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Dalton

Social Bases of Party Support



Dalton Reading

Russell J. Dalton, "The History of Party Systems," in Dalton, *Citizen Politics: Public Opinion and Political Parties in Advanced Western Democracies*, 2nd ed. (Chatham, NJ: Chatham House, 1996), pp. 149-164

Discussions of political parties normally focus on the present, on the policy positions and political leaders that define current party images. Nevertheless, **historical experiences have deeply etched their features on the framework of party systems.** The Democratic tendencies of American Catholics, for example, result from their class position when they first emigrated to America and the history of their integration into society and politics.

The legacy of history is even more evident in Western Europe. Seymour Martin **Lipset** and Stein **Rokkan** (1967) described the development of European party systems in terms of the historical conditions of national and socioeconomic development. They **maintained that two successive revolutions in the modernization of Western societies--the National Revolution and the Industrial Revolution--created social divisions that still structure partisan competition today.** Although their discussion deals primarily with Western Europe, the approach has relevance to other Western democracies including the United States.

The National Revolution involved the process of nation building that transformed the map of Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The **National Revolution spawned two kinds of social cleavage.** The **center-periphery cleavage** pitted the dominant national culture against ethnic, linguistic, or religious minorities in the provinces and the peripheral sectors of society. It involved conflicts over values and cultural identities. Were Alsations to become Germans or French; was Scotland a separate nation or a region within Britain? The westward expansion of the United States during its history generated similar tensions between regional cultures.

This cleavage is visible today in persisting regional differences in political orientations; between the English, Welsh, and Scots; between Bretons and the Parisian center; between the "Free State of Bavaria" and the Federal Republic of Germany; between the "old" Federal Republic and the new German Länder in

the East; and between the distinct regional cultures in the United States.

The **church-state conflict** cast the centralizing, standardizing, and mobilizing forces of the national government against the traditional influence of the Catholic church. In the face of a growing secular government, the church sought to protect its established corporate privileges. Furthermore, Protestants often allied themselves with nationalist forces in the struggle for national autonomy. Contemporary divisions between religious denominations and between secular and religious groups are--a continuation of these earlier social divisions.

The Industrial Revolution in the nineteenth century **also generated two new social cleavages.** The **land-industry cleavage** aligned the rural and agrarian interests against the economic concerns of the rising class of industrial entrepreneurs. The Ruhr industrialists challenged the power of the Prussian Junkers; the landed gentry of Britain and the United States were challenged by the barons of industry. We see this cleavage in contemporary conflicts between rural and urban interests.

As the industrial sector became dominant, a **second cleavage developed between owners and workers.** This cleavage furnished the basis of the Marxian class conflict between the working class and the middle class composed of business owners and the self-employed. The struggle for the legitimization and representation of working-class interests by labor unions often generated intense political conflict in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Today this cleavage is seen in the political competition between business associations and labor unions, and more generally between members of the middle class and working class.

These historical events may seem far removed from contemporary party systems, but Lipset and Rokkan (1967) demonstrated that a linkage exists. **These four dimensions of cleavage defined the potential major bases of social conflict.** As social groups related to these cleavages developed, they won access to the political process before the extension of the voting franchise. When mass voting rights were granted to most Europeans around the turn of the century, this political structure was already in place. In most instances new voters were mobilized into supporting the party groups that already were represented in the political process. New voters entered the electorate with preexisting partisan tendencies. The Conservative Party in Britain, for example, became the representative of the middle-class establishment, and the Labour Party catered to the interests of the working class. The working class in France and Germany supported the Communist and Socialist parties. The American party system developed more gradually because the voting franchise was granted earlier and social groups were less polarized; still, the modern party system reflects the experiences of the Civil War and class alignments created in the 1930s. **The formation of mass political parties thus tended to institutionalize the existing elite coalitions, creating the framework for**

modern party systems. Once voters formed party loyalties and interest groups established party ties, the potential for dramatic partisan change lessened and the parties became self-perpetuating institutions. In one of the most often cited conclusions of comparative politics, Lipset and Rokkan (1967) stated: "**the party systems of the 1960s reflect, with but few significant exceptions, the cleavage structures of the 1920s**" (P. 50).

Early electoral research substantiated Lipset and Rokkan's claims.

Regional voting patterns from early in this century were mirrored in later election returns (Clubb et al. 1980; Miller 1977, chap. 5). Survey research found that social cleavages, especially class and religious differences, exerted a potent effect on voting. Richard Rose and Derek Urwin's (1969, 1970) comparative studies of postwar party systems found striking stability in electoral results.

As this theme of partisan stability became the conventional wisdom, dramatic changes began to affect these same party systems. The established parties were presented with new demands and challenges, and the evidence of partisan change became obvious (Dalton et al. 1984).⁷ At the root of this development was a decreasing relationship between traditional social cleavages and partisan choice. In their comparative study of Western democracies, Mark Franklin (1992) and his colleagues found broad evidence that traditional social divisions were losing their ability to predict voting choices (also see chapter 8). Because of this erosion in traditional social-based voting, party systems became more fractionalized. Fluctuations in voting results increased. **Voting is now characterized by higher levels of partisan volatility at the aggregate and**

individual levels (Crewe and Denver 1985). Popular attachments to political parties weakened and discussions of the crisis of party systems became commonplace (see chapter 9). In sum, the major research question changed from explaining the persistence of contemporary party systems to explaining their instability.

Several unique national circumstances contributed to these patterns: the Vietnam war and Watergate in the United States, regional and economic tensions in Britain, the green movement in Germany. In addition, **a similar set of new issues are visible across national boundaries. Party systems derived from the National and Industrial revolutions faced the issues of environmental protection, social equality, nuclear energy, sexual equality, and alternative lifestyles. Citizens demanded more opportunities for participation** in the decisions affecting their lives and pressed for a further democratization of society and politics. Once these trends began, they evoked a conservative counterattack that opposed the liberalization of social norms, women's rights, environmentalism, and related issues. These new political conflicts are now an important aspect of contemporary politics.

A major factor in the destabilization of modern party systems was the initial inability or unwillingness of the major parties to respond fully to the new

demands. **As a result, several new parties formed specifically to represent the new political perspectives.** The first wave included environmental parties, such as the green parties in Germany and France or Left-libertarian parties (Miiller-Rommel 1989; Kitschelt 1989). This stimulated a counter wave of New Right parties, such as the National Front in France or the Republikaner in Germany (Betz 1994; Ignazi 1992). It is unclear whether these parties reflect temporary adjustments to new issues or a more long-lasting realignment of political conflict. American history is filled with third-party movements eventually incorporated into the established parties. Is the present partisan instability in advanced industrial democracies just another case of this recurring pattern?

Several scholars claim that we are witnessing a permanent restructuring of political alignments as a result of the socioeconomic trends of advanced industrialism. They maintain that advanced industrial democracies are experiencing a third revolution, the Postindustrial Revolution (Bell 1973; Inglehart 1977, 1990). Indeed, new issue interests, new styles of participation, and new expectations about the citizen's role in society seem to flow from the value changes discussed in chapter 5.

Party systems are in a state of flux, and it is difficult to determine how fundamental and long lasting these changes will be. It is clear, however, that the new political conflicts of advanced industrial societies have contributed to this situation. While we wait for history to determine the significance of these trends, we can look more closely at the political alignments that now exist in America, Britain, Germany, and France.

The Structure of Political Alignments

Most parties and party systems are still oriented primarily toward the traditional political alignments described by Lipset and Rokkan. We shall refer to these alignments collectively as the **Old Politics cleavage**. The Old Politics cleavage is based on the political conflict between Old Left and Old Right coalitions. Lipset and Rokkan considered the class cleavage to be the primary factor in structuring the Old Politics alignment because class issues were the most salient during the extension of the franchise. The Old Left therefore identifies itself with the working class and labor unions, as well as secular groups and urban interests (also see Lijphart 1981). The Old Right is synonymous with business interests and the middle class; in some nations this conservative coalition also includes religious and rural voters. When political issues tap the concerns of the Old Politics cleavage--for example, wage settlements, employment programs, social security programs, or church-related legislation--party positions reflect their traditional social orientations.

The political conflicts of advanced industrial societies have created **a new dimension of cleavage** in recent years. **This New Politics dimension involves**

conflict over a new set of issues: environmental quality, alternative lifestyles, minority rights, participation, and social equality. This dimension represents the cleavage between proponents of these issues, the New Left, and citizens who feel threatened by these issues, the New Right.

The Old Politics cleavage is likely to remain the primary basis of partisan conflict in most advanced industrial democracies for the immediate future. The New Politics dimension is significantly affecting these party systems, however, because it can cut across the established Old Politics cleavage. Despite their differences, labor unions and business interests occasionally join forces to fight the opponents of nuclear energy. Farmers and students sometimes become allies to oppose industrial development projects that may threaten the environment. Fundamentalist blue-collar and white-collar workers unite to oppose changes in moral codes. An emerging New Left and New Right potentially may restructure social-group alignments and party coalitions. In sum, the simple dichotomy between Old Left and Old Right is no longer adequate to describe present patterns of political competition. The contemporary political space is now better described by at least two dimensions.

In the last edition of this book we mapped the sociopolitical space using cross-national data from the Political Action study (Dalton 1988, chap. 7). Contemporary data of this sort are available only for the United States, and **we will use the American case to illustrate the Old Politics and New Politics cleavages.**

For much of this century, the **Old Politics cleavage provided the framework for party competition in the American party system.** The New Deal coalitions created by the Great Depression determined the social bases of party support: the Democratic Party and its labor union supporters against the Republicans and big business. Religious differences were muted because of the formal separation of church and state in the United States.

In the 1960s the New Politics began to affect American politics. Student protesters, the women's movement, and the alternative movement challenged the symbols of the political establishment. Herbert Weisberg and Jerrold Rusk (1970) described how this cultural conflict introduced new dimension of cleavage into American politics, as represented by dissident Democratic candidates in the late 1960s and early 1970s. New Politics issues entered the agenda of subsequent campaigns. Rusk and Weisberg found, however, that the Democrats and Republicans were not clearly divided on New Politics issues; these issues divided parties internally rather than separating them politically.⁸ Another study of party cleavages in 1974 found that the Democrats and Republicans were only slightly differentiated on the New Politics dimension (Dalton 1988, chap. 7).

The policies of the Reagan and Bush administrations stimulated a convergence

of Old Politics and New Politics alignments over the 1980s and early 1990s. The tax and spending priorities of the Reagan administration sharply favored business and the more affluent sectors of society. This served to reinforce ties between business interests and the Republican Party. Furthermore, the Reagan administration pursued a conservative social agenda and developed strong political links to religious groups such as the Moral Majority and other fundamentalist organizations. To an extent atypical of modern American politics, religion was injected into partisan politics.

The Reagan and Bush administrations also clarified party positions on the New Politics agenda. Environmental protection was an issue that had roots in the Republican Party; Richard Nixon, for example, had established the Environmental Protection Agency during his first presidential term and had introduced a variety of environmental legislation. Yet Ronald Reagan openly speculated that "killer trees" were a major cause of air pollution. The policy initiatives of the Reagan administration demonstrated its hostility toward the environmental movement. Although George Bush claimed to be the environmental president, the assault on environmental protection legislation continued under his administration. Similarly, the Reagan and Bush administrations were openly antagonistic toward feminist organizations. The abortion issue became a litmus test of Republican values in the appointment of federal judges and the selection of candidates.

As the Republicans became critical of the New Politics agenda, the Democrats became advocates of these issues. The Democrats became the partisan supporters of the environmental movement in congressional legislation. The Democrats were the first to nominate a woman and feminist for national political office, Geraldine Ferraro in 1984. Alternative political groups also developed a political base and prominence among the activist core of the Democratic Party.

In short, political cleavage lines seemed to overlap and become more polarized during the 1980s. This pattern of ideological convergence was simplified because only two parties exist in America; if one party adopts a position, the opposition naturally gravitates toward the other party. Furthermore, the Reagan and Bush administrations consciously sought to clarify their position on New Politics issues because they thought this could benefit them electorally. The Democrats were as enthusiastic in embracing these same constituencies.

We can test these expectations with data from the 1992 American National Election Study. The survey asked respondents about their feelings toward a set of sociopolitical groups and the political parties.⁹ [KJ: These are the "thermometer" measures.] These data can identify the structuring of major social groups and the political parties in relation to Old Politics and New Politics dimensions. We used a statistical analysis method to represent the

interrelationship of group perceptions in graphic terms.¹⁰ This technique maps the political space as defined by Americans. When there is a strong similarity in how two groups are evaluated, they are located near each other in the space. When groups are evaluated in dissimilar terms, they are positioned a distance apart in the space.

The American sociopolitical space in 1992 is depicted in figure 7.1. The traditional Left/Right cleavage of the Old Politics is quite evident. Clinton is located at the left of the horizontal dimension, along with labor unions. Bush is located at the opposite end of this continuum, and the nearest group is big business; fundamentalist religious groups are part of the conservative Republican cluster.

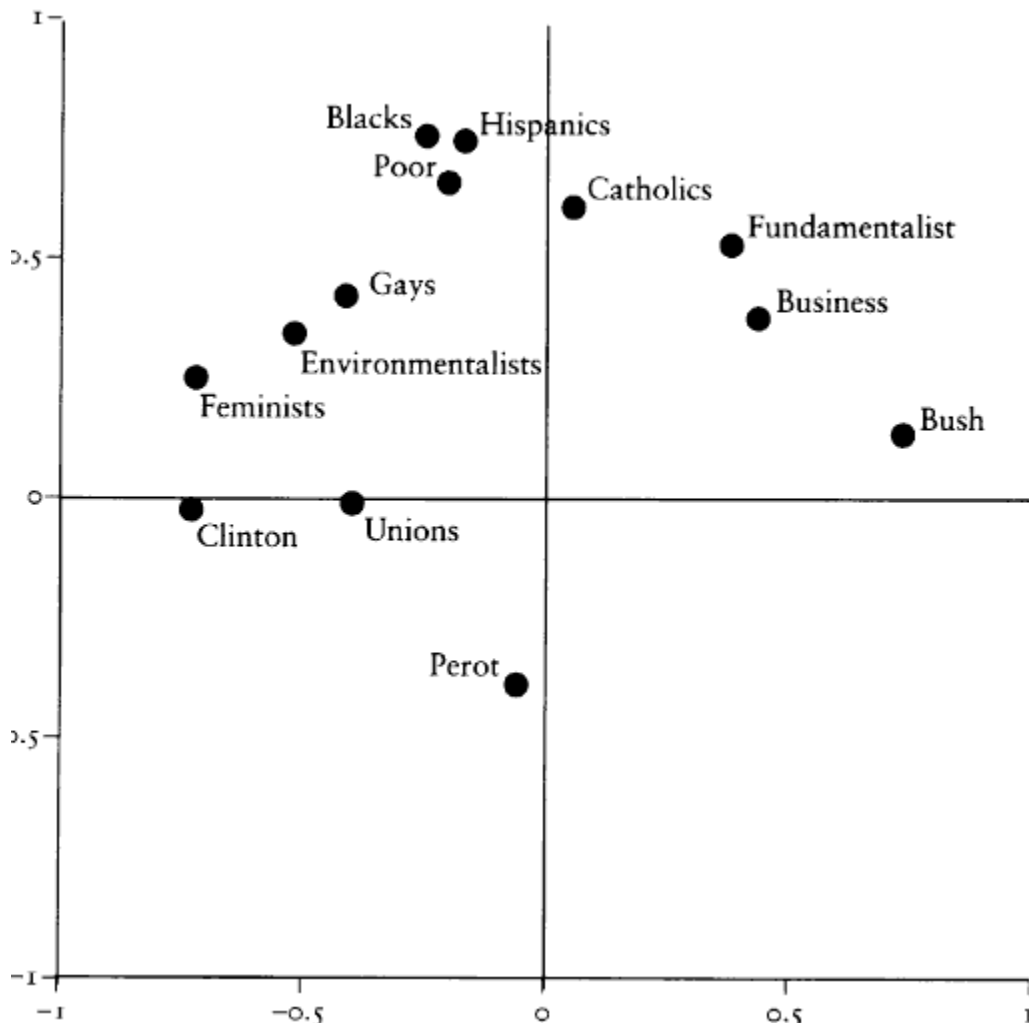


Figure 7.1: The Sociopolitical Space in the United States

SOURCE: American National Election Study, 1992

We also find a second dimension of political cleavage, which has Texas billionaire Ross Perot juxtapositioned against minority groups, such as

Hispanics, blacks, and the poor. This pattern fits the tone of the Perot campaign in 1992 and the social base of Perot supporters. What is distinctive about the 1992 patterns, however, is the movement toward fusion of the Old Politics and New Politics cleavages. Instead of two dimensions of conflict aligned at right angles, as seen in earlier studies, one sees that New Left groups have apparently moved toward the Democratic Party. The cluster of Clinton support groups includes the unions and feminists, gays, and environmentalists. Even if some tensions exist among groups within each cluster, the bipolar nature of contemporary American politics is becoming apparent."

Comparable and current data on the sociopolitical space in Britain, Germany, and France are not available, but another study uses a different method to illustrate party positions on Old Politics and New Politics issues in all four party systems. Michael Laver and W Ben Hunt (1992) asked experts to position the parties in their respective nations on a set of policy dimensions. Figure 7.2 presents party positions on two issues: taxes versus social spending as a measure of the socioeconomic issues of the Old Politics, and the environment versus economic growth as a measure of New Politics priorities.

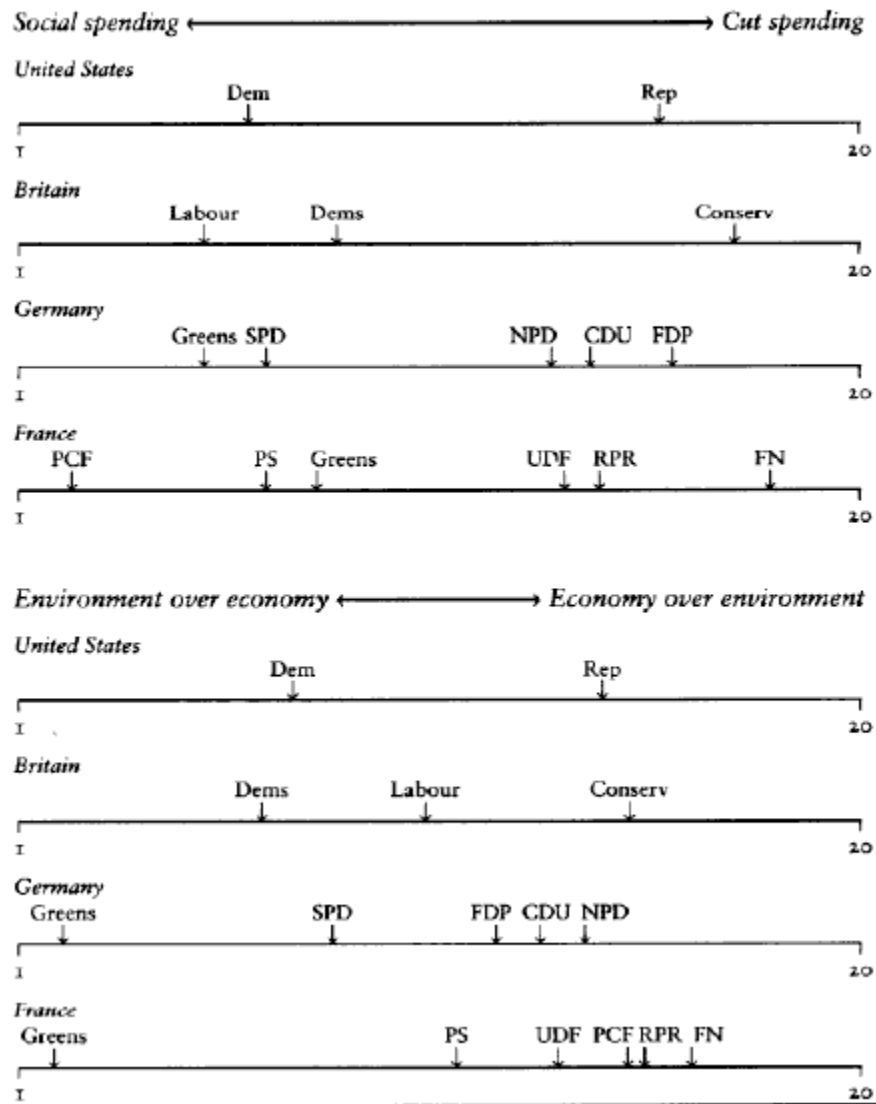


Figure 7.2: Party Positions on Two Policy Dimensions

SOURCE: Laver and Hunt (1992, appendix)

The top panel of the figure locates parties on the spending/taxes issue. Here we find a traditional Left/Right party alignment in each nation. The Democratic Party in the United States is located at the left end of this continuum, following the pattern found above in mapping the sociopolitical space. At the opposite end of the Old Politics dimension are the Republicans. Even before the present "Contract with America," the Reagan administration had developed a strong commitment to cutting public services and cutting taxes. This is now ingrained in the Republican policy image.

In Britain, the Labour Party has been the representative of the working class and the advocate for socialist policy. The party's working-class orientation is institutionalized through formal ties to the labor unions. Normally, membership in a union automatically includes a dues-paying membership in the Labour

Party; union leaders also control this large bloc of votes at Labour Party conventions. Past Labour governments have nationalized several major industrial sectors, expanded social welfare programs, and vigorously defended the interests of their working-class supporters. The Labour Party is located to the left of both the American Democrats and the German SPD on this dimension. The British Liberal Democrats are a small centrist party that occupies a midpoint on this dimension. The party was traditionally a representative of liberal, middle-class values. In recent years it has formed and reformed itself, but still holds a centrist position on issues of the government's socioeconomic role.

Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Party government aggressively attempted to roll back the scale of national government during the 1980s. Thatcher's government privatized many government-owned industries, reduced government social and educational programs, sold off public housing, and generally tried to lessen the scope of the government's involvement in society. These policies reinforced the Conservatives' traditional image as a party that favors business interests and that draws disproportionate support from middle-class voters. Reagan and Thatcher became synonymous with the retrenchment of government programs in the 1980s (Pierson 1994). The present Conservative administration of John Major has continued these policies.

The major representative of Old Left in Germany is the Social Democratic Party (SPD). The SPD emerged from the socialist working-class movement and still consistently represents working-class interests. Although German labor unions no longer have institutional ties to the SPD the relationship nevertheless remains close. ¹² Because of these liberal traditions, the SPD favors increased social spending. In 1980 the Greens joined the German party system. Herbert Kitschelt (1989) has described the Greens as a Left-Libertarian party because it combines an advocacy for new Left causes with a distinctly liberal position on many traditional issues of the social spending and the welfare state. Thus political experts position the Greens to the left of the SPD on the social spending dimension in figure 7.2. ¹³

The Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU) is a major political force on the right in Germany. The CDU was formed after the war as a conservative-oriented catchall party (Volkspartei). In the state of Bavaria the CSU runs as the party of the conservative bloc. As their names imply, both conservative parties represent religious voters on the church-state cleavage. The Union parties also advocate conservative economic policies and a free-market economy. The CDU/CSU now forms a governing coalition with the small Free Democratic Party (FDP). The CDU/CSU and FDP occupy similar conservative positions on the services/ taxes dimension. Indeed, during the 1980s the CDU/CSU-FDP government limited benefits for every single social program, decreased the government's budget deficits, and pursued conservative economic

reform. The exceptional costs of German unification have forced these parties to turn temporarily away from these policies, but their commitment to smaller government remains strong. The National Democratic Party (NPD) is a small, extreme-Right party known for its nationalistic and reactionary policies, more so than for its economic agenda. Nevertheless, experts locate the NPD at the conservative end of the social services dimension.

France has two major parties that represent traditional Old Left positions: the Communist Party (PC) and the Socialists (PS). The PC strongly believes that the government is responsible for social needs and is the most Leftist party in all four nations. The PC depends very heavily on working class votes and has formal ties with the communist labor union, the CGT. Furthermore, while other communist parties have lost their Marxist ideology with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the French Communist Party remains committed to these values. The French Socialists, by comparison, have moderated their ideological image during the 1980s to appeal to liberal middle-class voters. Still, political experts see the PS as strongly committed to extensive governmental social programs.

France has two major conservative parties, the Rally for the Republic (RPR) and the Union for French Democracy (UDF). The RPR is the modern successor to the Gaullist forces that created the Fifth Republic and governed the republic for most of its history. The party is a representative of conservative business interests and the middle class; it favors a reduction of government social programs and taxes. The UDF is a moderate conservative party that attracts liberal elements of the middle class. Together the RPR and UDF form a conservative majority in the present parliament, advocating a traditional conservative economic agenda. The president of France, Jacques Chirac, is a leader of the RPR. At the far right of the political spectrum is the National Front (FN). The FN is an example of a New Right party, focusing its attention on cultural and social issues, such as opposition to foreigners, a nationalistic foreign policy, and traditional social values. Its identity is formed more as a backlash to the liberal themes of the New Politics than by traditional economic issues; but on issues of social spending it is perceived as sharply conservative.

If Old Politics issues, such as government social spending, were the only factors structuring electoral competition, then Lipset and Rokkan would still be correct in describing contemporary party systems in terms of the cleavages of the 1920s. The class-based Left/Right party alignment that historically structured partisan politics remains clearly visible in how political experts position the contemporary parties on the services/taxes dimension.

The content of the political agenda, however, now includes more than the economic and security concerns of the Old Politics. The New Politics introduce new interests into the political debate, and this has led to a different alignment of parties. The partisan alignments along the New Politics cleavage can be seen in the bottom panel of figure 7.2, which positions parties on the

environment/economy policy dimension.

In the United States, we find the same Left/Right ordering of the parties. The Democrats are seen as the advocates for environmental protection. The Republicans are perceived as more concerned with protecting the economy even at a cost to the environment. This party cleavage was aptly illustrated in the 1992 presidential election. The Democrats nominated Albert Gore, a political figure who is closely identified with environmental protection and the author of a best-selling book on the environment, as their vice-presidential candidate. Despite earlier claims to be the environmental president, Bush opposed environmental regulations and, in the heat of the campaign, took to slurring Gore as the "Ozone Man" because of Gore's concern about the depletion of ozone in the upper atmosphere. In the United States, the alignment of the two parties is now similar on both Old Politics and New Politics dimensions.

In most other party systems, the environmental issue creates a new pattern of partisan alignment (Dalton 1994, chap. 9). In Britain, for example, the centrist Liberal Democrats have distinguished themselves among the established parties as the most sympathetic to the environmental issue.¹⁴ In Germany, the Green Party is seen as a strong advocate for environmental causes and is located at the far end of this continuum. Over time the SPD has become more sympathetic to the environment, but experts still position the SPD near the center of this policy scale. The Social Democrats are closer to the conservative CDU and FDP on this dimension than they are to the Greens. On the far right of this continuum is the extremist NPD, which illustrates where this party and the New Right Republikaner would be located on the New Politics dimension. As the Greens are advocates for modernization and liberal issues, the NPD (and more recently the Republikaner) are the most vocal critics of social and cultural change. Overall, the major cleavage on the environmental dimension separates the Greens from all the other German parties.

The ability of New Politics to transform party alignments is most clearly illustrated in the French party system. The French Greens are strong supporters of the environment, occupying an extreme New Left position. But the traditional Leftist parties are neutral or critical of environmental protection. The French Socialists are at the center of this scale and have an ambivalent record on environmental matters. The French Communists, who are extremely Leftist on Old Politics issues, are positioned between the conservative UDF and RPR the environmental dimension. On the environmental dimension, the Communists and the National Front hold similar positions. Overall, as we saw in the German party system, the New Politics cleavage separates the Greens from all the other French parties.

If we combine the evidence in this section, we can begin to map the sociopolitical space that voters use to orient themselves to partisan politics. **In each nation there is a clear representation of political positions along the**

traditional socioeconomic issues that formed the initial structure of party competition in these democracies. In addition, the political controversies of advanced industrial societies are bringing new issues to the fore, and this is prompting the formation of new parties or the realignment of the established parties to represent these positions. Much of the current research on electoral politics can be seen as an attempt to assess the relative position of the political parties on both dimensions and the relative weight of both dimensions in structuring political choice for the electorate. The mix of these forces is what fuels the current processes of electoral change in these nations.

Contemporary Party Systems

This chapter has described broad similarities in the ideological structure of contemporary party systems. **Most political parties are still organized around the Old Politics cleavages of class and religion.** Even if these cleavages have become less salient, the group ties and institutional structure of the parties have perpetuated these images. Parties are, after all, still turning to the same interest groups and associations for the core of their support. Contemporary publics see Rightist parties as linked to business interests (and sometimes the Catholic church) and Leftist parties as allied with the labor unions.

While major party differences exist on the Old Politics dimension, **there are indications of the increasing importance of the New Politics cleavage.** Earlier chapters (5 and 6) found that citizens are developing postmaterial values that lead to new policy interests. These new issue demands initially manifested themselves outside the established parties. The growth of citizen action groups, for example, often reflected a mix of the new style of citizen participation and New Politics issue concerns. These interests are now gaining representation through partisan politics, which places new demands on the established parties.

Some indications of partisan change along the New Politics dimension are already evident. New parties, such as the German and French Greens, have been formed to represent New Politics concerns. These small parties have drawn their support from the young, the better educated, and post-materialists-key groups defining the New Politics cleavage. A more basic change would occur if the larger established parties adopted clearer positions on New Politics issues. There is some evidence of this change in the recent actions of the German SPD and French Socialists. Both parties are attempting to combine Old Left and New Left issue appeals into a single program; the French PS found this an especially difficult task for a governing party. The Democratic and Republican parties in the United States also have developed closer ties to New Left and New Right groups respectively.

Despite these indications of partisan change, we should not underestimate the difficulty of integrating the New Politics cleavage into party systems based on the Old Politics cleavage. The established parties have been

understandably hesitant to formalize close ties to New Left or New Right groups, especially in Western Europe where the Old Politics ties remain strong. Parties are naturally cautious about taking clear stands on a new dimension of conflict until the costs and benefits are clear. The major European Leftist parties are divided on many issues that involve Old Politics/ New Politics conflicts. While most industrial labor unions favor economic development projects that will strengthen the economy and produce jobs, Leftist environmentalists often oppose these same projects because of their ecological consequences. Many conservative parties also face divisions between conservative business elites and liberal middle-class voters. Political alliances between Old Politics and New Politics groups so far have been temporary because of the conflicting values of these groups.

Added to these uncertainties are the new questions of partisan identities in the post-Cold War era. The end of communism requires a rethinking of the foreign policy stances of many parties. Many conservative parties used anticommunism as part of their political image, and this must now be replaced by other political themes. Similarly, the collapse of East European socialism has weakened the ability of social democratic parties to advocate programs to expand the role of government. In short, parties of the Left and the Right are rethinking some of the themes that created their electoral identities. It is too soon to know what the implications of these reevaluations will be.

Because of the uncertainties facing the parties and the difficulties in integrating a new political cleavage into the existing party systems, future partisan change is likely to follow a slow and uncertain course. Continuing changes in citizen values and issue interests mean that the potential for further partisan change is real.

Notes

1 There are several good analytic studies of recent American elections (Pomper 1989, 1993; Abramson et al. 1994), British elections (Butler 1995; Heath et al. 1985, 1994), German elections (Dalton 1993b, 1996), and French elections (Boy and Mayer 1993)

2. Vote share was based on most recent national election: United States (1992), Britain 1992), Germany (1994), and France (1993). Years in government is complicated by the separation of powers in the United States and France; we decided to count the number of years a party was part of the legislative majority between 1970 and 1995 as the most comparable cross-national statistic.

3. In 1994 the Republican seats in the House rose to 230, and the Republicans had a majority of Senate seats (54). In addition, the party made broad gains in state and local offices (Wattenberg 1996).

4. Because of the single-member district electoral system, the Liberal Democrats are routinely disadvantaged in winning seats in Parliament. In 1992, for example, the party won 18 percent of the popular vote nationwide but won only 3 percent of the seats in the House of Commons.

5. In 1994 the western Greens allied themselves with the eastern Alliance 90 and ran under the heading Alliance 90/Greens.

6. The German electoral law requires that a party win 5 percent of the national vote on the second ballot, or three district seats, in order to share in the proportional distribution of Bundestag seats. In 1990 this requirement was separately applied to East and West; in 1994 the PDS won four district seats in East Berlin and thus received additional seats in parliament based on its national share of the vote.

7. Bartolini and Mair (1989) forcefully argue that earlier historical periods were also marked by high levels of partisan volatility. But their methodology underestimates the degree of the current levels of partisan change (Dalton 1993c).

8. For instance, the 1984 Democratic primaries featured a confrontation between Old Left and New Left Democrats. Walter Mondale was identified with the traditional New Deal policies of the Democratic Party and won early endorsements from labor unions and the party establishment. Gary Hart, in contrast, explicitly claimed that he was the New Politics candidate, the representative of new ideas and a new generation. Hart's core voters were the Yuppies--young, urban, upwardly mobile professionals--one of the groups linked to the New Politics cleavage.

9. These are the so-called feeling thermometer questions that measure positive and negative feelings toward each object. Respondents are given a thermometer-like scale to measure their "warmth" or "coldness" toward each group.

10. The group items were factor analyses using a principal components analysis involving the methods described in Barnes, Kaase et al. (1979, 58183) and extracting only two dimensions. For earlier analyses of similar sociopolitical spaces, see Barnes, Kaase et al. (1979), Inglehart (1984), Dalton (1988, chap. 7). Cees Middendorp (1991) has conducted an extensive longitudinal analysis of the Dutch political space using a different methodology, and he identifies two very similar dimensions.

11. Similar results are obtained from the American portion of the Cross National Election Project. This study found even stronger evidence of a convergence in Old Politics and New Politics cleavages using a question on political representation. Furthermore, a follow-up question asking about the

partisan leanings of social groups found that Clinton was perceived as the preferred candidate for the women's movement (73 percent), the civil rights movement (68 percent), labor unions (66 percent), and environmental groups (64 percent). Bush was perceived by a plurality as the favored candidate of business associations (48 percent) and religious fundamentalists (45 percent). See Beck and Curtice (forthcoming).

12. The German portion of the Cross National Election Project also contained a question on the partisan leanings of social groups. About three-quarters of the German public saw labor unions as leaning toward the SPD, and an equal number saw business associations and the Catholic church as leaning toward the CDU/CSU; nearly 80 percent saw environmental groups as favoring the Greens. See Dalton (1993a, 266) and Wessels (1993).

13. A new entrant to the German party system is the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), a successor of the communist party of the German Democratic Republic. The PDS would be positioned on the far left of this scale.

14. Even the Liberal Democrats' advocacy of environmental issues was insufficient for some environmentalists. In the 1989 European Parliament election a newly formed British Green Party won 14 percent of the vote. The structure of the British electoral system handicaps minor parties, however, and the Greens have been unable to institutionalize this support.