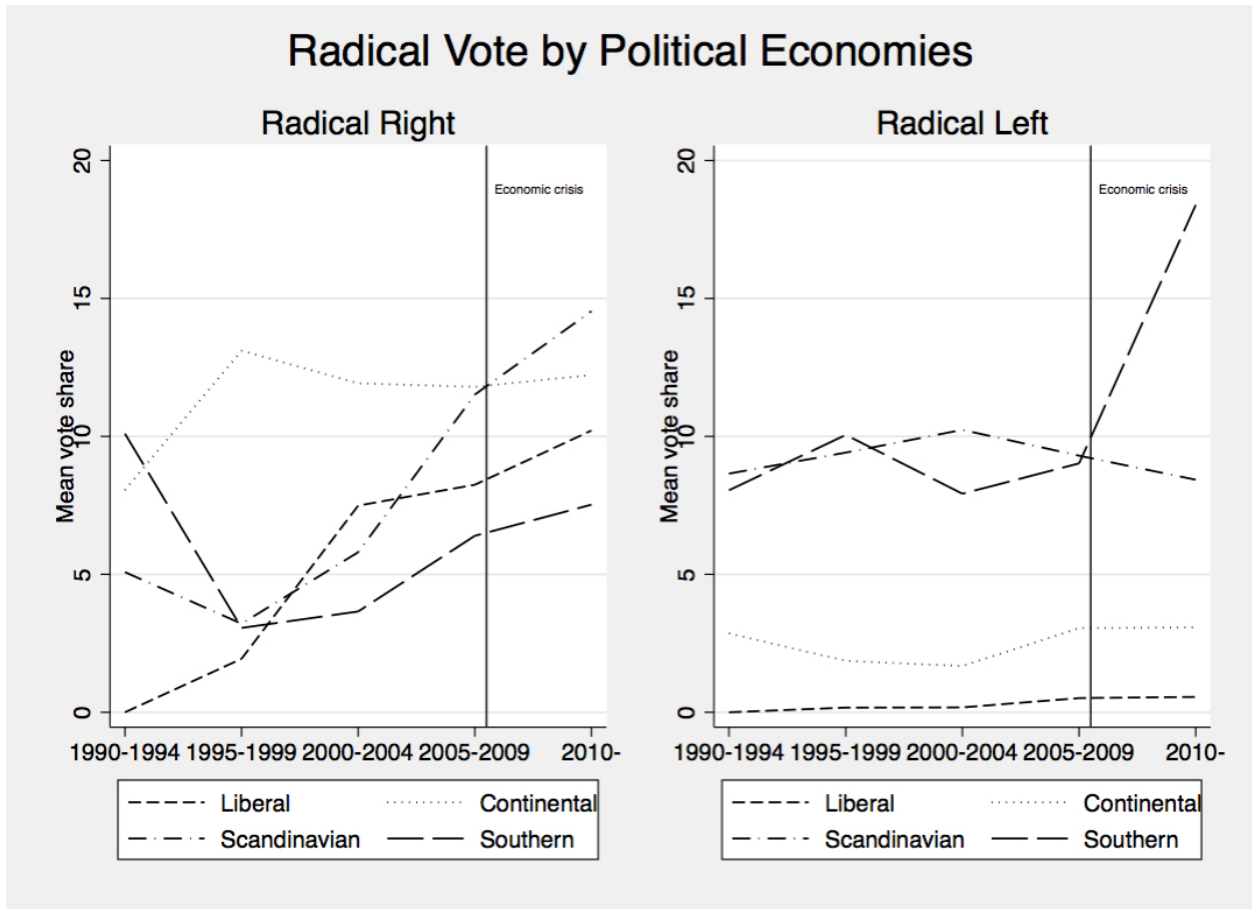


Figure 5:

Vote share of radical left and radical right parties by political economy. (Parlgov data [parlgov.org](http://parlgov.org))



## Individual Determinants of Vote Choice

The previous section focused on the strategies of political parties. This section turns to address the behavior of voters. Using the European Election Studies (EES) Voter Study 2014,<sup>7</sup> we assess the determinants of vote choice for the four party families discussed above: the major left, the major right, the radical left and the radical right, across welfare democracies. To assess the calculus of voters, we model the choice to vote for one of these party families as a function of economic preferences (based on a factor of a battery of economic preference questions),<sup>8</sup> social preferences (based on a factor of a battery of social preference questions),<sup>9</sup> while controlling for a number of socio-economic characteristics of the voters, namely: age, gender, age at which they completed their education, perceived social status, difficulty in paying bills, and religiosity. Details are available in the appendix.

The results are summarized as predicted probabilities of supporting each party family across the four welfare democracy types, as a function of select variables, while other characteristics are held constant. Turning to figure 6, we see that major left parties are generally supported by voters who hold economically left-wing and culturally-liberal preferences, a finding consistent with and carefully examined by Häusermann in this volume. There are, however, some striking differences across the welfare democracies that are in line with our expectations. The total predicted probability change as cultural liberalism decreases is smallest in the Scandinavian welfare democracies. This suggests that economic, rather than cultural preferences are more significant in determining the support of major left parties in the Scandinavian welfare democracies than in the other systems. On the contrary, in the Southern welfare democracies, economic preferences, though significant, have a relatively modest ef-

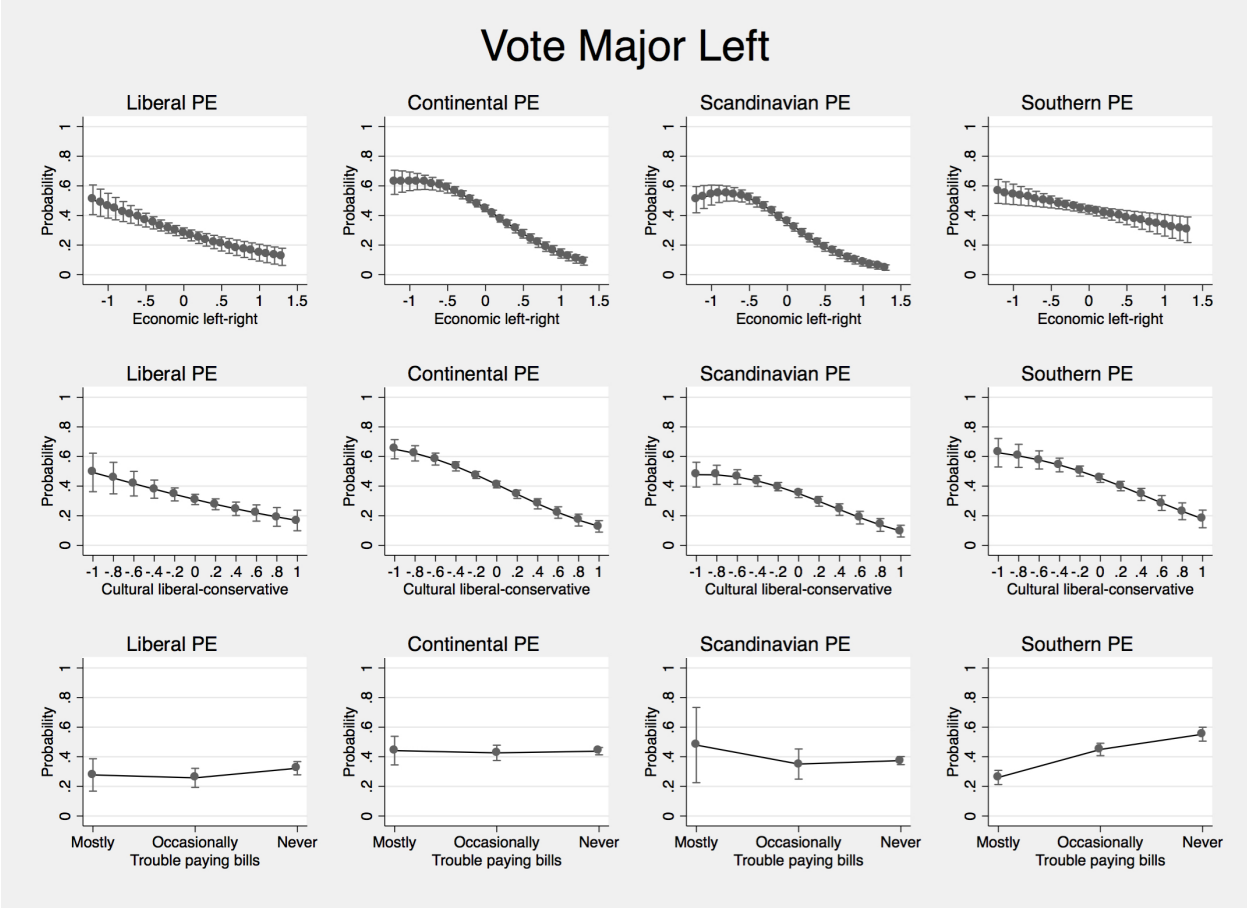


Figure 6: Vote Choice Analysis for Major Left

Effect of economic and social preferences, as well as economic hardship (trouble paying bills) on vote for Major Left parties across welfare democracies (EES 2014 data)

fect on vote for major left parties in comparison with cultural preferences. In the Southern welfare democracies major left parties tend to be significantly more supported by voters who rarely find themselves in financial difficulties (they tend to not have trouble paying their bills), a point we will return to when discussing support for the radical left in Southern Europe.

Turning to major right parties, figure 7 unsurprisingly demonstrates that major right parties tend to be supported by voters with economically right-wing and culturally conser-

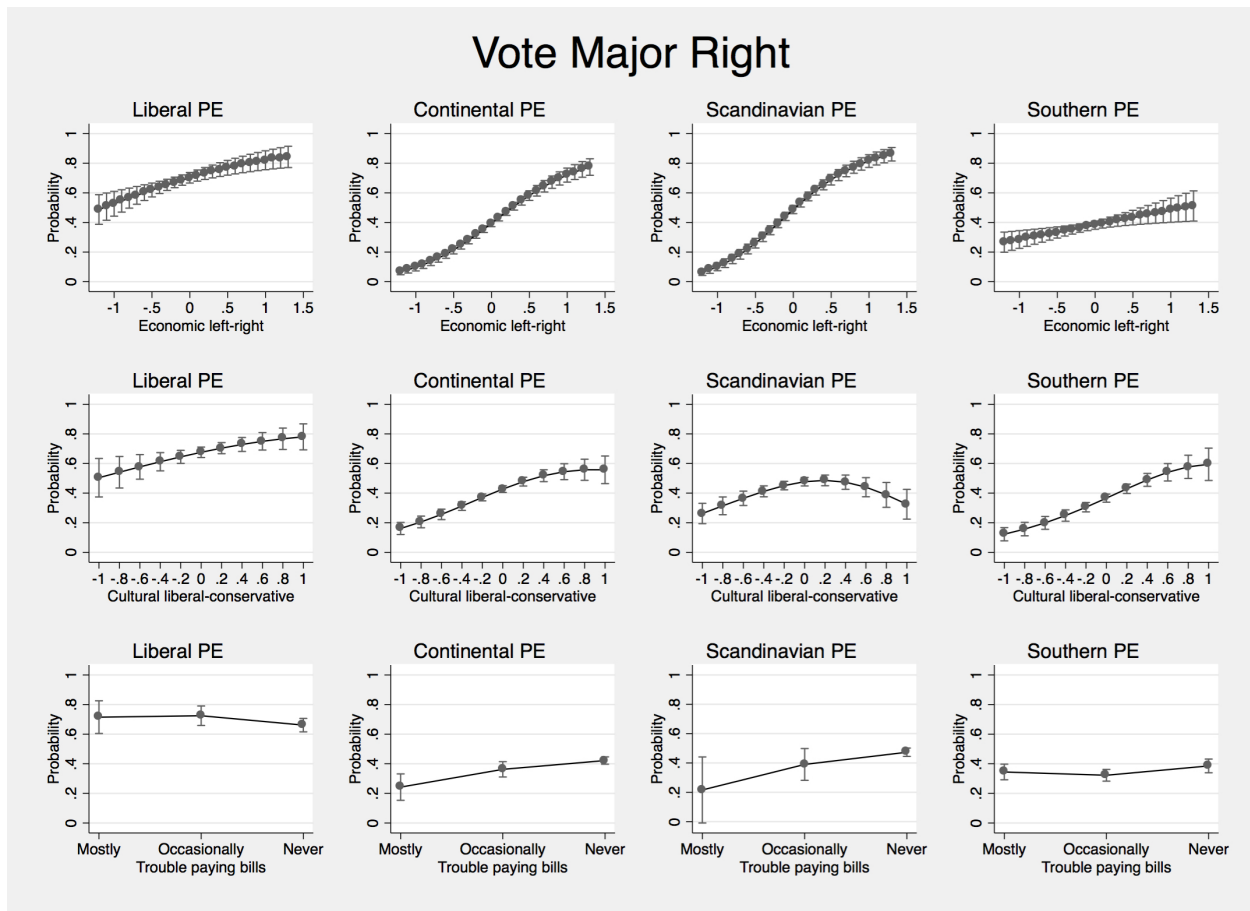


Figure 7: Vote Choice Analysis for Major Right

Effect of economic and social preferences, as well as economic hardship (trouble paying bills) on vote for Major Right parties across welfare democracies (EES 2014 data).

vative preferences. Again, however, economic preferences play a relatively large role in the Scandinavian and Continental welfare democracies, while they exert a moderate impact on vote choice in the Liberal and Southern welfare democracies. Also, interestingly, Scandinavian voters of the major right do not tend to be extremely culturally conservative, as extreme social conservatism is primarily found in supporters of the Scandinavian radical right (see figure 9).

Radical left parties tend to receive much lower vote shares than major parties, and con-

sequently their vote probabilities are generally lower. Nonetheless, figure 8 presents an intriguing finding. Predictably, radical left parties tend to be supported by voters with radically left-wing economic preferences and with extremely culturally liberal views. However, in the Southern welfare democracies, economic views have insignificant impact on voting for the radical left. Rather, radical left support in the Southern states of Europe is significantly predicted by voters' difficulty with paying their bills. The substantial social suffering in Southern Europe in the context of the economic crisis could explain this outcome.

The vote for radical right parties, as depicted in figure 9, is primarily determined by preferences over cultural issues. Radical right parties are mostly supported by voters who are extremely culturally conservative. This is most strikingly visible in the context of the Scandinavian welfare democracies, where moving toward the extreme positions on cultural conservatism increases the predicted probability of supporting the radical right up to almost 60 percentage points (*ceteris paribus*). This finding is logical in the context of Scandinavian welfare democracies. Given the economic nature of mainstream competition in Scandinavia, the main political challengers attract voters on the basis of the weakly represented cultural dimension. Figure 9 nicely indicates that their voters follow suit.

In general, the findings of the voter-level analyses presented here are consistent with those of the party-level section above and with other multidimensional analyses of the individual determinants of vote choice (e.g. Häusermann and Kriesi 2015). Further, these results provide additional support for our expectations about how the four welfare capitalism types of Western Europe affect the configuration of party spaces and the form that political competition takes within them. In the next and penultimate section, we briefly investigate the relationships between the dominant radical parties and mainstream parties in the welfare

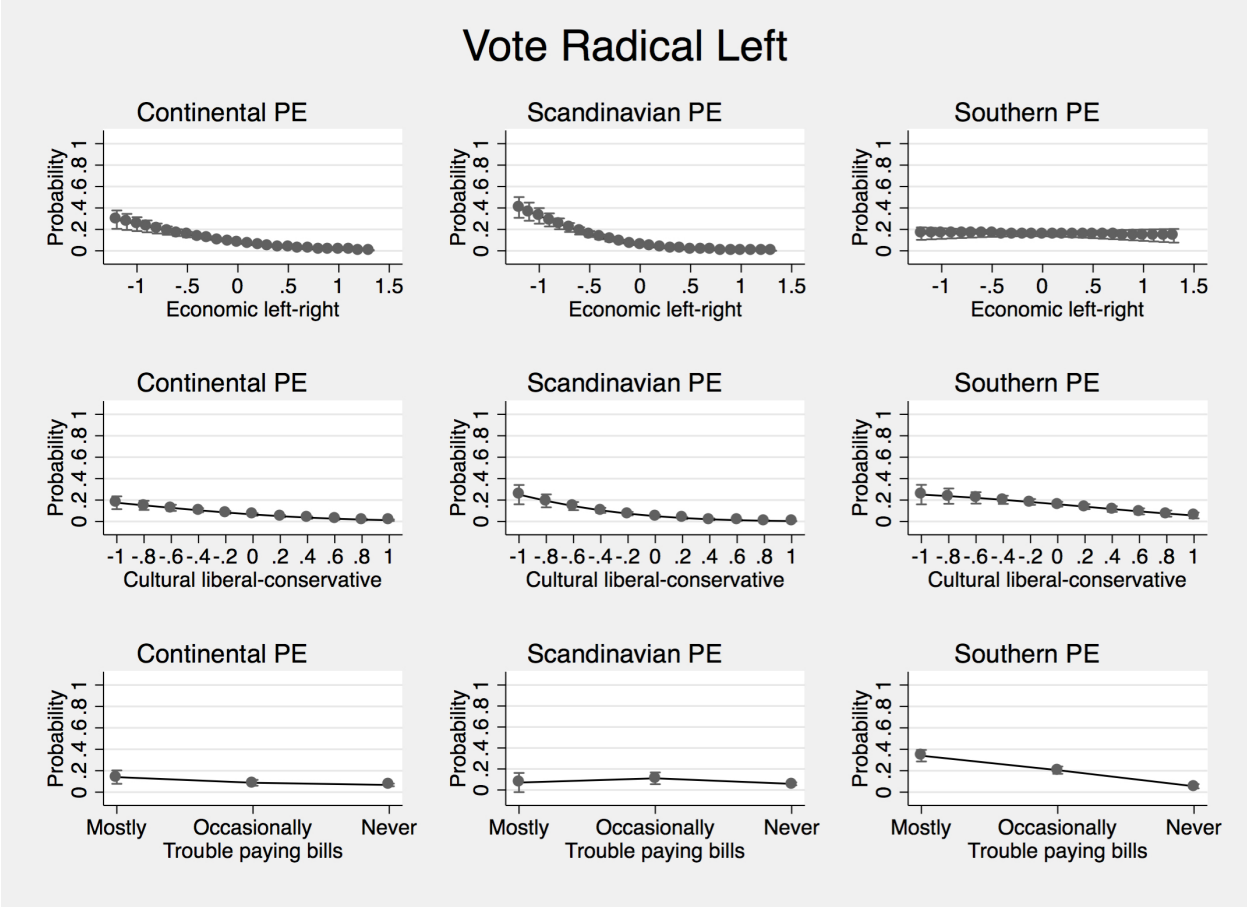


Figure 8: Vote Choice Analysis for Radical Left

Effect of economic and social preferences, as well as economic hardship (trouble paying bills) on vote for Radical Left parties across welfare democracies (EES 2014 data). Note that Liberal welfare democracies exclude the radical left vote choice, as the Irish Socialist Party – the only radical left party we identify in these systems – has no observed voters in the EES 2014 data.

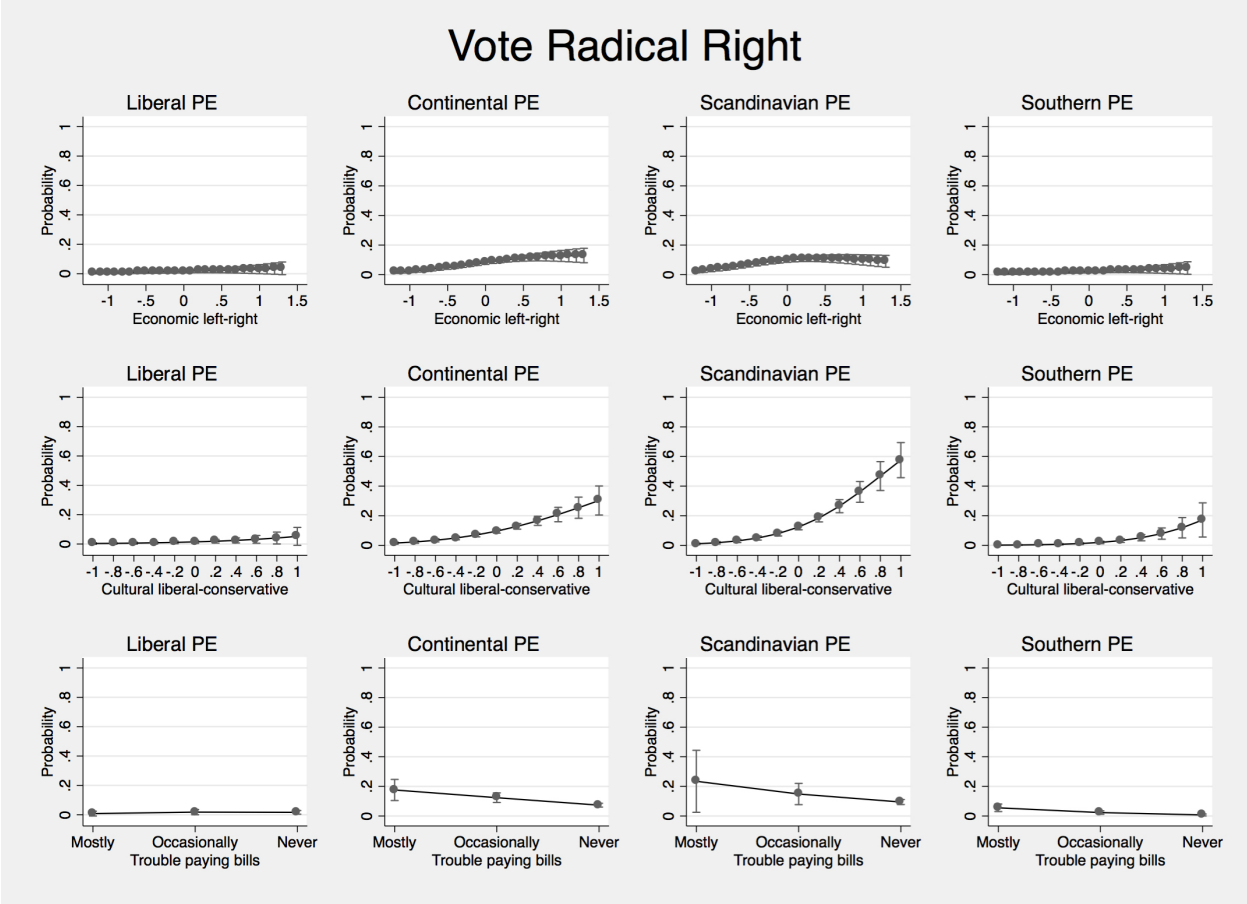


Figure 9: Vote Choice Analysis for Radical Right

Effect of economic and social preferences, as well as economic hardship (trouble paying bills) on vote for Radical Right parties across welfare democracies (EES 2014 data).

democracies of the North, the South, and on the continent.

## **Radical Parties in Europe**

### **Northern Radicalism**

Scandinavian welfare democracies produced party systems where the economy structured mainstream competition, which contributes, at least in part, to the fact that the radical, extreme parties gaining traction in this part of Europe are defined by anti-immigrant, cultural politics. The recent influx of refugee and asylum applications in this region have further reinforced the salience of migration and cultural politics for radical right parties and their voters, which the mainstream parties have struggled to address. Figure 10 demonstrates that the dominant challengers of these systems, the radical right Danish People's Party (DF) in Denmark, True Finns (PS) in Finland, and the Sweden Democrats (SD) in Sweden, stand far away from the competition line between the major parties in their systems. That the Christian Democrats (KD) in Finland and Sweden are positioned relatively close to the PS and SD further indicates the orthogonality of economic and cultural politics in the region, and underscores the difficulty the major parties have in responding to upheaval in cultural politics.

### **Southern Radicalism**

The party systems of Southern welfare democracies are marked by an amalgamation of cultural and economic politics, and their mainstream party competition thus combines economic

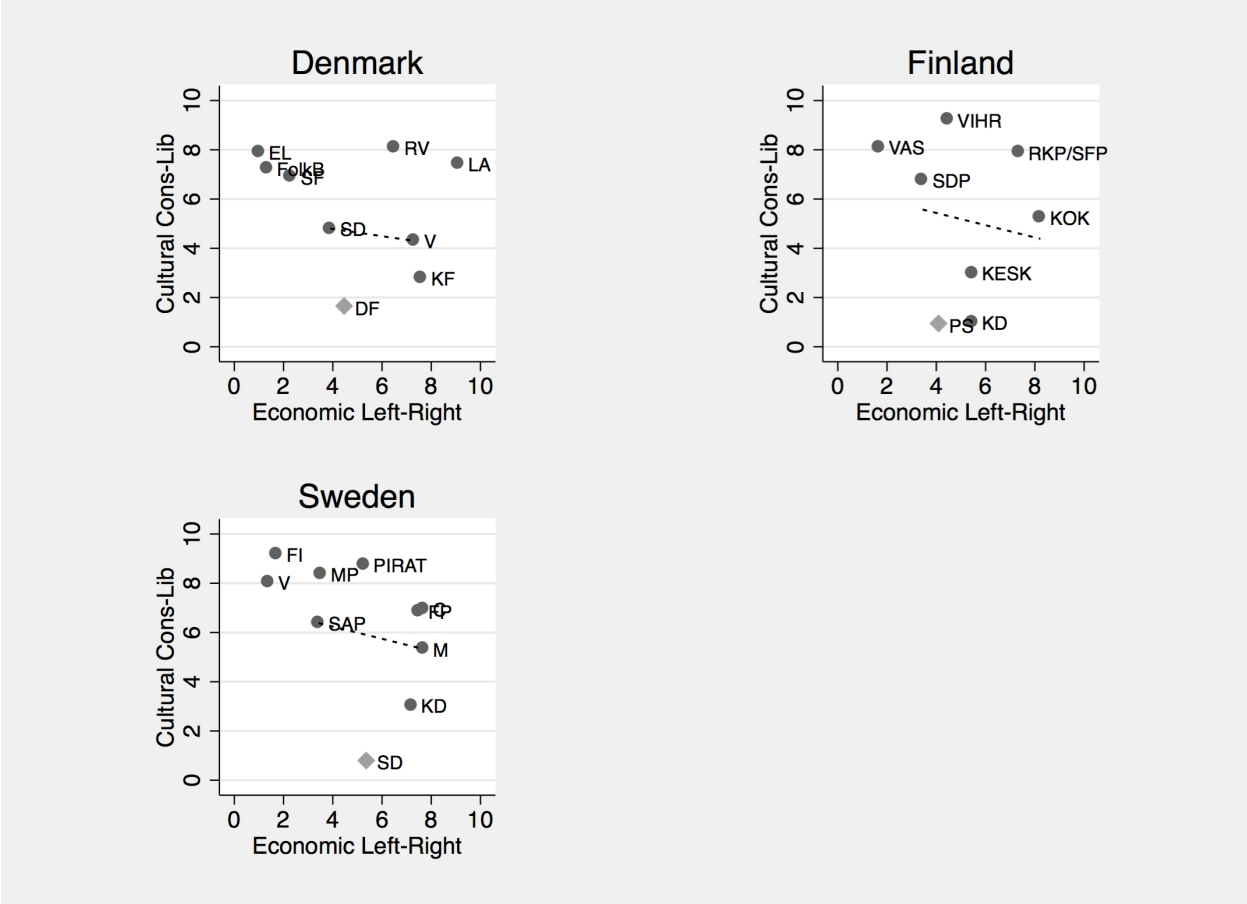


Figure 10: Scandinavian Party Systems

Dominant populist challengers are marked with diamond. Competition line is depicted between major mainstream parties (CHES 2014 data).



as well as cultural differences. This remains the case even in the aftermath of the critical juncture brought on by the recent economic crisis. Indeed, and largely in the context of the crisis, the dominant challenger parties in this region of Europe are anti-austerity, radical left-wingers. Simultaneously, however, these challengers include significant appeals to culturally liberal values. Figure 11 demonstrates that challengers in Southern Europe, such as Podemos in Spain, Syriza in Greece and the Five Star Movement (M5S) in Italy, stand near the existing axis of party competition, but at its left-liberal extreme.

Interestingly, the Greek Communist Party (KKE) behaves differently from the new challengers. The KKE is an orthodox communist political force, with a heritage rooted in the Greek civil war. It stands clearly on the economic extreme of the party system, far away from the axis of competition. This position, however, does not seem to be very rewarding. While the radical left *and* culturally liberal Syriza, contesting both dimensions, won 36.3% of the vote in the 2015 national election, the purely economically-oriented KKE received only 5.5%. The evidence from the South suggests that successful contemporary challengers need to combine economic extremism with extreme cultural views – a finding that modifies, at least somewhat, expectations within the niche party literature that privilege non-economic positioning or extremity in economic positioning alone (Meguid 2005, 2008; Adams et al. 2006).

While the Southern challenger parties stand at the extreme of the dominant conflict line, amalgamating economic and cultural issues, they differ from the mainstream establishment in their stress on political corruption. In this sense, even Southern challengers focus on and succeed through emphasizing an orthogonal political issue. Figure 12 depicts the levels of anti-corruption salience of political parties across the South. It demonstrates that the

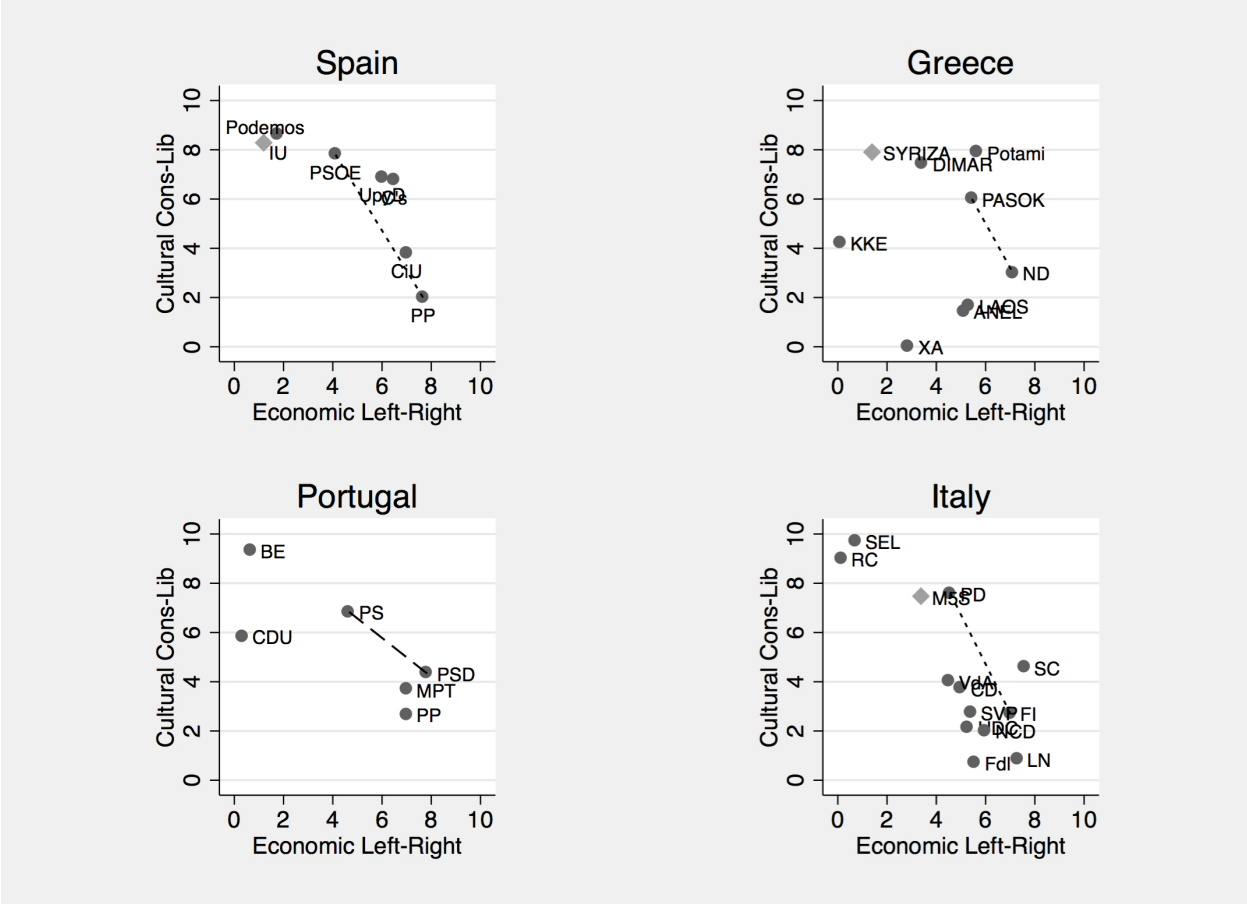


Figure 11: Southern Party Systems

Dominant populist challengers are marked with diamond. Competition line is depicted between major mainstream parties (CHES 2014 data).

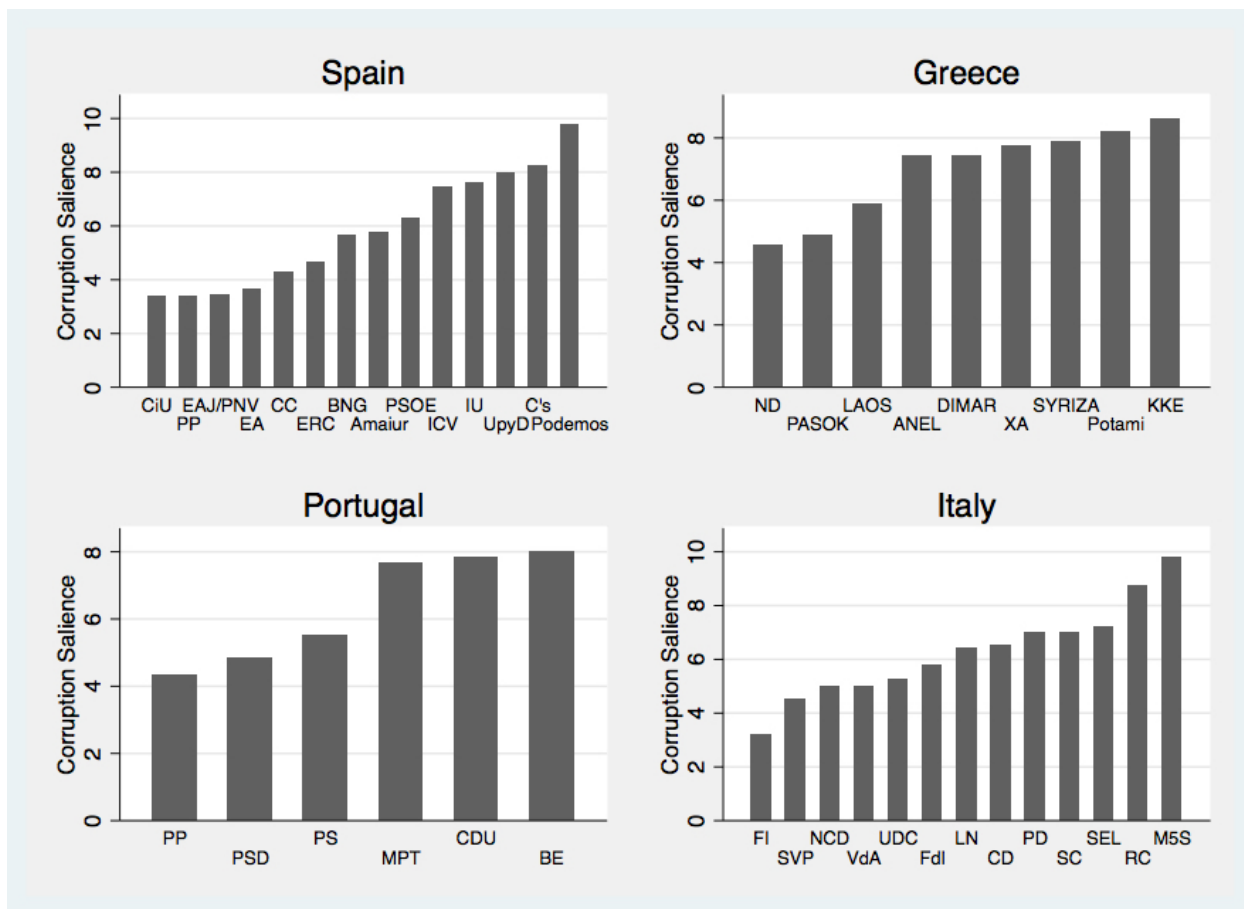


Figure 12: Anti-corruption Salience in Southern Party Systems

(CHES 2014 data).

dominant radical challengers tend to most vocally decry political corruption – a stance that certainly gains political traction in post-crisis Southern Europe. Elsewhere (Polk, Rovny et al. 2017) we demonstrate the regional character of anti-corruption salience, which – while prevalent among political challengers that are either new or non-government parties – is heightened in Southern and Eastern Europe.

## Continental Radicalism

The party systems of Continental Europe stand in between those of the North and the South. Figure 13 shows that, in line with the South, the Continental systems (with the exception of Belgium) feature mainstream competition that combines economic and cultural tones. The competition axis between the major parties is thus generally steeper. Simultaneously, and more in line with the North, the dominant populist challengers are radical right parties at the conservative extreme. While the German AfD also stands close to the economic right extreme, the other radical right challengers are more economically centrist, and consequently positioned further away from the mainstream competition axis, as expected.

France is an interesting case that could be simultaneously categorized as Continental and Southern. Given the historical importance of the State-Church cleavage, the left-wing Socialists (PS) are significantly culturally distinct from the major right-wing Gaulists (UMP), producing a steep competition axis typical for the South. Also typically Southern is the presence of a historically significant radical left, currently represented by the Communist (PCF) and Left (PG) parties. Finally, in line with the current situation in the South, both major parties are facing tough electoral competition from political outsiders splitting the left and right camps, be it the radical right Front National (FN), or the centrist, liberal Emmanuel Macron. However, the main radical challenger in the French system is the radical right FN, which stands on the conservative fringe, far from the competition axis.

Consequently, we can see that the different histories and competition structures of the four welfare capitalism types of Western Europe provide varied political opportunities that lead to the rise of divergent political challengers across the welfare democracies.

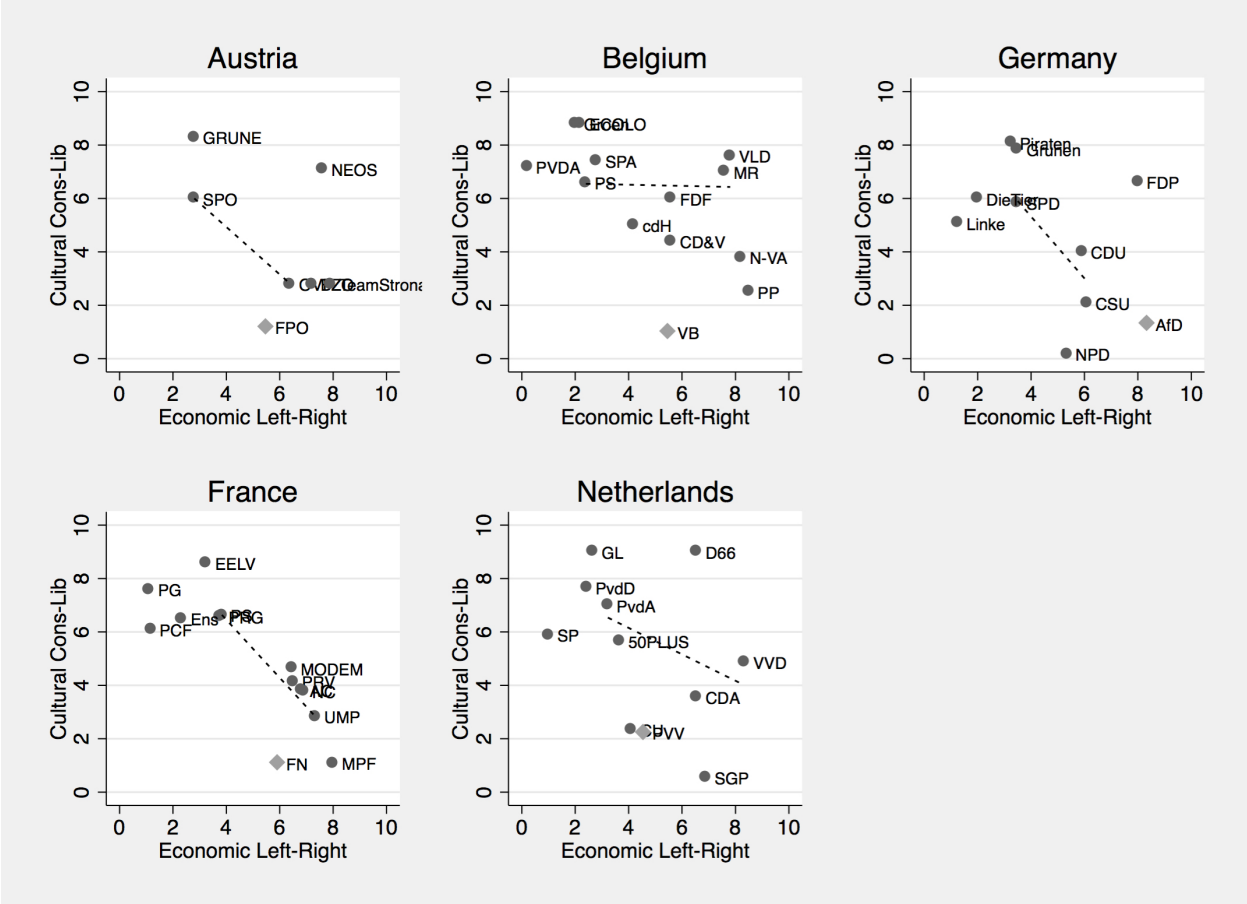


Figure 13: Continental Party Systems

Dominant populist challengers are marked with diamond. Competition line is depicted between major mainstream parties (CHES 2014 data).

## Conclusion

To arrive in their current position, the welfare democracies of Europe travelled different paths. The contrasting role of State-Church conflict, the varied strength of different social groups, the mixed opportunities of cross-group coalitions, and the divergent success of opposed political forces created a trajectory that produced the four European welfare democracies we know today. This chapter has argued that these mechanisms also shaped the contours of European party systems, leading to divergent political opportunities for party competition across the welfare democracies of Europe.

Our findings demonstrate that the welfare democracies of Europe encapsulate party systems that associate the major dimensions of political conflict – the socio-economic and the socio-cultural dimension – in different ways. In the North, mainstream political conflict tends to concentrate on economic issues, while cultural concerns form a secondary, more parallel dimension, contested by smaller and/or challenger parties. The Southern party systems tend to combine economic and cultural issues into one ‘super’ dimension, while Continental welfare democracies tend to stand in the middle.

This structure of party competition has important implications for the nature of political contestation because it shapes the strategic opportunities for both mainstream and challenger parties. In the North, radical challengers distinguish themselves from the major parties that historically contest economic issues by raising orthogonal cultural concerns. While we observe all radical right parties reduce the salience they accord to economic issues and increase the discussion of cultural topics, this is particularly pronounced in the Scandinavian welfare democracies. In the South, where dominant conflict combines economic and cultural concerns

into something approaching unidimensionality, the differences in issue salience across party families are less prominent.

Voters respond to the strategic actions of structurally constrained political parties. Our vote choice analyses demonstrate that economic considerations play a very significant role for the support of major left and right and radical left parties in the Scandinavian welfare democracies, while they are much less pronounced in the Southern welfare democracies, where economic interests intersect with cultural preferences. Similarly, radical right parties are supported primarily on the basis of cultural conservatism of voters, but again, this effect is most powerful in Scandinavia, moderate in the Continental welfare states, and relatively weak in the South. In the South, voters tend to weigh economic and cultural considerations more equally, while their support for radical left parties – the most dominant electoral challengers in these countries – is based on direct experiences with economic hardship in the context of the economic crisis (such as trouble with paying bills).

Our conclusions suggest the rise of divergent patterns of political challenge across the welfare democracies of Europe. In Scandinavia, and to a slightly lesser extent in the Continental welfare democracies, we see the rise of dominantly radical right political challengers that seek to reorient party competition from its original economic focus in a direction of cultural conflict. While there is an underlying basis in social movements and ideological commitment that must not be overlooked, this kind of competition is also in line with the Rikerian view of politics as an art of manipulating and reframing the competitive field, which is considerably less emphasized in the literature (see Hobolt and De Vries 2015 for an important exception).

The Southern welfare democracies, however, demonstrate a very different pattern of po-

litical challenge. The radical contenders for power in the South do not seek to reframe the standing structure of competition by stepping aside from the dominant line of political conflict. Rather than manipulating the political playing field, which has traditionally combined economic and cultural concerns, the Southern challengers (of both the left and the right) seek to contest the extant extremes along the standing axis of competition, while stressing the economic hardships their countries face, and opposing political corruption. This is somewhat contrary to the expectations of the niche party literature, which expect challengers to focus on non-dominant issues and dimensions. The type of competition we demonstrate in the Southern welfare democracies rather echoes Sartori's (2005 [1976]: 312) gloomy conclusion that "the extreme left and the extreme right neither desire nor have much to gain, in competing centripetally. Their goals are best served by tearing the system apart."



# Notes

<sup>1</sup>We use the term worlds of welfare when referring to the work of Esping-Andersern and otherwise use welfare capitalisms or welfare democracies.

<sup>2</sup>We use ‘mainstream’ or ‘major’ interchangeably to denote the traditionally dominant center-left and center-right political parties.

<sup>3</sup>There are, however, important differences in the development of the immigration debate and anti-immigrant parties in Denmark and Sweden. See Green-Pedersen and Krogstrup (2008) and Green-Pedersen and Odmalm (2008) for a full discussion.

<sup>4</sup>Note that France is generally considered as a Continental political economy, although it is somewhat of an outlier. Given its virulent State-Church conflict in the 19th century, it may be considered as Southern. Nonetheless, we keep to the established classification of France as Continental.

<sup>5</sup>Note that Norway and Switzerland are excluded, as they are not covered by the EES data used below.

<sup>6</sup>But see Afonso and Rennwald in this volume on the rapidly evolving relationship between the radical right and welfare state politics. It is also important to note potential shifts toward more liberal positions on select cultural issues for some parties in this family, e.g. gay rights and gender equality.

<sup>7</sup><http://eeshomepage.net/voter-study-2014/>

<sup>8</sup>The economic factor is derived from self-placement on 0-10 scales pertaining to: 1) state regulation and control of the market, 2) redistribution of wealth, and 3) spending – the trade-off between tax levels and public services.

<sup>9</sup>The cultural factor is derived from self-placement on 0-10 scales pertaining to: 1) same-sex marriage, 2) civil liberties, and 3) immigration.

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# Appendix



	Major Left	Radical Right
economic placement	-0.793*** (0.183)	0.452 (0.416)
cultural placement	-0.757*** (0.248)	1.129* (0.644)
female	-0.107 (0.163)	-0.658 (0.432)
2.trouble with bills	-0.087 (0.316)	0.816 (1.138)
3.trouble with bills	0.230 (0.303)	0.821 (1.101)
social level	-0.091 (0.058)	-0.061 (0.150)
religiosity	0.185*** (0.033)	0.477*** (0.107)
end of education	-0.252** (0.123)	-0.518 (0.316)
age	-0.010* (0.006)	0.000 (0.015)
Constant	-0.157 (0.627)	-4.926*** (1.808)
Observations	804	804

Baseline: Major Right

Standard errors in parentheses

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

Table 1: MNL Vote Choice model for Liberal Welfare Democracies

	Radical Left	Major Right	Radical Right
economic placement	-0.839*** (0.194)	1.746*** (0.130)	1.574*** (0.192)
cultural placement	-0.523** (0.239)	1.434*** (0.164)	2.316*** (0.250)
female	-0.017 (0.148)	0.044 (0.098)	-0.307** (0.152)
2.trouble with bills	-0.437 (0.307)	0.437 (0.293)	-0.317 (0.305)
3.trouble with bills	-0.727*** (0.282)	0.563** (0.276)	-0.870*** (0.286)
social level	-0.011 (0.053)	0.111*** (0.036)	0.000 (0.053)
religiosity	0.102** (0.041)	-0.159*** (0.023)	-0.004 (0.038)
end of education	0.180* (0.105)	-0.045 (0.069)	-0.278*** (0.105)
age	0.009* (0.005)	0.002 (0.003)	-0.029*** (0.005)
Constant	-2.617*** (0.587)	-0.226 (0.433)	1.649*** (0.579)
Observations	2,546	2,546	2,546

Baseline: Major Left

Standard errors in parentheses

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

Table 2: MNL Vote Choice model for Continental Welfare Democracies

	Radical Left	Major Left	Radical Right
economic placement	-3.362*** (0.240)	-1.983*** (0.148)	-0.521*** (0.191)
cultural placement	-2.215*** (0.311)	-0.909*** (0.195)	1.926*** (0.264)
Female	0.590*** (0.191)	0.086 (0.123)	-0.270 (0.172)
2.trouble with bills	-0.140 (0.967)	-0.903 (0.773)	-1.049 (0.834)
3.trouble with bills	-0.976 (0.924)	-1.032 (0.733)	-1.695** (0.785)
social level	-0.187*** (0.066)	-0.198*** (0.043)	-0.272*** (0.057)
religiosity	0.205*** (0.061)	0.094** (0.039)	0.080 (0.054)
end of education	-0.027 (0.142)	-0.111 (0.086)	0.168 (0.110)
age	0.007 (0.006)	0.012*** (0.004)	0.000 (0.006)
Constant	-2.193* (1.247)	0.862 (0.900)	1.088 (1.044)
Observations	1,784	1,784	1,784

Baseline: Major Right

Standard errors in parentheses

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

Table 3: MNL Vote Choice model for Nordic Welfare Democracies

	Radical Left	Major Right	Radical Right
economic placement	0.193 (0.196)	0.507*** (0.159)	0.845** (0.369)
cultural placement	-0.123 (0.252)	1.418*** (0.208)	3.113*** (0.489)
female	-0.052 (0.158)	0.073 (0.128)	-0.805*** (0.301)
2.trouble with bills	-1.051*** (0.186)	-0.613*** (0.174)	-1.418*** (0.326)
3.trouble with bills	-2.574*** (0.255)	-0.641*** (0.184)	-2.824*** (0.535)
social level	-0.017 (0.059)	0.073 (0.049)	-0.116 (0.108)
religiosity	0.028 (0.041)	-0.076** (0.031)	-0.023 (0.079)
end of education	0.270*** (0.092)	0.111 (0.075)	0.469*** (0.171)
age	-0.009* (0.005)	-0.005 (0.004)	-0.028*** (0.010)
Constant	0.192 (0.530)	0.286 (0.433)	0.101 (0.947)
Observations	1,495	1,495	1,495

Baseline: Major Left

Standard errors in parentheses

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

Table 4: MNL Vote Choice model for Southern Welfare Democracies