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Party system change in Western Europe

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Introduction

Although there appear to be many definitions of ‘political party’, beyond a few questions at the margins the referent of the term ‘political party’ is rarely in doubt. The same cannot be said with regard to ‘party system’, and hence the first step in analysing party system change must be specification of what it is that might be changing.

At a minimum, a party system consists of a number of parties; for some scholars that number need not be greater than one, while for others a one-party system is the negation not only of ‘system’, but of ‘party’ as well. The last one-party systems in Western Europe disappeared with the end of the Estado Novo in Portugal (1974) and the Franco regime in Spain (1975), and in Europe more generally with the end of Communist rule in Central and Eastern Europe (1989).

Even limiting the focus to systems with more than one party, there are a variety of understandings of what the defining characteristics of a party system are, and hence of how typologies of party systems should be constructed and what empirical variations might signal ‘party system change’.

The first class of typologies might be identified as katagraphical (from the Greek καταγραφω, meaning ‘to record or catalog’). Katagraphical typologies are based on lists of the parties found in a political system. Archetypically, these include typologies based on the number of parties (e.g. two-party systems versus multiparty systems), but typologies based on the presence or absence of specific party types (e.g. mass parties) or members of particular party families (e.g. radical right parties) would also be included. At the extreme, the katagraphical approach might lead one to conclude that there had been party system change whenever the ‘list’ of parties changed – that is, whenever a new party arose or a previously existing party disappeared. Given the importance of the list of parties to these typologies, a central concern is the rule by which parties are included or counted.

The second class of typologies, which might be referred to as relational, are based not on the particular (number of) parties, but rather on the patterns of relationships among them. The classic statement of this position comes from Sartori:

The concept of system is meaningless – for purposes of scientific inquiry – unless (i) the system displays properties that do not belong to a separate consideration of its component
elements and (ii) the system results from, and consists of, the patterned interactions of its component parts, thereby implying that such interactions provide the boundaries, or at least the boundedness, of the system . . . Parties make for a ‘system’, then, only when they are parts (in the plural); and a party system is precisely the \textit{system of interactions} resulting from inter-party competition.

(Sartori 1976: 43–4)

Because it is the nature of the interactions among parties rather than the specific identity of the parties that are interacting that defines the system, a party system may shift from one relationally defined type to another without any change in the ‘cast of characters’.

\textit{Socio-structural} typologies are based on the relationships between the parties and the society in which they operate. Here, one might differentiate between, for example, class-based party systems and party systems based on a religious cleavage. In reality, socio-structural cleavages are not mutually exclusive, and the most influential socio-structural typology of party systems, that of Lipset and Rokkan (1967), is based on the combination of four social cleavages: centre/periphery, state/church, land/industry and owner/worker. Recognizing that the ties between social structure and party are better described as matters of degree rather than differences of kind, quantitative measures of association (e.g. Alford’s ‘Index of Class Voting’ (Alford 1963: 79–86) or Rose and McAllister’s ‘Index of Determination’ (Rose and McAllister 1986: 38)) may be employed, with party system change identified by a significant change in the appropriate index.

Finally, another common set of conceptualizations of party system change is not based on a typology, but rather on changes in quantitative assessments of the approximation of a party system to an ideal type. Two such ‘ideals’ have been particularly prominent. One is the ideal of electoral stability (the opposite of which is volatility), most frequently measured by the Pedersen (1979) index or any of a host of variants derived from it. The other is the ideal of uniformity, in terms of either electoral ‘swings’ or patterns of electoral support, often identified as ‘nationalization’ (Caramani 2004; Stokes 1967).

Although each of these methods of defining party system change is conceptually distinct (in the sense that one can imagine scenarios under which any one of them would indicate substantial change while the others would indicate no significant change), the general expectation is that they will be closely related empirically. Indeed, party system changes as defined by one of these schemes are often theorized to be the direct cause or direct effect of party system changes as defined by the others. For example, a significant weakening in the ties between social structure and parties (an ‘unfreezing of cleavages’, in the terms of Lipset and Rokkan [1967]) might be expected to open the electoral market to new parties (a katagraphical change), increase the range of politically acceptable coalitions (a relational change) and also increase both electoral volatility (due to weaker ties between voters and parties) and nationalization (because voters become relatively more sensitive to national political personalities or issues).

This chapter first presents a review of the major typologies of party systems and the measures used to assess party system change. It then uses those tools to chart the major examples of stability and change in the party systems of Western Europe since the 1970s.

\textbf{Katagraphical typologies}

The simplest kind of typology of party systems classifies them on the basis of the number of parties; the simplest of these divides party systems between two-party and multiparty types. An additional category, that of hyper-fragmented systems, might be added, although the border
between multiparty and hyper-fragmentation is nowhere near as (apparently) clear as that between two-party and multiparty.

The more difficult question for katagraphical typologies is whether the identity of the parties or merely their number is determinative. The more parties there are, the less likely it is that the addition or subtraction of one of them will be regarded as defining a new party system. At the other extreme, however, it is possible to consider every change in the list of parties as defining a new party system, as, for (a non-European) example, when it is asserted that the US has seen no fewer than five distinct two-party systems (Chambers and Burnham 1967: 3, 9, 298, 302); the equivalent European question would be whether to count the nineteenth-century Liberal v. Conservative and twentieth-century Labour v. Conservative British two-party systems as representing party system change.

Finally, one might consider the addition or subtraction of a party of a particular type to represent party system change. Here it might be argued, for example, that the transition of a party from cadre to catch-all party form (e.g. the British Conservative Party over its long history) or the conversion of a liberal party into a right-wing populist party (e.g. the Austrian Freedom Party under Jörg Haider) would constitute a new party system, even if the nominal list of parties remained unchanged.

**Counting parties**

The first problem for katagraphical typologies is to determine which parties (or organizations calling themselves parties) are to be counted – and how they are to be counted. The simplest answer to the counting problem is, of course, to count them all, and to count each party as ‘1’, although even here one would have to decide whether to limit attention to officially registered parties (assuming that there is an official party register) or to parties that actually field candidates or win seats in one or more elections at one or more levels of government, or alternatively to count any organization that claims to aspire to registration or to contest elections at some point in the future (or that has done so in the past). The problem with any of these ‘liberal and egalitarian’ counting rules is that they consider a party like the Dutch *Lijst Pym Fortuyn*, which in November 2006 won 0.2 per cent of the vote and no seats, to be the equivalent of the *Christien-Democratisch Appèl*, which in the same election won 26.5 per cent of the vote and over 27 per cent of the seats.

A number of strategies to ‘correct’ for this problem have been proposed. One is to establish a threshold, in terms of either votes (generally 0.5 per cent, 1 per cent or 5 per cent) or seats (generally 1) that a party must achieve (sometimes in the election for which the count is being made, sometimes at least once over some longer time period) before it is counted. A second strategy, derived from Sartori’s more relational understanding of party systems adapted for katagraphical typologies, is to count ‘relevant’ parties; that is, those with either blackmail potential or coalition potential (Sartori 1976: 123). The follow-up question here is whether to assess this (as Sartori does) at the level of national government formation or at the level of individual election districts (e.g. Katz 1980); the latter implies either that many more parties will be counted as relevant or that each district or other sub-national unit will be assumed to have its own party system, even though these local party systems are clearly interdependent.

A third possibility is to count all parties, but to weight them according to their strength, yielding a measure of the ‘effective number of parties’ (ENP; Laakso and Taagapera 1979), based either on their vote shares in elections (ENP,) or on their seat shares in the legislature (ENP). While this has become the most common way of counting parties, it can be misleading in several respects. Most obviously, the distinction between two-party and multiparty becomes blurred,
with ‘two-party’ generally operationalized as a range between 1.5 and roughly 2.5; however, the latter value – and indeed any value greater than 2 – can be reached only if there are in fact more than two parties. The result can be especially misleading when applied to seat shares. Consider, for example, a parliament in which three parties have 48, 48 and 4 seats, respectively. The ENP, in this setting is 2.17, reflecting the small size of the third party, but if one were to assume any coalition of two parties to be politically as well as mathematically possible and base the effective number of parties on Shapley and Shubik (1954) or Penrose and Banzhof (Penrose 1946; Banzhof 1965) power scores rather than simple seat counts, the effective number would be 3, reflecting the fact that no one party has a majority but any two do (and thus each of the three parties has the same power). If, however, one assumed that political reality would make a coalition between the first and third party impossible, then even if the seat distribution was 51, 42 and 7, the ‘truly effective’ number of parties would be closer to two, even though the ENP, score would be higher, at 2.27.

**Relational typologies**

The last example is relevant to katigraphical typologies in that it addresses the appropriateness of using the ENP as the counting method for identifying two-party systems. More generally, however, it derives directly from the concerns of relational typologies, which are particularly sensitive to coalition possibilities and patterns.

**Sartori’s typology**

The most widely cited relational typology is that of Giovanni Sartori (1976), who, if one excludes single-party systems, proposes four basic types of party systems (ibid.: 288): twopartism, moderate pluralism, polarized pluralism and predominant party. While each of these has a number of parties associated with it as an indicator or cause – Sartori indicates that he is open to either interpretation (ibid.: 287–90) – the defining concern is ‘the mechanics – how the system works’ (ibid.: 128, italics in original).

The *twopartism* type is, as the name implies, associated with the existence of two significant parties. In advancing Australia as an example of twopartism (ibid.: 187), despite the fact that one of the two ‘parties’ was in fact a coalition of two parties (Liberal and Country), Sartori highlights the difference between system format (raw number of parties) and mechanics (relations among them): because Liberal and Country parties were always in government or in opposition together, and because they did not compete against each other in the electoral arena, the mechanics of the system mimicked that of the British system of Labour v. Conservative (in which the Liberals were essentially irrelevant to government formation – at least at the time when Sartori was writing). Twopartism is also associated with alternation in office (essentially as a defining characteristic, in contrast to a predominant party system) and with low ideological distance or segmentation (as an expectation, which might be violated by a subtype that Sartori called ‘twoparty polarized’).

*Moderate pluralism* is associated with three to five parties, none of which is likely to have an electoral or parliamentary majority; as a result, ‘the major distinguishing trait of moderate pluralism is coalition government’ (ibid.: 178). However, it is not just coalition government but the real likelihood of alternative coalitions – the potential to ‘mix and match’ in multiple ways – that characterizes moderate pluralism. Moreover, with moderate pluralism ideological distance is constrained (although greater than with twopartism) and (because) competition is centripetal, with parties appealing to the centre.
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**Polarized pluralism** is primarily defined by the intensity of conflict, in particular due to the ‘presence of relevant anti-system parties’ (ibid.: 132), although it is also defined numerically as more than five significant parties. A second characteristic is the existence of bilateral oppositions (ibid.: 134). This means that the political centre is occupied, and so rather than drawing parties toward the centre, competition instead is centrifugal, with the characteristic trend being ‘the enfeeblement of the center, a persistent loss of votes to one of the extreme ends (or even to both)’ (ibid.: 136).

In a predominant party system, the defining factor is not the aggregate number of parties, but the presence of one party that ‘simply happens . . . to win, over time, an absolute majority of seats (not necessarily of votes) in parliament’ (ibid.: 195). In the terms applied by Baumol et al. (1986) to economic markets, the political market remains contestable, but it is not effectively contested. A record of single-party majorities may be the obvious indicator of predominance; however, like Pempel’s (1990: 3–4) definition, this has the disadvantage that it can only be recognized after the fact.

**Patterns of cooperation**

Sartori’s typology is based primarily on patterns of competition among parties. In writing about the French Fifth Republic, Karlheinz Reif (1987: 30–1) drew a contrast between two models of party government based additionally on patterns of cooperation. Katz (1987: 12–13) elaborated Reif’s dichotomy into a trichotomy (dividing Reif’s ‘type B’ between coalitional and dominant party systems), based on patterns of coalition formation. To these three types, a fourth can be added: the cartel party system (Katz and Mair 1995).

**Bipolar systems** are typified by two-party systems, but are not necessarily restricted to them. Rather, the defining condition is that the parties are aligned such that a general election not only decides the partisan balance of the parliament, but also directly decides who will head the government without further post-election negotiation among the parties. In other words, the electorate is choosing the government, not just choosing those who will, subsequent to the election, choose the government. In contrast to Sartori’s two-partism, the components of the two blocs may compete against one another, even as they are collectively competing against the other bloc.

In a **coalitional system**, the expectation is that no party or reliably pre-announced coalition of parties will win a parliamentary majority. As a result, a general election is only the first step in the process of selecting a government. Once the electorate has established the relative strengths of the parties in parliament, the leaders of these parties then negotiate among themselves to determine the composition of the governing coalition.

In this scheme, a **dominant party system** is one in which, although no party wins a majority of the parliamentary seats, over time there is one party that is the necessary senior partner in every politically conceivable government. The actual composition of the government may change, and indeed the dominant party may even yield the premiership to one of its coalition partners, but the possibility that it will be forced into opposition is effectively nil. Pempel’s ‘one-party dominant party regimes’, although adding a ‘historical project’ (Pempel 1990: 4), are of this type.

Whereas these types are concerned with patterns of interparty cooperation in the form of coalition formation within systems that are still primarily characterized by patterns of competition, Katz and Mair have suggested a type – the **cartel party system** – in which the dominant interparty relationship is cooperation. Although electoral competition continues, it is primarily spectacle (LaPalombara 1987; Manin 1997), with the core parties (i.e. all parties that can reasonably hope
to occupy national office or a significant share of sub-national offices) cooperating, first, to close the electoral market both to new competitors and to competition over potentially destabilizing issues, and, second, to protect their own positions, whether in office or in opposition, thereby reducing their dependence on both their own members and civil society in general. Parties that are not part of this tacit cartel (identified by Katz and Mair as ‘anti-party-system parties’) may exist, but they are irrelevant to the government.

**Ad-hoc bipolarity**

Although not explicitly included in the definition, there is an implicit assumption in the Reif/Katz bipolar system that when there is not simply a two-party system the pre-announced coalitions between which voters are asked to choose will be reasonably stable over time. (In the case of Sartori’s twopartism, this assumption is part of the definition.) Conversely, it is implicit in Sartori’s moderate pluralism (and explicit in Reif/Katz’s coalitional system) that the parties will not present voters with two predetermined alternatives, even at a single election. The increasingly common pattern of what might be called ‘ad-hoc bipolarity’ – in which competition at particular elections is structured between two pre-announced coalitions, but in which these coalitions are not stable over time – does not fit either of these patterns. The ‘coalitional promiscuity’ (Mair 1997) with which this type is associated (in particular, the frequent rise and demise of novel coalitional formulae) means that electoral rewards and punishments based on performance become more problematic, as the same coalition may not be available at subsequent elections to be rewarded or punished.

**Socio-structural typologies**

Both katagraphical and relational typologies are defined only with reference to the parties themselves. Socio-structural typologies of party systems, on the other hand, are defined by the correspondences (and possible direct organizational connections) between the parties and social structure.

**Lipset and Rokkan**

Particularly with regard to Western Europe, the best-known socio-structural typology is that developed by Lipset and Rokkan (1967). This typology is based on the idea that the patterns of elite alliance and opposition that evolved during the process of nation-building were translated into patterns of political party support during the period of suffrage expansion. Moreover, the authors suggest, after the advent of universal (manhood) suffrage by the 1920s and the occupation of both national and local political offices by the parties existing at the time, resources were no longer available for new elites to mobilize alternative patterns of support, leading to the famous ‘frozen cleavages’ hypothesis and the observation that ‘the party systems of the 1960s reflect, with few but significant exceptions, the cleavage structures of the 1920s’ (ibid.: 50, italics in original).

The Lipset and Rokkan typology is based on four cleavages: centre/periphery, secular/clerical, land/industry and owner/worker. Altogether, Lipset and Rokkan identify eight patterns actually found in Europe based on the first three of these four cleavages, with the additional overlay of a more uniform pattern of competition between whichever of these patterns exists in a particular country, on the one hand, and one or more parties of the left derived from the owner/worker cleavage, on the other hand.
Aside from the fact that the Lipset and Rokkan typology does not fit the history of every European country, the typology and the frozen cleavages hypothesis raises a number of questions. First, is the typology focused on the generic cleavages that structure party competition, or on the specific parties themselves? Second, what is the essential nature of a cleavage, and is it possible for new cleavages to form? In particular, does the division between materialist and post-materialist values signal a cleavage that would require revision of the typology, and might the evolution of the European Union represent a new form of ‘nation-building’ that could generate new cleavage structures, in both cases notwithstanding that they post-date suffrage expansion? Third, what is the effect on the socio-structural typology of party systems of the evident fact that the social divisions on which the typology is based are becoming weaker or more porous? Clearly, the Protestant/Catholic cleavage in Northern Ireland has very little to do with Catholicism or Protestantism as religions, but is it generally true that the utility of the typology will survive the decline in religiosity or the increase in interclass mobility that have typified the last 50 to 70 years?

**Single-cleavage typologies**

Although the class cleavage is included in the Lipset and Rokkan model, a more parsimonious typology would simply categorize party systems based on a single predominant cleavage, thus contrasting, for example, class-based systems and religion-based systems. Perhaps the most unambiguous statement of this position is Peter Pulzer’s (1967) claim that ‘class is the basis of British politics; all else is embellishment and detail’. Similarly, the party system of Northern Ireland in the 1970s was structured by one basic cleavage, whether it was identified as religion or republicanism (Rose 1971).

A variant, or intermediate case, would be a situation featuring one dominant cleavage, but with separate party systems on each side of the cleavage. The obvious approximation would be the current Belgian party system(s), for which the language cleavage defines an uncrossable barrier (for institutional as well as attitudinal reasons), with separate multi-dimensional party systems within each of the two major language communities.

**Cross-cutting cleavages**

Each of these socio-structural typologies assumes a society structured by at least one cleavage that is sufficiently ‘deep’ that individuals are very unlikely to support a party from the ‘other’ side of the cleavage. Such societies might be described as ‘segmented’, and to the extent that this segmentation makes accommodation among differing segments impossible it may make stable democracy impossible as well. Lijphart’s (1975 [1968]) model of consociational democracy, in which accommodation at the elite level compensates for deep segmentation at the mass level, offers a possible escape from this trap.

The alternative, assumed by pluralist accounts of democracy but also perhaps what one would expect if Lipset and Rokkan’s frozen cleavages were to ‘melt’, would be a pattern of cross-cutting cleavages. In fact, this term is somewhat misleading, in that what is required is less that the social differences reflected in the party system cut across cleavages (e.g. that there be both working-class and middle-class Catholics) than that the connections between the resulting identities and political parties be sufficiently fluid (such that, for example, a working-class Catholic might at times support a labour party on the left of the political spectrum but at other times support a Catholic party on the right). With this type of party system, there is still a connection between parties and social groups, but it is much more fluid and contingent.
Party system change in Western Europe

Approximations of stability and uniformity

Two additional dimensions of party systems have also been significant in attempts to assess change over time. Stability (although generally characterized in terms of its opposite, volatility) refers to the degree to which the strength of parties remains constant from one election to the next; nationalization refers to the degree of uniformity across space. In a perfectly stable system, there would be no change in party strength over time; in a perfectly nationalized system, there would be no variability in party strength over space.

Stability/volatility

The primary tool for the assessment of stability is the Pedersen index of volatility, computed as one-half the sum of the absolute differences between party vote shares at two points in time (Pedersen 1979). This index would take the value 0 if every party received the same share of the vote at both elections, and 100 if every party in the first election lost all of its votes (and all were replaced by new parties). As with any index based on aggregation, there is the possibility that a party’s gains in one area will be compensated by losses in another, giving a false appearance of stability, a possibility that increases with the number and heterogeneity of the subunits. In the limiting case, the question is whether the Pedersen index (which, because it is computed from aggregate election returns, has the advantage of being usable even in places and times lacking survey data) can be employed as an indicator of (changes in levels of) individual volatility. While Bartolini and Mair (1990) argue that it can, Katz (2001) presents data showing a negative correlation between the Pedersen index and individual-level volatility as estimated from survey data.3

The Pedersen index has been widely used to assess the validity of the Lipset and Rokkan frozen cleavages hypothesis, based on the presumption that increased volatility would be indicative of ‘melting’ cleavages. As Bartolini and Mair (1990) point out, however, if there is more than one party on each side of a cleavage (e.g. both a socialist and a Communist party representing the working class), then shifts in support among these parties would be irrelevant to the relationship between cleavages and parties; this led the researchers to propose a distinction between within-block volatility and inter-block volatility.

One problem with the Pedersen index is that it implicitly assumes a constant cast of parties, or at least that the identity of a party that remains in competition from one election to the next is unchanged. It does not distinguish between changes in the distribution of votes resulting from the entry, exit, split or merger of parties and those that reflect changes in support among a fixed set of parties. While it may be possible to compare the vote share of a party at time 1 to the sum of the vote shares at time 2 of the parties into which it split (and conversely for mergers), or to identify the ‘successor party’ of a party that has disappeared, reality is rarely as simple as this approximation implies. If, however, one understands volatility to be important because it is an indicator of the strength of attachment of voters to their parties – and therefore of the degree to which parties can depend on a stable base of support – then the meaning of a high volatility score attributable to the entry or exit of organized factions or other subgroups would be quite different from high volatility attributable to a large number of ‘floating voters’.

Nationalization

In its simplest sense, nationalization refers to movement from a politics based on localities (in which even the parties competing would vary over space and the primary question would
be: ‘Who will represent this territory in contradistinction to and competition with the representatives of other territories?’) to a politics in which the same parties would compete everywhere on the basis of a common set of ‘functional’ rather than ‘territorial’ issues (Caramani 2004: 15–17). In more detail, however, as Caramani points out (ibid.: 58–9), this general definition has given rise to two quite distinct types of measures focusing on two very different senses of ‘nationalization’.

One set of measures concentrates on uniformity of change between one time and another, on the presumption that high correlation among responses must indicate some common underlying stimulus. The simplest such measure operationalizes nationalization as a uniform ‘swing’ across constituencies (e.g. Butler and Stokes 1969: 135–7, 303–12). A more complex (and data-hungry) measure is based on analysis of variance (Stokes 1965, 1967): nationalization is defined as the proportion of the variance in constituency-level election results that can be expressed as a nationally uniform linear function of national-level results (understood to indicate national electoral forces). Finally, I have suggested that the Stokes measure, which assumes a uniform response to national forces, is too restrictive, given that different constituencies (depending on their composition) might be expected to have diametrically opposed responses to the same national force; I have thus proposed that the parameter of the linear function linking national and local returns should be allowed to vary (Katz 1973).

The other set of measures is based on ‘the extent to which the levels of electoral support are homogeneous across all constituencies’ (Caramani 2004: 61, italics in original). There are a great number of these measures, differing primarily in the way they adjust (or not) for party size and the number of constituencies. In comparison to the first set of measures, they all have the advantages of being computable on the basis of a single election (and thus not being disrupted by boundary changes) and of being computable for multiparty systems (as opposed to requiring at least dichotomization between two stable coalitions). Their primary disadvantage stems from the identification of total nationalization with complete political uniformity even in a context of social and economic diversity.

Changes in West European party systems since 1970

As the preceding analysis demonstrates, there are far too many ways of conceptualizing party system change for a single article to review them all for all of the countries of Western Europe. This section will therefore of necessity concentrate on broad trends, with particular attention devoted to the larger countries. However, the empirical examination of party system change in Western Europe can be effectively framed by a more detailed, albeit still brief, examination of the party systems of two countries, Switzerland and Italy – the systems that have arguably experienced the least and the greatest change, respectively.

Switzerland and Italy

The case for Swiss stability rests first and foremost on the relations among parties with regard to government formation. The ‘magic formula’ (two seats to the Free Democrats, two to the Christian Democrats, two to the Social Democrats and one to the Swiss People’s Party), first used in 1959, defined every Swiss cabinet until 2003, when the Swiss People’s Party gained one seat at the expense of the Christian Democrats. The effective number of parties in the National Council, which in 1971 stood at 5.5, had scarcely moved by 2011, standing at 5.6.
Beneath this apparent stasis, however, there have been some changes worthy of note. Although the effective number of parties in the National Council barely changed, the effective number of parties in the electorate nearly doubled, rising from 6.2 in 1971 to 11.5 in 2011. Electoral volatility also increased significantly, from 5.2 in 1975 to 9.7 in 1999. Although the ‘magic formula’ for government formation has remained intact, the share of the votes won collectively by the four governing parties dropped from 81.0 per cent in 1971 to only 72.7 per cent in 2011, reflecting in part the rise of the Greens as a new party family in Swiss national politics.5 While not substantially altering the relations among parties defining the party system, several of the governing parties experienced either mergers with or the defection of small parties. Moreover, during the 1990s, the Swiss People’s Party underwent two significant changes relevant to katagraphic typologies: a strong shift in the direction of a radical right populist agenda, and a great increase in national centralization (in contrast to the traditional Swiss model of national parties as loose confederations of cantonal organizations). Of note primarily for international comparative purposes, the Swiss Communists (Partei der Arbeit) dropped from 2.5 per cent of the vote in 1971 to only 0.9 per cent in 2011 (for three parties together).

In contrast to the stability of the Swiss party system, the party system in Italy underwent a virtually complete collapse and reconstruction (still in progress) between 1972 and 2008. From the relational perspective, in 1972 Italy was the archetype of polarized pluralism (or Pempel’s ‘one party dominant’ type): although governments between 1948 and 1993 were short lived, all were dominated by the Christian Democrats (DC) and were composed of parties that collectively became known as the pentapartito, the DC plus some combination of the Socialists (PSI), Social Democrats (PSDI), Republicans (PRI) and Liberals (PLI). To the left of this centre bloc there was a large non-coalitionable Communist party (PCI – 28.1 per cent of the vote), and to its right there was a significant (9.1 per cent) and equally non-coalitionable neo-fascist party (the MSI). This created the pattern of bilateral opposition that Sartori argued leads to a centrifugal pattern of politics, such that in 1972 the pentapartito parties won a collective 61.6 per cent of the vote, and only the DC was numerically necessary to form a majority government, while in 1992 they only totalled 53.3 per cent, and effectively all five parties were needed to form a majority. The index of volatility, which was below 10 until 1987, rose to 16.2 in that year (13.7 in 1992), peaking at 41.4 in 1994.

In katagraphical terms, the shift was similarly dramatic. Between 1992 and 1994 the DC disappeared, while the PSI dropped from 13.6 per cent of the vote to 2.2 per cent; between 1987 and 1992 the Lega Nord went from 1 per cent (as the Lega Lombarda) to 8.7 per cent, and then to 10.1 per cent in 1996 (and finally down to about 4 per cent in 2013); in 1994 Forza Italia won some 20 per cent of the vote in its first election, while the MSI, after reforming itself into Alleanza Nazionale, won 13.5 per cent of the vote (up from 5.9 per cent in 1987). In 1991 the PCI dissolved itself, evolving into the Democratic Party of the Left (Partito Democratico della Sinistra – PDS), which in 2007 further transformed into the Democrats of the Left, replacing the hammer and sickle flag of the PCI in its party symbol with the red rose of the Party of European Socialists; by 2013 the remaining Communists (the Party of Italian Communists and Communist Refoundation) had become part of the Civil Revolution alliance, which altogether won only 2.3 per cent of the vote. While the effective number of parties was actually a bit lower in 2008 than it had been in 1972, there was a dramatic peak during the 1990s (both ENPv and ENPs over 7.5 in 1994, and then over 5 in each election until 2008). The ties between social structure (and social-structural organizations) and parties, which had been stable not only in the post-1946 era but even back in the pre-fascist period (Galli and Prandi 1970: 19), became notably ‘unstuck’. In particular, the disappearance of the DC meant a dramatic diminution in
the significance of the secular/clerical cleavage, severing the ties between organizations formally connected to the Catholic Church and an explicitly Christian party.

The rise of the Lega was also significant in katagraphical terms, in that it was the first significant regional party (as opposed to a party representing one of Italy’s two small linguistic minorities). One result was that although the 1994 election ushered in an essentially bipolar system, the conservative pole actually consisted of two separate and regionally specific alliances: Polo del Buon Governo (primarily Forza Italia and Alleanza Nazionale) in the south, and the Polo delle Libertà (Forza Italia and the Lega Nord) in the north, with Alleanza Nazionale competing separately. Although this regionalization proved temporary, the composition of the two major alliances was renegotiated at each election, reflecting a kind of ad-hoc bipolarity. The other major katigraphical change in 1994 was the rise of Forza Italia as a new type of party, which Hopkin and Paolucci (1999) identified as the ‘business firm party’.

**General trends**

This brief review of party system change in Switzerland and Italy highlights a number of trends that have characterized party systems in much of Western Europe. Table 28.1 summarizes the trends with respect to the number of parties for the 16 larger democracies of Western Europe (the EU-15 minus Luxembourg but with the addition of Norway and Switzerland), 13 of which were already well-established democracies in the 1970s and three of which (Greece, Portugal and Spain) only joined the ranks of democracies in that decade. In each case except volatility, Table 28.1. shows the average figure for elections taking place between 2004 and 2011 as a proportion of the corresponding average for elections held between 1974 and 1981 (for volatility, the date ranges are 1990–9 and 1974–82, respectively).

Table 28.1 Average for elections 2004–11 as a proportion of average for elections 1974–81

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Raw no. of parties winning votes</th>
<th>Raw no. of parties winning seats</th>
<th>ENPv</th>
<th>ENPs</th>
<th>Volatility (1990–99 v. 1974–82)</th>
<th>Vote for top two parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>9.89</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s compilation.
Katagraphic changes

The first obvious trend is that parties have become more numerous, particularly at the electoral level. Considering only parties winning reportable numbers of votes, the number of parties grew by at least 10 per cent in 9 of the 16 countries, and declined by at least 10 per cent in only one – Spain, which started its democratic ‘career’ with a highly fractured party system (18 parties in 1977). The increased fragmentation is even more obvious with respect to the effective number of parties in the electorate (ENPv), with 10 of the 16 countries showing increases of at least 10 per cent, plus two trivial increases, and again only Spain with non-trivial consolidation. Only in Greece, Spain and France did the two largest parties (not always the same two) account for a larger share of the vote in the 2004–11 period than in 1974–81. Turning from the electorate to the parliament, the increased fragmentation of West European party systems is also clear, particularly with regard to the effective number of parliamentary parties (ENPs). While the number of parties winning at least one parliamentary seat rose in only 8 of the 16 countries, the value of ENP rose by at least 10 per cent in 11 of the 16 countries and only declined significantly in France.

One frequent development has been the collapse of the non-coalitionable (primarily Communist) left. In the 1970s, Communist parties averaged at least 5 per cent of the vote in Finland (17.6 per cent), France (21.0 per cent), Greece (10.8 per cent), Iceland (23.7 per cent), Italy (30.7 per cent), Luxembourg (8.2 per cent), Portugal (16.1 per cent), Spain (10.1 per cent) and Sweden (5.1 per cent); notwithstanding their electoral strength, these parties were generally considered ineligible for inclusion in government (the SKDL in Finland being a notable exception). By the period 2000–4, the corresponding list included only Finland (9.9 per cent), Greece (5.7 per cent), Italy (6.7 per cent), Portugal (6.9 per cent), Spain (5.5 per cent) and Sweden (8.4 per cent) – all parties except Sweden’s having experienced a loss of at least 40 per cent, and in most cases surviving only in alliance with other left-wing parties or movements and/or by having repositioned themselves as non-Communist left parties (Gallagher et al. 2006: 235; Mackie and Rose 1982). Green parties, which barely existed in the 1970s (e.g. 1.5 per cent of the vote in Germany in 1980), won over 5 per cent of the vote in Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Switzerland by the end of the first five years of the 2000s (joined by Sweden later in the decade); Green parties have now been included in national governments in Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland and Italy.

On the right pole of the conventional left–right spectrum there has been a dramatic growth of far-right and radical right populist (RRP) parties. In the 1970s, such parties averaged at least 5 per cent of the vote only in Denmark and Italy, and were (even more than the far left) regarded as being beyond the pale. By the 2000s, they were winning over 10 per cent of the vote in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Norway, and at least 5 per cent in Sweden and the United Kingdom (BNP plus UKIP).

An alternative method of characterizing the rise of Green and RRP parties (to placing them on the far left and far right, respectively) is to suggest that they reflect the evolution of a new dimension along which parties might be placed. Initially characterized as the materialist/post-materialist dimension (Inglehart 1990), this has more recently and more generally been identified as GAL/TAN (Green–Alternative–Libertarian/Traditional–Authoritarian–Nationalist) (Hooghe et al. 2002). An additional new dimension that increasingly has given rise to the formation of new parties is that of Euroscepticism. Originally (and somewhat ironically), Eurosceptic parties, such as the Danish People’s Movement against the EU (Folkebevægelsen mod EU) were significant only in European Parliament elections. In conjunction with the series of crises and bailouts in
the Eurozone, Eurosceptic parties (whether anti-EU or merely anti-euro) are entering the national political arena in a number of countries.

Obviously, the disappearance of the DC, the creation of Forza Italia and the Lega Nord, and the substantial party reconstructions (of the MSI into Alleanza Nazionale and of the PCI into first the PDS and then the DS) represent major katographic change in Italy. A similarly significant katographic change took place in Belgium, beginning at the end of the 1960s. In 1968, the Christian Social Party (PSC-CVP) dissolved; it was replaced by two separate parties, one in Flanders (CVP) and the other in Wallonia (PSC). This was followed in 1971 by a similar division of the Liberals into separate Flemish (PVV) and Walloon (PRL) parties, and in 1978 by a split of the Socialist Party into the Parti Socialiste and the Socialistische Partij. When the Greens entered Belgian national electoral politics, it was as two separate parties, Ecolo in Wallonia and Agalev (now Groen!) in Flanders. Since 2000, there have been some significant changes in party names, further differentiating the Flemish and Francophone party systems. On the Francophone side, for example, the PSC changed its name to Centre Démocrate humaniste (CDh) in order to be more appealing to non-believers – leading to some defections, and the establishment of the new Chrétiens Démocratiques Francophones (CDF). With the addition of specifically regional parties such as the Volksunie, Vlaams Blok and then Vlaams Belang in Flanders and the Rassemblement wallon, the result has effectively been to give Belgium two independent regional party systems that only come together in the national parliament.

Relational changes
These katographic changes have caused or been accompanied by a number of relational changes; however, there has been no clear overall pattern.

Most obviously (in terms of Sartori’s typology), the changes in the Italian party system in the first half of the 1990s (the dissolution of the PCI and its transformation into the PDS; the collapse of the DC; the taming of the MSI and its transformation into Alleanza Nazionale) spelled the end of the last system of polarized pluralism in Europe. Earlier, in 1976, Sweden had elected its first non-socialist prime minister in over 40 years, moving it out of the dominant party system categories of Pempel, Reif and Katz.

Two systems that had been strictly bipolar shifted from Sartori’s twopartism category into (or at least towards) moderate pluralism. Perhaps most dramatically, because it had for so long been regarded as the archetypical two-party system, in 2010 the United Kingdom experienced its first post-war coalition (Conservative and Liberal Democrat) government; polls suggest (at least in mid-2014) that the era of alternating single-party majorities may be at an end, and there is speculation that the Liberal Democrat’s choice of alliances might have as big an impact on government formation as shifts in public preferences among the parties.6 This represented the culmination of the trend first noted by Crewe (1974), whereby both of the major parties were observed to be losing support.7

A less dramatic but perhaps substantively larger change took place in Ireland. From the founding of the Irish Free State in 1922 until the aftermath of the election of 1989, the Irish party system had aptly been characterized as ‘Fianna Fáil versus the rest’; indeed, it was clear that Fianna Fáil, as a matter of principle, preferred to be in opposition rather than even consider entering a coalition government. In 1985, the formation of a new party, the Progressive Democrats (PD), primarily by liberal (on divorce, contraception and privatization) dissidents from Fianna Fáil, had no immediate impact on this attitude: Fianna Fáil won a solid single-party majority in 1987, although the PD temporarily replaced Labour as the third-largest party in the Dáil. The 1989 election left Fianna Fáil just short of a majority, and the party decided to form a coalition government with the PD. The truly transformative change in party system dynamics
came in 1993, however, when a coalition government of Fianna Fáil and Labour (traditionally allied with Fine Gael) took office. In 1994, there was a coalition of Fine Gael, Labour and (a new entrant to government) the Democratic Left; in 2008, another new coalition formula emerged, this time Fianna Fáil plus the Greens.

A similar transformation occurred in Norway in 2005. From 1945 to 2005, Norwegian governments had alternated between single-party Labour governments (since 1961, always minority governments that depended on but excluded the Socialist Left) and bourgeois governments that usually included the Centre Party. In 2005, the Labour Party formed a coalition government that represented a departure from that norm in four respects: it was the first time since 1945 that Labour had participated in a coalition government; it was the first Norwegian majority government since 1985; it was the first government to include ministers from the Socialist Left; and it was the first government since 1945 in which the Centre Party was in coalition with Labour.

The so-called ‘two-and-a-half’ party system of Germany (CDU/CSU versus SPD, with the FDP normally allied with the Christian Democrats, but in coalition with the SPD from 1969 to 1982, when they returned to coalition with the CDU/CSU), became more fully twopartisan in Sartori’s terms (bipolar in the Reif or Katz typologies) in 1998, when an SPD–Green government was formed, thus apparently eliminating the possibility of government change being brought about by the coalition choices of the FDP. With the rise of Die Linke (formed by the merger of the East German Communist successor PDS and a left-wing breakaway from the SPD), replacing the Greens as the fourth largest party in the Bundestag after the 2009 election and raising the possibility of a novel coalition formula on the left, the bipolar nature of German government choice appears to have been solidified.

By the beginning of the 1970s, two of the four consociational systems of government by grand coalition had disappeared. According to Lijphart, ‘the politics of accommodation in the Netherlands came to an end around 1967’ (Lijphart 1975 [1968]: vi) in reaction to dramatic electoral losses by the ‘Big Five’ parties in 1967 (down 8.8 per cent in total, followed by the loss of another 7.8 per cent in 1971, when for the first time since 1946 a party that was not one of the Big Five entered the cabinet). In 1966, the first Austrian government since 1945 that was not a grand coalition of the Austrian People’s Party (ÖVP) and the socialist party (SPÖ) took office: a single-party ÖVP government that lasted four years, followed by 13 years of single-party SPÖ governments. After a four-year coalition of the SPÖ and the then-liberal Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ), Austria returned to the old pattern of SPÖ–ÖVP coalition until 2000, when a coalition of the ÖVP and the now-right-populist FPÖ took office.

Change in the Belgian system is hard to characterize in terms of the standard relational typologies, but it has nonetheless been substantial. The first step was the obvious consequence of the split between the Flemish and Walloon wings of the major parties; this meant that every coalition had many more partners, making the process of negotiation more difficult, notwithstanding the expectation that the two linguistically specific successors of each of the old major parties would enter or leave government together. Over time, however, the interests, strategies and electoral fortunes of Flemish and Walloon parties of the same family began to diverge, such that the interim Verhofstadt III government formed at the end of 2007 and the Leterme government that followed it (after the second-longest post-election coalition negotiations in post-war European history, 194 days) both included the Walloon Socialists, but not their Flemish counterparts. After a record-smashing 541-day process, the Di Rupo government took office in December 2011, including both Flemish and Walloon social democrats, Christian democrats and liberals – but lacking a majority in the Flemish language group.
Social structural

As illustrated by the distinction drawn by Bartolini and Mair (1990) between inter-block and total volatility, or by the distinction between ‘a working-class party’ (most of its members or supporters are working class) and ‘the party of the working class’ (most of the working class are members or supporters), the assessment of the relationship between parties and social structure is open to a variety of interpretations. Nonetheless, there are some general trends and certain national developments that pass the ‘interocular impact test’ regardless of subtleties of interpretation.

The most general trends are the obvious decline in the importance of social class (in particular, membership in the unionized industrial working class) and religion as the defining cleavages of European party systems, even though labels such as ‘labour party’ and ‘Christian democratic party’ remain prominent. Based on the Alford index of class voting, for example, Dalton (2008: 148) presents data on trends in class voting from the late 1940s through the early 2000s for Great Britain, France and Germany (as well as for the US) that can only be described with words like ‘collapse’; although Dalton’s data with regard to religion (ibid.: 159) are less striking, the overall trend is clearly downward. For both class and religion, the most obvious reason for the declining relevance of the social cleavage is the decline in the size of the cleavage-based clienteles: there are simply fewer industrial workers and fewer committed Christians. For example, between 1989 and 2009 mass attendance by German Catholics fell by more than half, from 28 per cent to under 14 per cent (St Leger 2009); between 1967 and 1992, the proportion of Germans claiming to attend church ‘every or almost every Sunday’ fell even more dramatically, from 25 per cent to 10 per cent (Dogan 2002: 143); in 1988, the industrial working class, which in 1951 represented 51 per cent of the French electorate, had fallen to only 30 per cent (Dogan 2001: 101). But even within these natural clienteles, there is less group solidarity.

Less decline than redefinition, there have been two other noteworthy changes in the relationship between religion and party systems. Particularly in the Netherlands, the cleavage between Protestant and Catholic (two of the three pillars of the Dutch consociational system) was bridged by the 1980 merger of the Calvinist Anti-Revolutionary Party and Christian Historical Union with the Catholic People’s Party into the Christian Democratic Appeal (although a number of small Protestant parties – SGP, ChristenUnie – continue to win a few seats in parliament). In contrast, the Nordic countries, where the secular/clerical cleavage was short-circuited by the triumph of the state-allied Lutheran church, have seen the development of conservative Protestant parties, basically opposed to the liberalism of the established church (e.g. Kristent Samlingsparti in Norway, Kristdemokraterna in Sweden, Frihedspartiet in Denmark).

Finally, as described above, the relationship between language and party has fundamentally changed in Belgium. In the 1960s, language might have been described as a secondary cleavage, important to politics but contained within each of the national parties. Since then, it has become the primary cleavage, dividing two separate party systems.

Volatility and nationalization

Although it is questionable whether increased volatility should be interpreted as evidence that previously ‘frozen’ cleavages are ‘melting’, the general trend of increasing volatility is unmistakable. The Pedersen index increased in 10 of 16 countries in Table 28.1 between 1974–82 and 1990–9, while declining in only four (figures are not available for France and Germany, although graphs presented by Dassonneville and Hooghe [2011] show increasing volatility in these countries as well). Moreover, the four countries in which volatility declined were all among
the five with the highest measured volatility at the beginning of the period. In the two cases (Greece and Spain) in which the decline in volatility appears to have been greatest, the cause was elections with extraordinarily high volatility in the period immediately after the restoration of democracy, when the newly (re)established party systems were in flux. The same possibly would have been true for Portugal, had the initial point of comparison been the 1980s (the Portuguese ‘meltdown’ occurring only in the country’s fifth democratic election). In the other two cases of decline, volatility was high in the first period (third and sixth among the 16 countries), and the declines were nonetheless to levels above the longer-term norm in those countries.

With regard to territorial homogenization (in Caramani’s sense of nationalization – the Stokes and Katz measures of nationalization are, as noted above, extraordinarily data-hungry and not readily adaptable to multiparty systems), two observations can be made. The first is that, with minor deviations in a few countries, the trend between the 1960s and 1990 was a modest decrease in territorial heterogeneity, whether assessed by nation or by party family (Caramani 2000: 78, 87). The exception is for specifically Protestant and specifically Catholic parties, for which territorial heterogeneity has increased since the 1940s (ibid.: 88). The other observation, again with Protestant and Catholic (but not inter-confessional) parties as the exception, is that the modest declines in heterogeneity since the 1960s pale in comparison to the major declines of the previous 100 years.

Conclusions

Although there has been no universally consistent model for the evolution of West European party systems (as the contrast between the Swiss and Italian systems illustrates), as long as one remains cognizant of the sometimes quite significant exceptions it is still possible to identify some general trends.

In katagraphic terms, there has been a near-universal decline in the socialist far left, and a general decline in the strength of the big parties of the centre. This has been accompanied by significant growth in the ‘post-materialist’ left and the radical/populist right; significantly, Eurosceptic parties also are becoming more prominent actors in national elections. As indicated by both of the two measures of effective number of parties, there are simply more parties out there.

With respect to relational characterizations of party systems, there has also been a general movement toward bipolarity and away from polarized pluralism (which is, at least for the moment, a relic of the past). However, in some cases there has also been a shift away from strict bipolarity toward a more coalitional form of moderate pluralism or towards a version of ad-hoc bipolarity.

In Belgium, the relationship between social structure (in this case, the language divide) and the party system has become stronger, but in most other cases it has weakened, whether assessed by the capacity of social-structural characteristics such as class or religion to predict voting or by organizational ties between parties and unions or church-related organizations. Even more generally, there appears to be a growing separation between parties and society, as reflected in declining party membership (van Biezen et al. 2012), party identification (Dalton and Wattenberg 2000) and electoral turnout. At the same time, and in reaction to these trends, there are also a growing number of niche parties, often appealing to deeply held religious convictions (especially evangelical or Calvinist Protestant) or to ethnic minorities.

Finally, both nationalization and volatility are generally increasing.
Notes

1 In the table on p. 288, Sartori (1976) lists ‘More than 5 parties’ as one of the characteristics of polarized pluralism. On p. 132, however, he says, ‘the border line is not at five (or at six), but around five (or six)’.

2 The requirement that a predominant party win an absolute majority of the parliamentary seats makes Sartori’s definition of predominance both stronger and weaker than Duverger’s (1954: 308) definition of a ‘dominant party’, which need not always win an absolute majority, but which must have a political project that is identified with and dominates an epoch. Thus, the Italian Christian Democrats and the Swedish Labour Party – each in power and defining the political space for at least 30 years – qualify as dominant parties in Pempel’s (1990: 3–4) adaptation of Duverger’s definition (more seats than any other party; a dominant bargaining position; in office for at least 30 years; having an historical project), although neither would qualify as a predominant party for Sartori.

3 Note, however, that the survey-based measure depends on the (questionable) validity of vote recall responses.

4 For example, agricultural areas might be expected to reward governing parties for trade policies that would elicit a negative response in industrial areas.

5 The Swiss Green Party was founded as a local party in Neuchâtel in 1971 and won its first National Council seat in 1979. In 2011, the two Green parties (the Green Party of Switzerland and the Green Liberal Party) collectively won 13.8 per cent of the vote.

6 It should be noted that, from the relational perspective, the accuracy of such speculation is less significant than the change in expectations that makes it even plausible.

7 When Crewe first noted this trend, he observed that it was unique to Britain. Since then, the tendency for all ‘parties of government’ (not just those actually in office at the time of a particular election) to lose support has become more general.

Bibliography


