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**ALIGNMENT, REALIGNMENT AND DEALIGNMENT IN  
MULTI-PARTY SYSTEMS –  
A CONCEPTUAL AND EMPIRICAL STUDY**

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*For Dan, Noa and David*



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## ABBREVIATIONS

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BES	BLOC ELECTORAL SUPPORT
BV	BLOC VOLATILITY
CS	CLEAVAGE SALIENCE
ENP	EFFECTIVE NUMBER OF PARTIES
ETP	ELECTORAL TOTAL PARTISANS
GV	GROSS VOLATILITY
PI	PARTY IDENTIFICATION
PR	PROPORTIONAL PRESENTATION
PS	PARTY SUPPORT
TV	TOTAL VOLATILITY
WCS	BLOC-WEIGHTED CLEAVAGE SALIENCE



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## CHAPTER 1

### ‘ALIGNMENT’, ‘REALIGNMENT’ AND ‘DEALIGNMENT’ IN MULTI-PARTY SYSTEMS – AN INTRODUCTION

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*“[L]ong before having data which can speak for themselves the fundamental articulation of language and of thinking is obtained logically – by cumulative conceptual refinement and chains of coordinated definitions.” (Sartori 1970:1038)*

Democratic elections are exciting events for politicians, party activists, journalists and scholars of Political Science. Before an election everyone attempts to forecast its results; immediately after the ballots are counted and the big winner and losers are identified is the time for analysing and making sense of these election results. At this point, special attention is given to explaining electoral changes and particularly to identifying enduring shifts. Whatever the outcome of the election may be, and especially in American politics, “there will be political scientist who will ask: Was there a *realignment?*” (Carmines & Wagner, 2006:67) (*italics added*). This phrase introduces a core question and idiom that has preoccupied Comparative Politics literature in a broad sense and my research in particular. ‘Alignment’, ‘realignment’ and ‘dealignment’ are concepts that are used to typify major changes in a political system.

The study of realignment originates in the study of the American party system. Key was the first to discuss it in 1955, when he identified what he called a ‘critical election’. This is an election, explained Key (1955:4), “in which voters are, at least from impressionistic evidence, unusually deeply concerned, in which the extent of electoral involvement is relatively quite high, and in which *the decisive results of the voting reveal a sharp alteration of the pre-existing cleavage within the electorate*” (*italics added*). This kind of election is the peak moment of what later will be termed a ‘*critical realignment*’, as “the realignment [which commenced at this election] made manifest in the voting in such elections seems to persist for several succeeding

election” (Key, 1955:4). A few years after this publication, Key argued for another model of realignment: the ‘*secular realignment*’. This was defined as “a movement of the members of a population category from party to party that extends over several presidential elections” (Key, 1959:198-9). *Dealignment* was identified for the first time by Inglehart and Hochstein (1972:345) in their study of party identification in the U.S.A., almost two decades after Key’s publications. According to these scholars, a dealignment is characterised by “declining rates of identification with *any party*” (italics in original), which may happen when multidimensional crisis occurs, and this crisis “cuts directly *across party lines.*” (Inglehart and Hochstein (1972:345) (italics in original).

While the study of realignment in the American party system “enjoyed its heyday in the 1960s and 1970s” (Mayhew, 2000:449), the study of both phenomena – ‘realignment’ and ‘dealignment’ – was taken up in other Western democratic countries slightly later, where it was in vogue in the 1980s and 1990s. Prominent publications on the subject were Dalton, et al. (1984a) *Electoral Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies- Realignment or Dealignment?*, Crewe and Denver (1985) *Electoral Change in Western Democracies*, Bartolini and Mair (1990) *Identity, Competition and Electoral Availability: The Stabilization of European Electorates 1885-1985*, and finally Dalton and Wattenberg (2000) *Parties without Partisans - Political Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies*, in which they argued that dealignment is an ongoing process in most Western industrialised countries.<sup>1</sup> Despite this argument, scholarly research that considers both phenomena is still initiated, such as the ECPR workshop on “Electoral Change in the 21st Century: De-Alignment or Realignment?”, held in 2010.

The journey of the concepts of ‘realignment’ and ‘dealignment’ to new empirical contexts of Western democracies other than the U.S.A. has prompted scholars to re-specify the concepts by giving them new definitions and therefore modify their

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<sup>1</sup> I may also mention Franklin, et al., (1992) *Electoral Change – Responses to Evolving Social and Attitudinal Structures in Western Countries*, but in this book does not include a discussion of ‘realignment’ or ‘dealignment’ explicitly.

meanings<sup>2</sup>. According to Adcock and Collier (2001:530), this is part of the conceptualisation stage, wherein scholars or groups of scholars develop or adopt the specific formulation of a concept, which they term 'systematised concept'.

However, with the widespread availability of scholarly research into enduring electoral changes, the concepts of 'realignment' and 'dealignment' have been used with different (and even sometimes exclusive) meanings, as Sundquist (1983:4) articulated: "after a quarter century of study, the concept of party realignment is still far from clear. The writers all employ the same term – realignment – but it is difficult to find any two works that give it the same definition." This quote nicely summarises the current state of affairs: both concepts have become vague and ambiguous.

This problem of ambiguity is not confined to the concepts of 'realignment', and 'dealignment'. Other political terms such as 'democracy', 'legitimacy', 'transparency', 'corporatism' and 'terror' are employed by scholars, journalists, politicians and sometimes even the public. The popularity of these political terms does not come without cost: when the terms become generic, they have several meanings, used in multiple political contexts and, in some cases, even in non-political contexts. In other cases, the opposite development occurs: the concepts are ambiguous because they originate outside the scholarly discourse and therefore "carry a backpack of meanings" (Wonka, 2007:44).

Clear and precise concepts are of course important for the progress and existence of any scientific discipline. Wonka (2007:44) warned "scientific discourse based in ambiguous concepts is at least confusing, more likely unproductive and definitely not cumulative." A collective ambiguity, according to Sartori (1984:35), wherein "each scholar ascribes his[her] own meanings to his key terms [...] can be rampant – to the point of destroying a discipline as a cumulative fabric of knowledge."

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<sup>2</sup> In a theoretical discussion of 'concept specification in Political Science Research', Wonka (2007:42) did not employ the word "definition", instead arguing that each term has "[a]ttributes which define a concept's meaning."



## 1.1 The Unique Nature of this Study

Efforts to clarify the concept of realignment in the context of the American politics were made in both early and more recent research. Sunquist (1973), for example, discussed the diverse definitions of ‘realignment’ and argued that “one element is common to all stated or implicit definitions. A realignment is a durable change in patterns of political behavior”. Mayhew (2000), on the other hand, identified eleven empirical claims regarding realignment (for criticism of this work, see (Carmines & Wagner, 2006).

However, similar conceptual work on both the phenomena in other party systems, such as multi-party systems, is sparse. The present research is motivated by the conviction that there is inadequate conceptual understanding of the phenomena of ‘realignment’ and ‘dealignment’ in multi-party systems. It aims to fill this gap by examining empirically both phenomena in eleven European multi-party systems, in order to develop a conceptual understanding.

The approach of this research differs from that of many other studies in the field. It is structured along conceptual lines rather than on an explanation of events or phenomena. This is articulated through its approach, data sources and methodology. The two terms of ‘realignment’ and ‘dealignment’ were invented in reaction to the concept of ‘alignment’, a phenomenon of continuing patterns of party support or a certain immobility in the preference for a party or certain parties. Theoretical and empirical arguments of ‘alignment’ were developed (at least until the mid 1960s) through two approaches to exploring patterns of electoral behavior – the socio-psychological and the socio-structural structural approach.

These approaches entail the assumption that individual citizens do not necessarily act rationally (as is assumed by the Rational Choice approach), but that there are other mechanisms that “reduce complex problem-solving to more simple judgmental operation” (Carmines & Huckfeldt, 1996:246). In the case of this research, this complex problem-solving is that of the electoral decision of party support. According to the socio-psychological approach, the mechanisms involved are cognitive shortcuts. Scholars of political sociology, on the other hand, have focused on

“understanding the politics of individual citizens within the political and social setting where they are located” (Carmines & Huckfeldt, 1996:246); those who follow the socio-structural approach have particularly emphasised the structures of the society, i.e. its cleavages. According to these scholars, conflicts at the political arena are reflections of “long-standing social and economic divisions within society, and the cleavage structure is thought of in terms of social groups and loyalties of members to their social groups” (Franklin, et al., 1992).

Each of these approaches – socio-psychological and socio-structural approach – has identified different mechanisms involved in the creation of the alignment between voters and political parties. The first approach has emphasised voters’ developing identification with a political party, “which is not easily changed” (Campbell, et al., 1960:149). The second approach has argued that the identification of voters with their social segment leads to electoral support of the parties representing these segments.

These different mechanisms have influenced (most of) the definitions developed for ‘realignment’ and ‘dealignment’, as well as their indicators and the methods employed for studying them. In this research, I contend that each mechanism is a manifestation of ‘alignment’ in its own right, rather than a mechanism underlying alignment. I propose a unified approach to studying the phenomena of alignment, and examine whether ‘realignment’ or ‘dealignment’ have occurred in two manifestations of alignment: partisan alignment, and voter alignment along a cleavage.

This research is designed as a comparison between “relatively similar” cases, and studies eleven European multi-party systems with electoral systems of proportional representation. It begins in 1950 and covers sixty years, concluding in 2010. As far as methodology and data source(s) go, individual-level data (i.e. survey data) is scarce for some of these cases. In addition, national election surveys have been conducted only since the 1960s or 1970s (or even later) for most of these countries. The unavailability of data for the crucial period of alignment (between the 1950s and the mid 1960s) is a major problem for those investigating this subject (e.g. (Bartolini & Mair, 1990:99; Mair, 1989:13).

I devised several solutions to deal with this insufficiency of data. I conducted a combined analysis of two datasets of individual-level data and aggregate data (i.e. election results). The latter dataset was included to enable me to set the reference line (with regard to the period of ‘alignment’), to establish a data source for a period not covered by national survey datasets, and also as the main data source for cases for which national data surveys are not available. This combined dataset is unique, but it also has two main drawbacks. Observations were only available for election years that impact the quality of a sound longitudinal analysis. Secondly, the study of official election results limits the types of analysis that can be performed. To address this limitation, I used indices in major parts of my research. However, this research is also innovative in this respect as all of these indices are modifications of well-known indices: Pederson’s Total Volatility and Bartolini and Mair’s (1990) Cleavage Salience index.

My methodological innovations for the research of alignment phenomena serve as tools enabling me to answer the main research question of this study: *Are the connections between voters and political parties in the party systems of the Western democratic states still relatively stable and structured, or whether the party system changed? Answering this question will help us to answer the following empirical questions: Has a change occurred? And if so, what kind of transformation is it?*

Answering these questions lays the foundations for a more broad and conceptual understanding of alignment phenomena. This understanding and its associated empirical evidence of electoral behaviour are important, I believe, not only for Political Science students, but also in a wider sense. Firstly, understanding the changing relationship between voters and the political parties is of crucial importance to the political parties themselves. At the end of the day, their primary role is to “articulate and represent the interests existing within a society” (Dalton, 2009:170), and they must win voter support. Secondly, in the modern world “many agree on the purpose of political representation through elections” (Rosema, et al., 2011:12); for this reason, the study of electoral affiliation with elected representatives is one of the key issues at the heart of representative democracy.

## **1.2 Chapter Outlines**

I begin this investigation by presenting the two mechanisms for explaining the phenomenon of alignment – of continuing patterns of party support (Chapter Two). Chapter Three introduces the empirical dispute about the occurrence of realignment and dealignment in Western democratic countries. It then demonstrates that this disagreement has its roots in a conceptual problem: there is no single agreed definition for either realignment or dealignment. On top of that, there is not even an operational definition agreed on by groups of scholars regarding patterns of realignment or dealignment. I identify that the stock of definitions may be separated from each other regarding the appearance of signs of change into realignment or dealignment in both levels of analysis (the electorate and the cleavage), and that they disagree regarding the effects of these phenomena on a third level – the party system structure. Thus, I suggest analysing the phenomena of realignment and dealignment as they are manifested in these three levels, using a semi-modular approach. This enables me to examine two manifestations of alignment and their effects on the party system. In Chapter Four, I present the design of my empirical research. This chapter elaborates on the eleven similar cases of multi-party systems under examination, and the methods and datasets used to examine each of the manifestations of alignment and their effects on the party system structure. Chapter Five is the first empirical chapter; it uses the socio-psychological approach to study the issue of stability and change in partisan alignment. It examines arguments concerning partisan dealignment through assessing trends of partisanship as it is articulated in its two meanings: party identification and stable party support. This analysis shows that evidence of partisan dealignment has appeared in most of the cases studied, while partisan realignment has occurred only in one case, and another case suggests that the electorate is still aligned with the political parties. In Chapter Six, I test voter alignments along the two most salient socio-structural cleavages: class and religion. The chapter demonstrates that in most of the cases, the alignment(s) along the most salience cleavage(s) have eroded. The changes occurred first in the class cleavage and slightly later in the religious cleavage. Chapter Seven examines the issue of alignment regarding the patterns and timing of alignment and re/dealignment in their two manifestations. It demonstrates that patterns of alignment disappeared in all the cases by the mid 1980s and that all cases, except Denmark, have experienced dealignment. The chapter also proves that

the dealignment process is developed in two phases: partial and full. Chapter Eight tests the possible effects of realignment and dealignment on the party system structure. It recommends this test be based on study of the structure of the electoral party system. It demonstrates that during periods of partial or full dealignment, the stable structure of the electoral party system vanishes. Chapter Nine, the final chapter, summarises the findings of the previous chapters, and more importantly, proposes a definition for the process of dealignment in multi-party system and presents the conceptual, methodological and empirical implications of this study.

## CHAPTER 2

# THE PHENOMENON OF ALIGNMENT, AND A DISCUSSION OF THE EXPLANATIONS FOR AND MECHANISMS OF PARTY ALLEGIANCE

---

*“Unfortunately, there is little agreement on the nature of voters’ attachments to political parties”*

*Wolinetz (1979:15)*

People in democratic countries have the privilege of choosing their representatives. This very fact has raised the question: “how do voters decide who to vote for?” It is the most intensively studied question in comparative politics since the mid 1940s, and there is no single answer.

Several approaches prevail in the Political Science literature that examines electoral choice, which are based on the concept of rational choice, on socio-psychological reasons, and on socio-structural considerations. The rational choice approach was introduced by Downs (1957). He assumed that citizens act rationally in politics, and therefore explained voting behaviour as a rational choice: “each citizen casts his vote for the party he believes will provide him with more benefits than any other” (Downs, 1957:36). This approach implies that an individual’s electoral choice is dynamic and might change from one election to another.

The other two approaches assume a stable rather than a volatile electorate. The socio-structural approach suggests that the act of voting flows from identification with particular social group, or as Lazarsfeld and his collaborators (1968:137) argued, “voting is essentially a group experience.” According to this approach, political parties are articulation of socio-structural divisions, and therefore the party system structure is a reflection of the cleavages present in the society. Adherents of the socio-psychological approach go one step further. They position the socio-demographic

background of a voter at the bottom of ‘the funnel of causality’ that explains the act of voting. According to this rationale, the socio-economic conditions together with two other long-term political predispositions (party identification and political ideology) influence the short-term factors – the candidates competing and the issues at stake (Lewis-Beck, et al., 2008).

Utilising the latter two approaches, the literature on voting behaviour emphasises continuing patterns of party support or certain immobility in the preference for a party or certain parties and describes this as an ‘alignment’. In this condition, the voters either already have a lasting allegiance to a political party or parties, or they begin to develop one. Typically the temporal dimension or durability of this bond is essential in this approach.<sup>1</sup> Both approaches explicate the mechanisms for stable connections, as will be specified below.

This chapter deals with the phenomenon of alignment through the lenses of the socio-psychological and socio-structural approaches. It explores two explanations for the phenomenon to illustrate a particular alignment found in Western democratic countries: partisanship, and the identification of voters with their social segment that leads to electoral support of parties representing these segments. The chapter begins by exploring the socio-psychological approach and its criticism, and from this context, discusses the phenomenon of party identification – its development, durability, and its level of immunisation against change. It then turns to examine the socio-structural approach utilised in Lipset and Rokkan’s theory, along with a discussion of their ‘freezing hypothesis’ and relevant debate on mechanisms for the creation of party-freezing systems. The last section of the chapter outlines the empirical and theoretical arguments regarding the disappearance of these alignments, and presents two alternative explanations for the nexus between voters and parties raised in the literature – a new social cleavage and the functional model.

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<sup>1</sup> Only few scholars exclude the temporal dimension from their definition of ‘alignment’; e.g. (Deegan-Krause & Enyedi, 2010:688).

## **2.1 The Socio-Psychological Approach: Party Identification**

Party identification, or partisanship (Abramowitz & Saunders, 1998:634) is “a long-term, affective, psychological identification with one’s preferred political party” (Dalton 1996:199). The concept was developed by Converse and his collaborators (later known as the Michigan School) in *The American Voter* (1960). They assumed that party identification has two components: the direction of party choice (for example, in the American context, Democratic or Republican), and the strength of this attachment (i.e. a strong or weak identifier, or an independent or apolitical attachment) (Converse, 1976:10).<sup>2</sup>

Researchers agree that party identification is developed at a young age (often during the primary school years) (Campbell, et al., 1960:146-7), and that it strongly reflects one’s immediate social milieu, particular the family. The most prominent factor influencing the party identification of children is parental opinion<sup>3</sup> (Campbell, et al., 1960:146; Westholm & Niemi, 1992); this influence is “well known and even unquestionable” (Percheron & Jennings, 1981:421).

### **2.1.1 A Discussion of the Stability of Party Identification**

Campbell and his collaborators were also the first to observe the remarkably stable nature of party identification throughout life: “once established, [it] is an attachment which is not easily changed” (Campbell, et al., 1960:149). They argued that there are only a small number of life experiences that might cause a change or fluctuation of party identification, namely personal circumstances (marriage, a new job or a change in neighborhood) and social factors (such as a new polarisation in response to economic forces or national catastrophes) (Campbell, et al., 1960:150). Subsequently, Converse explained that partisanship primarily results from a combination of parental socialisation and lifestyle. According to Converse’s model, young voters inherit partisan loyalty from their parents: they are a “‘biased coin,’ particularly with respect

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<sup>2</sup> Later Miller (1991) called for the separation of the two components, arguing that the strength component may be responsive to other political preferences while leaving the basic identification unaffected. For criticism of Miller’s argument, see (Franklin, 1992).

<sup>3</sup> There are, of course, differences between those children whose parents both identify with the same party, and those whose parents identify with different parties (Franklin, 1992; Shrikant, 1992; Trevor, 1999).



to [...] such matters as party identification” (Converse, 1969:142). Once they enter the electorate and begin to vote, their electoral experience reinforces their early predispositions. This last factor is the mechanism for stable partisan loyalty: the greater the length of a psychological identification, the more a voter identifies with a party and the more resistant he/she becomes to changing that identification (Campbell, et al., 1960:163; Converse, 1969:144). Dalton and Weldon (2007:189-90) recently examined these two factors and found that in established democracies the last factor – electoral experience – is more important than the socialisation component (called the ‘parental push’ by Dalton and Weldon). In the same vein, Van der Eijk and Franklin (2009) stated that the self-experience of the political world sometimes overrides initial partisanship.

The Michigan School’s model of partisanship was critiqued soon after the publication of *The American Voter*, and especially as levels of partisanship decreased in America in the late 1960s. This critique involves several important issues, but for this dissertation – that focuses on the phenomenon of alignment – there are two main concerns: the process of creating party identification, and the immunisation against change of such party attachment.

Critiques of the Michigan School began with empirical research: Dreyer (1973) examined the stability of American party identification during 1958-60 and identified what he called the “random change” of party identifiers. Later research challenged the Michigan School’s argument about the immobility of partisan identification by developing a revisionist model in which partisanship is responsive to more short-term political factors (Franklin, 1992). Jackson criticized the traditional approach by suggesting that social, economic and geographic variables are exogenous factors for explaining party identification. He argued that people developing a party affiliation based on issues and party policies are therefore “subject to change if their positions on various issues change, if the parties modify their positions, or if new issues arise which divide the existing party coalitions” (Jackson, 1975:181-2). Markus and Converse (1979) proposed that an individual’s current identification is a function of their past identification and their vote in previous elections, but that a series of votes counter to this past identification might lead to changed partisanship. Fiorina (1981:102) followed the rational choice explanation and argued that party

identification is constructed by an individual's societal conditions, by political events and by the performance of incumbent officeholders. These arguments were supported by Franklin and Jackson (1983:968), who discovered that party identifications are subject to change as individual preferences change or as a consequence of shifts in party positions. Further, Franklin and Jackson argued that party identification is composed of a person's accumulated evaluation from previous elections, along with leaders' performance during election campaigns and while in office. It must be emphasised that the revisionist model does not contend that voters who change their political allegiance do so randomly; on the contrary, these "movement represents a series of reasonable adjustments to changing political circumstances" (Franklin, 1984:475).

Other researchers have illustrated that changes in partisanship are rooted in other occurrences. MacKuen, et al., (1989) argue for the measurement party identification in aggregate terms, which they term 'macropartisanship', and suggest that fluctuations in partisanship occur as macropartisanship is subject to the accumulation of economic evaluation and voter approval of the incumbent presidential administration.

More recent research suggests other mechanisms for explaining the basis of partisanship.

The work of Green, et al., (2002:36-9) is an example of the social identity theory of party identification. They argued that partisanship is not a rational choice but rather is based mainly on identification with the imaginary social group associated with particular parties. Since these perceived partisan groups change slowly over time, party attachments tend to be stable (Green, et al., 2002). However, change (according to these scholars) can and does occur. Abramowitz and Saunders (1998, 2006) criticised Green, Palmquist and Schickler's claim, asserting that voters choose their party identification based on issue position and/or party ideology.

## **2.2 The Socio-Structural Approach: Lipset and Rokkan's Freezing Hypothesis**

The socio-structural approach is characterised by its emphasis on the concepts of social identity and social loyalty as core factors in the creation of alignments.

One of the most influential studies of the phenomena of alignment from the socio-structural perspective is that of Lipset and Rokkan (1967). In their seminal research, Lipset and Rokkan dealt with the construction of socio-cultural cleavages and the transition of these cleavages into party systems. Lipset and Rokkan (1967; Rokkan, 1999:284) identified four prominent cleavages, considered to be the products of two types of revolutions: national and industrial revolutions. The first type of revolution created the conflict between centralised nation-building culture and the increasing resistance of populations in the peripheries (i.e. center-periphery cleavage), and the conflict between the mobilising nation-state and the historically-established corporate privileges of the Church (i.e. the state-Church cleavage). The latter created the conflict between those with landed interests and the class of industrial entrepreneurs (i.e. the land-industry cleavage) and the conflict between owners and employers (the owner-industrial cleavage).

Mass movements, which are based on these four cleavages, brought the cleavages into the political arena by instituting political parties. Mass loyalty to political parties followed; see also (Converse, 1969:165). In other words, according to scholars of the socio-structural approach, in Western countries the foundation of alignment is membership and loyalty to a socio-structural group, which then form political institutions, mainly political parties that represent their interests (for example, Labour parties represent the working class and Christian parties stand for religious groups). The party system, therefore, is a reflection of this socio-structural structure.<sup>4</sup>

Of course, the same social group may be linked to more than one party. For example, the working class is connected to Socialist and Communist parties, as both parties claim to represent the working class; their approach to achieving the working class's interests is, of course, different (Van der Eijk & Franklin, 2009:92-3).

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<sup>4</sup> I should emphasise, however, this is not to say that the transition of socio-structural cleavages into the political system by translating them into party oppositions is assured for any divide. Rather, only those divisions that pass a sequence of thresholds are represented in the political system. According to Lipset and Rokkan there are four thresholds: threshold of legitimation (there is a recognition of the right of petition, criticism and opposition), threshold of incorporation (are most of the supporters of the movement given political citizenship rights), threshold of representation (the new movement can gain representation on its own) and threshold of majority power (an electoral victory will give a party power to bring major structural change in the system) (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967).

The process of creating alignments and the institutionalisation of party systems, Lipset and Rokkan concluded, had ended in the 1920s, but the party systems remained in the same situation until the 1960s. In Lipset and Rokkan's (1967:50) words:

*“the party systems of the 1960's reflect, with few but significant exceptions, the cleavage structures of the 1920's. This is a crucial characteristic of Western competitive politics in the age of ‘high mass consumption’: the party alternatives, and in remarkably many cases the party organizations, are older than the majorities of the national electorates.”* (italics in original)

This last argument regarding the stability or freezing of a party system was called “the freezing hypothesis”.

Lipset and Rokkan's theory is accepted in the literature as the most accurate explanation of the creation and sustainability of alignments and stable party systems in Western democratic countries. Moreover, their “freezing hypothesis” is even considered to be a law. Mair (1997:4) remarked “it was hardly even a real hypothesis. Rather, and more simply, it was an empirical observation”.

### ***2.2.1 A Discussion of the Freezing Hypothesis: its validity, meaning and empirical support***

After the publication of Lipset and Rokkan's study, other researchers examined the validity of the freezing hypothesis. The first to do so were Rose and Urwin (1970:288), who codified Lipset and Rokkan's hypothesis as a “null hypothesis – party support is constant”, meaning that the hypothesis is valid if the electoral fortunes of individual parties remain stable. After examining patterns of party support in nineteen countries<sup>5</sup> between 1945 and 1969, they supported Lipset and Rokkan's conclusion, finding that “[w]hatever index is used the picture is the same: the electoral strength of most parties in Western nations since the war had changed very

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<sup>5</sup> The countries are Australia, Austria, Belgium Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and the U.S.A.

little from election to election, from decade to decade, or within the lifespan of a generation” (Rose & Urwin, 1970:295). Wolinetz (1979:8), who investigated thirteen Western European party systems<sup>6</sup> between 1945 and 1979 using Rae’s index of fragmentation, that measures the number of parties and their size (for an explanation on the index calculation, see Appendix A), also affirmed Lipset and Rokkan’s hypothesis (and Rose and Urwin’s conclusion), suggesting that until the late 1960s most party alignments were stable.

Others, however, found differing evidence. For example, Borre (1980:142), who studied partisan instability based on the Total Volatility index, which measures the total changes of party support between two sequential elections (for an explanation on the index calculation, see Appendix A) in Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden between 1950 and 1977, identified that during the 1950s the trend of electoral change was not stable, but was rather an upward trend. Ersson and Lane (1982:93-4) tested fourteen European countries<sup>7</sup> over the period 1920-1980 using five different indices (Functional Orientation<sup>8</sup>, the Fragmentation index, Radical Orientation<sup>9</sup>, the Polarisation index<sup>10</sup> and Total Volatility), and maintained that since the 1920s the Western-European party systems were not stable, but were characterised by trends and some also by fluctuation. Moreover, Shamir (1984:70), who tested nineteen Western liberal democracies<sup>11</sup> from the creation of the party system until mid 1970s, measuring Total Volatility, Fragmentation, and Ideological Polarisation (for an explanation on the last index, see note no. 10 in this chapter), did not accept Lipset and Rokkan’s argument on frozen party systems. She concluded that “most party

<sup>6</sup> The countries are Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom.

<sup>7</sup> The countries are Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom.

<sup>8</sup> The functional orientation was measured as the aggregated share of the votes for the Conservative, the Liberal and the Agrarian parties (Ersson, 1982).

<sup>9</sup> The radical orientation was measured as the as the aggregated share of the votes for the Working-class parties (Ersson, 1982).

<sup>10</sup> The formula for polarization index that was used is:

$$P = \sum_{i=1}^n (f_i(x_i - \bar{x}))^2$$

where  $n$  is the number of parties,  $f_i$  is the share of vote of the respective party,  $x_i$  is the right-left score of the respective party and  $\bar{x}$  is the right-left score of the party system (Ersson, 1982).

<sup>11</sup> The countries are: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom and the U.S.A.

systems can not be regarded as stable and surely not as frozen. The freeze hypothesis [...] has to be rejected.”

Bartolini and Mair (1990) also attempted to monitor the freezing process by applying the Total Volatility index. Similarly to Wolinetz (1979) and Rose and Urwin (1970), who argued for the stability of the party system, Bartolini and Mair (1990:100) found that between 1886 and 1985 “there is virtually a nil trend”, and this (they argued), “reflect[s] a *fundamental bias towards stability*” (Bartolini & Mair, 1990:68) (italics in original). However, like Shamir (1984) and Ersson and Lane (1982), Bartolini and Mair (1990:100) admitted that “the development of total volatility over time also does not suggest that electoral alignment were frozen in the 1920s.” This argument was based on comparison between the level of aggregate volatility during post-war era and its level in inter-war years. They found that the average level of aggregate volatility during the post-war period and beyond is lower than the level reached in the inter-war period, the period during which “everybody agrees that the party systems became frozen” (Mair, 1997:80). Therefore, Bartolini and Mair suggested that if the freezing process occurred at all, it was in the post-war period and not during the early inter-war years, as was argued by Lipset and Rokkan (Bartolini & Mair, 1990:100).

This inconsistency between scholars on the validity of the freezing hypothesis becomes even more evident in Mair’s critique of the methodological tools used by Lipset and Rokkan. Mair argued (1997:63-4) that the different indicators used by these authors (and by Mair himself, see (Bartolini & Mair, 1990:96-100), were ultimately “based on measures of persistence/change in the aggregate support for *individual parties*” (Bartolini & Mair, 1990:96-100) (italics in original). The use of measures based on individual parties is not appropriate in this case, explained Mair, because the hypothesis refers to a freezing in the party alternatives that manifest themselves not by one party, but two or more parties: there might be more than one party representing each side of the cleavage, as explained above. Therefore, Mair stated (1997:28), “we must be concerned with blocs or families of parties and with the notion of parties which are cleavage allies as against those which are cleavage opponents.” For this reason, the measures based on individual parties cannot distinguish between intra-bloc and inter bloc electoral change, and therefore cannot be used to test Lipset and Rokkan’s hypothesis (Mair, 1989:13-4). Knutsen (2004:7-8)

supported this claim when he argued that for the analysis of social cleavage, we cannot use “[s]tudies of aggregate level stability and change”; when studying the relationship between social structures and party choice, we should examine “parties representing a given party family or the entire party system”.

Based on this argument, Bartolini and Mair developed a new index – the Bloc Volatility (BV), which is calculated by using the Total Volatility index based on blocs of parties, not on individual parties (for an explanation on the index calculation, see Appendix A). When they employed the Bloc Volatility index, and checked the volatility of the class cleavage, they found data that that “*offer[s] strong confirmation of the freezing hypothesis*” (Bartolini & Mair, 1990:101) (italics in original). In the same vein, Sundberg (1999:236) reached a similar conclusion about the Scandinavian party system, for which he examined the electoral success of different party families<sup>12</sup> and especially the three major cleavages, between 1945 and the mid 1990s.

Mair’s criticism of the use of measures of aggregate support for individual parties, however, is inaccurate. Rose and Urwin (1970) took the same approach as Bartolini and Mair (1990) when they tested the change of the electoral support for party families (the working-class and middle-class parties). In this way, they examined the total vote for each family, exactly as Bartolini and Mair suggested was necessary to test Lipset and Rokkan’s freezing hypothesis.

Bartolini and Mair’s criticism is based on their understanding of Lipset and Rokkan’s freezing hypothesis. Yet not all scholars read the freezing hypothesis in the same way. Rose and Urwin (1970:288), for example, maintained that Lipset and Rokkan’s analysis “emphasised the persistence of the same types of parties.” Therefore, they tested the persistence of electoral support for (old) parties, established before 1914 (Rose & Urwin, 1970:296-7).

Increasingly different interpretations of the freezing hypothesis occurred in later studies testing whether the freezing hypothesis has remained relevant in the period

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<sup>12</sup> Sundberg (1999) examines three groups of party families. Firstly, the three pole parties (which include the Social Democrats, Agrarian and Conservatives), secondly the Liberals and Communists, and thirdly all other parties.

after Lipset and Rokkan's research – that is, the 1970s onwards. According to Sartori, between the middle of the 1960s and the middle of the 1970s, the party system of Western Europe “reverse[d] its course into a defreezing”, but this was “counteracted by the traditional parties”; during the 1990s, this system has gone through “a new defreezing, this time to a deeper one” (Sartori, 1994:50). Wolinetz (1988:296) concluded that “[t]wenty years later, it is difficult to reach a similar conclusion [i.e. the freezing hypothesis] [...] party systems display considerably more change than they did in the 1960s. Electorates have become more volatile and party strengths are no longer constant as they were in the past.”

Maguire (1983:63) updated Rose and Urwin's study by examining the electoral support of individual parties between 1948-79, based on the age of the parties, and found that since 1960 old parties have been less stable in their votes than inter-war and new parties. Maguire concluded that “the assertion of Lipset and Rokkan no longer seem so accurate.” Also Drummond (2006) who examined Rose and Urwin's results with new results from 1970 to 1995 for the same countries, argued with regard to Lipset and Rokkan's freezing hypothesis “If [...] we examine the entire constellation of parties and the competition between them, we will see change nearly everywhere that bespeaks a growing instability” (Drummond, 2006:641).

Pedersen read Lipset and Rokkan's freezing hypothesis in the same way as Maguire. He argued that the stability of the party systems was created when voters continued to support the same parties and, therefore, the electoral support of the parties was also stable (Pedersen, 1983). Based on this assumption, Pedersen invented the Total Volatility index to test the stability and change of party system (Pedersen, 1979). He found that not all the European party systems were stable; rather, they differ in the pattern of aggregated electoral volatility, in that some remained stable but others were significantly unstable (Pedersen, 1979, 1983). Pedersen argued the party systems could be divided into three or even four distinct groups (Pedersen, 1979:9). Dalton and his collaborators (1984b:9-10) also used the Total Volatility index and another indicator – the Fractionalization scores<sup>13</sup> – in their research on the validity of the

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<sup>13</sup> The scores are based on the party vote shares for the election closest to the time points given. Fractionalization is computed as:



freezing hypothesis in eighteen countries<sup>14</sup> from the late 1940s to the mid 1970s. They found that in the 1970s there was an increasing trend of fragmentation and electoral volatility, and came to a dramatic conclusion: “one can see signs that the structure of democratic party systems, frozen for so much of our lifetime, is beginning to thaw” (Dalton, et al., 1984c:459).

As mentioned above, Bartolini and Mair criticised the use of Total Volatility to test the freezing hypothesis, due to their distrust of the use of measures based on individual parties. As they explained, the Total Volatility index measures two types of volatility – intra-bloc volatility (the electoral change is between the political parties that are cleavage allies) and inter-bloc volatility (the electoral change is between the two sides of the cleavage) (Bartolini & Mair, 1990; Mair, 1989). Mair (1997) argued that these two types of volatility are different. The first is more likely to occur between friends, while the second situation is likely to occur between enemies. Therefore, in the analysis of the stability of traditional cleavages, the volatility that matters is not individual party volatility but volatility occurring between the blocs of parties representing the opposing sides of a cleavage line (Bartolini & Mair, 1990:36). Therefore, the freezing hypothesis should be tested by changing level of Bloc Volatility (Bartolini & Mair, 1990:97). When Bartolini and Mair applied the BV index, they discovered that the contemporary increase in levels of electoral instability in Europe was mainly due to increase in intra-bloc volatility “*within* each class-cleavage bloc, and that the degree of electoral volatility *between* the major blocs has actually tended to decline over time” (Mair, 1997:29) (italics in original). This instability, according to Mair, was “regularly contained within broader and more stable political alignment”; see also (Mair, 1989:14-5).

In addition, Bartolini and Mair opposed Dalton and his collaborators’ argument due to a lack of evidence. When Dalton, et al., (1984b:10) compared the rates of volatility during the 1970s to those of the 1960s, they identified a rising trend of volatility during the 1970s. Bartolini and Mair criticised this comparison: they found that the

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$$F = 1 - \sum \frac{(ni)}{(N)} * \frac{(ni - 1)}{(N - 1)}$$

<sup>14</sup> The countries are Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and the U.S.A.

period between the 1950s until the late 1960s was an exception, in which the Total Volatility rate was low compared to the rate of the period prior to the 1950s, and that after the late 1960s (Bartolini & Mair, 1990:99); see also (Mair, 1989:13). Likewise, Ersson and Lane (1982:94) suggested that during the 1950s and 1960s the volatility level was lower than that of earlier periods, and found that the volatility rate between 1970-1974 was almost identical to the level during the years 1950-1954.

Lipset and Rokkan's freezing hypothesis suggests stable electoral support for established parties. Some scholars argue that the electoral success of new political parties demonstrates that the party systems are no longer frozen. To be more specific, the mobilisation and electoral success of new parties suggests that the party systems are no longer dominated by old parties or by parties older than their electorate. Pedersen (1979:2), for example, cites several examples of the phenomenon of the defection of large portions of the electorate from older parties to new parties, supporting those who argued that Rokkan and Lipset's hypothesis is no longer relevant in many European party systems. Inglehart (1987:1299) implied that the electoral success of new parties (New Politics parties) was due to the appearance of a new cleavage –the Materialist/Post-Materialist –that changed voters' alignment and the axis of the party system, as will be explained below.

Mair, however, held the opposite view. Firstly, he argued (Mair, 1997:82-4) that old parties had not experienced substantial losses. When we take into account the fact that a large portion of the electorate is composed of new voters: the old parties were actually "polling substantially more votes in absolute terms"; see also (Sundberg, 1999:236). Secondly, with respect to the electoral success of new parties, Mair (1999:213-4) confirmed that the number of new parties emerging (that is, parties which first began to contest elections no earlier than 1960) increased over the time and that these new parties enjoy substantially increasing electoral support (Mair, 2002b:134). However, he also found that new parties sometimes die after brief and temporary electoral success. Other new parties survive and even manage to obtain substantial electoral support, but most of these are new only in name, i.e. these parties are mergers between existing parties or emerge as result of split from older parties; they are not parties that belong to one of the new party families – the Greens or the extreme Right (Mair, 1990:220; 2002b:137-8). Similarly, based on election results

between the mid 1940s and mid 1990s in Scandinavian countries, Sundberg (1999:227) found that parties other than those belonging to one of the old party families experience the greatest electoral instability. He discovered that while there was a difference in electoral performance amongst the old party families, as the Liberals (or the Social Liberals) and Communist parties were electorally “[t]he big losers” (Sundberg, 1999:224), “[t]he hypothesis that electoral instability melts the frozen party system cannot be verified with our data” (Sundberg, 1999:230). Drummond (2006:639), on the other hand, who examined nineteen Western countries<sup>15</sup>, from 1970 to 1995 stated “it is [the interwar] parties [...] that are most likely driving the majority of the increase in party system instability throughout the West”.

Bartolini and Mair emphasised party families and assumed that a change in electoral support within the bloc of parties implied that the party system was still stable. Lane and Ersson (1999:125) referred to this assumption as the “*weak* version” of the freezing hypothesis. They maintained that “Lipset and Rokkan had in mind a *stronger* version of the frozen party system hypothesis.” Ersson and Lane (1998:24) underline the fact that Lipset and Rokkan’s model consists of two hypotheses. The first refers to the parties – “parties remain stable over time in terms of electoral support”; the second refers to the electorate – “the electorate is frozen in relation to the party system behind cleavages.” In other words, Ersson and Lane add to the definition of a freezing party system another component – the electorate. A frozen electorate is one in which the people vote for the same party from one election to another (Lane & Ersson, 1999:125). Namely, the freezing hypothesis implies a freezing of the electoral strength of individual parties and the patterns of electorate voting. Therefore, when Lane and Ersson found “increasing signs of instability” in gross volatility, they concluded “[o]ne part of the Lipset-Rokkan model of the party systems in Western Europe cannot be upheld, namely the hypothesis that the electorate is frozen, [...] The electorates in the West European countries are mobile – this the gross volatility scores indicate” (Ersson & Lane, 1998:33). The interpretation of the freezing hypothesis as having two components enabled them to conclude “[t]here are no frozen party

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<sup>15</sup> The countries are Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, Sweden, United Kingdom and the U.S.A.

systems in Western Europe any more” (Ersson & Lane, 1998:36). This empirical observation is based mainly on changes in patterns of individuals’ party support (measured by ‘party switching’<sup>16</sup> and ‘gross volatility’<sup>17</sup>) and not on changes in the parties’ aggregate electoral support, since they found that the indicators of change in the aggregate support of parties had increased since the mid 1970s but not to the same extent as the gross volatility (Ersson & Lane, 1998:30-2; Lane & Ersson, 1999:129-31). However, they (Lane & Ersson, 1999:131) argued that the difference between the levels of instability in the electorate and in party systems would disappear in the future, since these factors tend to change together and “[t]hus, neither the strong or the weak version of the party system hypothesis can be upheld.”

Ersson and Lane understood the freezing hypothesis to mean that a frozen electorate would not change its party support. This interpretation was shaped by their view of the connections between parties and the electorate, and mainly on what they term the ‘freezing party system’. The main mechanism for this freezing, Ersson and Lane held, is the cleavage. They argued the connection between parties and electorate is structured by cleavages: the electorate is divided into different sectors corresponding to the cleavages that prevail in the society, and each political party can mobilise only a certain sector of the electorate (its electoral niche) (Ersson & Lane, 1998:34; Lane & Ersson, 1999:110). A similar description is found in Rose and Urwin’s article (1970:296). An alignment, Lane and Ersson (1999:124-5) explained, occurs when the connection between voters and parties is stable, so that the cleavage functions as glue between the voters and the parties; such alignments tend to be long lasting. Put differently, the frozen party system is maintained because it is cleavages that construct the relationship between parties and voters. Therefore, as long as the cleavages are frozen, the relationship between the voters and parties is also frozen. Pennings and Lane (1998:3) presented an identical argument, claiming that the catalyst that froze the cleavage structures was the introduction of universal manhood suffrage. This caused party organisations to incorporate the entire mobilised electorate, resulting in the closure of the electoral market and leaving little room for

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<sup>16</sup> ‘Party switching’ refers to those voters who voted in two successive elections and changed their party support from one election to another (Ersson & Lane, 1998).

<sup>17</sup> Gross volatility takes into account all the eligible voters in two successive elections and measures the proportion of voters who not only change their party support (i.e. party switching), but also those who change between voting and non-voting (Ersson & Lane, 1998).

the emergence of new cleavages in the party system. A similar argument was also proposed by Pedersen (1983:57).

Mair (2001:35) accepted that a frozen cleavage is one “in which more or less the same social forces combine and compete in alignment with more or less the same party alternatives”. But he rejected the idea that the validity of the freezing hypothesis depends on the sustainability of the same socio-structural cleavages. This, Mair explained, implies that Lipset and Rokkan’s hypothesis could be valid only in a frozen society, “and this is clearly an impossible precondition.” According to Mair (2001:30) “[n]o society is, or has been, frozen, and hence if political alignment are stabilized, this process must be due to something else, or to something more”.

Instead, Mair proposed two other types of freezing: the freezing of party alternatives, and the freezing of the party system itself (Mair, 2001:35). He admitted that “parties have an almost inexhaustible capacity to adjust and to adapt, and hence to survive through transformation,” which, he argued, tends to direct the party systems towards stability. Put it differently, the party systems are stable since the parties are adaptive organisations. Wolinetz (1988:304) also emphasised the role of political parties in the continuity of party systems: “parties adjust their appeals to the changing predilections of their electorates.” Bornscier (2010:58) also argued that “the patterns of interaction between parties [...] perpetuate political alignment.”

Logically, Mair is correct that a frozen party system cannot mean frozen social-structural cleavages. More importantly, it seems that Mair and Wolinetz are right to argue that the political parties are the cause of a frozen party system (as was argued by Lipset and Rokkan). In their seminal work, Lipset and Rokkan alluded to the strategic capabilities of political parties. They (1967:51) suggested that “the leeway for new party formations was particular small” in countries where both working-class parties, liberals and conservatives formed nationwide organisations. However, this emphasis on parties’ adaptive capabilities may conceal Lipset and Rokkan’s main argument. In order to hold their positions, parties may adopt non-cleavage issues (Sartori, 1968), moving them away from their function as political institutions of cleavage representation. This development was already identified by Kirchheimer (1966:184), writing at almost at the same time as Lipset and Rokkan. Kirchheimer

described the way in which, after the Second World War, mass parties (which represented the working class or the denominational division)<sup>18</sup> transformed themselves into ‘catch-all parties’: parties which broadened ‘their electoral appeal beyond their original *classe gardée*’ (Katz & Mair, 1995:12) (italics in original). They drastically reduced the role of party ideology and therefore reduced their role as cleavage representatives (Kirchheimer, 1966).

Another issue is the application of this definition of alignment to other countries. Lipset and Rokkan’s study claimed that socio-structural cleavages could explain voting behaviour in all Western democratic countries, as their historical research included European countries as well as the U.S.A.

Lipset and Rokkan were not the first to argue that the basis of cleavages is a potent predictor of voting behaviour in the case of the U.S.A. (Beck, 1979). The first were Paul Lazarsfeld and his associates (1968) from Columbia University, (Thomassen, 1994). Similarly, the role of party identification in explaining voters’ attachment has been applied to countries other than the U.S.A (Holmberg, 2007; Weisberg, 1999) (this topic will be discussed more extensively in Chapter Five). Addressing Lipset and Rokkan’s hypothesis specifically, Inglehart and Hochstein (1972:345) explained that mechanism of freezing is mass party identification; new voters must have a sense of party attachment, “otherwise they would have been free to shift to any new party which arose subsequently.”

In the literature, however, the idea took root that the socio-psychological approach (i.e. party identification) could explain American voter behaviour, while the socio-structural approach could explain voter behaviour in Western Europe. Wolinetz (1979:15) explained that as party identification in the U.S.A is an “artifact of the number of elected positions: voters are said to need an underlying predisposition to simplify the choices confronting them”, or to put it differently, voters require this simplification because so much is asked of them (Van der Eijk & Franklin, 2009:88). In Western Europe, on the other hand, not only are the elections less frequent, but also

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<sup>18</sup> According to Krichheimer (1966), other parties such as bourgeois parties (called the cadre parties by Duverger (1954), and the elite parties by Katz and Mair (1995) will also be transformed into ‘catch-all’ parties.

the “[p]arties are more closely tied to social groups” (Wolinetz, 1979:15). Shively (1972) presents a different explanation. He argues that when there is a match between strong social identities and party positions on cleavage issues, there is less need for voters to develop party identification. Other scholars have seen these two explanations as “complementary, not contradictory. The emphasis on social structure did not deny the existence of party identification. Similarly, the authors of the party identification model did not discount the importance of social structure” (Crewe, 1985b:3).

From the end of the Second World War onwards, patterns of voter behaviour changed and arguments of a change in alignments arose. Change in voter behaviour was triggered by socio-demographic, economic and technical changes such as secularisation, expansion of educational opportunities, rising living standards and increasing industrialisation (which changed the industrial sector, the context of the workplace and the residential neighbourhood), the growth of electronic media (Dalton, et al., 1984b), the rise of social policy, the welfare state, the collapse of the Communist bloc (Kitschelt, 1994:21) and finally the advent of globalisation, wherein national boundaries evaporated (Kriesi, et al., 2008a).

Two approaches were taken as the basis for two alternative explanations regarding new patterns of voter behaviour: the (new) social cleavage and the functional model.

### **2.3 Two Alternative Explanations for Voter Behaviour**

Inglehart was the first to argue that a new cleavage – the Materialist/Post-Materialist – replaced traditional cleavages (such as class and religion) as a basis for alignment. This new divide concerns physical safety vs. the non-material quality of life. While the first emphasises economic gains and security (for example, the issues of law and order), the latter’s priorities are ‘a sense of community and the non-material quality of life’ (such as environmentalism, women’s rights, unilateral disarmament, opposition to nuclear power, etc.) (Inglehart, 1987:1296). This new divide, according to Inglehart, changed the historical socio-structural ties between voters and parties as described by Lipset and Rokkan.

Traditionally, political polarisation reflected conflicts between social classes: the support of Left parties came from the working class, and the middle class tended to support the Right parties (Inglehart, 1977:70; 1984:25). This situation has changed: Post-Materialist voters, despite their relatively high levels of income and their occupations, have become more likely to align with Left or Liberal positions and the Materialist (who are poorer) are more prone to support the Right; this trend has strengthened over time (Inglehart, 1977:70, 183, 230; 1987:1299). Put another way, Inglehart (1987:1296) claimed that the basis of alignment has changed “from class-based to values-based.”

What Inglehart identified as Post-Materialist, Flanagan (1987) termed ‘libertarian’ (and suggested that both labels include an emphasis on personal freedom, participation, equality and tolerance of minorities). According to Flanagan (1987:1305-6) this new value basis for alignment created two distinct cleavages. The first divides Materialists from non-Materialists, or Old Politics from New Politics. The second is a value-based cleavage within New Politics itself, and distinguishes between New Left and New Right. The New Left is composed of libertarians, who support moral issues such as liberalising abortion, gay rights, and other ‘quality of life’ issues. The New Right is composed of authoritarians, who endorse issues such as anti-abortion, traditional moral and religious values, patriotism, law and order, etc. The two cleavages, emphasised Flanagan (1987:1306-7), are independent of each other. He argued that a new pattern of alignment has appeared: middle-class people have crossed the line to support New-Left values, and the working-class has shifted to support Old Right interests.

Kitschelt (1994) presented a very similar argument, claiming the change in alignment basis was stimulated by the appearance of a ‘libertarian vs. authoritarian’ divide<sup>19</sup>, wherein voter configuration shifted “from a simple alternative between socialist (left) and capitalist (right) politics to a more complex configuration opposing left-libertarian and right-authoritarian alternatives” (Kitschelt, 1994:30-1).

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<sup>19</sup> Kitschelt (1994) defined this cleavage differently from Flanagan. He argued that libertarians advocate the realisation of equality and liberty in the community, while authoritarians see the community as structured in internally hierarchical units.



Stubager (2010a), who examined Flanagan and Kitschelt's arguments regarding the new libertarian-authoritarian divide, demonstrated (at least in the Danish context) that voters' length of education is the socio-structural basis for the new cleavage.

All in all, these four scholars supported the identification of a new cleavage and argued that the basis of alignment changed, but they differed in their assessments of the new cleavage's structure.

Inglehart held (as was presented above) that the new cleavage replaced the old cleavage structure (and mainly replaced the dominant cleavage, the class cleavage). Flanagan stated that the new cleavage has appeared alongside the old division, but it divides only those who support 'New Politics' issues, while Kitschelt supported Flanagan's argument but argued that the two cleavages (i.e. old and new) cut across each other and create a structure of two orthogonal axes. A similar argument can be found in Stubager's (2010b) paper.

More recently, additional arguments have appeared in the literature regarding the creation of yet another new socio-structural cleavage. Kriesi and his collaborators have argued that the globalisation process is a new junction (in Rokkan's terminology), which has created a socio-structural cleavage cutting across the most important traditional cleavage – class cleavage. This new divide is between the 'winners' and 'losers' of the globalisation process (Kriesi, et al., 2008a:4). The 'winners' are those whose life chances have increased, as they benefit from the new opportunities brought by the globalisation process. The 'losers' are those whose life chances were formerly protected by national boundaries. With the weakening of these boundaries, they feel a threat to their social, economical status (Kriesi, et al., 2008a:4-5). This cleavage, Kriesi et al., argued, has transformed the structure of the political space, as the voters' distribution and parties' locations have changed.

As an alternative to the arguments regarding the appearance of new cleavages, Flanagan and Dalton (1984:13) stated that alignments diminish "as a product of the loss of functions by political parties and the declining functional value of party identification to large numbers of citizens". This has occurred due to the process of what Dalton terms '*cognitive mobilization*', when voters possess the political skills and resources necessary to deal with complexities of politics and make their own

political decisions without reliance on external cues (Dalton 1996:213-4; 2006:194). According to Dalton, this cognitive mobilisation produced new typology of voters. Traditionally scholars who follow the Michigan School differentiate between partisans and independent voters (who do not have party identifications). By adding the cognitive mobilisation component, Dalton could identify four patterns of political mobilisation: ritual partisans (those who have party identification but low cognitive mobilisation and therefore who mobilise only on the basis of their party attachment), cognitive partisans (who rank high in these two components and therefore involve themselves in politics even when party cues are lacking), apolitical voters, who are attached neither to a party nor cognitively (this group is equivalent to the independent voters of Michigan School), and apartisan voters, who are the ‘new independents’. They have high cognitive mobilisation but no party attachment (Dalton 1996:214-5; 2006:195-6). Thus, these new independent voters are less consistent in their patterns of party support. Apartisans, Dalton (1996:214; 2006:195) states, are mainly “concentrated among the young, the better educated and postmaterialists”, but socio-economic changes will gradually increase the number of apartisans (Dalton, 2006) . This means that evidence of broking ties between voters and parties is not a temporary situation, but a lasting trend.

However, these two explanations - the (new) social cleavage and the functional model-- are sometimes presented in the literature simultaneously: (e.g. Dalton, et al., 1984c; Flanagan & Dalton, 1984), as testament to the dispute about how best to define, describe and explain the nexus between voters and political parties.

## **2.4 Conclusions**

The majority of electorates still had stable patterns of party support when research into voter behaviour began after the Second World War. Two alternative explanations were developed to explain the phenomena of voters aligned with political parties. The first was voter identification with the parties (the socio-psychological explanation). The second pertained to voters’ socio-structural characteristics and their identification with and loyalty to a group and its political institutions – in this case, political parties (the socio-structural explanation).

The two alternative explanations were examined over time and were criticised on theoretical and empirical grounds. In addition, regarding socio-demographic, economic and political developments, two alternative explanations for capturing voter behaviour were proposed. One, the (new) socio-structural, claimed the replacement of the dominant traditional cleavages with a new cleavage basis, suggesting **realignment** along this new cleavage. The second, the functional model, claimed the disappearance of voters' long-term party allegiance and suggests **dealignment**.

This study is motivated by this discussion: it concentrates on the phenomena of 'alignment', 'realignment' and 'dealignment'. The goal of this dissertation is to investigate the discussion of these three phenomena, by capturing, understanding and elucidating this empirical debate. The empirical debate has its roots in a conceptual controversy, as there is no single agreed operational definition for either 'realignment' or 'dealignment'. In order to put an end to this controversy, I propose to adopt a semi-modular approach for studying the three phenomena. This approach encapsulates the major concepts, components and assumptions of the literature.

## CHAPTER 3

### FINDING A WAY THROUGH THE DISORDER – THE PROBLEMS OF IDENTIFYING OF ALIGNMENT, REALIGNMENT AND DEALIGNMENT

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*“The clarification and refinement of concepts is a fundamental task in political science.”*

*Adcock and Collier (2001:529)*

Scholarly discussion of the mechanisms of alignment – party identification and socio-structural cleavage(s), and more importantly about the relevance of these concepts for the period after the 1970s – created another debate in the literature of Political Science that follows either the socio-psychological or the socio-structural approach (both approaches are discussed in the previous chapter). This debate is focused on whether or not the connections between voters and political parties in the party systems of Western democratic states are still relatively stable and structured, whether or not these party systems have changed and, – if so – what kind of change has occurred.

Three major empirical arguments dominate this debate. The first suggests that the relationship between voters and parties has hardly changed, that voters are still affiliated to the political parties in much the same way as they always have been, and that the connection between voters and parties is stable; as such the party systems are still in an alignment. The second argument suggests that since the 1970s, the connection between electorates and the parties has changed and has led to a new alignment. In other words, we have witnessed wide-scale realignment at some point since the 1970s. The third argument suggests that the party systems of industrialised democracies have been experiencing a process of dealignment since the 1970s, with a diminishing connection between voters and political parties, and no new alternative connection asserting itself.

This empirical debate is a barrier obstructs our understanding of the current state of the party systems of the Western democratic states. This chapter addresses the dispute, exploring why we cannot tell which of these three situations (alignment, realignment, or dealignment) characterises industrialised democracies. The second part of this chapter examines the empirical and theoretical literature regarding the alignment-re/dealignment processes, and suggests that the empirical dispute has its roots in a conceptual problem.

The conceptual problem is that there is neither a single agreed operational definition of either realignment or dealignment, nor what Adcock and Collier (2001) call ‘systematized concepts’ (operational definitions that are adopted by a group of scholars). In order to contribute to the resolution of this empirical dispute, I propose to study the empirical situation from a new perspective – the semi-modular approach – in the last part of this chapter. This new approach will help us to develop a new model, which clarifies the positions of party systems regarding the alignment issue.

### **3.1 The Empirical Dispute**

The literature mentions three different empirical research results that form the basis for the empirical dispute. It is necessary to emphasise that this dispute does not reflect different personal opinions on this controversy, as Dalton and his colleagues (2000:37) imply; scholars – however – may find contrasting evidence and, therefore, draw divergent conclusions, particularly when they examine different countries or different periods of time.

The first type of research results indicated that the party systems of industrialised democracies have not changed, remaining stable and in alignment. Bartolini and Mair (1990:68) reported that the volatility index rates of thirteen European states<sup>1</sup> between 1885 and 1985 “reflect a fundamental bias towards stability”.<sup>2</sup> Later, Mair (1997:78) argued that until the 1990s the “image of electoral change [wa]s largely mythical”. He claimed that the realignment and dealignment processes never occurred, and that

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<sup>1</sup> The states are: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and United Kingdom.

<sup>2</sup> The only exception to this conclusion is the party system of Denmark during the 1970s, as I will mention below.

instead, party systems continues to be frozen, since the old parties “adapt and modify their appeals and their methods of mobilizing support” (Mair, 1997:89).

Only since the 1990s, when the volatility rate increased and the levels of voter turnout declined in fifteen European countries<sup>3</sup>, does Mair accept (2002b:138) that “the impression that comes across from these data is not one that points to realignment, but rather to increasing detachment and disengagement.” But these increasing trends did not infer that the party system was unstable, since the change has been only partial. As was concluded by Gallagher, et al., (2006:296), “we can see that contemporary Western European politics is characterized at least as much by continuity as it is by change.” According to these scholars, “if realignment is taken to mean the replacement by an alternative divide of the fundamental division between the right and the left, then the evidence in favor of realignment is far from convincing. If it is taken to mean a significant shift in party fortunes within both the left and right, on the other hand, then a limited realignment may well be taking place” (Gallagher, et al., 2006:287). In addition, regarding the occurrence of dealignment, they claimed: “we see evidence that the period around the turn of new century is different from what has gone before. Here again, we *may* be witnessing real signs of dealignment” (Gallagher, et al., 2006:296) (*italics added*).

The second type of research results suggested that since the 1970s, some of the party systems of industrialised democracies have changed and a new alignment has emerged. Namely, a realignment has occurred at some point since the 1970s. Dalton, et al., (1984c:451), for example, stated that “from the perspective of early 1980s [...] [p]rocesses of realignment have been highlighted in Japan, West Germany and Italy.” Realignment occurred during the 1970s and in Denmark (Bartolini & Mair, 1990:71-2) and in Australia (Weaklien & Western, 1999) or more recently in Denmark (Stubager, 2010b).

The third type of research results showed that since the 1970s, some of the party systems of industrialised democracies have weakened and that the party systems are now going through a process of dealignment. Dalton, et al., (1984c:451) argued again

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<sup>3</sup> The countries are: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and United Kingdom.

that “from the perspective of early 1980s [...] [in] The Netherlands, Britain, Scandinavia, and Spain – party instability follows at least temporary electoral dealignment.” Later, Dalton, et al., (2000) found evidence of dealignment trends within eighteen advanced industrialised democracies.<sup>4</sup> Borre (1984) also identified dealignment in three Scandinavian states – Sweden, Denmark and Norway – during the 1960s and 1970s. Klingemann (who examined Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the U.K between 1944 and 2001) discovered that the “results do not support the stability hypothesis. Measures of fragmentation, polarization, and volatility – comes closer to the secular change hypothesis [i.e. dealignment]” (Klingemann, 2005:50).

We may also find these various research results in country-specific analyses. Research into the Italian political system uncovered three different research results. Peripheral dealignment (where the proportion of weak identifiers declines and the non-attached grow accordingly, while the strong party identifiers do not follow any trend; (Schmitt, 1989; Schmitt & Holmberg, 1995) was found between the mid 1970s and the late 1980s (Schmitt, 1989). In the same period - between the mid 1970s and 1990s – a dealignment was also identified (Bardi, 1996a); see also (Bartolini & D’Alimonte, 1996). Later Bardi (2007:712) argued that a gradual dealignment has been observable in Italy from 1987, suggesting a “[s]izeable electoral dealignment in Italy is a relatively recent phenomenon, whose beginning barely preceded the huge transformations of the 1990s.” Researchers also found that between 1987 and 1996, Italian politics passed through a major partisan realignment (Wellhofer, 2001), or a party realignment (in the first half of the 1990s) (Bardi, 2007). Each of these studies reached a different conclusion concerning the question of the Italian party system’s alignment situation, despite the fact that they examined the same period of time (namely the mid 1970s to the late 1980s). This contrast in results for the same period can be found for other countries too. In research regarding the British party system, we find two different research results. Some research shows a partisan dealignment occurring from 1964 onwards (Alt, 1984), or beginning with the two elections of 1974 (Crewe, 1983, 1985a); see also (Clarke & Stewart, 1998; Särilvik & Crewe, 1983). It has also been found that the change during this period was limited – a peripheral

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<sup>4</sup> The states are: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom.

dealignment was identified in Britain between the mid 1970s and the late 1980s (Schmitt, 1989); see also (Clarke & Stewart, 1984), which continued until 1992 (Schmitt & Holmberg, 1995). We also find two differing results from research into the Israeli party system. Realignment is seen both before the 1970s (Arian & Shamir, 2001); see also (Arian, 1979), and since 1977 (Arian & Shamir, 2002), which has continued to the 1990s (Hazan, 1998:162). At the same time, it was also identified that as of 1992, Israel went through a dealignment (Arian & Shamir, 2001; 2002). Another case is the German party system, for which we also find two different results. Some research stated that the alignment of West Germany remained stable until the late 1980s (Klingemann, 1985; Schmitt, 1989). Other research, however, showed that between 1953-1983 the German party system experienced a secular realignment (Dalton, 1984), and that a new party realignment occurred during the 1980s (Rohrschneider, 1993). Others assert that initial signs of dealignment existed in the late 1980s (Dalton, 2004:33). The American political system is the fourth example for which two different research results are evident, but in this case some researchers held that the party system experienced realignment (Meffert, et al., 2001; Petrocik, 1981), or a “Republican realignment,” which began in the early 1980s (Campbell, 1997:845). Others, however, have disagreed that such realignment occurred in the American political system (Ladd & Hadley, 1975; MacKuen, et al., 1989), or have argued that the realignment that occurred during the 1980s remains incomplete (Shea, 1999), hollow (Wattenberg, 1998) or of a limited nature (Miller & Shanks, 1996:166). Furthermore, some researchers have argued that a dealignment process occurred in American politics between the 1960s and 1980s (Beck, 1984a) and continued throughout the 1980s (Clarke & Stewart, 1998; Flanigan & Zingale, 1985; Shea, 1999). A similar dispute exists regarding the Netherlands. For the same period (between the mid 1970s and the late 1980s), it has been argued that the Netherlands went through either realignment (Schmitt, 1989) or dealignment (Irwin & Dittrich, 1984).

In addition, other scholars have concluded that alignment, realignment and dealignment processes can occur simultaneously within the same party system. Flanagan (1984), for example, discovered that between the 1950s and 1970s, Japan underwent two processes. The first was when the Liberal-Democrat party supporters changed from prealignment to alignment, and the second was when opposition



supporters shifted from being aligned to dealigned partisans. Ladd (1989) argued that due to the changes of the last quarter-century, the American political system has realigned – thus, the current system involves a new voting alignment and dealignment. Vowles (1997) also found that during the 1970s and 1980s, New Zealand went through realignment and dealignment simultaneously.

Some more creative scholars use exclusive terms in order to describe or identify a realignment or dealignment. There is a large variety in concepts currently in vogue for each of these processes. For the dealignment process, the terms strong dealignment, peripheral dealignment (Schmitt, 1989; Schmitt & Holmberg, 1995), ideological dealignment (Crewe, 1983), issue dealignment (Carmines, et al., 1987) and stable dealignment (LeDuc, 1984) are all used. For realignment, researchers use concepts such as post-realignment (Schmitt, 1989), an old Left realignment and a new party realignment (Rohrschneider, 1993), issue evolution realignment, secular and ideological realignment (Abramowitz & Saunders, 1998, 2006), party realignment (Green, et al., 2002), and philosophical realignment (Ladd, 1997).

These contradictory empirical arguments, I argue, have their roots in a conceptual problem, which will be presented in the next section of this chapter.

### **3.2 The Conceptual Problem**

Key was the first scholar to discuss the occurrence of realignment. In 1955, he identified what he called a ‘critical election’ (Key, 1955:4). This is an election “in which voters are [...] unusually deeply concerned, in which the extent of electoral involvement is relatively quite high, and in which the decisive results of the voting reveal a sharp alteration of the pre-existing cleavage within the electorate.” This kind of election, according to Key, creates a new alignment, as the new voting pattern “persists for several succeeding elections.” Later, this will be termed ‘critical realignment’. While this kind of realignment is fast and happens in one election, a few years later Key argued for another model of realignment: the ‘secular realignment’. This is “[a] secular shift in party attachment [that] may be regarded as a movement of the members of a population category from party to party that extends over several presidential elections”. This type of realignment is created by processes that “operate

inexorably, and almost imperceptibly, election after election, to form new party alignment and to build new party grouping” (Key, 1959:198-9).

Key’s work paved the way for identifying continuous patterns of voting behaviour – alignment or a change to a new durable pattern – after a realignment. In early research it was assumed that the transition from one alignment to another also causes a temporary period of instability (Dalton, et al., 1984b:14; McAllister & Studlar, 1995:202). Yet, the significant decline of party identification in the U.S.A. and evidence that this process is likely to continue for the coming years, lead Inglehart and Hochstein (1972:345) to discuss the occurrence of a new phenomenon – a dealignment, so called because there are “declining rates of identification with *any* party.” (On this innovative argument; see also (Dalton, et al., 1984b:14).

With equivalent social-demographic and economic developments occurring throughout the Western world, the two concepts became popular for defining new patterns of voting behavior. The concepts not only applied to American voting behaviour (the origin of the concepts), but were also applicable to research regarding countries with other political traditions, for example European countries, Israel, Japan, Australia and New Zealand (Arian, 1979; Dalton, et al., 1984a; Vowles, 1997). The extensive research of these two phenomena has created a conceptual problem. There is no single agreed operational definition for either the realignment or the dealignment phenomenon. Indeed, there are too many operational definitions for realignment and too many indicators (which function as operational definitions) associated with dealignment. On the top of this, there are no ‘systematized concepts’ in place (those commonly accepted by groups of scholars) (Adcock & Collier, 2001). As consequence of this, scholars disagree over the manifestation of re/dealignment.

In the section below, I will demonstrate this problem. My analysis is restricted to definitions of realignment and dealignment in the context of electorates and party systems. I will not address definitions of realignment and dealignment in other areas of the political system, like the legislative or the judicial branches, although some scholars associate electoral realignment with changes in government policy (e.g. (Mayhew, 2000).

### ***3.2.1 The realignment process***

The absence of a single agreed operational definition of the realignment process is highlighted through analysis of the abundance of definitions found in Political Science literature. Some years ago, Sundquist (1983:4) articulated this nicely: “after a quarter century of study, the concept of party realignment is still far from clear. The writers all employ the same term – realignment – but it is difficult to find any two works that give it the same definition”. Yet, in my effort to organise these definitions, I discovered that they can be divided into different categories according to their reference to three levels of analysis: the electorate, the party system structure and the cleavage.

#### *Realignment as a process caused by a change within the electorate*

In the first category are definitions that describe “realignment” or “partisan realignment” as a change that occurs within the electorate. Namely, realignment emerges when the electorate changes its party loyalty and starts identifying itself as a partisan of another party.

The electorate is, however, treated as either a collection of individuals or as members of various social groups. In the first meaning, realignment is a lasting change in which the individual voters switch their party loyalty and become partisans or loyalists of another political party (Beck, 1974; Inglehart & Hochstein, 1972; Johnston, 1987; Stanley, 1988); see also (Dalton, et al., 1984b:13) or when nonpartisans or new voters mobilise into the party system (Sundquist, 1983; Wanat & Durke, 1982). This is a conversion of individual voters (Sundquist, 1983:7).

In the second meaning (the electorate as composed of various social groups), “[a] realignment occurs when the measurable party bias of identifiable segments of the population changes in such a way that the social group profile of the parties – the party coalitions – is altered” (Petrocik, 1981:15); see also (Dalton, et al., 1984b:13; Ladd, 1981:3; Petrocik, 1987; Sheingold, 1973; Van der Eijk & Niemöller, 1983).

This is probably due to the influence of the so-called Columbia and Michigan Schools on the study of voting behaviour, as was discussed in the previous chapter. The first meaning of ‘electorate’ emphasises an individual’s party identification, a definition linked to the Michigan School. The second meaning assumes that voting must be seen as a group process in the tradition of the Columbia School, which focused on the sociological base of political predispositions and the reinforcing effect of information received during a campaign.

A concept that combines these two meanings is that of ‘party realignment’, argued to occur when the social characteristics of the party identifiers of one party change (Green, et al., 2002).

Besides these two meanings of ‘electorate’, there is also inconsistency in conceptualisations of the magnitude of electoral change necessary for realignment. Campbell and his collaborators (1980:83) stated that “any shift in the partisan identification” can be defined as realignment, while others insist that a realignment only occurs through a significant electoral change (Beck, 1974:203; Dalton, et al., 1984b:13; McMichael & Trilling, 1980:25). Those who tread a path between the two points of view have invented new concepts to distinguish between these two types of change. Sundquist (1983), for example, calls the former ‘minor realignment’ and the latter ‘major realignment’; see also (Cavangh & Sundquist, 1985) and Burnham (1970) named the former “subrealignment”.

*Realignment as a process that includes a change in the structure of a party system*

The second category of definitions refers to the level of electorate, but also discusses the possible effect of a change in the electorate on the party system structure. The main difference of opinion among researchers pertains to the necessity of change in the party system structure. There are those who view realignment as a process that includes an alteration in the structure of the party system – a change of the major party in a two-party system (Shea, 1999) or as “substantially altering the format of party competition or redefining party alternatives” (Wolinetz, 1988:299) (a definition that can also be applied in a multi-party system). In contrast, others describe realignment as a process of change in partisans’ electoral support or in terms of voter

mobilisation, which *may* create a change in the structure of the party system. This could be the emergence of a new majority party. However, this change is optional and not necessary to the definition of realignment (Petrocik & Brown, 1999; Pinkney, 1986; Trilling & Campbell, 1980). Clubb, et al., (1980:78) drew on this definition when they described two types of lasting rearrangements (i.e. realignments). In the first, there is a change in the party system structure caused by an increase (or decrease) in the total number of votes received by the parties. In the second type of realignment, the pattern of change involves shifts in the sources of electoral support, but its changes are counter-balancing: there is no change in the total support for the political parties, and the structure of the party system remains intact.

Crewe (1985b) presented three types of the realignment process that differ from each other regarding change in the party system structure. The first type is a social or ideological realignment, wherein “[t]he social and ideological bases of party support change, but the number and strength of existing parties remains much the same” (Crewe, 1985b:17). This type of realignment is a change in the electorate, but not in the structure of the party system and, unlike the earlier definitions, it refers to the electorate as being composed of different social groups. The second definition is a two-party partisan realignment, wherein partisans change their political support from one to the other, and the party balance changes between the two parties. The third definition is a multi-party partisan realignment, wherein the electorate support changes in such a way that it influences the major parties as along with the minor or new parties. The difference between these last two types of realignment is the influence of the change on the different parties. While in a two-party system partisan realignment will affect the parties that structure the system, in a multi-party system, the change will also affect minor or new parties. Clubb, et al., (1980:77-83) also described two scenarios of lasting electoral change. The first is ‘Across-the-Board’ change and the second is ‘Differential-Electoral-Change.’ While in the first type of change, the balance of power between parties changes (as there is an increase or decrease in the vote received by the parties), in the second type of change the overall partisans’ support remains the same and therefore there are no shifts in the relative electoral strength of the parties.

The inconsistent attitude towards the necessity of change in the party system structure (for definitions of realignment) can also be found in the literature on specific types of realignment – critical realignment and secular realignment. Burnham (1975:6), for example, held that a critical realignment causes an alteration of the relative electoral support, wherein majority parties become minorities; see also (Carmines & Stimson, 1984). Petrocik (1981) supported this view and claimed that a situation wherein balance is stable may be termed ‘noncritical realignment’. Other scholars argued that a critical election does not necessarily cause a change in the structure of the party system, but that a shift in the party balance is likely to occur (Campbell, et al., 1960:534, 536) since “it is expected that the redistribution of party support will benefit one party more in relation to the other” (McMichael & Trilling, 1980:31). Pomper (1967) expanded on this possibility and argued that one should not confuse these two different effects (a change in partisan commitments, and a change in the party balance). He argued it is also possible for partisan commitments to change while the party balance does not: the party voters retain the same majority party, although different partisans now endorse it.<sup>5</sup> In addition, Nexon (1980) claimed that critical realignment may include two scenarios. One possibility is that the party balance may change due to a change in the proportion of partisan support for each party. Another scenario is that the relative support given to each party by any group in the population may change, but these changes may cancel each other out, thus the proportional support for each party does not change and neither does the party balance. Ladd and Hadley (1975:26) also opposed the idea of the creation of a new majority party as the essential component of critical realignment, though they argued that “[w]hat really matters is that both the policy expectations and social group composition of electoral coalitions [are] transformed. It may or may not follow that there will be a new majority party”.

We can also note a similar inconsistency in the literature regarding secular realignment. In his discussion of secular realignment Key (1959:199) focused on the change of the social base of the parties, arguing that this change does not necessarily hail a change in the electoral trends and certainly causes no change in the party

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<sup>5</sup> This is, according to Pomper (1967), the main difference between “converting” and “realigning” elections; in the first, the party system structure does not change as the majority party wins, while in the second type of election, by contrast, the majority party is defeated.

system structure; see also (Dalton, 1984). Others have stated that secular realignment also creates a shift in the relative strength of political parties (Abramowitz & Saunders, 1998). Nexon (1980:62), however, took a different position by distinguishing between three types of secular realignment. According to him, the party balance shifts in two of these types of secular realignment, while in the third type the electoral change is slow and moves in different directions so that, over time, the elements making up each party coalition change.

The confusion surrounding the necessity of change in (and its effects on) the party system structure is exacerbated in countries with presidential government. Here, it is unclear if it is necessary for a change of majority party to occur in both the legislative and the executive (the president) branches. Specifically to the American case, Ladd (1997:16) explained that during two eras of major realignment the government was divided and “neither of the major parties [...] attained majority status”; see also (Ladd, 1989), Wolinetz (1988) called this a ‘split-level realignment’, while Shea (1999), on the other hand, claimed that this situation constitutes an incomplete realignment.

#### *Realignment as a process caused by a change of cleavage*

In the third category of definitions are those that define realignment as a change of alignment along a cleavage. Schattschneider (1960), for example, argued that a transition from one alignment to another is caused by a shift from one cleavage to another. Flanagan and Dalton (1984:8) explained that realignment occurs when “parties and their electorates adjust their position along a new cleavage dimension”; see also (Dalton 2009). Gallagher, et al., (2006:284) used a similar definition, noting that “as traditional cleavages wane in importance and new cleavages emerge, voters go through a process of ‘realignment’.” Lachat and Dolzal (2008:246) described realignment as a process wherein specific social groups develop attitudinal distances concerning a new cleavage: the political parties will articulate this cleavage, and this will transform the structure of the political space. Vowles (1997) defined realignment as a situation in which the influence of one cleavage overcomes another in the political competition between parties.

There is also disagreement regarding the implications of the realignment process on two levels of analysis – the electorate and the party system structure. The change of the cleavage occurs when electorates as individuals (Beck, 1979; Cavanagh & Sundquist, 1985; Schattschneider, 1960; Sundquist, 1983) or as members of social or ideological groups (Flanagan & Dalton, 1984; Gallagher, et al., 2006; Lachat & Dolezal, 2008; Rohrschneider, 1993) change their party support. This alteration may cause a change in the party system structure (McAllister & Studlar, 1995; Schattschneider, 1960), but will not necessarily do so (Beck, 1979; Cavanagh & Sundquist, 1985; Flanagan & Dalton, 1984; Sundquist, 1983; Wolinetz, 1988).

Some scholars have suggested that preventing such an electoral transition is the strategy of the established parties. Inglehart and Rabier (1986), for instance, argued that voting behaviour began to reflect a more value-based axis because of the realignment of established parties, and also partly through the emergence of new ones. The first scenario is elaborated by Inglehart (1984:68), who argued that in a process of realignment “existing parties may split, or be taken over by reorienting elites”. The emphasis here is on party strategy and mainly the role of party elite. Regarding this aspect, Rohrschneider (1993) differentiated between the two scenarios by using different names – “New party realignment” (when voters begin to support a new party due to a new cleavage, which creates party system change) and an “Old Left realignment” (which occurs when the old parties (in this case Left parties) adopt the cleavage’s issues: partisan choice is still made on the basis of the new cleavage, and therefore party system change is avoidable) (for a similar scenario, see (McAllister & Studlar, 1995).

On top of the disagreement regarding the other two levels (the electorate and party system change), the basic concept of ‘cleavage’ has three different formalisations in realignment literature. The first meaning – an electoral cleavage deals with the electoral distribution of voters – was implied by Key (1955) in his discussion on ‘critical realignment’; see also (McMichael & Trilling, 1980) and was also used by Pomper (1967).

In the second definition, a cleavage is a major political conflict that functions as a base for political alignment. This meaning is related to that of political division or



conflict, which does not necessary relate to the socio-structural definition of cleavages; rather, any issue can divide the electorate into two antagonistic reference groups, with each reference group represented by one party or bloc of parties (Cavangh & Sundquist, 1985; McAllister & Studlar, 1995; Rohrschneider, 1993; Schattschneider, 1960; Sundquist, 1983). In Zuckerman's words (1975:236), "the tie to social divisions is left to hypothesis." The same meaning can be found in Macdonald and Rabinowitz's definition (1987) of 'structural realignment'. This is what Deegan-Krause (2006) termed an "issue divide"; Carmines (1994:77) explained realignment as the "introduction of a new dimension of conflict.". The term 'cleavage' is employed within the context of explaining durable party support in terms of ideological voting: voters identify their own ideological position with that of the parties, and vote accordingly (Oppenhuis, 1995). Layman (2001:292) (cited at (Carmines & Wagner, 2006:74) clarified that a realignment occurs when a large number of people feel strongly about political issues present on the political agenda over a long period of time, which provokes resistance and cuts across existing lines of cleavage.

The third understanding of the term 'cleavage' is as a socio-structural division between people that underpins their interests and demands, and which will therefore be a site of political conflict. According to this definition, realignment occurs when a new socio-structural division appears and members of socio-structural groups who identify with this new cleavage change their patterns of party(ies) support accordingly, while parties adjust their positions along this new cleavage (Flanagan & Dalton, 1984; Lachat & Dolezal, 2008; Van der Eijk & Franklin, 2009; Vowles, 1997).

Table 3.1 maps the three levels of definitions, conceptualisations and inconsistencies regarding the electorate, the party system structure and the cleavage.

**Table 3.1: The different definitions of the realignment process**

<i>The level of analysis</i>	<i>The different meanings</i>			<i>Additional concepts or inconsistencies</i>
<i>The electorate</i>	<i>In realignment, the electorate changes its party loyalty and begins to identify itself as a partisan of different party.</i>			Inconsistency about the magnitude of change necessary, whether any (Campbell 1980) or significant (Dalton, et al., 1984a; McMichael & Trilling 1980); ‘minor realignment’ and ‘major realignment’ (Sundquist 1973; Cavanagh & Sunquist 1985); or ‘subrealigning’ (Burnham 1970).
<i>The different meanings of ‘the electorate’</i>	<i>The electorate is composed of individual partisans.</i>	<i>The electorate is composed of social or ideological groups.</i>		
References	*Beck 1974; Johnston 1987; Stanley 1988. **Clubb, et al., 1980; Crewe 1985b; Pinkney 1986; Trilling & Campbell 1980; Petrocik & Brown 1999; Shea 1999. ## Macdonald & Rabinowitz 1987 structural realignment. ***Beck 1979; Cavanagh & Sunquist 1985; Schattschneider 1960; Sundquist 1973.	*Arian & Shamir 2001; Dalton 1984, 1988; Dalton, et al., 1984a; Ladd 1981; Petrocik 1981, 1987; Macdonald & Rabinowitz 1993 (structural realignment). **Crewe 1985b. ## Vowles 1997; Flanagan & Dalton 1984; Gallagher, et al., 2006; Lachat & Dolezal 2008. *** Rohrschneider 1993.		
<i>The party system structure</i>	<i>The possible effect of the realignment process on a party system</i>			
<i>The different anticipated effects</i>	<i>In realignment, the party system structure changes.</i>	<i>It is not necessary that in realignment the party system structure will change.</i>		* It is unclear whether a change in the majority party of both branches is necessary in presidential government: yes it is necessary (Shea 1999), not necessary (Ladd 1989, 1997).
References	**Shea 1999; ** Norpoth & Rusk 2007.	**Clubb, et al., 1980; Crewe 1985b; Pinkney 1986; Trilling & Campbell 1980; Petrocik & Brown 1999. ***Beck 1979; Cavanagh & Sunquist 1985; Flanagan & Dalton 1984; Schattschneider 1960; McAllister & Studlar 1995; Sundquist 1973; Sundquist 1973; Inglehart & Rabier 1986; Rohrschneider 1993 Old left realignment and New party realignment.		
<i>The cleavage</i>	<i>Realignment is a change of alignment along a cleavage.</i>			
<i>The different meanings of ‘cleavage’</i>	<i>A cleavage is an electoral distribution.</i>	<i>A cleavage is a major conflict.</i>	<i>A cleavage is a socio-structural division.</i>	- ‘structural realignment’ (Macdonald & Rabinowitz 1987).

References	Key 1955, McMichael & Trilling 1980.	***Cavanagh & Sunquist 1985; Schattschneider 1960; Sundquist 1973; McAllister & Studlar 1995; Carmines 1994; Rohrschneider 1993 Old Left and New party realignment.	## Vowles 1997; Flanagan & Dalton 1984; Gallagher, et al., 2006; Lachat & Dolezal 2008. ***Beck 1979.	
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*Index for signs of references:*

(\*) Definitions that refer to the first level – the electorate.

(\*\*) Definitions that combine the two levels of the electorate and the party system structure.

(##) Definitions that combine the two levels of the electorate and the cleavage.

(\*\*\*) Definitions that combine the three levels.

Scholars who accept the socio-structural meanings of cleavage and are especially interested in class cleavage employ different terminology but similar concepts when they argue for the existence of new voting patterns within the working class. The first is of ‘class realignment’, which refers to a change in the pattern of class as the social basis for electoral support without any reduction in the overall strength of this association (Evans, 1999). The second concept is ‘class dealignment’, used to describe a change in the way the electorate votes by means of factors other than class association (Crewe, 1983; Evans, 1999; Knutsen, 2007).

### **3.2.2 The dealignment process**

While an enormous number of definitions exist for the phenomenon of realignment, definitions of dealignment are rare. Beck defined ‘dealignment’ as “a decay in the preexisting mass bases of support for the political parties – that is, an erosion of the mass party coalitions.” (Beck, 1984b:233) and Ladd (1981:3) argue that “[i]n a dealignment, voters move away from parties altogether; loyalties to the parties, and to the parties’ candidates and programs weaken, and more and more of the electorate become ‘up for grabs’ each election.”

The main conceptual problem of the dealignment process is rooted in the abundance of indicators that function as operational definitions associated with the concept. However, these indicators can be organised along the three levels of analysis – the

electorate, the party system structure and the cleavage, as was accomplished for the definitions of realignment, above.

The indicators referring to the first level – the electorate – can also be split into two groups: one referring to the electorate as individual voters, and another referring to the electorate as social groups. There are scholars who combine both these groups. Denver (1985:402), for instance, stated: “[b]oth of these features, then – weakening party identification and attenuation of social group/party link – would indicate a dealigning party system”.

Concerning the party system level of analysis, very often scholars simultaneously employ different indicators testing the possibility of dealignment at the electorate and the party system level (e.g. (Dalton, et al., 1984a; Dalton, et al., 2000; Gallagher, et al., 2006; Pennings & Lane, 1998; Vowles, 1997). At first this might seem a reasonable method, since these indicators appear to be coherent with each other. However other scholars have questioned this method, on the grounds that changes in patterns of party support will not necessarily change the party system structure. Crewe (1983:211), for instance, presented a variety of scenarios that could occur in a two-party system: frequent changes of party system (unstable dealignment); an enduring change, when one of the major parties grabs and maintains new supporters (two-party realignment); a change of the party system structure, either into a multi-party system (new party system) or a different two party system (when one of the major parties fades away); or a situation in which voters change their patterns of party support but the aggregate votes stays the same (stable dealignment). The last situation was identified by LeDuc (1984) in Canada, where the party identification of partisans has decreased but the party system remains stable, since electoral change rarely operates in one direction. However, most of the scholars who study patterns of dealignment have assumed that the party system structure will change, and have employed several indicators for capturing this transformation.

We saw in the realignment literature a tendency to distinguish between old and new parties, especially in the context of party system change. The first type of parties is that which can prevent party system change, while the electoral success of the second type indicates the occurrence of party system change. In the dealignment literature, by

contrast, both types of parties are seen to contribute to change at the level of the party system, especially regarding indicators of increasing fragmentation and the increasing number of parties, as both types of parties can contribute to these increases.

Three indicators can be ascribed to the third level of analysis – the cleavage: single issue voting, voting by candidate orientation, and voting by government performance. These three indicators imply that the electorate no longer votes according to its ideological position or socio-structural background, but based on other factors. The employment of the first indicator of single issue voting for identifying dealignment is particularly interesting due to its closeness to the ideological voting theory. The ideological theory explains voting according to voters' position on one or other side of the dividing ideological line – the cleavage; single issue-voting means, by contrast, voting that occurs according to voters' positions on one or more issues (Oppenhuis, 1995). However, these issues are not integrated into one ideological dimension and hence the cleavage component is absent here.

In addition, as in the case of the realignment process, there is no clarity with respect to what magnitude of change may be identified as a dealignment. On this problem, Schmitt (1989) preferred to differentiate between general change and limited change, and invented a new concept by defining limited change as a “peripheral dealignment”; see also (Schmitt & Holmberg, 1995).

Table 3.2 maps the list of indicators based on the three levels of analysis used to identifying dealignment.

**Table 3.2: The different indicators for identifying dealignment**

The level of analysis	Indicators	
The electorate	Composed of individual voters	Composed of social or ideological groups
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a decrease in the party-affiliated portion (or party identifiers) of the electorate</li> <li>- a decline in party membership rates</li> <li>- an increase in the number of people who define themselves as independent of parties, or as nonpartisans.</li> <li>- an increased tendency amongst voters who maintain strong party ties to vote contrary to their party identification</li> <li>- a decrease in the importance of the parties</li> <li>- an increase in levels of electoral volatility</li> <li>- an increase of volatility during election campaign</li> <li>- a decline in turn-out (so-called demobilisation).</li> <li>- an increase in split-ticket voting</li> <li>- voting decisions made increasingly late in the election campaign</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- an erosion of the partisan attachment of the various social groups</li> <li>- voting differentiation between social groups that does not persist</li> </ul>
(Modification) of party system structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the disappearance of old parties</li> <li>- the entrance of new parties to the political arena</li> <li>- an increase in fragmentation</li> <li>- a growing number of parties</li> <li>- the rapid rise and then demise of new parties</li> </ul>	
Factors other than cleavages that explain voter behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a rise in single issue voting</li> <li>- voting by candidate orientation</li> <li>- voting by government performance</li> </ul>	

Sources: Alt, 1984; Arian & Shamir, 2001; Beck, 1979, 1984a, 1984b; Burnham, 1970; Carmines, et al., 1987; Clarke & Stewart, 1998; Crewe, 1983, 1985a; Dalton, 1996, 2006; Dalton, et al., 1984b; Dalton, et al., 2000; Denver, 1985; Flanagan & Dalton, 1984; Flanagan & Zingale, 1985; Gallagher, et al., 2006; Inglehart & Hochstein, 1972; Irwin & Dittrich, 1984; Klingemann, 2005; Knutsen & Scarbrough, 1995; Ladd, 1981; LeDuc, 1984; Mair, 1983; Pennings & Lane, 1998; Särilvik & Crewe, 1983; Schmitt, 1989; Schmitt & Holmberg, 1995; Shea, 1999; Vowles, 1997.

On top of this, the third level of alignment along a cleavage and (specifically) the question of its persistence creates several distinguishable types of dealignment. Kriesi (2008:38) differentiated between two sorts of dealignment: structural dealignment (the weakening of voters' attachment to the established parties), and functional dealignment (the greater detachment of the voters from the parties in general). While the first "is expected to be temporary and may give rise to a realignment under the

impact of the articulation of the new structural cleavage, the [concept of] functional dealignment [...] predicts a generally declining structuring capacity of parties”. Bonschier (2010:61) argued that the links between parties and social groups may become weaker due to what Martin (2000) and Lachat (2004) defined as structural and behavioural dealignment. The first occurs due to socio-demographic changes: ‘modernisation leads to long-term change in the strength of [...] social groups’. The second – behavioural dealignment – occurs when new political issues or a new dimension of political conflict become important and the political allegiance of a given social group is changed. This definition of behavioural dealignment is especially interesting, as some scholars (especially those who define a cleavage as a ‘major conflict’) would describe this scenario as a realignment (!).

### **3.3 Towards a New Approach – The Semi-Modular Approach**

In this section I present a new approach that seeks to resolve the conceptual problem of the realignment and dealignment phenomena, in order to clarify the connection between voters and political parties. Since this problem derives primarily from the existence of diversity in operational definitions (or indicators), the fundamental principle of the approach proposed here is to develop a core unifying definition, usable by most scholars in the field.

I have demonstrated that this collection of definitions and indicators can be organised by their reference to three main levels of analysis: the electorate, the structure of the party system, and a cleavage. In addition, this categorisation of definitions and indicators demonstrates that the electorate is treated either as individual voters who have party allegiances, i.e. partisans, or as socio-demographic groups that share patterns of party choice. These two meanings derive from the socio-psychological and socio-structural approaches to the concept of alignment. Realignment literature has also raised three different meanings for concept of ‘cleavage’. A cleavage can manifest as an electoral distribution, a socio-structural cleavage, and as an issue causing major conflict.

The distinction of different meanings (or treatments) for the main concepts here – ‘electorate’ and ‘cleavage’ – is not affected by geographical location or by the

separate literature regarding the American two-party system and (European) multi-party systems. Similarly, the selection of case stud(ies) has not affected the different meanings; this issue will be discussed in Chapter Five.

However, not all these definitions tie in with all three levels of analysis. Some definitions include a reference only to one or two levels (demonstrated by the references in Table 3.1). On top of this, a change in the level of the electorate and the cleavage does not necessarily cause an effect at the level of party system structure, as some of the scenarios of realignment and the empirical results concerning dealignment demonstrate.

All of this indicates that a semi-modular approach is required here. Therefore, I propose to study the phenomena of realignment and dealignment by exploring the question of stability and change at the different levels of electorate and cleavage separately and independently from each other – i.e. in modules.

The separate examination of stability and change at the electorate and cleavage levels will also assist in exploring the possible occurrence of realignment or dealignment based on the socio-psychological and socio-structural approaches to the phenomena of alignment (presented in the previous chapter). Concerning the first definition of the electorate (the electorate as composed of individuals), I will examine patterns of partisanship. This will be done based on two meanings of the concept of partisanship or party attachment: party identifiers (the core concept of the socio-psychological approach) and stable and durable party support, presented in Chapter Five. The second treatment of the electorate concerns the voting behaviour of socio-demographic groups, and is the main concern of the socio-structural approach. This articulates the assumption of voting according to a socio-structural cleavage. Voter alignments along the most salient socio-structural cleavages – class and religious cleavages – will be studied in Chapter Six.

Through examining the two different definitions of the electorate, I will explore two separate manifestations of alignment: partisan alignment and voter alignment along a cleavage. In addition, I will determine for each of these manifestations the duration of



the alignment, the occurrence of realignment and the creation of a new alignment, and/or the occurrence of a dealignment (as Figure 3.1 shows).

As I noted in the previous chapter and in this chapter, some scholars have argued for the identification of new cleavages. The first is the Materialist/Post-Materialist cleavage<sup>6</sup>, which is value- or belief- based. However, I will not examine this cleavage due to the major scholarly theoretical and empirical criticism of its existence. Knutsen and Scarbrough (1995:497) argued that the Post-Materialist cleavage is not a cleavage since it is not based on social division. In addition, Bartolini and Mair (1990:214) criticised the argument of value as a new basis for an alignment. They argued the traditional cleavages (for example, the class cleavage) also have normative-ideological components.

A more recent argument for a new cleavage is the globalisation cleavage, argued to consist of “opposing ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ of globalization within national political contexts” (Kriesi et al., 2008a:4). In their study of the possible occurrence of a realignment in six Western European polities (Austria, Britain, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland), Kriesi and his collaborators (2008b) examined this cleavage as is articulated by two issue dimensions: the economic and cultural dimensions. An issue dimension is an aggregation and clustering of positions concerning several related single issues (Morgan, 1976:421). In this sense, Kriesi, et al. (2008a:4), merged the two meanings of the term ‘cleavage’ in the realignment literature, as a socio-structural divide and as an issue causing major conflict.

I decided, however, not to examine cleavage in terms of a major issue conflict for several reasons. Firstly, the class and religious cleavages articulate the issues of the most important dimensions. As Kriesi and his collaborators (2008a:11) explained, “the four Lipset and Rokkan cleavages – the centre/periphery, religious, rural/urban and owner/worker, boil down to two dimensions: a cultural (religion) and a social-economic one (class)”. They suggested socio-economic and religious issues have remained salient over the years despite assuming different meanings in the 1970s, when new social movements appeared. Kriesi, et al., (2008a:13) explained that at this

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<sup>6</sup> The Materialist/Post-Materialist cleavage has several names, such as ‘value cleavage’ (Flanagan, 1987) and ‘new politics cleavage’ (Kitschelt & Hellemans, 1990).

time, the Left reinforced its position regarding socio-economic issues and the cultural dimension became “one opposing culturally liberal or libertarian concerns, on the one side, and the defence of traditional (authoritarian) values and institutions, on the other.” A second transformation of the cultural dimension’s character occurred, according to Kriesi, et al., (2008b:257), in the 1990s. At this time “[t]he traditional moral or religious issues [...] bec[a]me less important than the new ‘globalization issues’, i.e. European integration and immigration.”; see also (Kriesi et al., 2006:943).

Van der Brug and Van Spanje (2009:310), who examined Kriesi and his colleagues’ argument by utilising different data sources (expert judgments of party positions and survey data of voters, rather than the newspaper sections used in the original research), found that parties and voters are not structured by the same two dimensions, but rather that “there is a substantial mismatch between party positions (which are structured by one dimension) and opinion of voters (which are structured by two dimension)”. These findings suggest that the study of dimensions in the context of realignment cannot be done, as there is no coherent structure of voters and parties in the political space, as is assumed in realignment literature.

Theoretically, Van der Brug and Van Spanje’s results (2009:310) concerning party positions may have been a result of the data-set they used. Using expert surveys for measuring party positions is problematic, not only because it is subjective (reliant on expert’s perceptions), but also because it is static – the same survey results are employed over a long period,<sup>7</sup> despite the fact that parties may change their position over the years. A good method of combating this deficiency would be to examine party positions across election years. This could be achieved by examining party positions as they are articulated in party manifestos. For example, The Comparative Manifesto Projects (CMP) (Budge, et al., 2001; Klingemann, et al., 2006) is a well-known and used source. Still, this data source cannot be used for studying the issue of immigration, as there is no dedicated variable for this topic. Of course, one could develop different methods for establishing parties’ positions (see for example Pellikaan’s confrontational method; Pellikaan, et al., (2007); Pellikaan, et al., (2003). However, unravelling manifestos requires possession of all the relevant documents

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<sup>7</sup> Theoretically one can use several similar expert surveys, but this then raises the question of matching a survey with specific election years, as setting cut-off points could influence the empirical results.

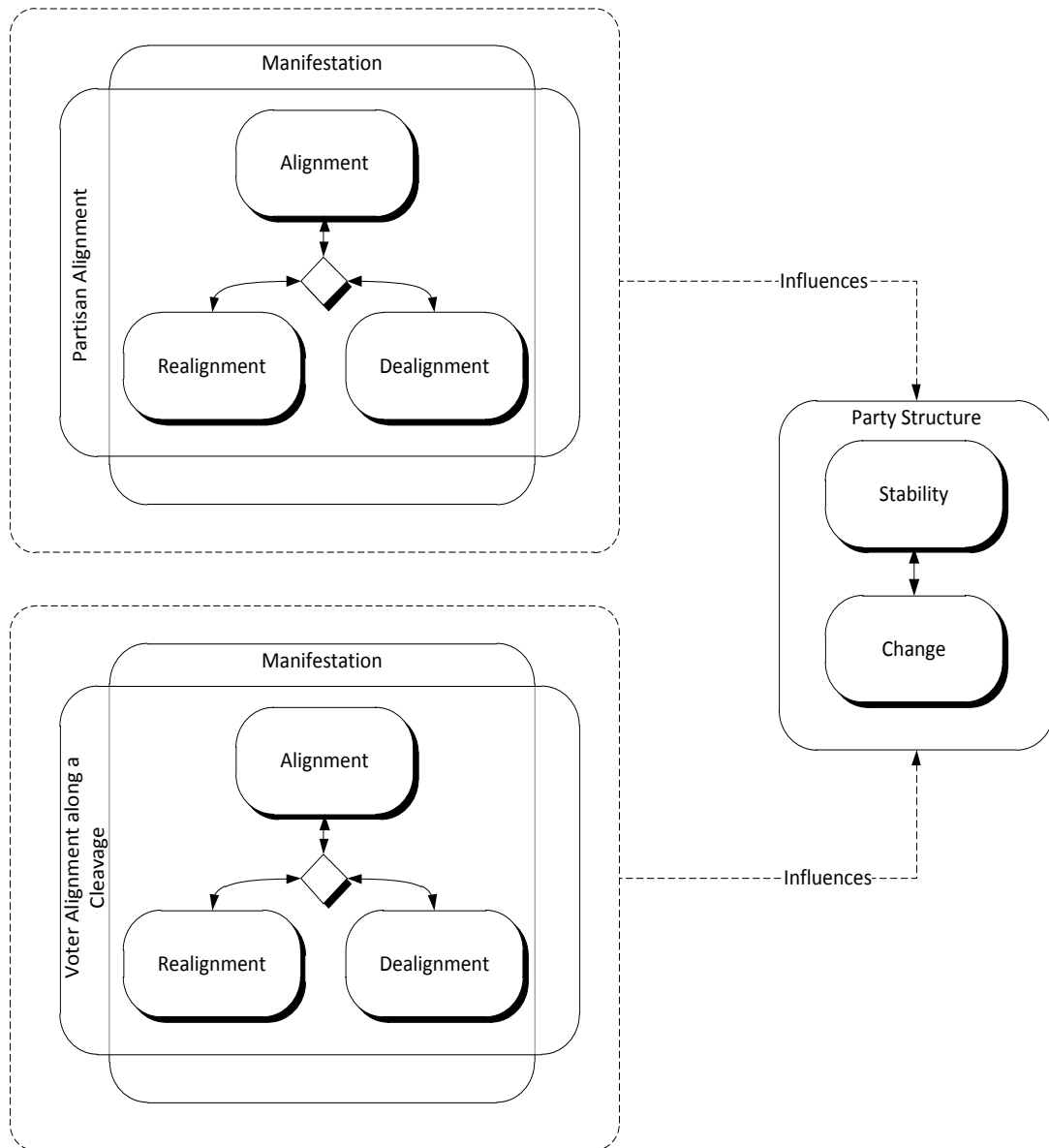
(and knowledge of relevant languages), which is impractical for the eleven cases examined in this research.

My discussion of the definitions of re/dealignment also shows a lack of clarity concerning the effects of changes in partisans' alignment and in voter alignment along a cleavage on the party system structure. Here the scholars are divided regarding the necessity of party system change as a consequence of realignment and dealignment. Moreover, realignment literature suggests that a change of party system structure is preventable, especially through old (or established) parties' strategy.<sup>8</sup> Thus, in a separate chapter I will explore the possible effects on the party system structure of the re/dealignment of partisans and of re/dealignment along cleavage(s). Put differently, the examination of change and stability at the level of the party system structure will not be done independently, as was the case in the other two chapters. Rather, I will examine this issue when realignment or dealignment is identified in one of the manifestations of alignment – partisans and along a cleavage – making the use of a semi-modular approach inevitable. In addition, I will take into account party identity as an important component for identifying the modification of the party system structure.

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<sup>8</sup> In a very recent piece, Deegan-Krause and Enyedi (2010) presented a typology of elite possible actions for creating, re-shaping or preventing shifts in alignment, not only concerning party positioning, but also in the society (for example, regarding objective socio-structural difference, or group consciousness) or of other socio-cultural aspects (such as national symbols).

**Figure 3.1: The semi-modular approach: the study of Alignment, Realignment and Dealignment along the two manifestations of alignment, and their possible effect at the party system level**



The semi-modular approach theoretically allows for the three phenomena of alignment, realignment (and the creation of a new alignment), and dealignment to be exhibited at each of the two manifestations of alignment. These manifestations include trends of partisanship (as measured by party identifiers and stable party support) and patterns of voter alignments along the class and religious cleavages. For each manifestation of alignment in each election year, I established whether the alignment between voters and parties shifted into a new alignment (after a realignment) or eroded and no new alignment was created (a dealignment). By

examining these empirical results across the two manifestations, I will identify the link and causality between the three phenomena. This will enable me to build coherent models of realignment and dealignment and to develop definitions for both phenomena. I will then examine the possible effects of the models of realignment and dealignment on patterns of stability and change of the party system structure.

I aim to contribute to scholarly understanding of realignment and dealignment. I will do so by presenting:

- up-to-date empirical evidence (collected for my research) for the ties between voters and parties, and the effects of such ties on the party system structure,
- coherent models of the phenomena of realignment and dealignment, and
- definitions associated with realignment and dealignment.

## CHAPTER 4

### DATA AND METHODOLOGY

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My research aims to examine the citizen-parties nexus since the Second World War. The main subject is the stability and change of multi-party systems in Western democratic countries. It explores the question of whether the voters in established democracies have remained attached to political parties according to the same pattern as when these political systems were first institutionalised, or whether a change has occurred at some point from the mid 1960s and caused the connection between electorate and parties to be restructured. One possible scenario is the phenomenon of realignment, in which a new alignment between voters and parties is generated; a second is dealignment, in which the link between voters and parties has been broken.

As Chapter Three discusses, the term ‘realignment’ originated in the American two-party system. The term ‘dealignment’ was also identified for the first time in a study of the party systems of the U.S.A. (Inglehart & Hochstein, 1972). This research, however, examines these phenomena in eleven cases of multi-party systems. Consequently, my research is challenged by the application of the definitions of re/alignment to a different type of party system. The main justification for doing so is found in the research design of this thesis. I decided to design my research as a comparison between “relatively similar” cases and to study ten European multi-party systems with an electoral system of proportional representation: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden.<sup>1</sup> This research design “sets out to neutralize certain differences in order to permit a better analysis of others [i.e. the question or phenomena we are studying]” (Dogan & Pelasy, 1990:178).

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<sup>1</sup> Italy (only between 1994 and 2005) and Germany both have a mixed electoral system. However, I examined only the votes that were cast according to the proportional representation system, the so-called ‘second vote’.

In the analysis presented in this thesis, however, eleven different party systems are distinguished as I studied the Belgian sub-national party systems – Flanders and Wallonia – separately. The creation of these two sub-national party systems occurred between 1968 and 1978 when the three major parties split one after another in a fashion that caused each splinter group to run as a separate party in two or three of the regions (Deschouwer, 2004). The first was the Catholic Party (CVP/PSC), which split into two separate parties – the Flemish Christian People’s Party (CVP) and the Walloon Christian People’s Party (PSC) in 1968. In the next election (1971) the Liberal party (PVV/PLP) split into the Party of Liberty and Progress (PVV) and the Party of Liberty and Progress (PLP), and in the 1978 election the Socialist party (BSP/PSB) followed the other parties and split into the Flemish Socialist Party (BSP) and the Francophone Socialist Party (PS). Although the party system of Flanders and Wallonia started to form its present structure in 1968, I analysed each of them separately from 1950 onwards. This was done in order to make their cases comparable to the other nine cases under investigation here.

In my empirical analysis, I also distinguish between the so-called two Italian Republics. The second Republic in Italy began in 1993, with the first electoral reform for the legislative assemblies, as the electoral system for the Lower House (the Chamber) and the Upper House (the Senate) changed from proportional representation (PR) to a mixed electoral system.<sup>2</sup> My analysis for these two separate periods, however, does not differ from the analysis of the other cases. Concerning Germany, my analysis until the 1990 election refers to Federal Republic of Germany (i.e. West Germany) and from 1990 onwards (with the reunification of Germany) also includes what was called the German Democratic Republic (i.e. East Germany).

To give a complete picture, the analysis presented in this thesis encompasses 60 years

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<sup>2</sup> According to the mixed electoral system for the Lower House, 75 percent of the deputies are elected with the ‘single-member, single ballot’ plurality principle and the remaining 25 percent (with 4 percent threshold) are elected under the PR system. The PR was also addressed with a correction mechanism: in every region, the vote in the PR system for parties successfully elected according to the district system are reduced by an amount related to the number of votes which were actually required to win this district deputy (Ignazi, 1994). This electoral system was modified again in December 2005. Italy returned to the PR electoral system with a close party list vote in multi-member constituencies (26 constituencies for the Lower House). The threshold for electoral coalitions was only 2 percent and for single parties 4 percent. On the top of this, a majority bonus is given to the winning coalition: in the Lower House the coalition winning the largest plurality of the votes (provided that it reaches a minimum of 10 percent of the votes), gets 54 percent of the seats (Ignazi, 2006).

of electoral history. It begins in 1950 and finishes in 2010. Its data has been gathered by studying the national elections for the legislature’s Lower House for each case. I consider national contests to be decisive for the structuring of the party system. They are more appropriate for my research’s purpose than other elections, such as sub-national elections or European-parliament elections, which are considered second-order elections. Besides this, the European parliament election results only became available after the first election in 1979. In addition, one of the countries included in this research – Norway – is not a member of the European Union.

**Table 4.1: Periods, number of cases based on individual-level and aggregate data, per case**

	Aggregate data (official election results)		Individual-level data (national election surveys)	
	Period	N (time-points)	Period	N (time-points)
Austria	1953-2008	18	-	
Belgium (Flanders)	1968-2010	14	1991-2003	4
Belgium (Wallonia)	1968-2010	14	1991-2003	4
Denmark	1950-2007	23	1971-2005	14
Finland	1951-2007	16	1991-2007	5
Germany	1957-2009	15	1961-2009	13
Italy – 1st Republic	1953-1992	10	-	
Italy – 2nd Republic	1994-2008	5	1994-2008	5
Luxembourg	1951 <sup>3</sup> -2009	13	-	
the Netherlands	1952-2010	18	1967-2006	13
Norway	1953-2009	15	1965-2005	9
Sweden	1952-2010	19	1960-2006	15

In total, 161 national elections are examined.<sup>4</sup> Table 4.1 specifies the number of time-points for each case. One of the assumptions of my research is that between 1950 and 1964 the party systems are in a situation of alignment and therefore the volatility is

<sup>3</sup> The 1951 election in Luxembourg was not a national election but was held only in the North and Centre constituencies. The elections in the South and East constituencies were held in 1948 (Mackie & Rose, 1991).

<sup>4</sup> If one counts the elections in Flanders and Wallonia separately, 179 elections are investigated in total.



low. However, the 1953 election in Germany has been considered highly volatile for this period (Pedersen, 1979:11). Therefore, I excluded this election from my research; this election is considered a deviant case.

As I explained in the third chapter, empirical research into the patterns of connection between voters and parties finds that the definitions of realignment and dealignment differ from each with respect to three levels of analysis – the electorate, the party system and the cleavage. Therefore, I decided to use a semi-modular approach for examining separately the possibility of a shift into realignment (and the creation of a new alignment) or dealignment. These are considered for two manifestations of alignment – partisan and voter alignment along a cleavage. This will also aid in establishing the (possible) effect of a change in both alignment manifestations on the party system structure.

The main question of this research addresses the occurrence of these changes in both alignment manifestations and in the party system, per case and over time. It is not in my intension to provide an explanation(s) for evidence of stability or change. Therefore time is the independent variable for the major part of this research.<sup>5</sup>

## **4.1 The Study of the Two Alignment Manifestations and the Party System Structure**

### **4.1.1 The first manifestation of alignment: partisan alignment**

The first manifestation of alignment represents the socio-psychological approach. It is based on two understandings of the concept of partisanship. The first pertains to party identifiers, the second to durable and stable patterns of party support. Addressing the first definition, I examined levels of party identification (and those voters who have strong party identification) over the years under study. For all the countries studied, the data is based on individual-level data, but there are two types of surveys employed. For some cases, I utilised data from national election surveys. For others,

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<sup>5</sup> Overall in my empirical research, I applied a condition if a new pattern is identified and when this new trend is sustained for at least 10 years in at least three successive elections, as Smith (1989a:166) suggested: “[a] run of perhaps three elections will be needed to see whether a trend is under way.”

the data source was Eurobarometer and the European Election Study 1999 surveys, as presented in Dalton (2004) (Appendix C specifies the file numbers and Appendix D the name of variables). The second definition of partisanship was examined based on patterns of stable party support. To this end, I studied the level of voters who support the same party in two successive elections, while taking into account both those moving to support another party and all other electorate groups, including voters casting invalid votes and those who did not cast a ballot.

This is achieved by examining the levels of two indicators of stable party supporters. The first indicator is the proportion of those within the electorate who reported voting for the same party in two successive elections, based on individual-level data. The second is its equivalent estimation based on aggregate data (which I estimated): the Electoral Total Partisans index (ETP), based on measurement of (the complementary number) of the Total Volatility (TV) index, calculated by subtracting the TV index level from the percentages of the valid votes in the current election (for more information on these indices, see Appendix A).

I used indices based on calculations of volatility in two chapters of my research - Chapter Five (partisan alignment) and Chapter Six (voter alignment along the class and religious cleavages). I differentiated between forced and voluntary change of party support. Forced change of party support occurs when parties merge, and is not considered as a change in this research. Therefore, if two or more parties merged I compared their (separate) shares in election T1 with their (collective) share in election T2. Regarding splits of parties, I assumed that when an individual moves to support the smaller fraction, this is a voluntary change of party support and treated the change accordingly: I compare the party share in election T1 with its largest splinter in election T2 and treat the smaller new splinter party as if it had no votes in election T1. This method differs from the volatility calculations of other scholars. Mainwaring and Torcal (2006) and Mainwaring and Zoco (2007), for example, assumed that if two or more parties merged, the party(ies) with fewer votes disappeared in election T2; thus, they gave zero value to this party in election T2. In Bartolini and Mair's (1990) research, when a party split into two or more parties, the volatility is computed by subtracting the combined vote of the new parties from that of the original party in

election T1.

In the case of a mixed electoral system, such as Italy (between 1994 and 2005) and Germany, the volatility is measured for the votes that were cast according to the proportional representation system, the so-called ‘second vote’.

Since I am examining the (changes in) electoral behaviour within the whole electorate, I also used data regarding levels of turnout and invalid votes in this chapter. I measured turnout levels as the proportion of those who are entitled to vote (so called the electorate), regardless of their residence status.<sup>6</sup>

#### **4.1.2 The second manifestation of alignment: voter alignments along class and religious cleavages**

In this research I studied voter alignments, realignments and dealignments along the two most important socio-structural cleavages in West European politics – the class and religious cleavages. This was achieved by examining the strength of voter alignment with each of these cleavages over the time period selected, as is articulated by cleavage closure. Voter alignment strength was measured by estimating the proportion of voters who cross the line of the cleavage and vote for a party that does not represent the cleavage against the total number of voters who changed their party support in two successive elections. In other words, when only a small number of voters who change their party support cross the cleavage line, this indicates that the cleavage remains important and salient to the voters.

To measure the volatility across the cleavage line, I used the Bloc-Weighted Cleavage Saliency (WCS) index. Bartolini and Mair invented the original Cleavage Saliency (CS) index. It combines the level of Bloc Volatility (BV) – the number of people who cross the cleavage line to support the parties of the other side – with the Total Volatility, or Net Volatility (the aggregate volatility that is measured in a party system in one election year in comparison to the proceeding election year). This is done in order to make the trends comparable over the years and between cases. Dr. Meffert

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<sup>6</sup> This is especially important as in some of the countries, voters who live abroad are entitle to vote, as is the case in Finland, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands.

and I modified the CS index by controlling for electoral support of the blocs of parties that represent the cleavage, as we discovered that the CS index is sensitive to this component (as will be explained further in Chapter Six) (For theoretical and empirical demonstration, see (Federer-Shtayer & Meffert, Forthcoming)).

The WCS was calculated based on two types of datasets: individual-level datasets and aggregate data. While the former comes from national election surveys, the latter is based on official election results. A comment must be made regarding these two datasets. Unlike the empirical chapter (Chapter Five) on the partisan alignment where I examined the electoral behaviour of the whole electorate, in Chapter Six I take into account only those voters casting a valid vote. Put differently, the framework in each of these chapters is different. While in the chapter on the partisan alignment, the entire electorate is summed up to 100%, in the chapter on the voter alignment along cleavage(s), the total of valid votes is summed up to 100%.<sup>7</sup> There are two reasons for doing that. Firstly, I modified the original CS index by adding another component – the electoral support for the blocs of parties that represent the cleavage. Thus, it is preferable to have only one change at a time and to preserve comparability with the original CS index. Secondly, and more importantly, according to Bartolini and Mair the CS index can be calculated based on more than two blocs. However, it is not clear how the addition of a third bloc that includes data regarding de-mobilisation and abstentionism would affect the index's accuracy.

For calculation the WCS in each election year for each case, I identified two blocs of parties for each party system: parties that represent the class cleavage and parties that represent the religious cleavage. I assigned the parties to blocs on the basis of an ordinal ranking according to each party's core identity or genetic origin, as was done by Bartolini and Mair. All parties included in Bartolini and Mair's research (1990), along with those defined as "communist", "independent socialist", "socialist" or "social democratic" in Smith (1976; 1989b) and/or those which are members of the Socialist International organisation were assigned to the class bloc. To the religious bloc I assigned all parties defined as "Christian" in Smith (1976; 1989b) and/or parties that are members of the Centrist Democrat International. The parties'

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<sup>7</sup> The Pearson correlation between TV and party support volatility (PS) (its equivalent at the individual-level data) is 0.79 and is statistically significant (at the 0.01 level, 2-tailed), N=86.

assignment to blocs along the two cleavages is specified in Appendix B.

### **4.1.3 The party system structure**

As stated earlier, I examine the possible effects of realignment and dealignment along two manifestations of alignment. This is achieved by examining (possible) changes to the electoral party system structure. Two aspects of possible changes were taken into account: the supply aspect – parties’ constellation and cooperation before national elections (such as alliances, cartels, etc.), and the demand aspect – voters’ party support. To this end, I analysed election results and took into consideration parties which received at least 3 percent of the votes. Several components are studied: number of parties, relative electoral strength of the first two parties and (changes) in the identity of the dominant parties (the first two largest parties). Based on the first two criteria, I developed a typology for identifying the electoral party system structure after every national election. Combining this analysis with a close examination of the identity of the largest two parties provides an indication of the stability and change of the electoral party system structure. The empirical research includes all the cases where a realignment or dealignment was identified.

Two assumptions guide my analysis:

- First, I consider the period between 1950 and 1964 to be a period of alignment: voters were aligned to their parties along the most salient cleavages, and the party system structure was stable (for a similar argument, see Sartori (1994), Franklin, et al. (1992). This assumption is in line with Lipset and Rokkan’s freezing hypothesis, according to which the party system was frozen until the 1960s. Consequently, I suspect that if a change occurred in either the alignment manifestation or the party system, it happened at some point in the period from 1965 onwards. This expectation is in line with most of the arguments regarding realignment and dealignment, which I presented in Chapter Three. It also follows Bartolini and Mair’s (1990) argument that the freezing process ended in the postwar period, as they discovered that the Total Volatility from the 1950s to the late 1960s was much lower than in previous periods.
- In two empirical chapters – Chapters Five and Six – I used national election surveys to measure trends of electoral behaviour at the individual level. I treat each election

survey as a source of data for studying individuals' patterns of electoral behaviour between two adjacent elections. By presenting the trends of all the independent national surveys over the years, I used the surveys as if they were cohort study. This was based on the assumption that the surveys represent the trends well, although in each surveys different people were interviewed.

#### **4.2 The Combination of Two Sorts of Datasets**

In this research, I examined trends produced by individual-level and aggregate datasets: national election surveys and official election results.

There are practical reasons to combine these two sorts of datasets. Firstly, national election surveys are not available for all the countries included in this research (i.e. Austria and Luxembourg), and for most of the countries the national election survey has been conducted only since the 1960s or 1970s, or even later (for example in Finland since the 1990s). My research, however, begins in 1950.

Secondly, my main interest is to identify patterns of party support and I wish to examine these patterns for *all* the parties that participated in the elections. Sometimes, the national election surveys do not provide a breakdown of support for the very small parties. The official election results data, by contrast, covers all periods under investigation in this thesis, and incorporates data regarding electoral support for very small parties. Therefore, I decided to include in my research all the parties receiving at least 0.01 percentages of the valid votes. Thirdly, sometimes in survey data there is an under-representation of groups in the electorate that are excluded from the political arena, for example, those not casting ballots in elections. The official election results, however, give a good estimation of these groups and include information on turnout levels.

Appendix C specifies the different file numbers and sources of the surveys. The source for aggregate data over the period 1950-1989 is Mackie and Rose (1991, 1997); the remaining sources consist of official election results and the *European Journal of Political Research*. For the two sub-national regions in Belgium – Flanders

and Wallonia – I used Kris Deschouwer’s database,<sup>8</sup> except for the 2010 election (which I calculated with Deschouwer’s guidance). Table 4.1 displays the time span for each case. The same database was used for calculating turnout and invalid vote rates. For the two Belgian regions – Flanders and Wallonia – as turnout and invalid vote data is not available, I used self-calculated data (see Appendix E).

Yet as studies have already shown, examination of electoral behavior on the basis of respondents’ reports may be problematic: people over-report of electoral participation because they either want to comply with the social norm or minimise cognitive dissonance or because of a result of short memory span of respondents (Belli, et al., 1999; 2001). In addition, voting choice is often misreported, with respondents reporting support for the winning party (the so-called post-election “bandwagon”) (Traugott & Katosh, 1979; Weir, 1975; Wright, 1993).

Czesnik and Kotnarowski (2011) who examined the problem of voters’ over report of election participation for the CSES dataset, demonstrated that “[v]oter turnout weighting [...] is a possible solution of voter turnout over-reporting problem”.

Therefore, I improved my individual-level database by increasing the quality of representation of the different patterns of electoral behaviour. This was achieved by using political weight variables (for specification on these variables, see Appendix D). While in the Belgian, German and Danish surveys, the political weight variables already existed, I computed a new political weight variable for Finland, the Netherlands and for the last three German elections surveys, which was computed according to the official election results (including participation in the election, voters casting invalid votes and levels of party support).<sup>9</sup> Regarding the Italian, Norwegian and Swedish surveys, no political weight variable was used as those conducting the surveys discouraged their use.

Austria is the only case for which I used aggregate data in my analysis of partisan alignment. This data was produced from sub-national election results of

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<sup>8</sup> I am grateful to Kris Deschouwer for generously making his data available to me.

<sup>9</sup> I used probability weights. These weights are calculated by taking the inverse of the sampling fraction.

municipalities, communities, wards, etc. as a supplement for the missing individual-level data. This data was calculated by Plasser and Ulram (2000). The idea of calculation is based on volatility between parties: if a party gains more votes in those constituencies in which another party lost votes at the previous election, it is interpreted as a vote transition between those parties. Following this logic, the scholars trace the results of the current election back to the results of the previous election and relate the party's current election result to the results of all parties of the comparable election.<sup>10</sup> (For more details on the voter transition data, see SORA's site: [www.sora.at/en/topics/electoral-behavior/election-analyses/voter-transition-analysis](http://www.sora.at/en/topics/electoral-behavior/election-analyses/voter-transition-analysis)).

Analysis of patterns of party volatility requires historical knowledge of all the party changes over the whole period under investigation (such as mergers, splits, electoral alliance, etc.). This information was collected from the sources of election results specified above, but was also based on other sources such as *The Political Parties of the World* books (Day, 2002; Day, et al., 1996; Szajkowski, 2005) and McHale's (1983) *Political Parties of Europe*.

### **4.3 Conclusions**

This research is comparative, and prompts new empirical and conceptual conclusions regarding the realignment and dealignment processes in a multi-party system. It is based on repeated observations over long periods of time (or so-called longitudinal analysis), and examines individual-level and aggregate data in eleven European multi-party systems between 1950 and 2010.

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<sup>10</sup> The equation of voter transition analysis is:  
$$\text{ÖVP}_t = B1 * \text{SPÖB}_{t-1} + B2 * \text{ÖVP}_{t-1} + B3 \text{FPÖ}_{t-1} + B4 N_i_{t-1} + B5 \text{non voters}_{t-1}$$
, where  $N_i$  is any other party. For more details on the voter transition data, see website of the Institute for Social Research and Consulting (SORA) (<http://www.sora.at/en/topics/electoral-behavior/election-analyses.html>).



## CHAPTER 5

### PARTISAN ALIGNMENT, REALIGNMENT OR DEALIGNMENT

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*“The importance of stable partisan loyalties has been universally recognized in electoral studies, but the manner in which they should be defined and measured has been a subject of some disagreement.”*

*(Campbell, et al., 1960:122)*

*“Partisanship and vote are very close in parliamentary systems.” (Dalton & Weldon, 2007:181)*

This chapter focuses on the affiliation of voters to political parties as partisans. It discusses and evaluates the approach of what is called the Michigan School, according to which voters-parties' ties should be studied based on voters' party identification. Due to the major criticism presented by different scholars on the applicability of party identification for European and other multi-party systems, I will also base my study on patterns of long-term party support. This support is expressed by two indicators that measure stable party support in two successive elections. The first indicator is the proportion of those from the electorate who reported voting for the same party, based on individual-level data. The second is its equivalent estimation, the Electoral Total Partisans index (ETP) (which I invented), which is based on measurement of (the complementary number) of the Total Volatility index (TV), based on aggregate data.

This chapter is structured around discussion of partisanship in its two meanings, and the arguments for the decline of partisanship and partisan dealignment. It begins by discussing the interpretation of partisans as party identifiers and presents updated trends of party identifiers. This chapter proves there is no general trend of a decrease in partisans in the ten polities studied in this thesis, and then discusses criticism of the 'party identification' phenomena in multi-party systems. Therefore, it argues for the study of partisanship as durable party support and presents the empirical trends for both indicators of partisanship.

## **5.1 Dominance and Influence in the Study of Partisanship**

The study of the ties between voters and parties is probably one of the most prominent examples of the influence of dominant schools in Political Science literature. In Key's two classic works (1955, 1959), he described changes in the connection between voters and political parties, stating that these shifts occurred as the electorate changed its voting behaviour. Key dealt with the categorisation of elections based on election results as indicators for shifts in voting behavior. Immediately after the publication of Key's articles, Campbell and his colleagues (while following this categorisation) differentiated between elections based on a change in party identifiers (Campbell, et al., 1960:90) (for more on this topic, see (Pomper, 1967). Party identification is a "long-term, affective, psychological identification with one's preferred political party" (Dalton, 2006:179). This different view is based on the Michigan School's emphasis on the function of the concept of party identification. According to the Michigan School, "many people associate themselves psychologically with one or the other of the parties, and that this identification has predictable relationship with their perception, evaluation and actions" (Campbell, et al., 1960:90). They contend that once an individual becomes psychologically attached to a party, he or she will tend to support this party, implying that individuals' psychological party identification is the most important factor for explaining voting behavior (Campbell, et al., 1960:142); see also (Berglund, et al., 2005:107).

The dominance of the Michigan School's explanation of voting behaviour since the 1960s has not only articulated the transmission of the concept 'party identification' to other democratic countries (Borre & Katz, 1973; Butler & Stokes, 1969; Holmberg, 2007), but has also triggered a significant change in the way the phenomena of partisanship is studied.

Up to the publication of Campbell and his colleagues' book – *The American Voter* – the study of (stable) partisanship had been conducted in terms of an individual's past voting record. In their seminal book, Campbell and his colleagues critiqued this assumption, arguing that "such a definition blurs the distinction between the psychological state and its behavioural consequences" (Campbell, et al., 1960:122). The introduction and identification of party identifiers also influenced the way

scholars have defined and studied stability and change in the connection between voters and parties. It is assumed that when a high portion of the electorate changes its party identification and begins to identify with other parties following a stable period, this marks the occurrence of a realignment (Beck, 1974; Inglehart & Hochstein, 1972; Johnston, 1987; Stanley, 1988). Other scholars have followed the same logic, contending that a shrinking party-affiliated portion of voters is empirical evidence for dealignment (Dalton, 2004:32; Inglehart & Hochstein, 1972). Dalton and his colleagues even went one step further and declared that ‘dealignment is difficult to detect without measures of partisanship at the individual level’ (Dalton, et al., 1984b:14)<sup>1</sup>.

## **5.2 Strong Evidence for Partisan Dealignment?**

Numerous studies show changes of party identifiers (in percentages) for individual countries over the years, yet only a few studies have compared the trends in the ten countries examined in this study – Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. These are: Dalton, 2000, 2004; Schmitt & Holmberg, 1995. They all concluded similarly: the level of partisanship has decreased in many European countries, but ‘the depth and spread of this development are quite different in different countries and for different periods of time’ (Schmitt & Holmberg, 1995:101); see also (Dalton, 2000:25-9; 2004:32). Dalton (who reached similar findings) argued: “[o]ur broader base of empirical evidence now presents a clear picture of partisan dealignment” (Dalton, 2004:32-3); see also (Dalton, 2000:26).

The question remains: is there consensus that all the ten polities under study in this thesis went through partisan dealignment and, if so, when it started?

Firstly, I examine this question using commonly cited indicators – percentages of (strong) party identifiers. Whenever possible, I updated and extended the latest study on this subject (Dalton, 2004), which ended in 1998; this has been done for Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. The results for the other countries

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<sup>1</sup> In the same book, Beck (1984b) restricted this argument and stated that this is true only for cases where partisanship reflects a long-standing decision to support a party.

(Austria, Belgium, Finland, Italy, and Luxembourg) were taken from Dalton's book (Table 5.2, p. 33) that presents the longest longitudinal and most up-to-date research available for these polities. I used national election study data whenever available, because they represent the most valid data source for each case (Dalton, 2000:24). In addition, I used socio-demographic weights, if available.

Table 5.1 presents the OLS regression coefficient of percentages of party identification over time (the dependent variable is the percentage of the population having (strong) party identifiers, and the independent variable is the election year as a continuous variable). The use of OLS regression analysis for identifying stability and change in levels of party identifiers is common (see for example, Dalton, 2000; Dalton, et al., 1984a). Using this model, however, has a drawback: the regression coefficients only provide an indication of the existence of a trend (i.e. when the coefficients are different from zero and statistically significant) and the direction of such a trend – increase or decrease (i.e. as the coefficients are negative or positive). Therefore, I could only use the results for measuring whether the level of party identifiers has decreased over time, proving the occurrence of partisan dealignment. In a new partisan alignment, after the voters realign themselves and identify with another party, I would expect the level of party identifiers to be high again. However, the regression coefficients may show there is no trend-shift but a persistent level of party identifiers, therefore not providing information about whether voters switch the party with which they identify. Put differently, running OLS regression analysis prevents the revelation of the beginning of a new partisan alignment. This problem is even more manifest in this dataset as for most of the cases, the time series is very short and begins in the middle of the 1970s, a period in which many scholars suspect that changes in voting behaviour had already started (Dalton, et al., 1984a).

Firstly, I analysed the OLS regression test results to see whether I could identify a decrease in the level of party identifiers over the years, as an indicator of partisan dealignment. Of the ten regression coefficients for the percentage of party identifiers, eight are negative and only five are statistically significant (Austria, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Norway). All the ten regression coefficients for the percentage of strong party identifiers are negative, but only seven are statistically significant (Austria, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Sweden). When

examining each country, only Austria, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands show statistically significant decreases in the levels of both indicators – weak and strong identifiers. However, the period examined for two of the polities – Austria and Italy – is short compared to the other cases, and ends in 1999. I used the Eurobarometer surveys and the 1999 European Election Study as a data source for these two polities in lieu of the national election surveys. However, when running the same regression model based on a different data source – the Austrian exit poll – I receive non-significant coefficients for the series of strong identifiers.<sup>2</sup>

**Table 5.1: OLS regression for (strong) party identifiers over time**

	% with PID	% identifiers annum (sig)	per % strong identifiers per annum (sig)	Period	Time- points (N)
Austria*	67	-0.916***	-0.663***	1969-1999	7
Belgium*	50	0.09	-0.285**	1975-1999	22
Denmark	51.8	.281	-.04	1973-2005	10
Finland*	57	-0.293	-0.147	1975-1991	4
Germany	78.6	-.46**	-.81***	1961-2009	11
Italy*	78	-0.979***	-0.770***	1978-1999	19
Luxembourg*	61	-0.317	-0.316***	1975-1999	22
the Netherlands	73.9	-.26**	-.24**	1971-2006	10
Norway	71.9	-.47**	-.12	1965-2005	10
Sweden	45.4	-.21	-.60***	1964-1998	13

\*p≤0.1, \*\* p≤0.05, \*\*\* p≤0.01 (in two-tailed)

*Note:* The % with party identification in the first column is the average of the % expressing identification in the first two surveys in each series. The per annum change is the unstandardized regression coefficient.

Nations marked with an asterisk (\*) are based on the Eurobarometer surveys and 1999 European Election Study. Other nations are based on their respective national election studies.

For the second group of countries - Luxembourg, Norway and Sweden, I found that the two indicators – possessing party identification at all or possessing strong party identification – have decreased (as the regression coefficients are negative), but the trend of only one of the categories is statistically significant (see Table 5.1). For Belgium, the regression coefficient of the weak party identifiers showed no trend (as the value approximates zero), but since the coefficient of the second indicator – strong

<sup>2</sup> Based on data that is presented by Plasser and Ulram (2000), I could run the same regression model on party identifiers in Austria. Of those possessing strong party identification between 1974 and 1999 (9 time-points)  $b=0.21$  ( $p=0.37$ ), 30 percent of the respondents reported on strong party identification in 1974; for party identifiers between 1954 and 1999 (13 time points)  $b=-0.70$  ( $p=0.00$ ), 73 percent respondents reported on having party identification in 1954.

party identifiers – is statistically significantly negative, I include Belgium in this group.

For Finland, the regression coefficients of the two indicators showed negative values. Neither of them is statistically significant, however, probably due to the small number of time-points (only four). In Denmark, the picture is even more blurred as one indicator has a negative coefficient and the other has a positive one. The two, however, are not statistically significant.

The results of the OLS regression analysis are intriguing. For the first group of countries, evidence of partisan dealignment is strong. For the majority of the countries in the second group, however, empirical evidence of partisan dealignment is only found if we accept a ‘weak’ version of expectations, according to which party identifiers or having strong party identification has eroded over time. Doubts about the reliability of this evidence arise if one takes into account criticism of the application of the ‘party identification’ model for multi-party systems.

### **5.3 Some Problems and Criticism of the Application of the Concept of ‘Party Identification’ to Multi-Party Systems**

Campbell and his colleagues’ original research (1960:142) posed the concept of party identification, and convincingly explained voting behaviour only for the American two-party system case. The application of this concept in other types of party systems, i.e. European and multi-party systems is not without its difficulties.

The first problem appeared in one of the first research projects conducted on party identification in Denmark, aimed at rendering the directional components of party identification in a multi-party system (Holmberg, 1994:94). In the American case, people may consider themselves as either Republicans or Democrats (Weisberg, 1999:683). For a multi-party system, however, there are two main approaches for measuring the direction of party identification: it can be based on party blocs (for example, party families, cleavage, left-right, etc.) or on individual parties. Borre and Katz (1973) studied the main thesis of the Michigan School regarding party identification and voting choice based on these two approaches. In line with the first

approach, they divided the voters along the most important line of conflict in Denmark – that between the Socialists and Non-Socialists – showing that “party identification predicts voting behaviour better than in the United States” (Borre & Katz, 1973:108). Their study of party identifiers and voting behaviour across individual parties gives a much more fluid picture (Borre & Katz, 1973:77). Holmberg (1994) who only uses the first approach, divided the Swedish parties on a Left-Right scale. He found that for Sweden, the correlation between the direction of party identification (i.e. Left or Right) and party support was not only higher than for the United States, but also too high (ranging between 0.92 and 0.96!). This high correlation may indicate that party identification and party support along the Left-Right axis are not two separate phenomena (Holmberg, 1994:96-6).

More troubling, however, are two objections raised against the Michigan School’s model of party identification. The first objection is based on what Schmitt (2002:3-4) called the ‘stability assumption.’ The first to identify this was Thomassen, who studied 1970 Dutch provincial elections and the 1971 and 1972 Dutch parliamentary elections. He discovered that party identification is less stable than voter preference and suggested a reverse casual relation. He argued: “party identification is not a psychological attachment, but simply a reflection of the vote preference” (Thomassen, 1976:77); see also (Thomassen & Rosema, 2009:52). In much more recent research, Thomassen and Rosema (2009:49) repeated the same research and studied the period between 1971 and 2006, discovering that in the Netherlands the pattern of party identification as less stable than party support has persisted.

Borre and Katz made a similar observation when they discovered that party identification and party preference tended to coincide in the 1971 Danish elections (Borre & Katz, 1973:78). Beck concluded that “[p]arty loyalties are more instrumental elsewhere [besides the U.S.A.] and tend to be less distinguishable from vote choice at any particular time” (Beck, 1984b:234). Put differently, the first objection relates to the concept of ‘party identification’ as tautological: many people will identify with a party simply because they vote for it (Evans, 2004:25).

The second objection became evident in another study that also examined the Dutch electorate. It is critiques the assumption that voters identify with only one party, or

what Schmitt (2009:137) termed the ‘uniqueness assumption’. Van der Eijk and Niemöller (1983:338) were the first to find that more than a third of the Dutch respondents admitted to having multiple party identifications. Schmitt (who conducted the most recent research into this subject) showed that this is true not only in the Netherlands, but in fourteen countries (between 1996 and 2000) where an average of 10.2 percent of the respondents identified with more than one party (Schmitt, 2009:145).<sup>3</sup> These results are even more intriguing in the light of findings showing that voters identify with groups of parties (Ventura, 2001), or only exhibit Left-Right orientations (Percheron & Jennings, 1981).

These strong arguments show the problematic nature of the party identification model for multi-party and European countries. As Thomassen (1976:77) argued, “the concept of party identification has no real meaning in the Netherlands”, and as Van der Eijk and Niemöller (1983:339) concluded, “the application of the concept of party identification in relation to voting behaviour in the Netherlands is extremely doubtful”. Beck (1984b:234) even argued that the Michigan School party identification measurement “does not seem as appropriate outside of the United States.”

In order to tackle the validity issues of ‘partisanship’, I examine partisan dealignment at the electorate level, focusing on the decline in partisanship, by studying the patterns of partisanship in its alternative meaning as well: the electoral support of the same party over long-term period. This is not to say that the two are interchangeable, in contrast to what Van der Eijk and Franklin (2009:87) contended, but is included as an additional or supplementary element in the analysis of patterns of partisanship. Therefore, I examine partisanship by employing two additional indicators.

#### **5.4 Two Additional Indicators**

Durable party support is usually contrasted with the unstable or volatile voting behavior of so-called ‘apartisans’ (voters who are involved in politics, but remain unattached to a political party) (Dalton, 1996:213-6; 2006:195-6).

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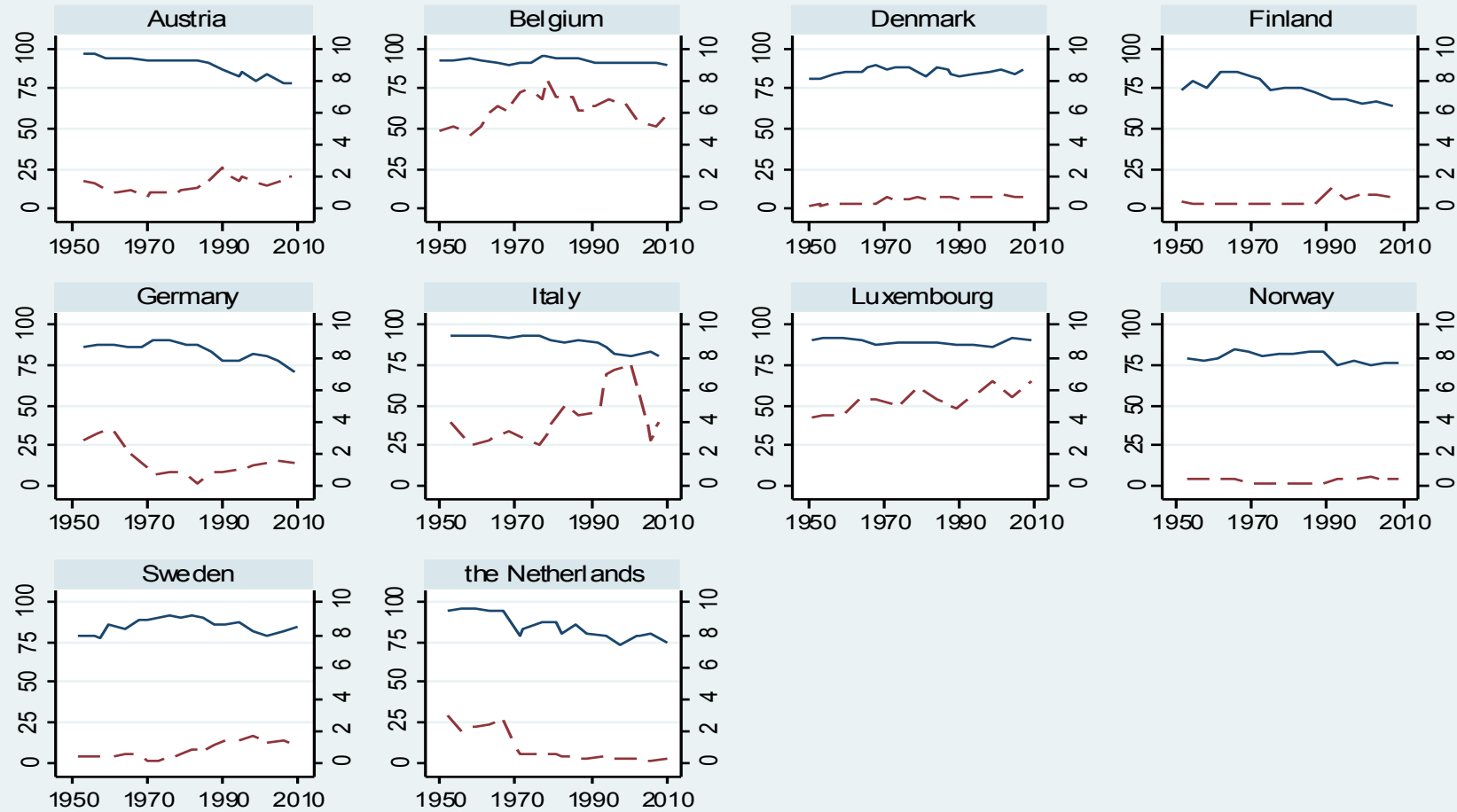
<sup>3</sup> This is true not only for multi-party systems, but also for two-party systems, as the U.S.A (Schmitt, 2009; Weisberg, 1999).



In the electorate, however, we can find two additional patterns of electoral behavior related to those not participating in elections, and those voting but casting a blank or invalid vote. These two patterns of electoral behaviour, which are considered as indicators of a dealignment, are examined separately by most scholars, e.g. by measuring turnout rates.

Taking into account these two groups within the electorate is crucial, and studying the electorate as a whole should (in my view) be the leading paradigm for examining patterns of party support. By neglecting to consider these two groups, we are likely to get an incomplete (or even misleading) picture of what happens in the entire electorate. This is even more important as scholars who study political participation (and more specifically electoral behaviour) have already found that the level of participation in elections has decreased over the years (Franklin, 2004; IDEA, 2002). As is depicted in Figure 5.1 while in some countries (Denmark, Belgium with the exception of 2010 election, Luxembourg and Sweden), the turnout level has been stable (or even increased) over the whole period, in other countries it has been decreased. In the Netherlands lower turnout levels were identified already in early 1970s and in Finland since mid 1970s; in Austria, Germany, Italy and Norway, on the other hand, only since early 1990s onwards.

Figure 5.1: Turnout and Invalid votes per country 1950-2010



turnout (left side, solid line); invalid votes (right side, dash line)

That being said, the fraction of invalid votes (not including invalid votes due to technical problems) is another pattern of electoral behaviour especially important in my research. Scholars have showed that in countries with compulsory voting, not only the turnout is higher by between 6 and 20 per cent, than in countries in which voting is not compulsory (Birch, 2009a) (for an opposite argument, see for example (Blais, 2009), but also that the proportion of invalid or spoiled votes is large (Birch, 2009b; Mackerras & McAllister, 1999).

Several polities under investigation here have compulsory voting. These include Belgium and Luxembourg. In two other polities there was compulsory voting until recently: Austria until 1992 (when it was abolished in all regions except for Tyrol and Vorarlberg) and in Italy until 1993 (when it was removed during reform of the electoral system). In addition, the Dutch electorate was obliged to vote until the 1967 election.<sup>4</sup> On top of this, the levels of invalid votes have increased over time, especially since 1990, in all ten countries under investigation here, as Figure 5.1 demonstrates.

Therefore, I return to my proposal that the study of stable party support should examine the electorate as whole, combining those who do not vote, or who cast invalid or blank ballots. I suggest studying stable party support based on two indicators.

The first indicator is the proportion of those who reported voting for the same party in two successive elections from *the whole electorate*, including those who cast invalid ballots and those who did not participate in one of these elections, based on individual-level data (i.e. national election surveys).

As I specified in Chapter Four, my survey dataset is based on recall questions concerning patterns of electoral behaviour. It includes Denmark (between 1971 and 2005), Flanders and Wallonia (1991-2003), Finland (1991-2007), Germany (1961-2009), Italy (1994-2008), Norway (1965-2005), Sweden (1960-2006) and the Netherlands (1967-2006).

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<sup>4</sup> For more on this topic, see IDEA's report (2009)

The study of electoral behaviour based on surveys and especially the validity of electoral behaviour for each election is questionable, as it is well known that surveys experience difficulty in tracing the non-voting electorate. Since this group within the electorate is an important factor in my study, I corrected the representation of those who did not vote and those who cast spoiled ballots by employing a political probability weight variable, computed according to the official election results (for more on this procedure, see Chapter Four).

The second indicator I included in my analysis is an equivalent estimation to the indicator of stable party support but that measures these patterns based on aggregate data. A well-known index for measuring a change of party support or volatility based on aggregate data is Pedersen's Total Volatility index (TV) (Pedersen, 1979). It measures the total changes of party support between two sequential elections (for index calculation, see Appendix A). This index mathematically represents "the minimal proportion of the electorate that must have shifted their vote given the observed aggregate change" (Przeworski, 1975); see also (Bartolini & Mair, 1990). Therefore, I argue the index's complementary number can give us an estimation of the *maximum* electors who voted for the same party between two consecutive elections. The calculation of this number is straightforward: as the highest number of the TV index's range is 100, it can easily be calculated as 100-TV.

In addition, the TV index calculates the aggregate volatility based on the percentages of valid votes that each party receives in the two elections. However by doing so, it does not take into account two other important metrics: level of turnout and proportion of invalid votes.

In order to be able to measure patterns of stable party support and to consider these metrics, I changed the TV index and introduced an advanced index – the Electoral Total Partisans (ETP). This index gives an estimation of stable party supporters from the *whole electorate* in two consecutive elections. The TV index was modified in two ways. Firstly, it measures changes in the level of those who change their party support – total volatility – and is not based on the number of valid votes, but rather on reference to the electorate in the current election. To put it differently, the TV index

calculates the party support share against the total number of people who are franchised.<sup>5</sup> The electorate in each election is regarded as 100 percent, regardless of changes in the number of people who can cast their vote, i.e. enfranchisement of certain group due to electoral system reforms. Secondly, I calculated the index's complementary number by subtracting the index level from the percentages of the valid votes in the current election. This share is the maximum estimation of electors who voted for the same party in the present and the previous election.

As the electorate is the reference framework, all the values are comparable over time. In addition, the ETP index, as with the TV index, can range between 0 (no stable party supporters) to 100 (maximum stable party supporters). The formula below captures the ETP index:

\* Change in the electoral strength of party 'I' (as measured by its proportion of valid votes from the whole electorate in the current election) since the previous election ( $\Delta EP_{i,t}$ ) is calculated as:  $EP_{i,t} - EP_{i,t-1}$ .

\* This is divided by two, in order to account for the fact that when one party "wins", the other party "loses".

\* Subtracting the index score from the fraction of valid votes in the current election ( $VV_{i,t}$ ).

The estimation of stable party supporters is calculated as:

$$VV_{i,t} - \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{\Delta EP_{i,t} - \Delta EP_{i,t-1}}{2}$$

The indicators co-vary to a certain extent. The Pearson correlation between the two indicators of stable party supporters is 0.74 and is statistically significant (at the 0.01 level, 2-tailed, N=65).

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<sup>5</sup> The measurement is based on the respective number of votes. In two cases – Luxembourg and the second Italian Republic – I calculated the component of parties support based on their respective electoral support in percentages, as the exact number of votes was not available. In Luxembourg this lack is due to the electoral system: because the number of votes for each elector varies with the number of deputies in a constituency, it is not possible to measure a national party vote by combining the four constituency-level votes (Mackie & Rose, 1991).

There are three scenarios of stability and change in partisanship – alignment, realignment and dealignment. A period of partisan alignment is identified when the electorate is aligned with its party and changes in party support are low. Partisan realignment is identified when the electorate changes its political allegiance. Partisan dealignment is identified when the long-term party support disappears.

Patterns of party allegiance or partisanship are evaluated by the two stated indicators for each election year. While high levels of stable party supporters can be an indicator for partisanship, low levels point to a shift. As I suggested in the previous chapters, most scholars agree that the postwar period was stable and the change occurred at some point between the mid 1960s and the 1970s; therefore I assume that from the 1950s to the mid 1960s, the politics were still in a situation of partisan alignment.

These three rival scenarios can be translated into three hypotheses:

**H1** During the period between the mid 1960s to the 2000s, no change occurred and the electorate remains aligned with the political parties.

A partisan alignment is identified when the electorate is aligned with its party and changes of party support are low. This is found when the level of stable party supporters is high in general.

**H2** During the period between the mid 1960s to the 2000s, an electoral change occurred: the electorate realigned itself with the political parties.

A partisan realignment occurs when the electorate changes its political allegiance and moves to support another party over long-term period, indicating that a new partisan alignment has been created. As I discussed in the third chapter, the literature on realignment presents three types of realignment. Firstly, a *critical realignment*: a quick change, which occurs in the course of one election. The second is a *secular realignment*. This is a gradual, incremental shift and therefore occurs over a long period. Another model of realignment was later proposed by Carmines and Stimson (1984) – the *‘dynamic growth model’* or *‘issue evolution’*, which is a combination of these two types of realignment: an electoral shock followed by incremental change. Thus, I expect to identify a critical realignment when a very short period with a low

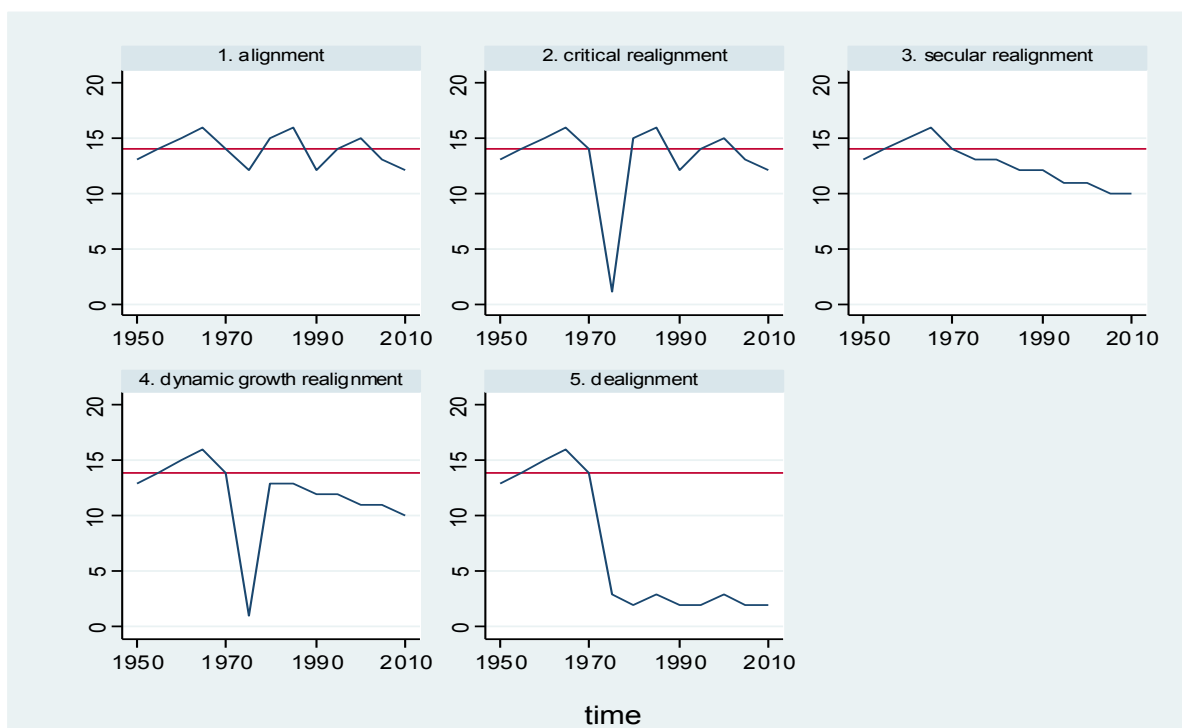
level of stable party support is followed by a long-term period of high level of party support elections. The continuity of the new patterns over a long-term period is identified when the new patterns are sustained for at least ten years and in at least three successive elections. A secular realignment is identified when the level of stable party supporters is slightly lower than in the partisan alignment period, and this persists over a long-term period (for at least ten years and in at least three successive elections). A dynamic growth model of realignment is identified when a short period with a very low level of stable party supporters is followed by a long-term period with somewhat higher level of stable party supporters.

**H3** During the period between the mid 1960s and the 2000s, an electoral change occurred: the electorate dealigned itself from the political parties.

A period of partisan dealignment is identified when the indicators demonstrate that the level of stable party supporters went down and remained lower over the given period when compared to the partisan alignment period, persisting for more than ten years and in at least three successive elections.

Figure 5.2 demonstrates the different five hypothetical scenarios nested in these three hypotheses.

**Figure 5.2: The different hypothetical scenarios**



## **5.5 The empirical results of the indicators of the level of partisanship**

My aim is to test if any change in partisanship measured by the two indicators of stable party supporters has occurred. Therefore, I ran a regression test on the data to see whether a statistically significant trend exists from 1950 onwards.

Table 5.2 shows the regression coefficients for each of the indicators over time (the dependent variable is the party support indicator for each election year and the independent variable is the time, i.e. election year as a continuous variable)<sup>6</sup>.

For all of the cases under investigation here, I ran an OLS regression model:

$$\text{indicator}(\text{stable party supporters}) = \alpha + \beta_1 \cdot T + \epsilon$$

If a change has occurred and voters are no longer committed to the political parties, I expect to find a decrease of the indicator level over the years, thus the regression coefficient should be negative and statistically significant.

For Austria, since this case is missing the individual-level dataset, I decided to examine the data presented in Plasser and Ulram's (2008:7) report. This is aggregate data from the sub-national election results<sup>7</sup> and includes estimation of Party Volatility (PV) rather than voting. Based on this index I could calculate the level of Gross Volatility (GV).<sup>8</sup> Therefore, if a decreasing level of partisanship is manifested in Austria, I expect the level of party switchers and those not participating in the election to increase over the years, and the GV regression coefficient should be positive and statistically significant.

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<sup>6</sup> For ETP: time was set to 0 for 1950, going up by increments of 1 for each additional year, and by a fraction for each additional month. For the proportion of stable party supporters: time was set to 0 for 1950, going up by increments of 1 for each additional year.

<sup>7</sup> These are election results of municipalities, communities, wards, etc. For more information on the data calculation, see Chapter Four.

<sup>8</sup> The Gross Volatility (GV) index measures at individual level those who change their party support – in Ersson and Lane's words (1998:25) 'party switching' (PS) – and also "takes into account all the eligible voters over the two elections and defining those changing between voting and non-voting as volatile voters."



I excluded Finland, the second Italian Republic, Flanders and Wallonia from the regression model for the indicator of proportion of stable party support, and the second Italian Republic for ETP, because these datasets include only a small number of cases (only 4 or 5 time-points).

Table 5.2 reveals that in all the cases apart from Denmark, Flanders and Luxembourg, the regression coefficients of the proportion of stable party supporters (where regression tests for this indicator were feasible) and the ETP coefficients are negative and statistically significant. In Austria, the coefficient of the GV is positive and statistically significant.

**Table 5.2: OLS regression coefficients for proportions of stable party supporters (or GV) and Electorate Total Partisans (ETP), 1950 – 2010**

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	proportions of stable party supporters	<i>ETP</i>
Denmark	%	77.51	78.33
	change per annum	-.13 (.12)	-.05 (.05)
	period (time-points)	1971-2005 (14)	1953-2007 (22)
	R <sup>2</sup>	.09	.05
	Durbin-Watson	1.89	1.59
Finland	%		75.73
	change per annum		-.38 (.07)***
	period (time-points)		1954-2007 (15)
	R <sup>2</sup>		.72
	Durbin-Watson		2.22
Flanders	%		80.91
	change per annum		-.08 (.05)
	period (time-points)		1954-2010 (18)
	R <sup>2</sup>		.14
	Durbin-Watson		1.16
Germany	%	74.85	72.27
	change per annum	-.51 (.26)*	-.30 (.11)**
	period (time-points)	1965-2009 (13)	1961-2009 (14)
	R <sup>2</sup>	.26	.38
	Durbin-Watson	1.44	0.74
Italy (1st republic)	%		82.85
	change per annum		-.40 (.09)**
	period (time-points)		1958-1992 (9)
	R <sup>2</sup>		.74
	Durbin-Watson		2.02
Italy (1st & 2nd Republics)	%		82.85
	change per annum		-.50 (.14)**
	period (time-points)		1958-2008 (14)
	R <sup>2</sup>		.47
	Durbin-Watson		1.65
Luxembourg	%		73.74
	change per annum		.09 (.12)
	period (time-points)		1954-2009 (12)
	R <sup>2</sup>		.06
	Durbin-Watson		0.96

the Netherlands	%	62.91	89.52
	change per annum	-.33 (.16)*	-.54 (.09)***
	period (time-points)	1971-2006 (12)	1956-2010 (17)
	R <sup>2</sup>	.28	.73
	Durbin-Watson	2.59	1.54
Norway	%	78.13	74.65
	change per annum	-.67 (.09)***	-.21 (.09)**
	period (time-points)	1965-2005 (10)	1957-2009 (14)
	R <sup>2</sup>	.87	.32
	Durbin-Watson	2.01	2.00
Sweden	%	76.60	76.57
	change per annum	-.59 (.09)***	-.18 (.09)**
	period (time-points)	1960-2006 (15)	1956-2010 (18)
	R <sup>2</sup>	.77	.22
	Durbin-Watson	0.68	0.87
Wallonia	%		84.11
	change per annum		-.16 (.06)**
	period (time-points)		1954-2010 (18)
	R <sup>2</sup>		.32
	Durbin-Watson		1.21

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	<i>GV</i>	<i>ETP</i>
Austria	%	3	88.94
	Change per annum	.70 (.06)***	-.60 (.08)***
	period (time-points)	1975-2008 (11)	1956-2008 (17)
	R <sup>2</sup>	.93	.78
	Durbin-Watson	2.08	1.16

\*p≤0.1, \*\* p≤0.05, \*\*\* p≤0.01 (in two-tailed)

Note: The % stable party supporters (or GV) or ETP in the first line for each case is the measurement level in the first year in each series. The per annum change is the unstandardized regression coefficient (s.e.).

The GV is based on the sum of shares of non-voters and party volatility as are reported in Plasser and Ulram (2008:7).

In Denmark, Flanders and Luxembourg, on the other hand, the ETP coefficients are approaching zero and are therefore statistically insignificant. The OLS coefficient for the proportion of party supporters in Denmark was slightly higher and negative, but was not statistically significant, thus signaling the absence of a trend.

Overall, the OLS regression test results demonstrate that in most of the party systems, the figures of stable party support have decreased since 1950, as the coefficients are negative and statistically significant.

Yet the Durbin-Watson values for some of the OLS models indicate a problem of first-order autocorrelation (a “correlation between values of the same time series” (Makridakis, et al., 1998) for the ETP time series for Austria, Flanders, Germany,

Luxembourg, Sweden and Wallonia and the same problem for the Swedish time series of proportions of stable party supporters.

Therefore for those cases with a problem of autocorrelation I fitted a Regression model with Autocorrelated Errors (autoregressive error model) for each of these cases, specified in Table 5.3. The autoregressive error model solves the problem of autocorrelation by augmenting the regression model with an autoregressive model for the random error, thereby accounting for the autocorrelation of the errors (SAS).

**Table 5.3: Autoregressive error model coefficients for proportions of stable party supporters and Electorate Total Partisans (ETP), 1950 – 2010**

<b>INDICATOR: ETP</b>		
Austria	Intercept	99.39 (5.00)***
	Time	-0.61 (0.14)***
	Lagged 1 time	-0.40 (0.32)
	Lagged 2 time	-0.09 (0.33)
	Period (N)	1956-2008 (17)
	R-Square	0.80
	Root MSE	5.66
	AIC	110.81
	MAE	4.23
	Durbin-Watson	1.74
Flanders	Intercept	83.34 (1.98)***
	Time	-0.12 (0.06)*
	Lagged 1 time	-0.13 (0.30)
	Lagged 2 time	0.12 (0.31)
	Period (N)	1954-2010 (18)
	R-Square	0.29
	Root MSE	3.71
	AIC	101.78
	MAE	2.70
	Durbin-Watson	1.80
Germany	Intercept	87.97 (4.94)***
	Time	-0.36 (0.14)**
	Lagged 1 time	-1.04 (0.29)***
	Lagged 2 time	0.67 (0.26)**
	Period (N)	1961-2009 (14)
	R-Square	0.71
	Root MSE	4.31
	AIC	91.41
	MAE	3.23
	Durbin-Watson	1.65
Luxembourg	Intercept	68.68 (7.82)***
	Time	0.09 (0.23)
	Lagged 1 time	-0.43 (0.37)
	Lagged 2 time	-0.15 (0.41)
	Period (N)	1954-2009 (12)
	R-Square	0.28

	Root MSE	6.75
	AIC	83.36
	MAE	4.91
	Durbin-Watson	1.74
Sweden	Intercept	80.22 (95.58)***
	Time	-0.10 (0.15)
	Lagged 1 time	-0.47 (0.29)
	Lagged 2 time	-0.16 (0.29)
	Period (N)	1956-2010 (18)
	R-Square	0.47
	Root MSE	5.56
	AIC	114.05
	MAE	3.60
	Durbin-Watson	1.70
Wallonia	Intercept	81.31 (2.90)***
	Time	-0.17 (0.08)**
	Lagged 1 time	-0.41 (0.27)
	Lagged 2 time	0.10 (0.28)
	Period (N)	1954-2010 (18)
	R-Square	0.42
	Root MSE	4.09
	AIC	105.40
	MAE	2.51
	Durbin-Watson	1.94
<b>INDICATOR: PROPORTIONS OF PARTY SUPPORTERS</b>		
Sweden	Intercept	86.87 (5.97)***
	Time	-0.56 (0.17)***
	Lagged 1 time	-0.62 (0.30)*
	Lagged 2 time	-0.04 (0.34)
	Period (N)	1960-2006 (15)
	R-Square	0.86
	Root MSE	4.00
	AIC	88.05
	MAE	2.66
	Durbin-Watson	1.88
*p≤0.1, ** p≤0.05, *** p≤0.01 (in two-tailed)		

The autoregressive error models confirm the OLS regression analysis, the ETP coefficients are negative and statistically significant in Austria, Germany, Sweden (for the indicator of proportion of party supporters) and Wallonia and approaching zero and not significant in Luxembourg and Sweden (for the indicator of ETP). In addition, contrary to the OLS analysis, the autoregressive error model suggests on significant decreasing ETP trend in Flanders.

The OLS regression and the autoregressive error models provides an indication of a linear shift of the indices' values from one year to another, but is not capable of rendering the exact point in time when the change began. Furthermore, these models does not have the ability to detect cases of temporary increase or small changes of

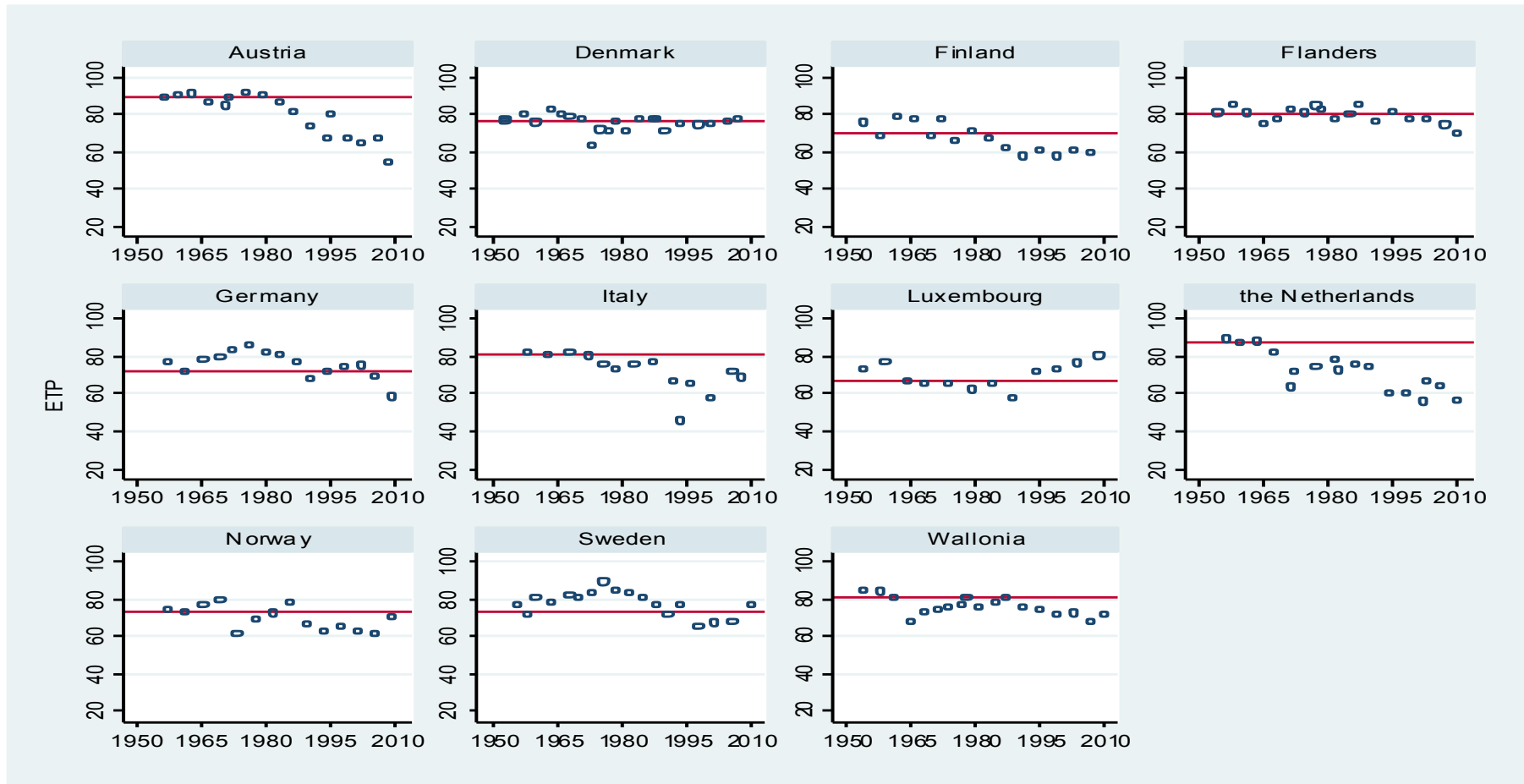
index level that are idiosyncratic of critical realignment; instead, the coefficients in these cases allude to no change.

Therefore, I turned to examine the trends of stable party support since 1965, by comparing them to the alignment period (i.e. 1950-4) using two methods.

I compared the level of ETP for each election year to the level of the ETP over the partisan alignment period, employing a comparison test. For Sweden, I ran an additional comparison test on the data about the proportion of stable party supporters, due to the unavailability of data for the 1950-60s period for the other cases. The reference line was the indicator average level minus one standard deviation over the 1950-64 period. I classify those elections in which the indicator level is equal or higher than the reference line as having high level of partisans. Likewise, elections with indicator levels lower than the reference line are labeled as having low levels of partisanship.

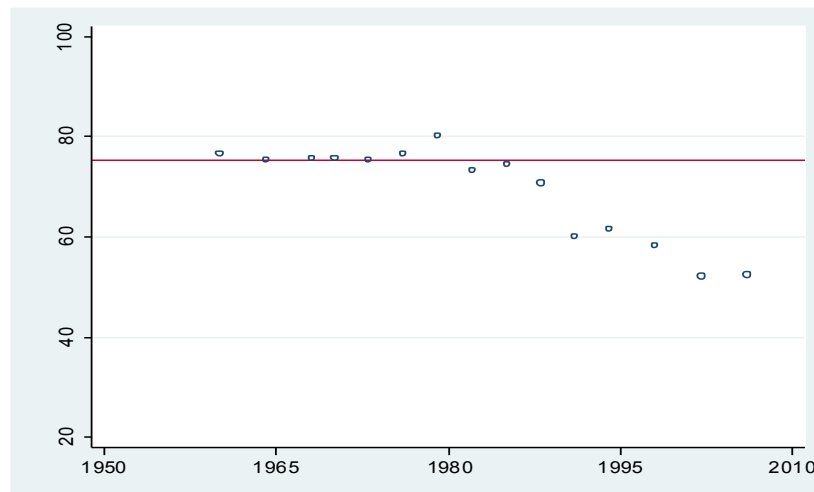
Figures 5.3-5.4 present the results of this comparison for the post-1965 period. If the electorate moves away from the parties and partisan dealignment occurs, the values of partisans' indicators should be located below the reference line. In a critical realignment, one or some of the indicators' values are much lower than the reference line, with subsequent values rising above the reference line. When the indicators' values are scattered around the line, this points to secular realignment. Dynamic growth realignment is a combination of the two previous scenarios.

Figure 5.3: Electoral Total Partisans (ETP) between 1950-2010 per case, in comparison to the reference line



Note: the reference line is the average level of the ETP between 1950 and 1964 minus one standard deviation

**Figure 5.4: Proportion of party supporters in Sweden between 1950-2010, in comparison to the reference line**



*Note: the reference line is the average proportion level between 1950 and 1964 minus one standard deviation*

The second method incorporates an analysis of variance (ANOVA) for each case, in which the ETP (or in the case of Sweden, the proportions of stable party supporters) are the dependent variable and the independent categorical variable is a dummy variable of two periods of ‘stability’ and ‘change’. For each election year from 1965 onwards, the time variable scored 0 for all values up to this election, 1 for that and all subsequent elections, (model of moving time frames or a moving  $t$ -test, which is commonly employed in disciplines with repeated measurement over time such as meteorology or geology). Since the observations are not independent from each other, I used an ANOVA model, which assumes repeated measurements and does not assume that all the treatment populations have the same variance (homogeneity of variance).

A decreasing indicator level during the post-1965 period points to a significant smaller index average than the average index scores over earlier period. Along with this, a significant smaller average score in at least two consecutive elections typically shows low values for the indicator over a long period and signifies a period of partisan dealignment. Table 5.4 displays the ANOVA results, where they are significant in at least one election year.

**Table 5.4: ANOVA models for indicators of partisanship: Electorate Total Partisans (ETP) and proportions of stable party supporters, in periods of ‘stability’ and ‘change’**

Indicator				
Austria	ETP	election year	1966	1970
		stability period Mean (s.d.)	90.10 (1.12)	89.31 (1.80)
		change period Mean (s.d.)	77.71 (11.56)	77.00 (11.71)
		ANOVA	F(1,14)=15.40**	F(1,13.6)=13.38**
		AIC	114.4	113.1
		BIC	116.1	114.8
		period (time-points)	1956-2008 (17)	
Denmark	ETP	election year	1966	1968
		stability period Mean (s.d.)	78.73 (2.75)	79.06 (2.59)
		change period Mean (s.d.)	75.08 (4.11)	74.73 (3.97)
		ANOVA	F(1,18.5)=53.62***	F(1,19)=51.66***
		AIC	159.3	157.5
		BIC	161.5	159.7
		period (time-points)	1953-2007 (22)	
Finland	ETP	election year	1966	1970
		stability period Mean (s.d.)	74.59 (5.03)	75.46 (4.46)
		change period Mean (s.d.)	65.80 (7.12)	64.68 (6.28)
		ANOVA	F(1,4.31)=6.11*	F(1,7.69)=13.58**
		AIC	94.1	90.4
		BIC	95.5	91.8
		period (time-points)	1954-2007 (15)	
Flanders	ETP	election year	1991	1995
		stability period Mean (s.d.)	81.17 (3.14)	80.80 (3.28)
		change period Mean (s.d.)	76.44 (3.85)	76.44 (4.30)
		ANOVA	F(1,8.45)=6.79**	F(1,5.89)=4.20
		AIC	92.3	93.8
		BIC	94.1	95.5
		period (time-points)	1954-2010 (18)	
Germany	ETP	election year	1980	1983
		stability period Mean (s.d.)	79.59 (4.96)	80.10 (4.73)
		change period Mean (s.d.)	73.29 (7.36)	72.06 (6.80)
		ANOVA	F(1,13)=3.91*	F(1,12.4)=7.19**
		AIC	92.8	90.4
		BIC	94.3	91.8
		period (time-points)	1961-2009 (14)	
Italy (1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> Republics)	ETP	election year	1968	1972
		stability period Mean (s.d.)	82.27 (.81)	82.39 (.61)
		change period Mean (s.d.)	70.31 (10.24)	69.19 (9.95)
		ANOVA	F(1,11.7)=15.78**	F(1,10.3)=19.09**
		AIC	92.0	85.5
		BIC	93.3	86.8
		period (time-points)	1958-2008 (14)	



the Netherlands	ETP	election year	1967	1971	
		stability period Mean (s.d.)	88.46 (.95)	89.92 (3.18)	
		change period Mean (s.d.)	68.93 (8.38)	67.65 (7.71)	
		ANOVA	F(1,14.3)=73.56***	F(1,13)=52.28***	
		AIC	105.3	106.5	
		BIC	107.0	108.2	
		period (time-points)	1956-2010 (17)		
		Norway	ETP	election year	1965
		stability period Mean (s.d.)	73.94 (1.00)	75.08 (2.10)	
		change period Mean (s.d.)	69.01 (6.59)	68.25 (6.34)	
		ANOVA	F(1,11.8)=5.89**	F(10.9)=9.10	
		AIC	82.7	81.5	
		BIC	84.0	82.7	
		period (time-points)	1957-2009 (14)		
Sweden	ETP	election year	1979	1982	
		stability period Mean (s.d.)	80.34 (5.02)	80.80 (4.89)	
		change period Mean (s.d.)	75.22 (6.77)	74.19 (6.30)	
		ANOVA	F(1, 15.9)=3.40*		
		AIC	108.7		
		BIC	110.4		
		period (time-points)	1956-2010 (18)		
		Partisans	election year	1968	1970
			stability period Mean (s.d.)	76.05 (.78)	75.93 (.59)
			change period Mean (s.d.)	68.26 (9.85)	76.64 (10.02)
			ANOVA	F(1,12.7)=7.82**	F(1,11.3)=8.10**
			AIC	98.5	93.0
			BIC	99.9	94.5
			period (time-points)	1960-2006 (15)	
Wallonia	ETP	election year	1965	1968	
		stability period Mean (s.d.)	82.79 (2.15)	78.96 (7.84)	
		change period Mean (s.d.)	74.49 (4.01)	74.98 (3.64)	
		ANOVA	F(1,1.74)=13.31*	F(1,2.15)=0.20	
		AIC	90.7	92.5	
		BIC	92.4	94.2	
		period (time-points)	1954-2010 (18)		

\* $p \leq 0.1$ , \*\*  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.01$

*Note:* The time variable was scored 0 for all time points up to this election, 1 for that election and for all time points afterward. This table presents only the results for the first two elections, which are statistically significant in each case.

I began by analysing those cases in which the OLS regression and autoregressive error models of the partisanship indicators signify decreasing trends: that is, all the cases except Denmark and Luxembourg.

In all of these cases, the comparison test and the ANOVA test (on periods of 'stability' and 'change') showed trends of decreasing stable party supporters

compared to the period of alignment. Interestingly, although the two methods measure the trends differently, for half of the cases these declining trends commenced almost at the same points in time.

In Finland, the comparison test indicates that from 1970 onwards, the ETP values are much lower than the reference line, with the exception of the 1972 and 1979 election. The difference ranges between 0.44 (in the 1970 election) and 11.97 (in the 1999 election) below the reference line. The ANOVA model confirms these lower values of ETP in comparison to the previous elections, as in the 1966 and 1970 elections the average score for the period of 'change' is lower than the average score for the period of 'stability' and the ANOVA coefficient in both election years is statistically significant.

Similarly, in Flanders the ANOVA model suggests that the mean score of ETP for the period since the 1991 election onwards is significantly lower than the mean ETP score for the earlier period. The comparison test also shows that until the 1987 election, the ETP values in most of the election years had been above the reference line (although there are three exceptions: the 1965 and 1968 elections (in which the ETP is 4.59 and 1.57 points respectively below the line), and the 1981 election (in which it was 2.58 points lower than the reference line). Since the 1991 election, in all the election years (apart from the 1995 election) the ETP scores are below the reference line. The values range between 1.66 (in the 1999 election) and 9.51 (in the 2010 election) points below the line. The results for the 1995 deviant election can be attributed to institutional change: this was the first general election under a revised constitution's new federal structure, the voters supported the coalition's parties (Downs, 1995), and the level of TV decreased from 13.27 in 1991 election to 5.41 in 1995 (my calculations).

For Italy I discovered that from 1972 onwards, all ETP-values assume below-reference-line-levels. The distance-to-the reference line is between 0.99 (in the 1972 election) and 35.56 (in the 1994 election). The ANOVA test complies with these results, as the average score for the period of 'change' is significantly lower than the average score for the period of 'stability' in the 1968 and 1972 elections.

In the Netherlands too both tests have the same outcome, and mark the 1967 election as the kick-off for declining ETP values. The average ETP score for the period of

‘change’ is lower than the average score for the period of ‘stability’ in the 1967 and 1971 elections, and the ANOVA coefficient in both elections is statistically significant. Further, Figure 5.3 reveals that in the Netherlands from the 1967 election onwards, the ETP levels are below the reference line. Not only is the level of volatility quite high, I also found that the distance-to-base-line of the ETP scores ranges between 5.22 (in the 1967 election) and 31.29 (in the 2002 election).

In Wallonia the comparison test suggests that from 1965 onwards, the ETP values in almost all election years are lower than the reference line: between 2.37 (in the 1985 election) and 13.14 (in the 1965 election). However, there are a few exceptions: the ETP values for the 1978 and 1987 elections (with only 0.43 and 0.52 points above the line). The ETP mean score for the period of ‘change’ is lower than the mean for the previous period (i.e. the period of ‘stability’) in the elections of 1965 and 1968 but is statistically significant only for the first election. A possible explanation for the non-significant results for the later election is the very low ETP value in the 1965 election.

As far as differences in timing of trend shifts between the two statistical tests, in Austria, Germany, Norway and Sweden these differences are substantial.

In Austria, statistically significant coefficients for the ANOVA model in the 1966 and 1970 elections indicate that the average score of the ETP values for the period since 1966 election onwards is significantly lower than the average score for the earlier period. The comparison test showed that between 1966 and 1970 are lower than the reference line, by 1.98, 4.06 points respectively. Yet in the following elections (between 1975 and 1979), the ETP values are a bit higher than the reference line (2.52 and 1.08 points respectively). However, from the 1983 election onwards the ETP values are again much lower than the reference line, ranging between 2.03 points of difference (in the 1983 election) and 33.90 points (in the 2008 election).

Similarly in Germany, the average ETP score for the period of ‘change’ is lower than the average score for the period of ‘stability’ already in 1980 and 1983 elections and the ANOVA coefficient for both elections is significant. However, the comparison test indicates that only in the 1990-1994 and 2005-2009 elections are ETP levels lower than the reference line (!).

Also for Norway the two methods indicate different starting point. The ANOVA models point out that the average ETP scores for the period since the 1965 election onwards is significantly lower than the average score for the earlier period. The comparison test shows ETP values that are much lower than the reference line only since 1973, with the distance to the reference line ranging between 0.57 (in the 1981 election) and 11.75 (in the 1973 election).

In Sweden, the two methods were employed for the two indicators, producing differences in timing of trend shifts between the two indicators and the two statistical tests. The ANOVA model coefficient for the ETP in the 1979 is significant, suggesting on significantly lower average indicator than those in the earlier elections. The comparison test for values of proportion of stable party supporters confirms this, as the indicator values since 1982 are lower than the reference line, ranging between 0.88 (in 1985) and 23.31 (in 2004) points of difference. However, the ANOVA model for this indicator suggests earlier shifts when it produces significant results for the 1968 and 1970 elections. A bigger difference is found for the comparison test of the ETP values. It shows that ETP levels are lower than the reference line only in the 1991 election and again between 1998 and 2006 elections.

I will now turn to examine those cases in which the OLS regression and autoregressive error models (presented at Tables 5.2-5.3) suggest on no-tend – Denmark and Luxembourg. Two different scenarios are found: while for the Danish case, both methods indicate on a temporary shift and for the case of Luxembourg, the two methods indicate no change.

The absence of a trend in the ETP values over the years in Luxembourg, as presented in Tables 5.2-5.3, is confirmed by both methods. Only two out of nine ETP values are much lower than the reference line, with distances of 4.80 points difference (in the 1979 election) and 9.44 points difference (in the 1989 election). Nevertheless, none of the ANOVA models indicates on significant difference in mean ETP between the two periods. All in all, both methods demonstrate that the level of ETP did not change much over the entire period.

Likewise, the first OLS regressions (presented in Table 5.2) suggest the absence of a trend for the last case, Denmark. In the 1966 and 1968 elections the average score for

the period of ‘change’ is lower than the average score for the period of ‘stability’ and the ANOVA coefficient in both election years is statistically significant. Yet, the comparison test draws a different picture. According to this test, the ETP values in the first three elections – 1966, 1968 and 1971 – are above the reference line, with 4.71, 2.55 and 2.19 points difference respectively. On top of this, the test demonstrates that in the following election – the 1973 election – the ETP value is lower than the reference line by 12.59 points (!), and then in the successive election years the ETP values fluctuate around the reference line. In almost half of these elections – seven elections – the ETP score is below this line, with a maximum of 4.64 points difference (in the 1990 election). In the other six elections the ETP is above the reference line, with maximum of 1.92 points difference (in the 1988 election). In order to validate the 1973 election as a critical election, I compared the indicators’ scores for the successive election years and found that all are lower than the respective indicator level in the 1973 election.

## **5.6 Partisan Alignment, Realignment and Dealignment: Discussion**

This chapter examines the argument of partisan dealignment. It began by examining trends of party identification over the years.

Evidence in favour of partisan dealignment, as is measured by trends of Party Identification, is not very strong: only in four countries – Austria, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands – did the levels of people with party identification and those with strong party identifiers erode significantly over time. Due to these findings and, more importantly, due to a major critique of the application of the phenomenon of ‘party identification’ to a multi-party system, I also examined the phenomenon of ‘partisanship’ based on patterns of electoral behaviour, and argued that partisans are those who support the same party for a long-term period.

I studied this by examining patterns of electoral behaviour within the entire electorate (comprising of party supporters, voters casting an invalid vote and people not participating in elections) by employing two indicators: the proportion of those who reported voting for the same party in two succeeding elections, and its equivalent estimation – the ETP index – based on aggregate data.

Table 5.5 summarises the empirical periods of partisan alignment, realignment and dealignment as found within the differing definitions of partisanship: trends of Party Identification (PI) (and having a strong party identification), ETP and proportion of durable party supporters. These last two are also measured by the comparison test (the distance-to-reference-line of) per election year and an ANOVA analysis of different splits between periods of ‘stability’ and ‘change’, in order to identify an abrupt change (in case of no trend) and to render the exact point in time when the change began (in case of a trend is identified). These two methods – the comparison test and the ANOVA– measure the trends differently, and in case the methods demonstrate that these declining trends commence at different time-points, I accept the latest time point.

Evidence of change into a partisan dealignment is found when party identification (or those who have strong party identification), ETP and proportion of durable party supporters lowers over the years (as when the models coefficients were significantly negative), and when the ETP, along with the proportion of durable party support (when this is available) indicate that the level of partisans is fairly low over long-term periods (based on the comparison test and the ANOVA models of the different periods).

Critical realignment is identified when there is no evidence of a lessening of party identification or ETP, and with accordant trend of ETP: a critical moment (a critical election in which the ETP was very low and is followed by a long-term period of high level of party support).

In five cases, the (OLS and autoregressive error) coefficients of PI, ETP and proportion of party supporters together with the comparison test and the ANOVA analysis indicate that a partisan dealignment is occurring. This occurred in Austria (in 1983), Italy (1972), the Netherlands (1967), Norway (1973), and Sweden (1982).

(Separate) PI trends for the two Belgian regions are not available; the OLS and autoregressive error models point out on declining trend and the comparison tests and the ANOVA models of the ETP values suggest that since 1965 in Wallonia and from 1991 in Flanders, the level of party allegiance has been in decline. Based on this evidence, I conclude that both regions are in a state of partisan dealignment.

Likewise, in Finland the regression coefficients of both PI measurements are not significant, while ETP regression coefficient and both tests demonstrate that the ETP values decline as of 1970, indicating the beginnings of a partisan dealignment period.

**Table 5.5: Evidence of partisan alignment, realignment or dealignment, per case over mid 1960s-2000s, based on trends of partisanship indicators**

<i>Evidence of partisan dealignment</i>							
	PI	Strong PI	OLS model for ETP or proportion of durable party supporters	Autoregressive error model for ETP or proportion of durable party supporters	Comparison test for ETP or proportion of durable party supporters	ANOVA model for ETP or proportion of durable party supporters, in periods of stability and change	Partisan dealignment since
Austria	negative (sig.)	negative (sig.)	ETP negative (sig.)	ETP negative (sig.)	ETP low	ETP negative (sig.)	1983
Finland	negative	negative	ETP negative (sig.)		ETP low	ETP negative (sig.)	1970
Flanders				ETP negative (sig.)	ETP low	ETP negative (sig.)	1991
Germany	negative (sig.)	negative (sig.)	ETP negative (sig.) Party supporters negative (sig.)	ETP negative (sig.)		ETP negative (sig.)	1990
Italy (1st & 2nd republics)	negative (sig.)	negative (sig.)	ETP negative (sig.)		ETP low	ETP negative (sig.)	1972
the Netherlands	negative (sig.)	negative (sig.)	ETP negative (sig.) Party supporters negative (sig.)		ETP low	ETP negative (sig.)	1967
Norway	negative (sig.)	negative	ETP negative (sig.) Party supporters negative (sig.)		ETP low	ETP positive (sig.)	1973
Sweden	negative	negative (sig.)	ETP negative (sig.) Party supporters negative (sig.)	Party supporters negative (sig.)	ETP low; Party supporters low	ETP positive (sig.) Party supporters negative (sig.)	1982
Wallonia			ETP negative (sig.)	ETP negative (sig.)	ETP low	ETP negative (sig.)	1965



<i>Evidence of partisan critical realignment and an alignment</i>							
	PI	Strong PI	OLS model for ETP or proportion of durable party supporters		Comparison test for ETP		Partisan realignment in
Denmark	positive	negative	-		ETP low in 1973 follows with higher ETP values		1973
<i>Evidence of continues partisan alignment</i>							
	PI	Strong PI	OLS model for ETP or proportion of durable party supporters	Autoregressive error model for ETP or proportion of durable party supporters	Comparison test for ETP	ANOVA model for ETP in periods of stability and change	
Luxembourg	negative	negative (sig.)	-	-	ETP high	-	

*Index:* (sig.) stands for statically significant results; ‘low’ stands for long period of lower levels of indicator in comparison to the reference line (the indicator mean between 1950 and 1964 minus one standard deviation); ‘high’ stands for long period of higher levels of indicator in comparison to the reference line (the indicator mean between 1950 and 1964 minus one standard deviation).

For Germany, the comparison analysis of ETP showed no clear trend, with fairly low ETP values in some of the elections since 1990. However, the OLS regression analysis of the both PI measurements, ETP and proportion of party supporters, as well as the autoregressive error model for ETP indicated that partisanship dropped over time. The ANOVA models of the two periods also indicate that the ETP values from the 1990 election onwards are lower than those in the previous years. Therefore, I follow the comparison test and contend that since 1990 a partisan dealignment has been occurring in Germany.

Only in Luxembourg were the ETP values at the same level over the whole period, as is suggested by both methods and no trend of ETP over time is identified by the OLS or autoregressive error models. Although significant declining trends of strong PI are found, I conclude that Luxembourg is still in a situation of partisan alignment.

In Denmark the PI regression coefficients for both analyses show no significant and contrasting trends. No significant declining trend of ETP is found by the OLS model. In addition, the comparative analysis elicits a peak or critical moment (the 1973 election) followed by high levels of partisanship, as measured by ETP.

Up to this point, I have examined the trends of partisanship in its two definitions parallel to each other. To strengthen my empirical conclusions, I now examine whether the same results emerge when I analyse the combined definitions of partisanship at the individual-level. Put differently, I wish to test the trends in partisanship as articulated by respondents who admitted party identification and reported voting for the same party in two successive elections.

Since my dataset only covers the period from 1973, I am not able to analyse the level of partisanship prior to the election in this year (the critical election, as captured by the ETP index). I can only examine the levels of partisanship in comparison to the 1973 election. To this end, I ran a binary logistic regression test with partisanship as the dependent variable (partisanship coded 0=respondents who do not have party identification and/or changed their party support in two succeeding elections and 1=respondents who have party identification and voted for the same party in two successive elections). The independent variable is again time, but in this model each

election year after the 1973 election was coded as a dummy variable, and the 1973 election year is the reference group.

Table 5.6 shows the logistic regression model for Denmark. The model suggests that between 1975 and 2005, the odds of being a partisan are higher than those for 1973 election. Only for the 2001 election is this trend not statistically significant, with the confidence interval ranges between minus and plus alluding to the absence of a clear trend. This indicates that apart from the 2001 election, from 1973 onwards the odds of being a partisan have been higher than they were for the 1973 election. This cements support for the trends found by both indicators: the 1973 election has the lowest level of partisans and in the subsequent period, the level of partisans increased again. In addition, the logistical model also gives us a good illustration of the process of critical realignment and a new alignment. In the elections until 1984, immediately after the critical 1973 realignment election, the odds of being a partisan are much smaller than the odds between 1990 and 1998.<sup>9</sup> The logistical model confirms the identification of critical realignment with its idiosyncratic peak in 1973, the election with the lowest odds of partisanship. The odds went up slightly in the following years (until 1984), and in 1990 rose again.

**Table 5.6: Binary Logistic Regression Analysis: prediction of party identifiers and stable party supporters in Denmark, 1973-2005**

Predictor Variable	B (S.E.)	Exp(B)	95% Interval for Exp(B)	Confidence Interval for Exp(B)
Constant	-.42 (.09)***	.66		
1975 election	.45 (.11)***	1.572	1.27	1.95
1977 election	.74 (.11)***	2.09	1.69	2.60
1984 election	.49 (.12)***	1.63	1.30	2.05
1990 election	2.28 (.16)***	9.78	7.09	13.48
1994 election	2.61 (.15)***	13.63	10.25	18.13
1998 election	1.30 (.12)***	3.68	2.92	4.63
2001 election	.15 (.10)	1.16	.95	1.43
2005 election	.24 (.10)**	1.27	1.04	1.55
Chi-squared	1047.645			
(p=0.00)				
Nagelkerke R Square	.14			
Log Likelihood	11984.06			
N	9500			
*p<=0.05, ** p<=0.01, *** p<=0.001				
<i>Note:</i> The dependent variable is coded 0 if voters who do not have party identification and/or changed their party support in two succeeding elections and 1 if the respondent has party identification and voted for the same party in two succeeding elections.				

<sup>9</sup> The logistical model does not include the 1987 and 1988 elections as data about party identification in these election years are missing.

Put differently, the logit model confirms that 1973 election is a critical election in the Danish political system.

All in all, Tables 5.5-5.6 demonstrate that only in one case – Luxembourg – are the voters still aligned with the political parties. A partisan critical realignment is found only in Denmark, which occurred in the 1973 election and since then a new alignment has been created. All other cases imply a state of partisan dealignment.

## **5.7 Conclusions**

This chapter deals with change and stability in the relationship between parties and voters as partisans. More specifically, it studies whether we can identify signs of partisan dealignment as partisanship has shrunk over time. Due to major criticism of the party identification model, this chapter has suggested studying this topic based on two aspects – party identification and durable party support. Moreover, it suggests doing so using three indicators. The first is the well-studied PI, and the other two indicators measure stable party support in two consecutive elections.

This study of electoral behaviour includes not only those who support a political party (i.e. valid votes), but also takes into account all of those who are franchised, i.e. the whole electorate. For the individual-level data, I measured the proportion of voters who reported voting for the same party in two succeeding elections. An equivalent estimation was calculated based on the ETP index (after modifying the TV index), based on aggregate data.

Unifying the results of these three indicators (PI, proportion of stable party supporters, and ETP) provides a much more reliable and comprehensive understanding of the patterns underlying partisan alignment.

The combined results of PI, ETP and the proportion of stable party supporters uncover a period of partisan dealignment in most of the party systems studied. On top of this, I prove that the shifts to partisan dealignment occurred in two waves. One wave happened between the mid 1960s and the early 1970s and includes Finland,

Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and Wallonia. The second wave stretches between the early 1980s to the early 1990s in Austria, Flanders, Germany and Sweden.

Only in two cases were no signs of partisan dealignment found. In Luxembourg, the low ETP scores together with the absence of a trend in the ETP suggest ongoing partisan alignment. Denmark is the only case for which the three indicators confirm signs of partisan critical realignment and the creation of a new alignment.

## CHAPTER 6

### VOTER ALIGNMENTS ALONG THE CLASS AND RELIGIOUS CLEAVAGES

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*“Electoral alignments reflect socioeconomic and cultural division, and political cleavages translate into party organizations.” (Caramani, 2004:9)*

This chapter deals with voter alignments along cleavages. It studies the most prominent socio-structural cleavages – those of class and religion. Namely, it examines the persistence of voter alignments along these two cleavages and attempts to identify whether these alignments have changed, causing realignments (and new alignments) or dealignments along these cleavages to occur.

The term ‘cleavage’ has been assigned different meanings in Political Science literature, as was described in the third chapter. In this chapter, I examine the concept of ‘cleavage’ as defined by the socio-structural approach. According to this approach, a cleavage is a socio-structural division between people. It underpins voters’ interests and demands, and therefore is a site of political conflict. The clearest and most inclusive definition can be found in Bartolini and Mair’s (1990) discussion, which argues that a cleavage has three aspects. Firstly, it involves a social division that separates people who can be distinguished from each other through key social-structural characteristics. Secondly, the group involved in this division must be aware of its collective identity and be willing to act on its basis. Thirdly, every cleavage is expressed by particular institutions and organisations. Only when these three divides – structural, attitudinal and institutional – exist can one speak of what Deegan-Krause (2006:540) called a “full cleavage”. (For similar definitions, see (Elff, 2007:278; Franklin, et al., 1992:5; Knutsen, 2004:2); for a discussion of the necessity of each of the three conditions, the reader is referred to (Deegan-Krause, 2006; Zuckerman, 1975:237-8).

This chapter focuses on the status of the two most dominant cleavages – those of class and religion – and poses two questions:

- Which cleavage has shown stronger voter alignment? And
- Has the voter alignment with either of these cleavages persisted over time?

Most other research on voter alignments along class and religious cleavages has used survey data, neglecting the usage of aggregate data. This study addresses this deficiency by discussing patterns of party support based on individual-level data, and by scrutinising the election results for party families or blocs of parties that represent these cleavages.

The use of election results facilitates the recognition and examination of cross-national patterns of voter alignments along cleavages over long periods of time, which research based on survey data is not always capable of doing. The strength of cleavages is tested by measuring the proportion of Bloc Volatility (BV) in the Total Volatility (TV), or the Cleavage Salience (CS) index (for an explanation of the index, see Appendix A). In this chapter, I examine the cleavages' strength by employing a modified index – the Bloc-Weighted Cleavage Salience Index (WCS) – that controls for electoral support of the blocs of parties that represent each cleavage in the political system (BES). In this way, this study extends, updates and amends Bartolini and Mair's (1990) study, which securitised the existence of an alignment along the class cleavage by employing the Cleavage Salience index (CS).

Last but not least, this chapter includes the empirical results of voter alignments along the class and religious cleavages. It does so for the eleven party systems under investigation in this research, over the alignment period (1950-mid 1960s), and considers the persistence of these alignments from mid 1960 until 2010. The empirical research is based on individual-level data (i.e. national election surveys) and aggregate data (i.e. official national election results).

This chapter begins by outlining the empirical debate over class and religion as salient cleavages and the later debate over the persistence of voter alignments along these

two cleavages. It then discusses the drawbacks of existing approaches in the literature for studying class- and religiously-driven voting. It concludes by recommending the use of a modified index in the study of cleavages (the WCS), and publishes and discusses the results of this thesis's empirical study.

### **6.1 Debates over Cleavage Salience and the Stability of Voter Alignments along the Class and Religious Cleavages**

After the identification of the crucial role of socio-structural cleavages in explaining stable patterns of party choice and party system structure, a discussion arose about which cleavage is the most influential in this respect. While scholars such as Lipset (1981) and Alford (1963) asserted that the owner-industrial (class) cleavage is the most important, others found that the state-church (religious) division, rather than class, is “the main social basis of parties in the Western world today” (Rose & Urwin, 1969:12). This dispute was well summed up in Lijphart's (1979:443) article: “[r]eligion and social class have been recognized as prime determinants of party choice from the very beginning of comparative voting behaviour research, but no consensus has emerged about which of the two variables is the *better* predictor” (italics in original).

In both early (Dogan, 1995:526-7; Rose, 1974:14) and more recent research (Dalton, 1996; Evans, 2000:404; Knutsen, 2004:82, 232), scholars have found that the predominant religion in each country is a crucial factor in identifying the cleavage most influential on voting behaviour. While the class cleavage is found to be more important in predominantly Protestant countries (such as Britain and the Scandinavian countries), in predominantly Catholic and in mixed countries (such as France, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Austria, and Switzerland), the influence of religion on voting behaviour is much stronger. A somewhat different conclusion was presented by Nieuwebeerta and Ultee (1999:147-8), who showed that in countries with high religious and ethnic diversity the level of class voting is low, but that a high density of union members in a country is accompanied by a high level of class voting.

Since the 1970s, however, new arguments have been put forward suggesting that the role of both these cleavages is in decline. Clark and Lipset (1991:404), who used the



Alford index<sup>1</sup> to study five Western democratic countries over the period 1947-1986, claimed that “the Alford index has declined in every country.” Ingelhart (1977:216) stated that “religious issues have faded in intensity during the twentieth century.” Dogan (1995:536) argued that since the 1960s the importance of the two cleavages has been in parallel decline, and Gallagher, et al., (2006:283), who studied the issue for the period 1950-1990s, found that “class and religion may now have less impact on voting behaviour.” Dalton (1996:171, 181), who examined the same period, identified a decline in class differences and predicted that although the religious cleavage is strongly related to partisan preferences, this division is expected to follow the same pattern of decline. According to Knutsen (2004:233), who investigated a more recent period (i.e. 1970-1997), “[t]he impact of the religious and class cleavages are, however, approaching each other in most countries because the cleavages that traditionally had the largest impact demonstrate the clearest sign of decline”; see also (Knutsen, 2006:182). On the basis of their research of twenty Western industrialised countries in the period 1945-1990, Nieuwbeerta and Ultee (1999:147) argued that the decline of class voting is substantial and “the countries slowly converged into a situation where class was relatively unimportant to voting behaviour.” Evans (2000:412), however, held that it was only in Scandinavian countries during the 1960s that high levels of class voting declined to a level “more like those of other Western European societies.” In a similar fashion, Brooks, et al., (2006:110), who tested three cleavages (those of class, religion and gender) in five different Western democratic countries for the period 1970-1990s, showed that “[p]atterns of cleavage change tend to [...] be specific to countries.” They found evidence of a decrease in class voting in Britain and Germany, and some indication of a similar decrease in the Netherlands and Australia. Further, they found evidence of a downturn in religious voting only in the Netherlands, while in the other countries, no monotonic patterns could be identified.

As a result of these findings, two different scenarios of change have been proposed in the literature. The first assumes that since the 1970s, a realignment has occurred – i.e., that there has been a shift in the basis of party support away from the traditional cleavages identified by Lipset and Rokkan, and towards new cleavages. As I

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<sup>1</sup> Alford index measures the difference between the percentage of manual workers that voted for Left parties and percentage of non-manual workers that voted for these parties (Alford 1963:79-80).

discussed in Chapter Two, over the years several new cleavages have been proposed: the Materialist/Post-Materialist cleavage (Inglehart, 1977, 1987), the libertarian vs. authoritarian cleavage and the globalisation cleavage (Kriesi et al., 2008a).

The second scenario proposed to explain voting patterns focuses on dealignment, suggesting that since the 1970s the connections between voters and political parties have diminished, but no alternative connections have formed (Curtice, 2002; Dalton, 2000; Dalton, et al., 1984c; Dalton, et al., 2000; Dogan, 1995). Instead, this argument goes, voters began to vote according to other factors, such as issue voting or voting for a specific candidate (Dalton, 1996; Dalton, et al., 2000). In Manin's words (1997:219), "[v]oters tend increasingly to vote for a person and no longer for a party or a platform".

Others, however, insist that the two cleavages of class and religion remain influential. On the basis of empirical research into the class cleavage between 1885 and 1985, Bartolini and Mair (1990:105) stated that this cleavage was, and still is, the most salient. Elff (2007:280-1), on the other hand, who examined seven European countries<sup>2</sup> between 1975 and 2000, discovered that between 1995 and 2002 class impact on electoral behaviour has been in decline in some countries (France, Great Britain and Denmark), while the impact of church attendance has been almost stable. Only in France did Elff identify an unambiguous downward trend.

## **6.2 Pitfalls in the Study of Voter Alignments Along the Class and Religious Cleavages: Its Drawbacks and an Alternative Approach**

There are two main traditions in the study of the class and religious cleavages and particularly their impact on voting behaviour, which focus on the voter alignment of different social groups. The first involves examining the association between voters' socio-structural characteristics and their electoral behaviour based on individual-level data, i.e. surveys. This is the most common method of studying this subject, but it has several drawbacks.

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<sup>2</sup> The countries are Belgium, Denmark, France, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands and West Germany.

The main drawback of studying the influence of the class and religious cleavages is the fact that social-demographic and economic changes (such as socio-economic mobilisation, the development of the welfare state and the secularisation process) necessitate the use of different operational definitions for each of the cleavages over the years. Thus, for the religious cleavage several subdivisions are applied. The first is between different religious groups, for example between Catholic and Protestants, and the second is between religious and secular people (Knutsen, 2004:44; Lybeck, 1985:107). The study of the class cleavage has seen more diverse subdivisions. Early research used a two-class schema between manual workers and all other classes, using the Alford index. Later research used the so-called Erikson/Goldthorpe's class schema. This differentiates between several employee classes: those who are involved in a service relationship with their employers, and those whose employment relationships are essentially regulated by a labour contract. A service relationship is recognised for employees required to exercise delegated authority or specialised knowledge and expertise. All in all, the Erikson/Goldthorpe's class schema distinguishes between six classes: the higher-level service class, the lower-level service class, routine non-manual workers, petty bourgeoisie, farmers and the working class (Knutsen, 2006:14-5).

More recent research has identified a new middle class or what is called a "salariat", which consists primarily of salaried white-collar employees (Dalton, 1996:168-70). These important changes in the class structure have triggered a debate about patterns of political orientation and party support amongst the service class.

Goldthorpe (1982:180) held that the service class constitutes "an essentially *conservative* element within modern society", while others argued that the service class is divided. The 'new class' approach divides this class between the managers in administrative hierarchies, and professionals who exercise specialised knowledge, the latter being divided into technical experts ('technocrats') and social and cultural specialists (Kriesi, 1998; Kriesi, et al., 2008a :12-3). Knutsen (2005), for example, who studied eight West European countries,<sup>3</sup> showed that public sector employees are more likely to support Left-wing parties and Greens than private sector employees,

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<sup>3</sup> These are Belgium, Britain, Denmark, France, West Germany, Ireland, Italy and the Netherlands.

who tend to support non-Socialist parties, apart from the Christian Democrats; see also (Knutsen, 2001). Other scholars have stated that public sector workers (Kitschelt, 1994:26-30) or socio-cultural service professionals (Kriesi, 1998) tend to be libertarians and support New-Left and Green parties. This, they argue, suggests that this last segment constitutes “a possible structural foundation” for new value cleavages – the Post-Materialist vs. Materialist cleavage, or the libertarian vs. authoritarian cleavage (Kriesi, 1998:171). It remains unclear if the study of class and sector voting supports traditional arguments of voter alignment along the class cleavage, or whether it indicates the decline of class voting and a realignment along a (new) cleavage.

The second drawback of this tradition is the interpretation of indicators. As explained by Lane and Ersson (1999:63): “[c]hurch attendance is a sign of religious devoutness, but devoutness may imply different patterns of attendance in different churches.” Esmer and Pettersson (2007:492) even proposed that in many places, this can be interpreted as a social rather than a religious commitment. Hence to interpret all indicators in the same way, without any differentiation, allows potential misinterpretation of voters’ religious commitment. For this reason, Manza and Wright (2003) distinguished between four separate religious cleavages: church attendance, doctrinal beliefs, denominational groups, and the local/contextual aspect of congregational membership.

Yet another problem is this tradition’s reliance on surveys. Studying political behaviour on the basis of surveys means studying voting behaviour on the basis of respondents’ reports of their party support. This, however, is problematic, as studies have already shown: voting choice is often misreported, with respondents reporting support for the winning party (the so-called post-election “bandwagon”) (Traugott & Katosh, 1979; Weir, 1975; Wright, 1993).

Moreover, there is a problem with availability of data. No survey data exist that covering the period before the 1960s, a period considered to have been less stable than the 1960s onwards. As a result, the study of patterns of voting behaviour along cleavages begins in a period that is also assumed to be the period of change.

In this investigation, I examine the influence of voter alignments along cleavages on party choice by studying this subject not the association between social-group affiliation and party vote, but rather this association's "importance and weight within the general context of electoral behaviour of a given country and/or period" (Bartolini & Mair, 1990: 44-5).

To this end, I have examined the electoral support for the party families or blocs of parties that represent the chosen cleavages. The study of party families – Social Democrats and Communist parties, and Christian Democratic parties – that represent the class and religious cleavages respectively, is based on an extensive number of criteria. In this way, I addressed the problem of using several different categories that require adaptation to accommodate socio-economic changes. In addition, the use of official election results assists in solving two additional issues related to the study of surveys. Firstly, as explained in Chapter Four, the patterns of party support were corrected by using political probability weight variables (computed according to the official election results) to 'correct' the patterns of (frequencies of) party support. Secondly, as mentioned above, this study makes use of two types of datasets: surveys and official election results. The latter functions as the reference line for a period not covered by the survey datasets, and also as the main data source for cases for which national data surveys are not available.

This study of alignment along cleavage based on patterns of electoral support for blocs or groups of parties based on aggregate data, i.e. election results, is not new in the literature. Rose and Urwin (1970) conducted similar research when they tested the change of electoral support for party families (the working class and middle class parties). In more recent research, Bartolini and Mair (1990) examined the strength of alignment along the class cleavage regarding the cleavage's closure of electoral mobility. They suggested that the cleavage's strength can be measured by "*the amount of electoral interchange occurring across the line which divides parties which represent the opposite side of a cleavage*" (Bartolini & Mair, 1990:41) (italics in original). This is achieved by using the Cleavage Salience index (CS), obtained by measuring the proportion of Bloc Volatility index (BV) (which measures volatility between blocs of parties instead of between individual parties) of the Total Volatility (TV) ( $BV/TV*100$ ) (see Appendix A for supplementary explanations of these

indices). According to Bartolini and Mair, using the CS index as an index for the strength of alignment facilitates the estimation of the proportion of electoral interchange across the cleavage line from within the amount of interchange in the system as a whole, at any point in time.

### **6.3 Methodology and Hypotheses**

This research uses the CS index to study the subject of voter alignments along the class and religious cleavages. It is novel in four respects. Firstly, this study examines both the class and the religious cleavages, while Bartolini and Mair studied only one cleavage type (class). It is not sufficient to study cleavage relevance by analysing only one cleavage, making no comparison to any other cleavages, especially not in the context of the discussion of the dominance of the class and religious cleavages (mentioned above). Secondly, this investigation extends and updates Bartolini and Mair's study, which covers a period ending in 1985. Thirdly, the data used to calculate CS values for each election year is not only based on election results (as in Bartolini and Mair's research), but also on individual-level data (where available). Fourthly, and most importantly, this research employs a modified index by adding another component – the electoral success of the various party blocs – to Bartolini and Mair's CS index.

Another component has been added to the CS index to address its shortcoming. Bartolini and Mair (1990:41) assumed that “[t]he stronger the cleavage, therefore, the less frequent is the exchange of votes across the dividing line.” Following this logic, the most salient cleavage is the cleavage with the lowest CS values. The weakness of the CS index is that it entirely based on TV and BV measures that do not take into account the actual, absolute level of electoral support for the cleavage bloc parties. Consequently, when a bloc of parties representing one side of a cleavage is composed of only marginal or small parties, the CS values of this cleavage may be low, not only due to the low proportion of voters who cross the cleavage line but also because of the low electoral support for these parties in the first place. Likewise, when the bloc includes parties that gain a high proportion of electoral support, the value of the CS index might be high. The explanation for this problem is the BV values' variance range. When marginal or small parties represent the cleavage in question the range of

variance of BV values is also small. The range of variance of BV values is large when a cleavage is represented by a bloc of parties that received high electoral support.

Table 6.1 demonstrates this problem. In the first case, the cleavage parties are large and the increase in support for this cleavage will lead to a CS value of 20, suggesting a fairly strong cleavage. In the second case, the cleavage is represented only by small parties, but the CS index again reaches 20, indicating a cleavage of similar strength to the first example, even though the already low electoral support for these parties decreased further to half of its previous size! Intuitively, it is obvious that the first cleavage should have much more salience or strength than the second cleavage.

<b>Table 6.1: Calculation of Cleavage Salience measures</b>				
		Election 1	Election 2	Index
Cleavage 1	Cleavage Party Bloc 1 (A)	30	32	+2
	Opposite Party Bloc 1 (B)	70	68	-2
	Bloc Volatility (BV)	$( \Delta_A + \Delta_B )/2$		2
	Total Volatility (TV)			10
	<b>Cleavage Salience (CS)</b>	$(BV/TV)*100$		<b>20</b>
	Bloc Electoral Support (BES)			32
	<b>Bloc-Weighted Cleavage Salience (WCS)</b>	$(1-[BV/TV])*BES$		<b>25.6</b>
Cleavage 2	Cleavage Party Bloc 2 (A)	4	2	+2
	Opposite Party Bloc 2 (B)	96	98	-2
	Bloc Volatility (BV)	$( \Delta_A + \Delta_B )/2$		2
	Total Volatility (TV)			10
	<b>Cleavage Salience (CS)</b>	$(BV/TV)*100$		<b>20</b>
	Bloc Electoral Support (BES)			2
	<b>Bloc-Weighted Cleavage Salience (WCS)</b>	$(1-[BV/TV])*BES$		<b>1.6</b>

Note: Lower CS values and higher WCS values indicate higher cleavage salience.

This problem has its roots in an oversight of the CS index regarding parties' electoral support. It is now clear that the CS index is missing an essential component – the proportional electoral support of the cleavage (Bloc Electoral Support, BES) that was gained by parties that represent this cleavage.

To solve this problem, I modified the CS index and together with Dr. Michael F. Meffert, I developed a modified index. First, we weight (or ‘correct’) the CS index values by the relevant Bloc Electoral Support (BES) for the cleavage parties, defined as the electoral support for the cleavage bloc parties in the election of interest. For each time-point or election year, the original CS index is simply multiplied by the BES of the respective bloc of parties in that election. Because the directions (of ‘strength’) of the CS and the BES are opposite, a second adjustment is necessary. The second modification is a reversal of the original CS scale in order to make the interpretation of the CS values more intuitive: higher values should reflect a higher salience or strength. Formally, we simply subtract the CS score (BV divided by TV) as a fraction from 1. The latter value is then multiplied by the BES value. The WCS index can range between 0 (low cleavage strength) to 100 (high cleavage salience).

The formula of the Bloc -Weighted Cleavage Salience index (WCS) is:

$$WCS = \left(1 - \frac{BV}{TV}\right) * BES$$

Low values of WCS indicate low cleavage strength, that is, high volatility across the cleavage line and/or low electoral support for the cleavage parties. High values, on the other hand, indicate high cleavage salience due to low volatility across the cleavage line and/or high electoral support for the cleavage parties. When we employed the WCS for the theoretical example, we received better results: the WCS for the first cleavage is 25.6 and for the second cleavage only 1.6, suggesting that the first cleavage is more salient than the second cleavage.

The empirical study of this research consists of two stages. For the period 1950-1964 (a period which is generally agreed to have been a stable period), I test which of the two cleavages – class or religion – influenced voters the most; that is, I seek to identify the cleavage with the strongest voter alignment. On the basis of the earlier findings mentioned above, I expect the alignment along the class cleavage to have more influence and to be stronger in the predominantly Protestant countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden), and the alignment along the religious cleavage to have more influence and to be stronger in predominantly Catholic or mixed countries (Austria, Belgium – in this research, Flanders and Wallonia, Italy,



Germany, Luxemburg,<sup>4</sup> and the Netherlands), thus leading to the following hypotheses:

*H1: For the predominantly Protestant countries during the period 1950-64, voter alignment along the class cleavage will be found to be stronger than voter alignment along the religious cleavage.*

*H2: For predominantly Catholic or mixed countries during the period 1950-64, voter alignment along the religious cleavage will be found to be stronger than voter alignment along the class cleavage.*

The strength of voter alignment is determined by the WCS index: the bigger its value, the stronger the alignment along a specified cleavage.

In the second stage, I test the persistence of voter alignment along the dominant cleavage over time. A change of voter alignments along these two cleavages can take several forms. The first scenario is a switch between the dominant and the weaker cleavage, or, a *realignment* along the dominant [class or religious] cleavage. This scenario was described as follows in Schattschneider's volume (1960:65):

*"A shift from the alignment AB [the old cleavage] to alignment CD [the new cleavage] means that old cleavage must be played down if the new conflict is to be exploited. [...] The new conflict can become dominant only if the old one is subordinated, or obscured, or forgotten, or loses its capacity to excite the contestants, or becomes irrelevant."* (italics added).

When expressing cleavage salience in terms of WCS, I expect to identify a new voter alignment when the cleavage that was less important in the previous period (that with lower WCS values) has become the dominant cleavage (that with higher WCS values) over this period (a period of at least ten years and over at least three successive elections). Alternatively, a new voter alignment can be created when the alignment

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<sup>4</sup> Luxemburg is not explicitly studied in either of these investigations, but is assigned to this group since it is a pre-dominantly Catholic country (International Religious Freedom Report (2004) ([www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2004/35469.htm](http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2004/35469.htm))).

along the less important cleavage also becomes strong. In this scenario, the WCS values for the two cleavages will be found to be equal, if the WCS values of the dominant cleavage are not lower than those measured in the previous period and this situation remains durable and persistent for a period of at least ten years and over at least three successive elections.

*H3: A voter realignment occurred and a new alignment appeared during the period 1965-2010: the voter alignment along the cleavage found to be weaker in the first period will strengthen so as to become more dominant than the other cleavage, or at least at the same level as it for a substantial period.*

The second scenario is a weakening voter alignment along the dominant cleavage; this is considered to be a *dealignment* along either the class or religious cleavage. In this scenario I expect that the voter alignment along the dominant cleavage will become weaker than in the first period, and that no strong alternative voter alignment will emerge.

*H4: A voter dealignment occurred during the period 1965-2010, where the dominant voter alignment loses its strength and the voter alignment along the other cleavage is not found to be dominant.*

A period of voter dealignment is identified when the WCS values of the dominant cleavage drop below those measured in the first period; the WCS values may even be equal for the two cleavages. This situation should remain for at least ten years and over at least three successive elections.

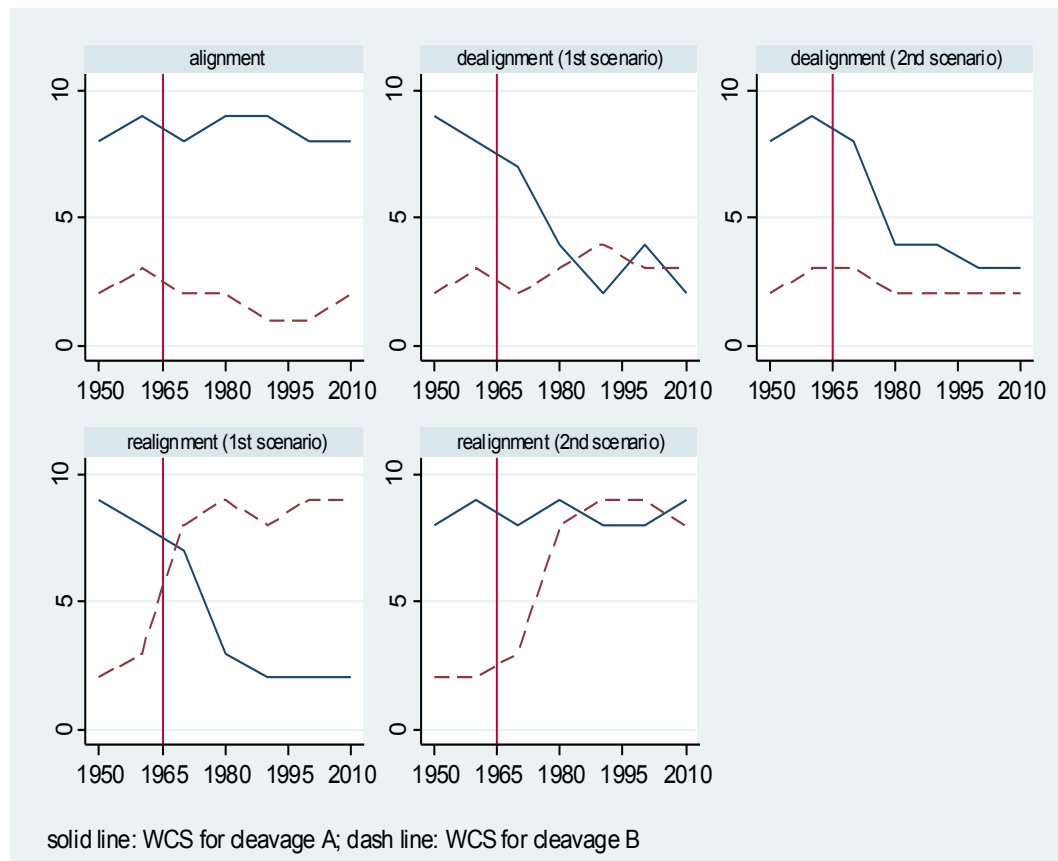
In the final scenario, the voter alignment along the cleavage that was found to be dominant in the first period continues its dominance; no changes occur.

*H5: No change occurred during the period 1965-2010: the voter alignment of the cleavage found to be stronger in the first period holds its dominance for the entire period.*

A persistence of voter alignment is identified when the cleavage with high WCS values displays equally high or higher values than in the first period.

These five different theoretical scenarios are presented in Figure 6.1.

**Figure 6.1: The five different theoretical scenarios of voter alignment along a cleavage**



The dominance of a cleavage and the scenario involving a switch or shift (i.e. realignment) are tested by comparing the WCS values of both cleavages.

The scenario involving the erosion of voter alignment along a cleavage (i.e. dealignment) is examined by employing two methods. One is a comparison test, in which I consider the WCS levels of the dominant cleavage over the first period as a reference line, equal to the average score minus one standard deviation. The WCS value for each cleavage in each election year is compared to this reference line. If a

weakening of the voter alignment along this cleavage occurs during the period after 1965, the WCS values should be lower than this reference line.

The second method incorporates an analysis of variance (ANOVA) for each case, in which the WCS values for the dominant cleavage are the dependent variable and the independent variable is a dummy variable of two periods of 'stability' and 'change'. For each election year from 1965 onwards, the time variable was assigned score 0 for all time-points up to this election, and 1 for that election and for all time-points afterward. For each election year from 1965 onwards, the time variable scored 0 for all values up to this election, 1 for that and all subsequent elections, (model of moving time frames or a moving *t*-test, which is commonly employed in disciplines with repeated measurement over time such as meteorology or geology). Since the observations are not independent from each other, I used an ANOVA model, which assumes repeated measurements and does not assume that all the treatment populations have the same variance (homogeneity of variance).

If a weakening of the voter alignment along this cleavage occurs during the time period since 1965, the ANOVA coefficient should be negative and statistically significant. This should be found in at least two successive elections.

I emphasise, however, that since the subject of this research is cleavages as reflected by electoral support for different party families, conclusions can be drawn only about voter alignment along the class and religious cleavages, and not regarding changes relating to any other cleavage. In addition, the different scenarios of voter re/dealignments along cleavages are not equivalent to the terms 'class realignment' or 'class dealignment' (Evans, 1999); see also (Crewe, 1983; Knutsen, 2007); both these concepts imply a change in the socio-structural characteristics of those voting for class parties with no necessary implications in electoral terms (i.e. party support).

## **6.4 Results**

*Strength of voter alignments along cleavages: Hypotheses 1 and 2*

The first aim was to identify which cleavage had more influence on the electorate in each country between 1950 and 1964. According to Hypothesis 1, I expected that in the predominantly Protestant countries, the levels of WCS for the class cleavage would be higher than those for the religious cleavage.

Table 6.2 presents a comparison of the WCS values of the two cleavages in three Scandinavian countries, based on official election results. Survey data for this period is available only for Sweden.

In Denmark between 1950 and 1969, no religious party participated in elections. Therefore, a comparison of the two cleavages is irrelevant, as no party represents the religious cleavage in this time period.

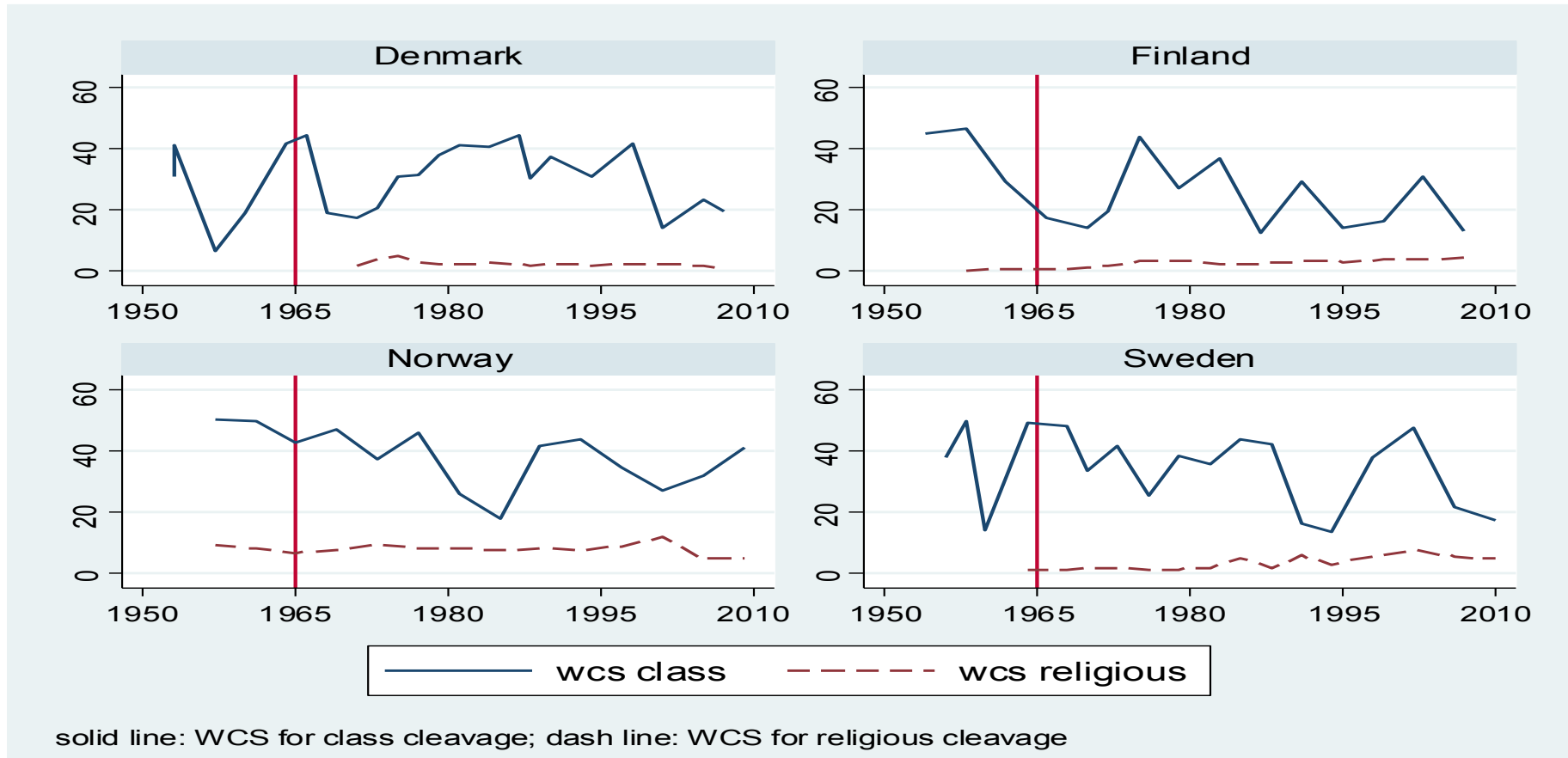
**Table 6.2: Bloc-Weighted Cleavage Salience index (WCS) for the class and religious cleavages in the predominantly Protestant countries, 1950–64**

	WCS	Mean	s.d.	period (N)
Denmark (aggregate data)	class	27.88	14.97	1953-64
	religious	-	-	(5)
Finland (aggregate data)	class	40.08	9.36	1954-62
	religious	0.30	0.37	(3)
Norway (aggregate data)	class	50.01	0.65	1957-61
	religious	8.77	0.99	(2)
Sweden (aggregate data)	class	37.84	16.60	1956-64
	religious	0.26	0.52	(4)
Sweden (individual- level data)	class	34.12	1.13	1960-64
	religious	1.39	-	(2) 1964 (1)

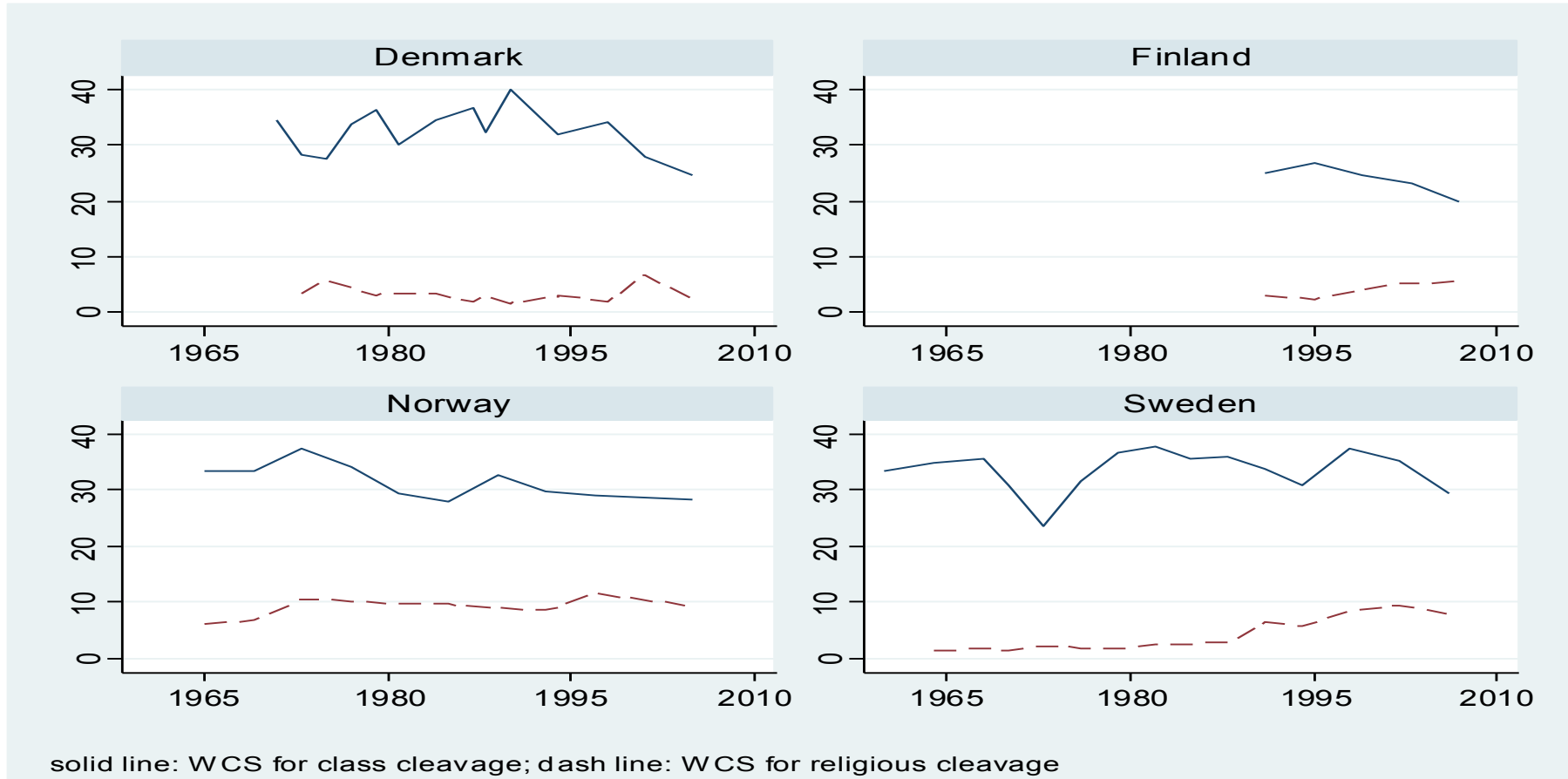
Table 6.2 reveals that during the period between the mid 1950s and the mid 1960s, the average of the WCS values for the class cleavage is higher than for the religious cleavage in all three predominantly Protestant countries. Figures 6.2 and 6.3, which depict the WCS values based on official election results and survey data (respectively) for both cleavages, confirm these trends. They show that in the three

predominantly Protestant countries, the WCS values for the class cleavage were higher than those for the religious cleavage in all time-points between 1950 and 1964.

Figure 6.2: Bloc-Weighted Cleavage Salience index (WCS) in Protestant countries, based on aggregate data



**Figure 6.3: Bloc-Weighted Cleavage Salience index (WCS) in Protestant countries, based on individual-level data**





With regards to H2, I expected that in predominantly Catholic or mixed countries the WCS average values for the religious cleavage would be higher than those for the class cleavage. The WCS mean values for the two cleavages in predominantly Catholic or mixed countries between 1950 and 1964 (based on official election results) are compared in Table 6.3. Individual-level data is not available.

**Table 6.3: Bloc-Weighted Cleavage Salience index (WCS) for the class and religious cleavages in predominantly Catholic or mixed countries, 1950–64, based on aggregate data**

	WCS	mean	s.d.	period (N)
Austria	class	34.75	14.23	1956-62 (3)
	religious	11.52	4.60	
Flanders	class	18.82	8.14	1954-61 (3)
	religious	3.25	3.11	
Germany	class	21.20	-	1961 (1)
	religious	30.05	-	
Italy	class	29.24	5.45	1958-63 (2)
	religious	25.13	7.73	
Luxembourg	class	29.76	9.06	1954-64 (3)
	religious	22.38	10.29	
the Netherlands	class	20.90	6.77	1956-63 (3)
	religious	41.24	9.45	
Wallonia	class	26.64	13.83	1954-61 (3)
	religious	3.98	3.58	

I received mixed results for the first period. Only in two countries – Germany and the Netherlands – was the data consistent with my expectations, namely the WCS mean values for the religious cleavage were higher than that for class. Figure 6.4 (which presents the WCS values in Catholic and mixed countries based on aggregate data) shows that the WCS values for the religious cleavage were higher than for class in the 1961 German election (the only election in this period, as I excluded the 1953 election from my dataset: see Chapter Four on data and methodology) and in all three Dutch elections during this period.

Austria, and the two sub-national Belgian party systems – Flanders and Wallonia – reveal an opposite pattern. In these three cases, the WCS values for the class cleavage

were higher than the values for the religious cleavage over all periods, as is shown in Figure 6.4. The differences between the average values, listed in Table 6.3, are high – 23.23, 15.57 and 22.66 points difference respectively.

In Italy the WCS values for the class cleavage were higher than those for the religious cleavage, but there is only 4.11 points difference between the mean values, indicating that the WCS values for the two cleavages were very close.

In Luxembourg, too, I found an interesting situation. In the first and the third elections (1954 and 1964) the WCS values for the religious cleavage were a bit higher than those for the class cleavage. However, in the 1959 election, the WCS score for the class cleavage was much higher than for the religious cleavage. Moreover, the average of WCS levels for the two cleavages is close, (7.38 point of difference respectively).

Overall, then, in the predominantly Protestant countries as well in three predominantly Catholic party systems – Austria, Flanders and Wallonia – the WCS values for the class cleavage were much higher than those for the religious cleavage. This indicates that between 1950 and 1964 voter alignment along the class cleavage was stronger than voter alignment along the religious cleavage. Voter alignment along the religious cleavage was stronger during this period in the Netherlands and in the 1961 German election, as the WCS values for the religious cleavage were higher than those for the class cleavage. For the other two predominantly Catholic countries, Italy and Luxembourg, the WCS values for the two cleavages were very close, suggesting that voter alignments along the two cleavages were equally strong for both divisions from 1950 to 1964.

Figure 6.4: Bloc-Weighted Cleavage Salience index (WCS) in Catholic and mixed countries, based on aggregate data

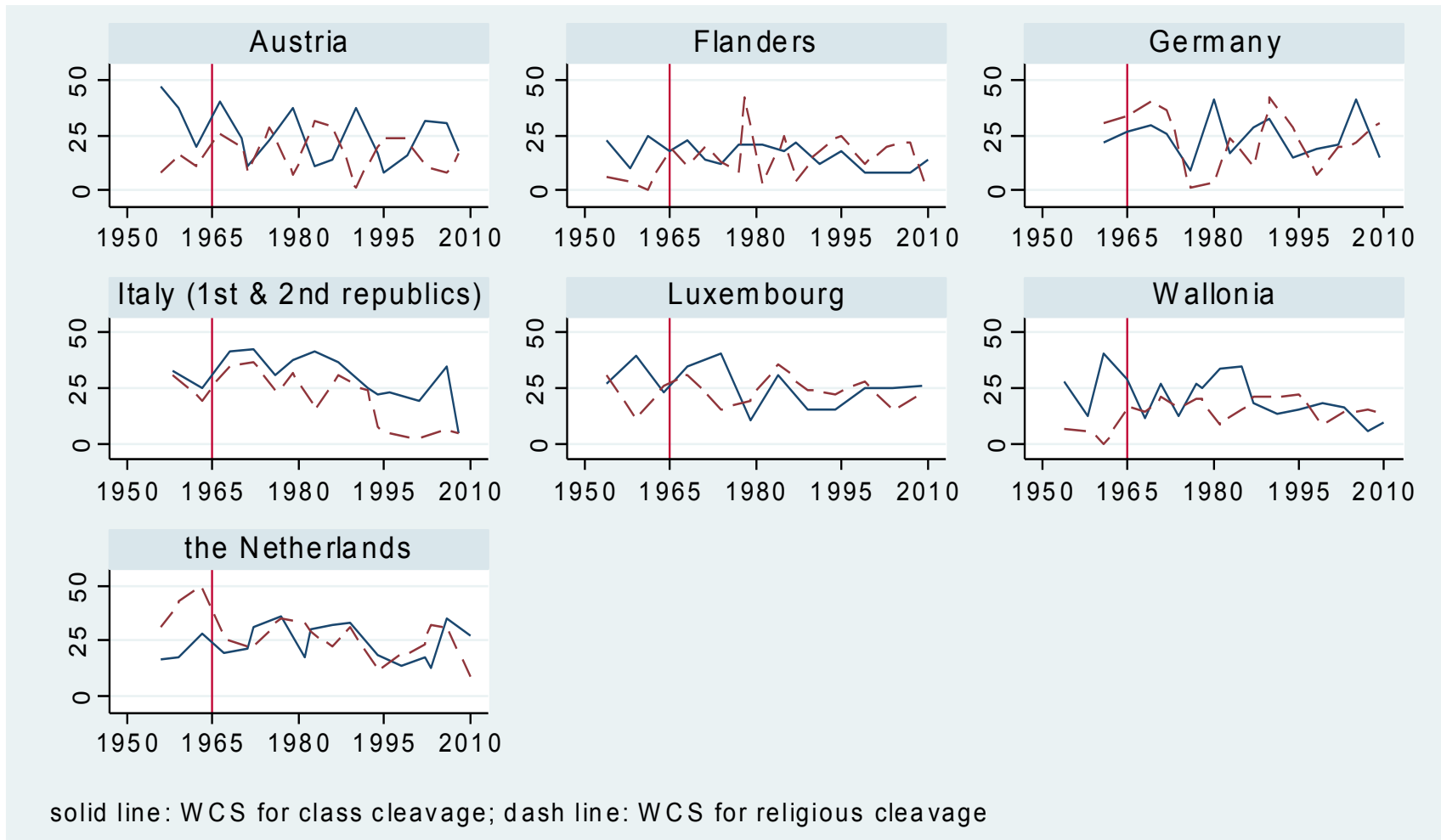
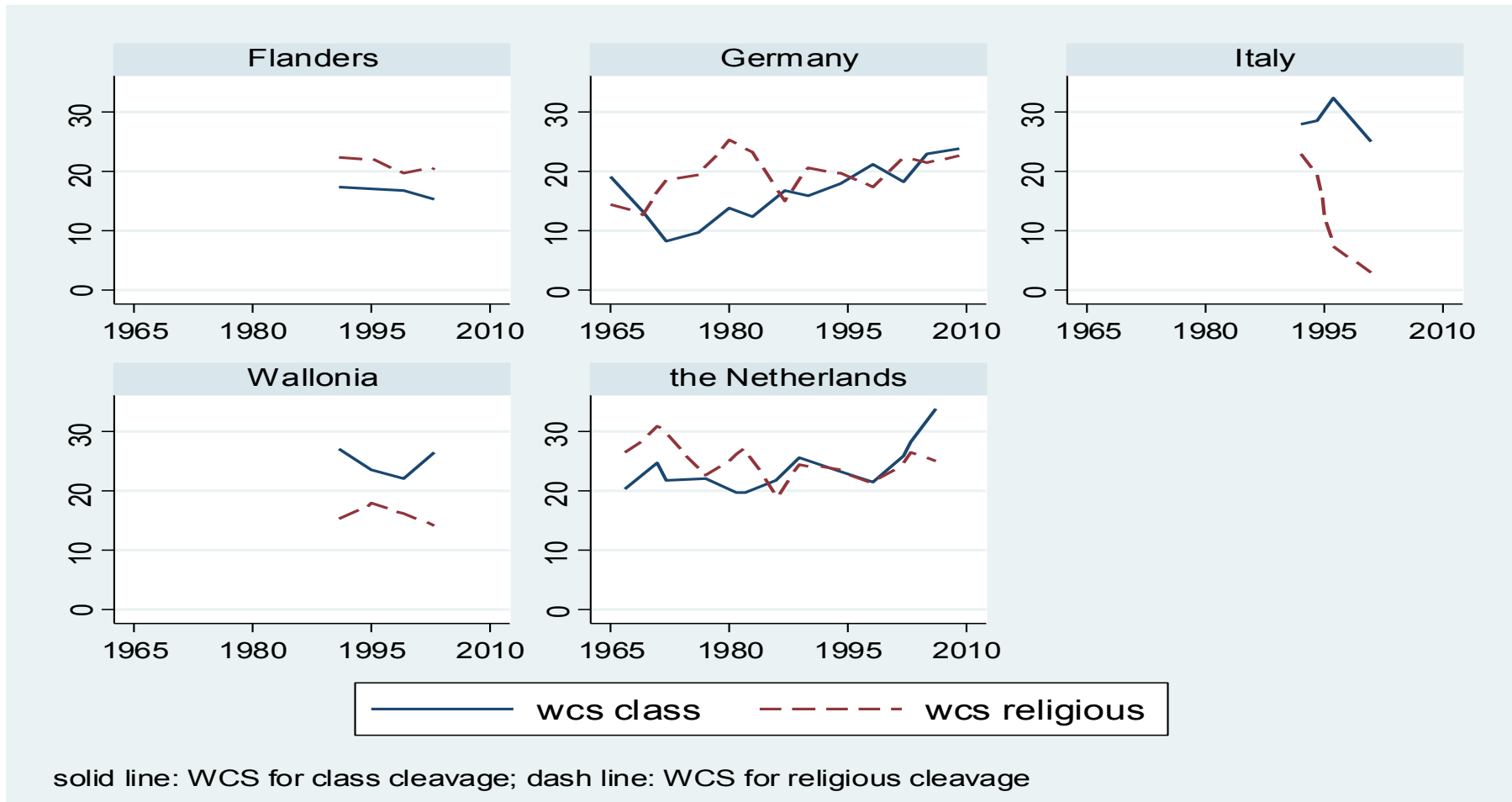


Figure 6.5: Bloc-Weighted Cleavage Salience index (WCS) in Catholic and mixed countries, based on individual-level data



*Persistence of voter alignments along the class and religious cleavages within countries over time: Hypotheses 3, 4 and 5*

The next question is: are we able to identify a realignment and a new voter alignment or a voter dealignments along the cleavages from 1965?

I begin my analysis by comparing the WCS values for the two cleavages in predominantly Catholic and mixed countries, for which I found mixed results in the first period. In three cases – Austria, Flanders and Wallonia – the WCS values for the class cleavage were higher than for the religious cleavage. In two cases – Italy and Luxembourg – the WCS values for the two cleavages were found to be at the same levels: no statistically significant difference between them was found. Germany and the Netherlands were the only cases for which the WCS values for the religious cleavage were higher than for class over the first period.

Figures 6.4 & 6.5 present the WCS values over the selected years, based on aggregate and individual-level data respectively. They indicate that in none of the three polities in which one cleavage (class or religious) was found to be dominant over the first period – Austria, Flanders, Germany, the Netherlands and Wallonia – did the less important cleavage have higher WCS values than the other cleavage in the previous period. On the contrary, the two figures show fluctuation in the cleavage with the highest WCS. This fluctuation began in Austria with the 1975 election, in the Netherlands with the 1977 election (based on aggregate data) or with the 1986 election (based on individual-level data), in Germany with the 1976 election (based on aggregate data) or with the 1987 election (based on individual-level data) and in Flanders between the 1965 and 1987 elections. In Wallonia the WCS values for the religious cleavage were slightly higher than for the class cleavage in the 1968 and 1974 elections; the differences are only 3.18 and 3.78 points. Nevertheless, the fluctuation period began with the 1987 election.

For all these cases except Flanders, this fluctuation, however, does not indicate that voter alignment along the less important cleavage became stronger, as the scenario of realignment suggests. Rather, the comparison test (presented in Figures 6.6-6.8) and the ANOVA model results (presented in Table 6.4) demonstrate that during or slightly

before this period of fluctuation, the WCS values of the dominant cleavage lowered from those measured in the first period, as is expected in period of voter dealignment.

**Table 6.4: ANOVA models for Bloc-Weighted Cleavage Salience index (WCS) for the dominant cleavage, in periods of ‘stability’ and ‘change’**

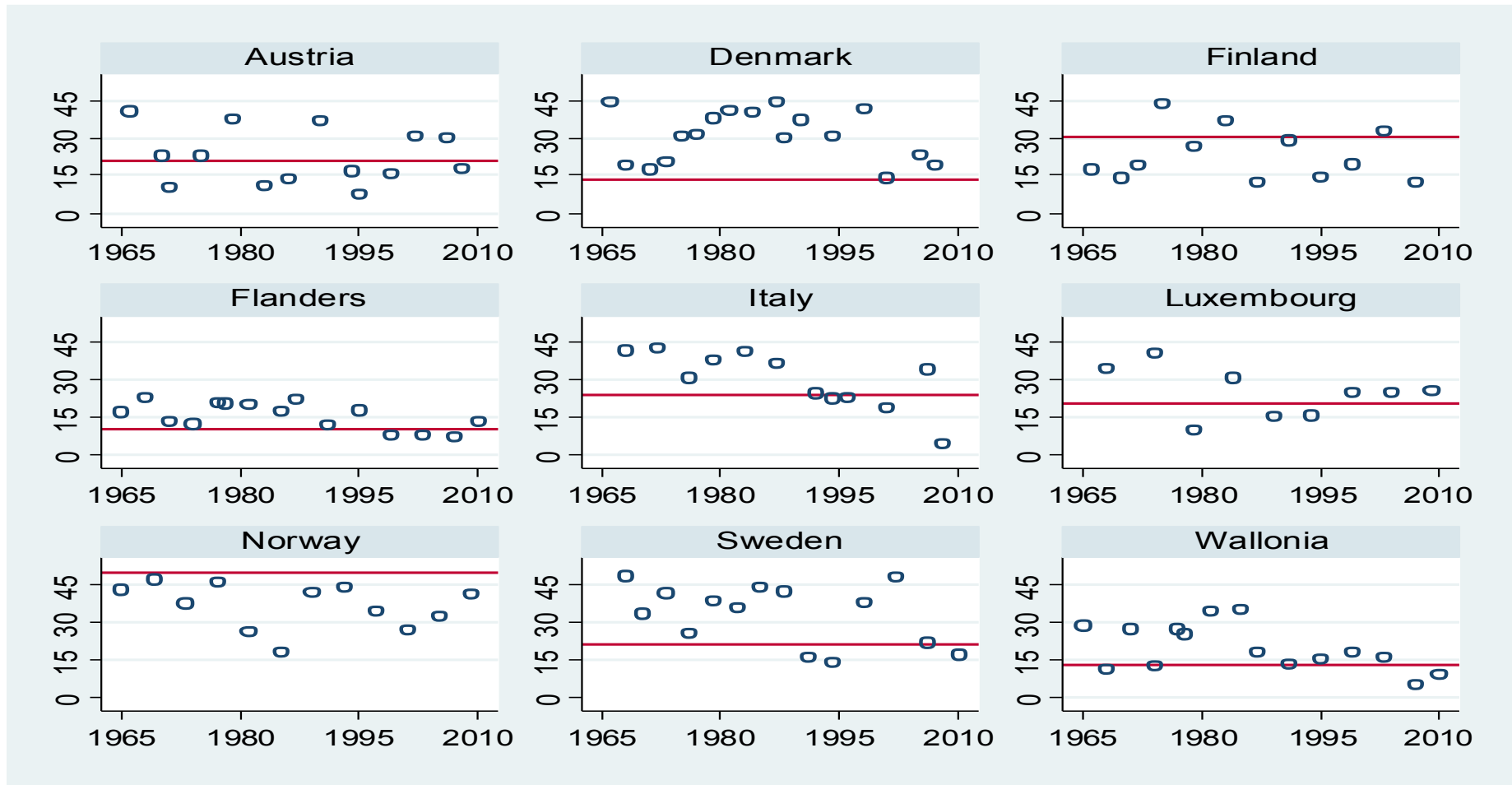
	Dominant cleavage		1 <sup>st</sup> election year	2 <sup>nd</sup> election year
Austria	Class	election year	<i>1970</i>	<i>1971</i>
		stability period Mean (s.d.)	36.23 (11.98)	33.58(11.95)
		change period Mean (s.d.)	21.07 (10.08)	20.91 (10.51)
		ANOVA	F(1,4.4)=5.26*	F(1,6.74)=4.25*
		AIC	120.9	122.3
		BIC	122.5	123.9
		period (time-points)		1956-2008 (17)
Denmark	Class	election year	<i>2001</i>	<i>2005</i>
		stability period Mean (s.d.)	31.91 (10.84)	31.01 (11.28)
		change period Mean (s.d.)	18.90 (4.67)	21.35 (2.78)
		ANOVA	F( 1,6.34)=12.57**	F(1,6.12)=9.12**
		AIC	156.8	158.6
		BIC	158.9	160.8
		period (time-points)		1953-2007 (22)
Finland	Class	election year	<i>1966</i>	<i>1970</i>
		stability period Mean (s.d.)	40.08 (9.35)	34.44 (13.61)
		change period Mean (s.d.)	23.21 (10.46)	23.73 (10.81)
		ANOVA	F(1,3.39)=7.43*	F(1,4.46)=2.02
		AIC	105.1	108.0
		BIC	106.5	109.4
		period (time-points)		1954-2007 (15)
Flanders	Class	election year	<i>1985</i>	<i>1987</i>
		stability period Mean (s.d.)	18.40 (5.02)	18.33 (4.77)
		change period Mean (s.d.)	13.28 (5.50)	12.67 (5.64)
		ANOVA	F(1,14.4)=4.16*	F(1,11.3)=4.85**
		AIC	106.7	105.7
		BIC	108.5	107.5
		period (time-points)		1954-2010 (18)
Italy (1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> republics)	Religious	election year	<i>1976</i>	<i>1979</i>
		stability period Mean (s.d.)	30.46 (7.66)	29.08 (7.32)
		change period Mean (s.d.)	14.88 (11.46)	13.91 (11.72)
		ANOVA	F(1,8.5)=8.73**	F(1,11.7)=8.86**
		AIC	97.9	97.2
		BIC	99.1	98.4
		period (time-points)		1958-2008 (14)
Italy (1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> republics)	Class	election year	<i>1983</i>	<i>1987</i>
		stability period Mean (s.d.)	35.34 (6.79)	36.17 (6.57)
		change period Mean	25.73 (11.63)	23.53 (10.61)

		(s.d.)		
		ANOVA	F(1,11.5)=3.76*	F(1,10)=7.18**
		AIC	95.4	92.9
		BIC	96.7	94.2
		period (time-points)	1958-2008 (14)	
Luxembourg	Class	election year	1979	1984
		stability period Mean	32.97 (8.07)	29.17 (11.77)
		(s.d.)		
		change period Mean	21.07 (7.41)	22.88 (6.18)
		(s.d.)		
		ANOVA	F(1,8.27)=6.79**	F(1,7.57)=1.34
		AIC	76.7	78.8
		BIC	77.6	79.8
		period (time-points)	1954-2009 (12)	
the Netherlands	Religious	election year	1967	1971
		stability period Mean	41.24 (9.45)	37.43 (10.84)
		(s.d.)		
		change period Mean	24.76 (7.99)	24.66 (8.31)
		(s.d.)		
		ANOVA	F(1,2.65)=7.91*	F(1,4.15)=4.71*
		AIC	113.3	115.6
		BIC	115.0	117.3
		period (time-points)	1956-2010 (17)	
Norway	Class	election year	1965	1969
		stability period Mean	50.01 (0.65)	47.63 (4.15)
		(s.d.)		
		change period Mean	36.43 (9.12)	35.84 (9.33)
		(s.d.)		
		ANOVA	F(1,11.6)=25.84***	F(1,8.19)=10.18**
		AIC	89.0	91.9
		BIC	90.3	93.2
		period (time-points)	1957-2009 (14)	
Sweden (based on aggregate data)	Class	election year	1991	1994
		stability period Mean	38.33 (10.36)	36.62 (11.68)
		(s.d.)		
		change period Mean	25.75 (13.84)	27.68 (14.54)
		(s.d.)		
		ANOVA	F(1,7.91)=3.87*	F(1,6.1)=1.51
		AIC	131.4	134.0
		BIC	133.2	135.8
		period (time-points)	1956-2010 (18)	
Wallonia	Class	election year	1987	1991
		stability period Mean	25.52 (9.66)	24.90 (9.47)
		(s.d.)		
		change period Mean	14.26 (4.83)	13.51 (5.00)
		(s.d.)		
		ANOVA	F(1,15)=10.26**	F(1,13.7)=10.39**
		AIC	119.9	113.0
		BIC	113.5	114.7
		period (time-points)	1954-2010 (18)	

\* $p \leq 0.1$ , \*\*  $p \leq 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.01$  (in two-tailed)

Note: The time variable was scored 0 for all time points up to this election, 1 for that election and for all time-points afterward. This table presents only the results for the first two elections, which are statistically significant in each case.

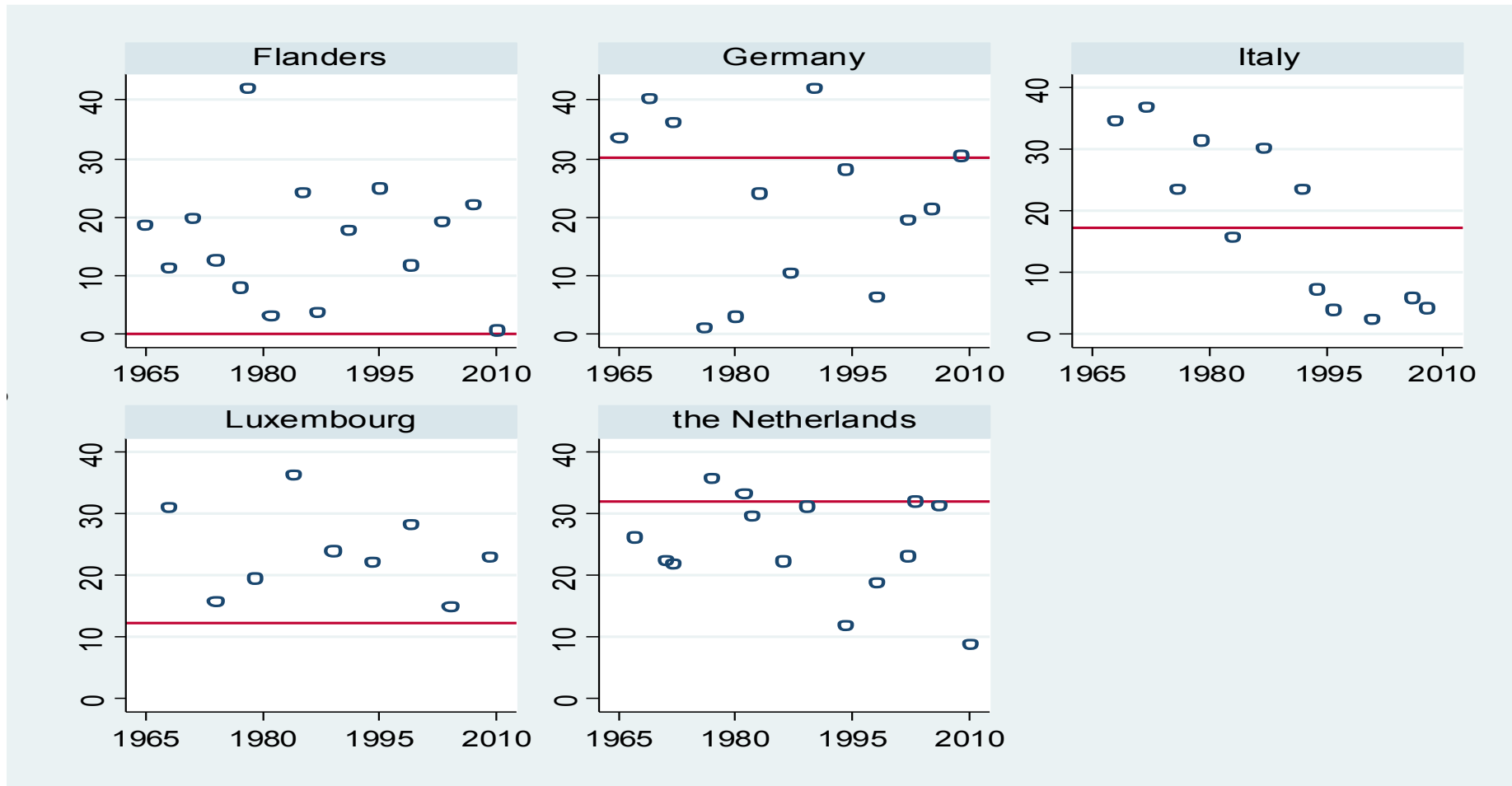
Figure 6.6: Bloc-Weighted Cleavage Salience index (WCS) for the class cleavage in comparison to the reference line, based on aggregate data



Note: the reference line is the average WCS level between 1950 and 1964 minus one standard deviation

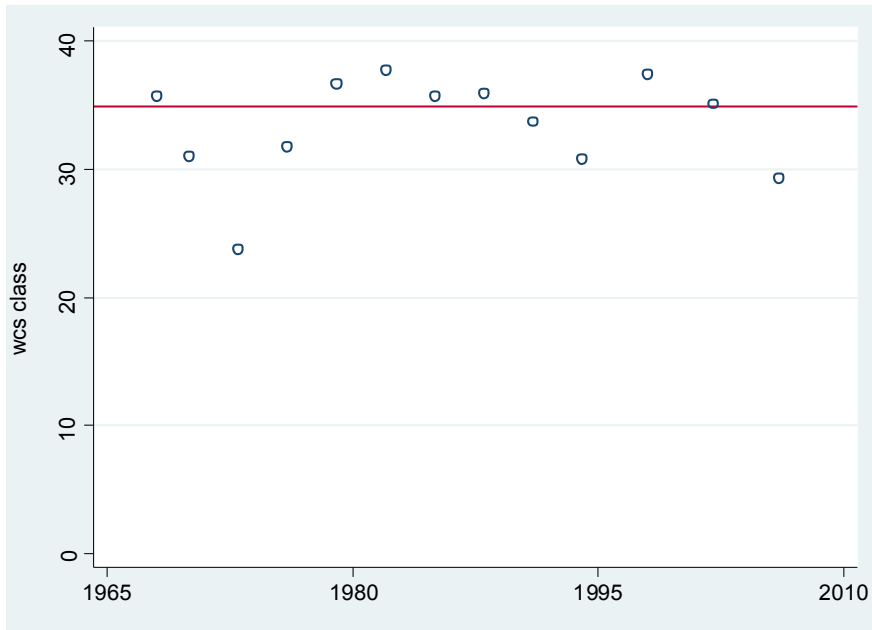


Figure 6.7: Bloc-Weighted Cleavage Salience index (WCS) for the religious cleavage in comparison to the reference line, based on aggregate data



Note: the reference line is the average WCS level between 1950 and 1964 minus one standard deviation

**Figure 6.8: Bloc-Weighted Cleavage Salience index (WCS) for the class cleavage in comparison to the reference line, for Sweden, based on individual-level data**



*Note: the reference line is the average WCS level between 1950 and 1964 minus one standard deviation*

In Austria, WCS values for the dominant cleavage – the class cleavage – were lower than those found in the alignment period. This includes the first period (1950-1964) and the period from the 1970 election onwards, with some exceptions – the 1975, 1983-1986 and 1995-1999 elections (see in Figure 6.6). However, Figure 6.4 indicates that at these exact time-points, the religious cleavage had higher WCS values than the class cleavage, which suggests that at these time-points, voter alignment along the religious cleavage was stronger than voter alignment along the class cleavage. Table 6.4, which presents the ANOVA coefficients for the two periods of ‘stability’ and ‘change’, provides statistical support for this change. The ANOVA model coefficient for the WCS of class cleavage in the 1970 and 1971 elections is statistically significant, indicating that the average WCS value for the period from the 1970 election onwards is significantly lower than the average for the previous elections. In summary, there was a decrease in the WCS values for the class cleavage from 1970 onwards.

In the case of Wallonia, the ANOVA model suggests that the average WCS value for the period from 1987 onwards are significantly lower than the average value for the earlier period, as the ANOVA coefficient in the 1987 and 1991 elections are

statistically significant. The comparison test, however, indicates that the WCS values are below the reference line only in the last two elections (2007 and 2010). However, Figure 6.4 demonstrates that based on the aggregate data, in the 1987-1995 elections the WCS values for the class cleavage were already much lower than those for the religious cleavage.

Weakening of voter alignment along the strongest cleavage also occurred in the Netherlands, where the religious cleavage is found to be dominant during the first period. Figure 6.7 reveals that the WCS values for the religious cleavage were below the reference line from the 1967 election onwards, apart from the 1977 and 1981 elections. Even for these two elections, the two datasets suggest that the WCS levels for both cleavages were at almost the same level (as can be seen in Figures 6.4 & 6.5): the individual-level dataset indicates that in the 1977 election the difference between the two WCS values is only 0.47 point difference, and the aggregate dataset demonstrates that in the 1981 election the difference is only 1.26 point difference.

The second method – the ANOVA model – supports this finding, as the model coefficient in the 1967 election and in the following election of 1971 is statistically significant. This suggests that in average the WCS values for the religious cleavage have been lower from 1967 onwards than those for the period 1950-1964.

For Germany, I uncovered intriguing results.<sup>5</sup> The comparison test indicates that the WCS values for the religious cleavage only in some of the elections – 1976, 1980, 1987, 1998 and 2002 – were much smaller than the WCS value in the 1961 election. The smallest difference with the reference line is 10.66 points difference (in the 2002 election), and the biggest difference is 28.8 points difference (in the 1976 election).

In addition, the official election results dataset suggests that the religious cleavage lost its dominant position in the 1976 and 1980 elections and again in the 1987 and 1998-2005 elections, when the WCS values for the class cleavage were found to be higher than those for the religious cleavage. The national survey dataset, by contrast, indicates that for the period between 1976 and 1983 the WCS values for the religious

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<sup>5</sup> I did not run an ANOVA model on the German dataset, due to a very short period of ‘stability’ (i.e. one election year).

cleavage were higher than those for the class cleavage. This datasets indicates that only from the 1987 election onwards did a fluctuation in the cleavage with the highest WCS value begin. This is confirmed by the almost identical mean values (class Mean=19.45, religious Mean=19.88), and *Sign* test (N=7, p=1.00). These last findings demonstrate that from 1987 onwards the WCS values of the religious cleavage decreased, according to both datasets.

Flanders is an exception, however. In this case I found that the WCS values for the religious cleavage have increased from 1965 onwards. Between 1965 and 1987 there was a fluctuation in the cleavage with the highest WCS and then, from the 1991 election until the 2007 election, the WCS values for the religious cleavage were much higher than those for the class cleavage (based on both sorts of data, as is shown by Figures 6.4 & 6.5). The comparison test for the religious cleavage demonstrates that over the whole period, the WCS values for this cleavage are much higher than the reference line, with the exception of the last election (2010). In addition, none of the ANOVA coefficients indicate that the WCS values were significantly lower in any split between two periods. On the other hand, the ANOVA model affirms the decrease of the WCS values for the class cleavage. In the 1985 and 1987 elections the average WCS score for the period of 'change' is lower than for the period of 'stability' and the ANOVA model coefficient is statistically significant. All of this demonstrates that between 1965 and 1981, the WCS of the religious cleavage increased to the same level of the class cleavage, and from 1985 onwards the WCS values for the class cleavage declined while the WCS values for the religious cleavage remained high.

I then examined the two cases wherein both cleavages were found to be equally salient over the first period – Luxembourg and Italy. In both polities, voter alignments along both cleavages eroded over time.

In Luxembourg, the erosion of voter alignment along the class cleavage began with the 1979 election. The comparison test shows that in the 1979, 1989 and 1994 elections the WCS values for the class cleavage were lower than the reference line. The ANOVA model suggests that since the 1979 election were the WCS values significantly lower than those of the previous years. In addition, when I compared the WCS values for both cleavages in each election year, I discovered that for the period

between 1979 and 1999, the WCS values for the religious cleavage were much higher than those for the class cleavage. Concerning voter alignment along the religious cleavage, the comparison test demonstrates that the WCS values for the religious cleavage were never lower than those of the first period, as all the values are above the reference line. Yet, as Figure 6.4 shows, in the 2004-2009 elections the WCS values for the religious cleavage were lower than those for the class cleavage, indicating that the religious cleavage lost its dominance over the class cleavage from the 2004 election onwards.

In the Italian case, the aggregate dataset and the individual-level data (with the exception of the last election) indicate that the WCS values for the class cleavage were continually higher than those for the religious cleavage over the whole period, in both the first and the second Italian Republics. However, the comparison test and the ANOVA model indicate that voter alignments along both cleavages – class and religious – weakened over time.

As Figure 6.7 shows, the WCS values for the religious cleavage are below the reference line in the 1983 election and then from the 1994 election onwards (with the exception of the 2006 election). The ANOVA model indicates that from the election of 1976 onwards, the mean WCS values for the religious cleavage were significantly lower than those in the earlier years.

Concerning the class cleavage, in the 1983 and 1987 elections the ANOVA coefficient for the class cleavage are statistically significant, yet the comparison test demonstrates that only from the 1994 election are the WCS values lower than the reference line. This indicates that only in the second Italian Republic did more voters cross the line of the class cleavage; from this point, Italian voter alignment along this cleavage erodes.

I now turn to my analysis of the results for the predominantly Protestant countries, where the level of WCS values for the class cleavage were found to be lower than those for the religious cleavage during the first period.

The results for the four Scandinavian predominantly Protestant countries – Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden – are clear: over the entire period, the WCS values for the class cleavage were higher than those for the religious cleavage. This is true for all the time-points based on both datasets, as can be seen in Figures 6.2 & 6.3.

The comparison test and the ANOVA model demonstrate that the erosion of voter alignment along the class cleavage had already begun in Finland and Norway in the mid 1960s.

In both countries, the WCS values for the class cleavage are lower than the reference line in most of the election years since 1965. In Finland, there are a few exceptions, in which the WCS value is higher than the reference line. This is the case in the 1975 and 1983 elections. Nevertheless, the ANOVA model confirms that the WCS values from the 1965 election onwards were lower than those in previous elections, as the model coefficient for the first two Norwegian elections is statistically significant. Concerning the Finnish case, the ANOVA coefficient is statistically significant only for the first election. This is probably due to the three deviate elections, which were identified by the comparison test.

Concerning the Swedish case, the ANOVA coefficient only for the 1991 election (based on aggregate data) is statistically significant. The comparison test, however, suggests that the WCS values were lower than those measured in the first period. The timing is different between the two datasets. The WCS values produced by individual-level data are already lower than the reference line in the elections between 1970-1976, and then again in the 1994 and 2006 elections. However, for the test based on the aggregate data, the WCS values dip below the reference line slightly later, in the 1991, 1994 and 2010 elections. All in all, the comparison test (based on the two types of datasets) together with the ANOVA model of the aggregate data suggest that the WCS values were lower than those in the previous elections from 1991 onwards.

With regard to Denmark, Figure 6.6 shows that the WCS values for the class cleavage in Denmark over the second period are much higher than the reference line. In addition, none of the ANOVA models indicates on significant difference in mean ETP

between the two periods. Together with the results of the comparison test, this demonstrates that the WCS values did not decrease over the entire period.

### **6.5 Voter Alignment, Realignment and Dealignment along the Class and Religious Cleavages: Discussion**

This chapter has examined stability and change of voter alignments along the class and religious cleavages, as measured by the Bloc-Weighted Cleavage Salience index (WCS). The index computes Bloc Volatility as a fraction of Total Volatility (i.e. the Cleavage Salience index (CS) and also controls for the size of the bloc of parties. This facilitates the WCS to neutralise sensitivity to this component, which the original CS index fails to do. The WCS index is constructed in such a way that it renders high values if the alignment of a cleavage is strong. These high values are drawn from that fact that of all the voters who change their party support between two successive elections, few will choose to cross the dividing cleavage line and switch their support to a party on the other side of this line.

This empirical research supports Hypothesis 1. Between 1950 and the mid 1960s in the predominantly Protestant countries, the WCS values for the class cleavage were much higher than those for the religious cleavage. This indicates that fewer voters crossed the divide between the class parties and the non-class parties, when compared with the estimation of voters who changed their electoral support between religious parties and non-religious parties or the other way around. This means that voter alignment along the class cleavage was stronger than alignment along the religious cleavage.

Hypothesis 2 suggested that during the period between 1950 and the mid 1960s in predominantly Catholic or mixed countries, voter alignment along the religious cleavage was more dominant than alignment along the class cleavage. This hypothesis was verified only in the cases of Germany and the Netherlands. In both cases, I found that the WCS values for the religious cleavage were higher than those for the class cleavage. For the other two cases – Italy and Luxembourg – the WCS values for the two cleavages the same, suggesting that voter alignments along both cleavages were equally strong. In the other three cases – Austria, Flanders and Wallonia – the results

contradicted my expectations. Surprisingly, I discovered that the WCS values for the class cleavage were higher than those for the religious cleavage. Based on this, I conclude that voter alignment along the class cleavage was stronger than alignment along the religious cleavage during this period.

Examining the levels of WCS values for the class cleavage (between 1950 and 1964) in countries where this cleavage was the salient cleavage, reveals that the average values for predominantly Protestant countries are higher than those for predominantly Catholic and mixed countries. For the first group it ranges between 27.88 (in Denmark) and 50.01 (in Norway) and for the latter group only between 18.82 (in Flanders) and 34.75 (in Austria).

Three rival hypotheses were tested using data from 1965 onwards. The first hypothesis posited a realignment: a switch of or a change in the dominant cleavage. The second hypothesis posited a dealignment: an erosion (or weakening) of the dominant cleavage without voter alignment along the other cleavage becoming stronger. The third hypothesis posited continuous voter alignment along the dominant cleavage.

The data regarding the stability and change of voter alignments along the class and religious cleavages were fed to three tests – a comparison of the WCS values between the two cleavages in each election year, a comparison test of the WCS values in each election year against a reference line, and an ANOVA model (of WCS values split into two periods of ‘stability’ and ‘change’). The results are summarised in Table 6.5. This Table shows that a difference in the strength of voter alignment between the two groups of countries did not influence the persistence or change of alignments. In two predominantly Protestant countries – Finland and Norway – strong voter alignment along the class cleavage diminished from the mid 1960s onwards. In most of the predominantly Catholic and mixed countries, this alignment began to erode slightly later, in the 1970s-1980s. Yet, in two cases – Italy (a predominantly Catholic country) and Sweden (a predominantly Protestant country) – this erosion commenced only in the early 1990s. Interestingly, with the exception of the Netherlands, the weakening of voter alignment along the religious cleavage only began in the mid 1980s – much later than the class cleavage’s weakening.



**Table 6.5: Stability and change of voter alignments along the class and religious cleavages**

<i>Voter alignment along class or religious cleavage, in the period 1950-1964</i>			
	Class	Religious	Class & Religious
	Austria Denmark Finland Flanders Norway Sweden Wallonia	Germany the Netherlands	Italy Luxembourg
<i>Voter alignment, realignment (and a new alignment) or dealignment from 1965 onwards</i>			
	Class	Religious	Class & Religious
Alignment	Austria (until 1970) Denmark (until 2007) Flanders (until 1985) Italy (until 1994) Sweden (until 1991) Wallonia (until 1987)	Germany (until 1987) Luxembourg (1979-2004)	Italy (until 1983) Luxembourg (until 1979)
Dealignment	Austria (1970 onwards) Finland (1966 onwards) Flanders (1985 onwards) Italy (1994 onwards) Luxembourg (1979 onwards) Norway (1965 onwards) Sweden (1991 onwards) Wallonia (1987 onwards)	the Netherlands (1967 onwards) Germany (1987 onwards) Italy (1983 onwards) Luxembourg (2004 onwards)	
Realignment (and a new alignment)		Flanders (1965 onwards)	

The erosion of voter alignment(s) along the dominant cleavage(s) was evident in most of the countries, regardless of which cleavage was dominant. Denmark and Flanders are the only exceptions here. The trend in Denmark suggests a continuity of alignment

along the class cleavage. A possible explanation for this is the electoral support of the new class – the white-collar strata (in particular public sector workers) for the Social-Democratic parties. This explanation was supported by Kunsten (2005), who found that the Danish public sector (which is the largest European public sector, relatively) tends to vote for Left Socialist parties. Moreover, he discovered no significant differences between voters in the private and the public sectors regarding support of the Socialist-Democratic (SD) party; Kunsten explained that in Denmark, the former category is mainly employed in the services sector, rather than in the industry related spaces, as is the case in other European countries.

In Flanders I uncovered a different process, i.e. voter alignment along the class cleavage in conjunction with a new alignment based on the religious cleavage, and later a dealignment from the class cleavage. Here, the strength of voter alignment along the religious cleavage, captured by the WCS index, has grown stronger than the class cleavage from the mid 1960s. This reveals a realignment phase – the party system has aligned along both cleavages since the mid 1960s. During mid 1980s, the WCS of the class cleavage decreased not only in comparison to the religious cleavage's WCS value, but also in comparison to the overall WCS values measured in the first period. These changes indicate erosion or dealignment concerning the class cleavage, but not for the religious cleavage, which maintained its position, as is measured by the WCS index.

The realignment that I identified only in the case of Flanders can be explained by the creation and institutionalisation of the sub-national party system. The new alignment along the religious cleavage, which emerged in the mid 1960s, occurred at the same period during which the Catholic Party (CVP/PSC) became the first Belgian party to split into two separate parties (in 1968). Both alignments were maintained during the period of party system establishment, when other Belgian parties – the Liberal party (PVV/PLP) and the Socialist party (BSP/PSB) – split (in 1971 and 1978 respectively). After the sub-national party system became institutionalised in the 1980s, erosion of the alignment along the class cleavage began, while the (new) alignment along the religious cleavage has remained strong.

## 6. 6 Conclusions

This chapter shows that voter alignment along the class cleavage was stronger than or at least as strong as the alignment along the religious cleavage in almost all the studied countries, regardless of their dominant denomination. The only exceptions are Germany and the Netherlands, in which I have identified that voter alignment along the religious cleavage is stronger than that along the class cleavage.

I also found that the religious distinction between Protestant countries and Catholic and mixed countries contributed to the strength of voter alignment along the class cleavage, as I discovered that the alignment along the class cleavage in predominantly Protestant countries was much stronger than in predominantly Catholic and mixed countries. These findings support Nieubeerta and Ultee's (1999:136) argument that the Scandinavian countries (and the U.K.) had relatively high levels of class voting in the studied periods, when compared with other European countries.

The level of voter alignment strength, however, is not helpful in predicting the point in time when voter alignment begins to erode. In some pre-dominantly Protestant countries the strong alignment along the class cleavage began diminishing in the mid 1960s, while in predominantly Catholic and mixed countries this alignment eroded in the 1970s-mid 1980s. In two cases, drawn from both groups of countries, voter dealignment along the class cleavage did not commence until the early 1990s. The weakening of voter alignment along the religious cleavage occurred, by contrast, much later – from the mid 1980s. A possible explanation for this is that the salience of moral issues, including marriage and divorce, birth control, abortion, sex education, pornography and so on, has been “especially important since the late 1960s” (Lijphart, 1980:83); see also (Kriesi, et al., 2008a).

The only cases in which alignments along the religious or class cleavages still persist are Denmark and Flanders. It seems likely that the persistence of the alignment along the class cleavage in Denmark can be explained by class-sector support. The establishment and institutionalisation of the sub-national party system in Flanders in the mid 1960s may account for its realignment along the religious cleavage.

Overall, I found that there has been a decline of alignment along the class cleavage, in contrast with Bartolini and Mair's (1990) argument that the levels of Bloc Volatility of the class cleavage "*offer strong confirmation of the freezing hypothesis*" (Bartolini & Mair, 1990:101) (italics in original). I believe that these contradictory empirical findings are rooted in two explanations. Firstly, the time frames for each study differed. Secondly and more importantly, the methodology also differed. The employment of the WCS index allowed me to demonstrate that signs of the erosion of class-based voting were evident in some of the countries as early as the mid 1960s - 1970s.

## CHAPTER 7

### ALIGNMENT, REALIGNMENT, OR DEALIGNMENT IN TWO MANIFESTATIONS – A COMBINED ANALYSIS

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Chapters Five and Six dealt with the issue of alignment in two of its manifestations. Chapter Five presented the socio-psychological approach and examined partisan alignment as articulated by patterns of partisanship, and Chapter Six presented the socio-structural approach and tested voter alignments along the class and religious cleavages. The combined research of these manifestations provides an up-to-date assessment of the phenomenon of alignment. In each of these chapters, I have examined patterns of alignment and its possible disappearance, either through shifts into a new alignment or through dealignment. Indeed, the division of the empirical analysis into two separate chapters, each examining one manifestation of alignment, has assisted in this study of the possibility (and timing) of changes in each alignment's manifestations. However, the separation of the empirical research also conceals the broad picture of stability and change of alignment. Moreover, identifying a change in one or both manifestation(s) then raises the questions of how the realignment or dealignment process begins, how it develops over time, and what the possible links are between these processes and patterns of party system structure.

Addressing these questions will provide empirical insights into the phenomena of realignment and dealignment in a multi-party system, and thus the basis for developing theoretical and conceptual knowledge of these two phenomena. This chapter combines the findings of the previous empirical chapters and analyses alignment as it is articulated simultaneously by both of the selected manifestations. It begins by raising the question of the durability of alignment in both manifestations. In order to identify a transition between the two manifestations of alignment, the occurrence of realignment and the shift into a dealignment across the manifestations is then discussed. Since in all the cases, apart from Denmark, signs of dealignment

were found in one or both manifestations, the chapter finishes by presenting models of the development of the dealignment process.

### **7.1 Signs of Stability and Change of Partisan Alignment and Voter Alignment Along a Cleavage**

This research studies the phenomenon of alignment by examining its two manifestations. Chapter Five examined partisan alignment as articulated by patterns of party identification and stable party support. The latter was measured by trends in the proportions of voters who reported supporting the same party in two consecutive elections, based on individual-level data and its equivalent estimation - the Electoral Total Partisans (ETP), based on aggregate data (for an explanation of this index, see Appendix A). Chapter Six tested patterns of voter alignments along two socio-structural cleavages – those of class and religion – the electoral closeness of which was measured by employing the Bloc-Weighted Cleavage Saliency index (WCS) (for an explanation of this index, see Appendix A).

Overall evidence for change is found through research into the two manifestations. Partisan dealignment was found in all cases except Luxembourg and Denmark. The transition into a situation of partisan dealignment occurred in two waves. The early and the major wave began in the mid 1960s and ended in the early 1970s, and included Finland (1970), Italy (1972), the Netherlands (1967), Norway (1973) and Wallonia (1965). The second, smaller wave occurred from the early 1980s to the early 1990s, affecting Austria (1983), Flanders (1991), Germany (1990) and Sweden (1982). In Luxembourg, no signs of partisanship erosion were found. In addition, signs of partisan critical realignment were identified in the 1973 Danish election.

The erosion of voter alignment along the class cleavage in predominantly Protestant countries began in the mid 1960s in Finland (1966) and Norway (1965). In predominantly Catholic and mixed countries it started slightly later, in the 1970s: Austria (1970), Flanders (1985), Luxembourg (1979) and Wallonia (1987). In two other cases it commenced in the 1990s: Italy (1994) and Sweden (1991). Alignment along the class cleavage weakened much earlier than the religious cleavage, which began diminishing from the mid 1980s onwards: Italy (1983), Germany (1987) and

Luxembourg (2004); it occurred earlier than this only in the Netherlands (1967). Evidence of persistence of voter alignment along the class cleavage was found in Denmark, and in Flanders a new voter alignment along the religious cleavage was created in the 1965 election.

The different time periods of each manifestation, per case, are presented in Table 7.1.

Alignment, realignment or dealignment in two manifestations

**Table 7.1: Alignment, Realignment or Dealignment in the two manifestations of alignment, in every election year between 1950 and 2010, per case**

Austria																									
Partisan Cleavage	1953	1956	1959	1962	1966	1970	1971	1975	1979	1983	1986	1990	1994	1995	1999	2002	2006	2008							
	Partisan alignment									Partisan dealignment															
	Voter alignment along class cleavage						Voter dealignment along class cleavage																		
Denmark																									
Partisan Cleavage	1950	1953	1953	1957	1960	1964	1966	1968	1971	1973	1975	1977	1979	1981	1984	1987	1988	1990	1994	1998	2001	2005	2007		
	Partisan alignment									Partisan critical realignment and a new alignment															
	Voter alignment along class cleavage																								
Finland																									
Partisan Cleavage	1951	1954	1958	1962	1966	1970	1972	1975	1979	1983	1987	1991	1995	1999	2003	2007									
	Partisan alignment						Partisan dealignment																		
	Voter alignment along class cleavage					Voter dealignment along class cleavage																			
Flanders																									
Partisan Cleavage	1950	1954	1958	1961	1965	1968	1971	1974	1977	1978	1981	1985	1987	1991	1995	1999	2003	2007							
	Partisan alignment									Partisan dealignment															
	Voter alignment along class cleavage				Voter alignment along class cleavage and a new alignment along the religious cleavages						Voter dealignment along class cleavage and a (new) alignment along the religious cleavage														
Germany																									
Partisan Cleavage	1957	1961	1965	1969	1972	1976	1980	1983	1987	1990	1994	1998	2002	2005	2009										
	Partisan alignment									Partisan dealignment															
	Voter alignment along religious cleavage									Voter dealignment along religious cleavage															
Italy (1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> Republics)																									
Partisan Cleavage	1953	1958	1963	1968	1972	1976	1979	1983	1987	1992	1994	1996	2001	2006	2008										
	Partisan alignment				Partisan dealignment																				
	Voter alignments along class and religious cleavages							Voter dealignment along religious cleavage and alignment along class cleavage				Voter dealignments along both cleavages													



Luxembourg

	1951	1954	1959	1964	1968	1974	1979	1984	1989	1994	1999	2004	2009
Partisan Cleavage	Partisan alignment												
	Voter alignments along religious and class cleavages						Voter dealignment along class cleavage and alignment along religious cleavage				Voter dealignments along both cleavages		

the Netherlands

	1952	1956	1959	1963	1967	1971	1972	1977	1981	1982	1986	1989	1994	1998	2002	2003	2006	2010
Partisan Cleavage	Partisan alignment					Partisan dealignment												
	Voter alignment along religious cleavage					Voter dealignment along religious cleavage												

Norway

	1953	1957	1961	1965	1969	1973	1977	1981	1985	1989	1993	1997	2001	2005	2009
Partisan Cleavage	Partisan alignment					Partisan dealignment									
	Voter alignment along class cleavage			Voter dealignment along class cleavage											

Sweden

	1952	1956	1958	1960	1964	1968	1970	1973	1976	1979	1982	1985	1988	1991	1994	1998	2002	2006
Partisan Cleavage	Partisan alignment										Partisan dealignment							
	Voter alignment along class cleavage										Voter dealignment along class cleavage							

Wallonia

	1950	1954	1958	1961	1965	1968	1971	1974	1977	1978	1981	1985	1987	1991	1995	1999	2003	2007
Partisan Cleavage	Partisan alignment					Partisan dealignment												
	Voter alignment along class cleavage										Voter dealignment along class cleavage							

Taking into account the evidence of alignment in both manifestations gives us a clear picture of the phenomenon of alignment and an indication of the durability of the alignment in these two manifestations. Table 7.2 specifies the findings of alignment, realignment and dealignment as found across the two manifestations for each case.

In almost half of the cases, alignment *in both manifestations* persisted only until the mid 1960s: Norway and Wallonia (until 1965), Finland (until 1966) and the Netherlands (until 1967). In other cases, it lasted into the 1970s: Austria (until 1970), Denmark (until 1973), Italy (until 1972), and Luxembourg (until 1979), and in Germany and Sweden it held until the mid 1980s (1987 and 1982, respectively).

In Flanders, a new voter alignment along the religious cleavage was created in the 1965 election, while alignment along the class cleavage continued. However, as I explained in Chapter Six, this realignment is explained by the supply aspect – the creation and institutionalisation of the sub-national Flemish party systems. The next shift in the Flemish party system is identified in 1985, when voter dealignment along the class cleavage began.

Overall, this demonstrates that the transition from alignment into dealignment or to a new alignment, as articulated by both manifestations of alignment, occurred in a period of twenty-two years, from 1965 to 1987. As of the late 1980s, none of the cases has displayed a situation of alignment in both manifestations.

The next question is a shift to what – was it a transition into dealignment, or was a new alignment between the electorate and parties created? In the previous two chapters, for each manifestation of alignment I established per case whether the alignment between voters and parties shifted into a new alignment (after a realignment) or eroded without the creation of a new alignment (dealignment). As I conducted the empirical research across both manifestations, evidence for any one of the three states (alignment, realignment or dealignment) could be found for each manifestation, at any time-point, in each case study. Therefore, theoretically, the separate analysis of the two manifestations of alignment could yield nine distinct situations or states, eight of which are a shift or transition from alignment in either or

both manifestations.<sup>1</sup> Table 7.2 depicts these states and their associated empirical results.

<b>Table 7.2: States of Alignment, Realignment and Dealignment across the two manifestations</b>			
<i>The first manifestation: partisan alignment</i>			
	<i>Alignment</i>	<i>Realignment and a new alignment</i>	<i>Dealignment</i>
<i>The second manifestation: voter alignment along the class and religious cleavages</i>	<i>Alignment</i>	Denmark (critical realignment and a new alignment, 1973-)	Italy (1972 -83) Sweden (1982-91) Wallonia (1965-87)
	<i>Realignment and a new alignment</i>	Flanders (1965-1991, along religious cleavage)	Flanders (1991-, along religious cleavage)
	<i>Dealignment</i>	Austria (1970-83) Finland (1966-70) Flanders (1985-91, along class cleavage) Germany (1987-90) Luxembourg (1979-2004 along class cleavage), (2004 - along both cleavages) Norway (1965-73)	Austria (1983-) Finland (1970-) Flanders (1991-, along class cleavage) Germany (1990-) Italy (1983-94, along religious), (1994-, along both cleavages) the Netherland (1967-) Norway (1973-) Sweden (1991-) Wallonia (1987-)

The empirical study, however, shows only six states that indicate a transition. Three of these states were seen in two cases: Denmark and Flanders. The remaining states concern an alignment (i.e. partisan alignment and/or voter alignment(s) along one or both cleavages) and/or a dealignment (i.e. partisan dealignment and/or the erosion of voter alignment(s) along one or both cleavages).

<sup>1</sup> There are eight states as alignment cannot transit into itself, therefore the combination of alignment in both manifestations is not counted.

One of these states occurs with a shift into partisan dealignment, while voter alignment(s) along one or both cleavages hold(s). This situation was found in Italy (between 1972 and 1983), Sweden (from 1982 until 1991) and Wallonia (between 1965 and 1987).

The opposite situation appears when voter dealignment(s) along one or both cleavages begin(s) while partisan alignment is maintained, as was seen in Austria (between 1970 and 1983), in Finland (between 1966 and 1970), in Germany (between 1987 and 1990), and in Luxembourg (between 1979 to 2004 along the class cleavage, and 2004 onwards along both cleavages). To this group we can also assign Flanders, as it experienced partisan alignment between 1985 and 1991, while a new voter alignment along the class cleavage eroded and a new alignment along the religious cleavage was maintained.

A state of dealignment across the two manifestations was found from the mid 1960s to the early 1970s only in Finland (since 1970), the Netherlands (since 1967), and Norway (since 1973). In the other cases, this occurred much later, in the 1980s and early 1990s: Austria (since 1983), Flanders (only along the class cleavage, since 1991), Italy (from 1983 onwards along the religious cleavage and since 1994 along both cleavages), Germany (since 1990), Sweden (since 1991) and in Wallonia (since 1987).

The situation in Denmark is unique and therefore it is the deviant case in this research. My analysis of patterns of partisanship indicates a transition into a situation of partisan critical realignment in the 1973 election that was followed by a new alignment. This occurred in combination with a voter alignment along the dominant cleavage – the class cleavage.

This state, which combines a realignment (and the creation of a new alignment) in one manifestation and an alignment in the other manifestation, was also identified in Flanders between 1965 and 1991. Here, a new voter alignment developed along the religious cleavage (together with continuity of voter alignment along the class cleavage), while the partisan alignment was maintained. In the cases of Denmark and Flanders, the state of realignment did not occur in both manifestations simultaneously.

In addition, in Flanders the partisan dealignment was found only 25 years after the new voter alignment along the religious cleavage was identified. This case, together with all the other cases, actually demonstrates that a state of realignment (and appearance of a new alignment) in one manifestation does not occur simultaneously or related to a state of dealignment in the other manifestation.

States of dealignment in one or both manifestations have been identified in all the cases except Denmark. The next question this raises deals with state transition, i.e. the shift into dealignment and its development. How does this begin and how has it developed over time?

In this research I employ a modular approach to the study of the two manifestations of alignment. Therefore, no theoretical or empirical restrictions were applied to any of the state transitions in the empirical study of these manifestations. A temporal examination of these transitions across both manifestations could yield an empirical and theoretical explication of two aspects of the development of the dealignment process:

- Origin: Did the transition start in both alignment manifestations simultaneously, or did it begin in only one of the manifestations?
- Process and Development: How does the dealignment process evolve, given its origin?

In ten out of eleven cases, states of dealignment have been identified in one or both manifestations. We can recognise two main state transition models or scenarios for the dealignment process's development. Figure 7.1 displays the state transition matrix of alignment and dealignment across manifestations.

<b>Figure 7.1: State Transitions Matrix of Alignment and Dealignment across manifestations</b>				
		TO STATE		
		<i>Voter dealignment along cleavages(s) &amp; partisan alignment</i>	<i>Voter alignment along cleavages(s) &amp; partisan dealignment</i>	<i>Voter dealignment along cleavages(s) &amp; partisan dealignment</i>
FROM STATE	<i>Voter dealignment along cleavages(s) &amp; partisan alignment</i>	Luxembourg		Austria Finland Flanders Germany Norway
	<i>Voter alignment along cleavages(s) &amp; partisan dealignment</i>			Italy Sweden Wallonia
	<i>Voter dealignment along cleavages(s) &amp; partisan dealignment</i>			the Netherlands

The first state transition is a shift that begins when the dividing line(s) of (both) cleavage(s) lose (some of) their relevancy (voter dealignment(s) along one or both cleavages), and continues when parties lose voters' durable support (partisan dealignment). In four cases, this occurred almost at the same time-point. In Finland and Germany the shift began as voter dealignment along the cleavage, and then spilled over in the next election, when a partisan dealignment began. In Flanders and Norway the shift occurred in the same direction and slightly later (with one election difference). In another case, Austria, the spill-over of the dealignment process commenced much later. Here the shift began as voter dealignment along the class cleavage in the 1970 election, and only after four election years (a period of 13 years), a partisan dealignment arose (in the 1983 election).

In Luxembourg, we see a different scenario: signs of voter dealignment were identified along the cleavage(s), while the partisan alignment remained intact at least until the 2009 election. A possible explanation for this is my finding that alignment along the religious cleavage held until very recently – the 2004 election. Therefore,

based on the empirical trends in all the other cases, I predict that Luxembourg will follow the other cases and, with the erosion of voter alignments along both cleavages, signs of partisan dealignment will also appear.

The second state transition is found in the other three cases, where the shift into dealignment began as partisan dealignment and only later affected voter alignment along the cleavage(s), after few election years. In Italy and Sweden this occurred after four and three election years (eleven and nine years difference) respectively, and in Wallonia after eight election years (a period of 22 years difference).

Only in the Netherlands did the state transition into dealignment commence in the two manifestations simultaneously during the same election year – the 1967 election. A possible explanation is the depillarisation (or in Dutch *ontzuiling*), when “the role of ideology or religion within the subcultures has declined” (Anderweg & Irwin, 2002:35). This was particularly true among Dutch Catholics. Bakvis (1981:521), for example, found that while in 1963 85 percent of Dutch Catholics voted for the Catholic People’s Party (KVP), in 1972 only 38 percent did so. He described these developments among the Dutch Catholic subculture and argued that the decline of Catholic support in the KVP is a result of “the transformation of the Dutch Catholic subculture into a much less cohesive body” (Bakvis, 1981:528).

This situation, together with a very low threshold (0.67 percent since 1956 (Andeweg, 2005:494; Farrell, 1997:70), has urged the electorate to move away not only from the parties that represent the main cleavage – the religious cleavage – but also from any established political party. This is illustrated by the same 1967 election in which the new progressive-liberal party, Democrats’ 66 (D66) achieved 4.5 percent of the valid votes in its first contested election. During this election, the Catholic People’s Party (KVP) and the Labour Party (PvdA) lost 5.4 and 4.4 percent of the votes respectively (my calculations).

These two state transitions into the dealignment process provide insights into the origin and development of the dealignment process. They demonstrate that the process can commence in either alignment manifestation. They also demonstrate that

the process will appear in one manifestation first and subsequently spill over into the other manifestation. Therefore, the dealignment process develops in two phases.

## **7.2 Conclusions**

This chapter deals with the topic of alignment in its both manifestations – partisan alignment and voter alignment along the class and religious cleavages – and presents a combined analysis of the manifestations.

The empirical research indicates that the transition from alignment into dealignment or a new alignment, as articulated by either manifestation of alignment, occurred in a short period of twenty-two years, from 1965 to 1987. This is substantiated by the fact that as of the late 1980s, none of the cases has displayed a situation of alignment in both manifestations. Moreover, in the vast majority of the cases (eight out of eleven), diminishing of patterns of alignment occurred throughout the mid 1960s and mid 1970s. Erosion of alignment happened in the mid 1980s only in Flanders, Germany and Sweden. This verifies earlier arguments, according to which the alignment between voters and parties in most of the European multi-party systems diminished somewhere between the mid 1960s and mid 1970s (e.g. (Dalton, et al., 1984c; Sartori, 1994:50). The late erosion in the other three European multi-party systems can be explained as due to prominent political developments, which postponed the erosion. Flanders experienced the creation and establishment of new sub-national party system, and Germany dealt with reconstruction projects after the Second World War.

In all the cases except Denmark, signs of dealignment are evident in at least one of the alignment manifestations. Realignment in either one of the alignment manifestations is identified only in Denmark and Flanders. These two cases indicate that realignment (and new alignment) does not occur in both alignment manifestations. Similarly, realignment cannot occur simultaneously with dealignment, but only when alignment in the second manifestation is maintained. These last two arguments warrant further empirical examination.

The cases in which signs of dealignment have been identified in one or both manifestations draw a clear picture of how the dealignment process develops. The



empirical research proves that dealignment can start in either one of the manifestations. In addition, all the cases (apart from the Netherlands) show that the process is initially partial and begins as dealignment in one of the two manifestations. Subsequently, the erosion process is aggravated and becomes a full process of dealignment (identifiable when the signs of erosion appear in the second manifestation). This situation of full dealignment means that none of the mechanisms of alignment remain functional.

This empirical research (described in two separate chapters) of partisan alignment and voter alignments along cleavages is not only based on different scientific approaches to studying voting behaviour, but also taps into different articulations of alignment. Each articulation therefore interprets different implications for the party system in the case a change occurring in one of these two alignment manifestations.

Diminishing partisanship over time indicates an erosion of the allegiance of voters to any individual parties, but will not necessarily affect the parties that represent the salient cleavage(s), especially the dominant parties. By contrast, erosion of voter alignment(s) along one or both (the class and the religious) cleavages means that cleavage closure has decreased and the voters no longer vote according to class or religion, but this will not necessarily affect all parties. Having identified the origin and the development of the dealignment process, we will examine how its two phases – partial and full dealignment – tie in with the party system structure.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **THE PARTY SYSTEM STRUCTURE IN CASES OF REALIGNMENT OR DEALIGNMENT – A MISSING PIECE IN THE PUZZLE**

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The study of stability and change in the connections between voters and parties or, more specifically, the alignment, realignment, and dealignment of voters, has always attracted a considerable amount of attention in Political Science literature. Yet the study of the effects of realignment and dealignment on the party system structure has received very little attention. This chapter will show the problematic elements of the study of the three phenomena – alignment, realignment, and dealignment – at the party system level, and attempt to address these problems by suggesting a methodology for studying the issue. It will also present the results of my empirical research.

The chapter begins with a discussion of the effects of realignment and dealignment on the party system structure and presents possible scenarios of party system change during dealignment, secular realignment and after critical realignment. It then identifies the pitfalls in the indices and measures used in the literature for recognising transformations of the party system structure. In place of these indices and measures, it recommends an examination of the electoral party system structure and offers definitions and relevant typology that are deduced from typologies or classifications of party systems. After this methodological discussion, the chapter then examines ten case studies of polities that have experienced partial and/or full dealignment, and one case study of a polity that has gone through a partial realignment.

## 8.1 Between Concepts and Observations

As part of their discussion of measurement validity, Adcock and Collier (2001:530-1) suggested a flowchart to depict the relationship between concepts and measurements. It is a four-step model for valid measurement: 1. the background concept (the broad constellation of meanings and understandings associated with a given concept); 2. the systematised concept (a specific formulation of a concept used by a scholar or group of scholars); 3. indicators (also referred to as ‘measures’ and ‘operationalization’); 4. scores for cases. Researchers following this four-step model will find that the study of the effects of realignment and dealignment on the party system structure is especially problematic for multi-party systems, as some steps from Adcock and Collier’s (2001) model are missing in this type of system.

Background concept of realignment at the party system level for multi-party systems can be found in the literature. Arian and Shamir (2001:691), for example, reported on realignment in the Israeli party system after the 1977 election, and Hazan (2007:285-6) discussed it as a possible scenario for the Israeli party system with the appearance of the middle party, Kadima. Systematised concepts of this type of shift, however, are rare, unlike for two-party systems (especially in the American literature), for which one can easily find systematised concepts of realignment referring to changes of the party system. In realignment, the balance of power within government is modified, or there is a shift of majority parties (Shea, 1999:33). In this latter scenario, variations amongst the systematised concepts are related to the necessity of this shift: some scholars do not consider it essential, since the transfer of voters between parties could even out (Trilling & Campbell, 1980:31) (for more on this subject, see Clubb, et al., (1980:77-83), or the voters could move away from the major parties to support (smaller) third parties (Pinkney, 1986:48). The same discussion is found regarding specific types of realignment: critical realignment and secular realignment. Some have argued that critical realignment includes a change in relative political power as majority parties become minorities (Burnham, 1975:6; Carmines & Stimson, 1984), without which the process could not be called a critical realignment (Petrocik, 1981). Others have not held such a strict view, arguing that this change may or may not occur (Campbell, et al., 1960; Ladd & Hadley, 1975; McMichael & Trilling, 1980; Nexon, 1980; Pomper, 1967). In the case of secular realignment, the differences are

even greater: some have argued that no change in the party system structure is expected (Dalton, 1984; Key, 1959; Nexon, 1980). This is in contrast to those who have seen this type of change as part of the secular realignment process (Abramowitz & Saunders, 1998).

These parsimonious systematised concepts are clear definitions of the effect of realignment in two-party systems. Yet they cannot simply be transferred to multi-party systems, due to the substantial difference between the two. While in a two-party system shifts in electoral strength and balance between parties are straightforward, in the case of multi-party systems these changes are much more minor, since the electoral differences between majority and minority parties are much smaller and there is no clear benchmark by which to identify these modifications. For this reason, Dalton (1996:192) defined a realignment as “significant shift in the group bases of party coalitions, usually resulting in a shift in the *relative size of the parties’ vote shares*” (Italics added).

A systematised concept of the implications of realignment on party systems that can be applied to multi-party systems is that of Wolinetz (1988). He defined realignment as “substantially altering the format of party competition or redefining party alternatives” (Wolinetz, 1988:299). The main drawback of this definition is its ambiguity, as it includes generic terms such as ‘format of party competition’ and ‘party alternatives’. The definition becomes clearer when one identifies several indicators for each of the systematised concepts that Wolinetz (1988:297-9) employed in his empirical discussion in the same paper. Alteration of the format of party system competition occurs when established parties merge, fade into insignificance, disappear, or lose their parliamentary representation. The redefining of party alternatives occurs when a new party succeeds in displacing previously established parties and acquires a major role in cabinet formations or policy-making.

This list of indicators can easily be applied to two- and multi-party systems, yet the relevance of these indicators for the study of the effects of realignment on the multi-party systems is questionable, especially regarding the second component: redefining party alternatives. In a two-party system, a change of the majority party includes a change of the governing party; in multi-party systems (in which the government

usually consists of several parties), by contrast, the pattern of government formation, and more specifically the inclusion of parties in a coalition government, might be due to reasons other than those related to electoral success, such as the coalition formation logic itself. For example, according to de Swaan's (1973) argument on closed coalitions, the inclusion of new parties in government might be related to their positions on the Left-Right axis and not necessarily related to their electoral success.

We should also keep in mind that the disappearance of an established party due to a merger between two or more parties (one of the Wolinetz's indicators for measuring the alteration of the format of party competition) does not necessarily occur for reasons related to electoral circumstances, but can be due to other factors, such as those concerning the party elite. On top of this, as discussed in Chapter Four, a merger between parties is *ipso facto* a shift that forces the electorate to change its patterns of party support: therefore, this factor should be taken into consideration. I will return to this issue below.

The study of how the party system is affected by a dealignment is even more problematic. As seen in the literature of realignment, it is not clear if the party system structure is affected during a period of dealignment. Crewe (1983) and LeDuc (1984) argued that electoral shifts may not translate into the party system, as they conceal each other or move in different directions.

A second problem related to the impact of dealignment on the party system structure concerns the type of change occurring. Crewe (1983:211) studied the British two-party system and suggested several scenarios of new enduring party balance, but also described the possibility of frequent changes. This last scenario, which Crewe named 'unstable dealignment', is the most commonly expected scenario in the literature. Most scholars, however, have not used any definitions for describing the shifts expected during a dealignment. Instead they have employed several indicators to accommodate the dealignment's effects. Some such indicators deal with the party system structure, such as increased fragmentation, the disappearance of old parties and the emergence of new parties, the emergence and marginalisation of new parties or an overall increase in the number of parties. Indicators that signal a change of voting behaviour but are also seen as signalling a change at the party system level,

such as an increase in electoral volatility, are also used. In summary, the study of the effects of dealignment is mainly based on indicators, which have not been developed from definitions. Based on Adcock and Collier's (2001) model, this can be described as beginning research in the middle, i.e., the third stage, as the first two stages of the background of the concept (step one) and the systematised concept (step two) are missing!

This discussion demonstrates the need to develop clear systematised concepts of the possible effects of realignment and dealignment on the party system in multi-party systems. In order to define these concepts, we need to identify the essence of the phenomena we investigate. To this end, we must re-examine the concept of the 'party system' and its meaning in the contexts of alignment, realignment, and dealignment.

## **8.2 The 'Party System' and Its Usage in the Contexts of Alignment, Realignment, and Dealignment**

One of the first uses of the term 'party system' was in Duverger's (1954) 'Political Parties'. Duverger (1954:203) stated that "[w]ith the exception of the single-party states, several parties co-exist in each country: the forms and modes of their coexistence define the 'party system' of particular country being considered." He explained that a party system is defined by particular relationships between characteristics such as numbers, respective size, alliances, geographical localisation, political distribution, and so on (Duverger, 1954:203). The interaction between parties is what Sartori saw as the essence of a party system; according to him, "a party system is precisely the *system of interactions* resulting from inter-party competition" (Sartori, 1976:44) (italics in original).

Later, Laver identified the interaction between parties as taking place in two arenas: in the legislative, where "the day-to-day politics of coalition are conducted", and in the electorate, in which "the politics of electoral competition are conducted" (Laver, 1989:203). Each of these arenas, according to Laver, is a separate party system; the first is the 'legislative party system', the second the 'electoral party system'. Therefore, he argued, "[t]here is [...] no simple thing that we can think of as 'the party system'. Rather, there are several party systems operating in different arenas,

similar to each other yet different” (Laver, 1989:203); see also (Bardi, 1996). Along the same lines, Pennings (1998:79) stated that the study of party systems should focus on three aspects: votes, office, and policy, and explained that these elements are independent from each other, since a change in “one of these factors does not automatically involve changes in other factors.” Therefore, we should evaluate the relevance of each the three dimensions to the phenomena we wish to define.

As discussed in previous chapters, the essence of the three phenomena concerns long-term patterns of (dis)connection between the electorate and political parties. That said, we can see that the legislative party system (created because of the functional division between the electoral and parliamentary arenas) has nothing to do with the discussion of alignment, realignment, or dealignment, since the electorate does not have any influence on interactions within this system. The voters do not have any direct influence on the day-to-day interaction of parties in the legislative branch. Moreover, the possible influence of the electorate on the most basic interaction in the legislative branch, i.e., that between the government and the opposition regarding coalition government formation, is minimal. Research has showed that election results are not the only factor to constrain or influence government formation, but rather are one of several institutional and political factors (such as party positions and constitutional regulations) (Mattila & Raunio, 2004:265). Besides this, there may be a reverse relation of cause and effect: a change in the pattern of government formation might lead to electoral change, as Mair (2002a:105) proposed. According to him, within the limited combinations of coalition government formation, (or as Mair put it, the closed structure of competition) voters tend to vote strategically, so their preferences are also likely to be constrained. In party systems where the combination of government formation is broader, there is no need for voters to vote strategically. Following this logic, when the patterns of government formation are modified, the voters change their patterns of party support accordingly (Mair, 2008). This last argument of strategic voting, however, stands in contrast with assumptions of the socio-psychological and socio-structural approaches and with the core argument regarding the phenomena under investigation here: that either partisanship or socio-structural group membership is the main explanation for party support. All in all, it is clear that the first dimension of a party system – voting – should be the core of our interest.

The study of election results, which encapsulates the degree of connection between voters and political parties, should also take into account the supply aspect – the electoral competition patterns between parties during elections. Changes of competition patterns on the supply side may not only affect the election results *per se*, but can even define the domain of this chapter – the party system structure. Recently, Bardi and Mair (2008) argued that a single polity might have several different party systems, such as a vertical division occurs as certain parties run for election only in specific parts of the electorate. All in all, it is clear that the effects of alignment, realignment or dealignment on the party system are manifested in the patterns of interaction between parties both before, and more importantly after, the election. Put differently, our domain in this chapter is *the electoral party system*.

This clarified, I now return to my main task: finding systematised concepts. This chapter's discussion of the existing systematised concepts for realignment in two-party and multi-party systems makes clear that when realignment occurs, the electorate changes its electoral behaviour in such a way that a new structure of the electoral party system might be formed. In a scenario of critical realignment it is expected that the structural change will appear immediately after the critical election, the peak moment of the realignment. In contrast, secular realignment is a long-term process, during which the possible transformation of the party system structure will occur. On top of this, with the appearance of a new alignment, we expect this (possible) new structure to be durable, or, as Sundquist (1983:5) put it, to be “a lasting change”.

Thus, my first hypothesis concerning realignment is:

**H1** The structure of the electoral party system will change and a new durable structure of electoral party system will be created immediately after the critical election(s) (the peak moment of the critical realignment), or during a period of secular realignment.

This conceptual and empirical discussion has also pointed out that a new long-term party system structure can also be created during a period of dealignment. However, since all the eleven cases under investigation in this research have an electoral system



of proportional representation, I expect that the increasing numbers of voters with no party allegiance will create frequent shifts in the structure of the electoral party system. Alongside this is the question of the nature of the transformation. Some indicators suggest that during a dealignment period, the party balance will be dispersed, which implies that the party system structure becomes more fragmented (for instance, an increase in the level of fragmentation or in the number of parties, etc.).

This leads me to draw two hypotheses concerning dealignment:

**H2** During a period of dealignment, the stable and durable electoral party system structure will disappear without a new, stable structure being formed.

**H3** During a period of dealignment, the structure of the electoral party system structure will become more fragmented.

My semi-modular empirical analysis of patterns of partisan alignment and of voter alignment along a cleavage (see Chapter Seven) has demonstrated that the dealignment process develops in two phases. It begins in either one of the manifestations of alignment, and in this first phase the process is partial. In its second phase, the process will inevitably spill over into the other manifestation of alignment and become a full process of dealignment. In addition, as I explained in Chapter Seven, since the alignment mechanism of voters and parties for each of the manifestations is different, the effect of dealignment in each of these manifestations on the party system structure may be different. It would be interesting to examine the differences between these effects.

Therefore, I will examine the two hypotheses concerning the period of dealignment in its two phases: as a partial and a full process. With regards to realignment, I could only examine the partial realignment that is identified in my empirical research.

As my approach is semi-modular, theoretically the causality relationship may be the reverse of what is usually expected or assumed, as changes in the electoral party system might have kicked in *before* the dealignment or realignment began. Therefore, the timing of changes in the electoral party system versus those in the alignment manifestations is important, and will also be examined.

Having defined my expectations concerning changes in the electoral party system after or during re/dealignment, the next challenge is to find an appropriate method for testing these expectations. This brings me to the next problem of studying how a party system is affected by these phenomena: the difficulties of identifying change using various indices.

### **8.3 The Difficulties of Identifying Alignment, Realignment or Dealignment Using Various Indices**

Study of the effects of re/dealignment on the party system is usually undertaken using several indices. Some indices aim to evaluate the party system structure, such as Laakso and Taagepera's (1979) Effective Number of Parties (ENP); Rae's (1967) Fragmentation index (for an explanation of both indices, see Appendix A). Some are a formula for examining the Left-Right polarisation of relevant parties, such as was suggested by Shahla and Belousov (Klingemann, 1985),<sup>1</sup> while others count the number of major parties or number of relevant parties (e.g. (Bardi, 1996b; Dalton, et al., 1984a; Klingemann, 1985; Knutsen, 2004; Lane & Ersson, 1987). Such study is sometimes even done using indices that aim to measure the aggregate change of party support, such as Pedersen's (1979) Total Volatility index (TV) (e.g. (Dalton, et al., 1984a; Lane & Ersson, 1987; Mainwaring & Zoco, 2007; Pennings, 1998:84). Some indices measure electoral support for different groups of parties, for example, the Functional Orientation index and the Radical Orientation index (for explanation of these indices, see notes 8, 9 in Chapter Two) or other categorisations of party families (Sundberg, 1999). Study of the effects of re/dealignment on party structure may also use indices related to the study of cleavage alignment, such as Bartolini and Mair's (1990) Bloc Volatility index (e.g. (Bardi, 1996b; Klingemann, 2005; Lane & Ersson, 1987).

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<sup>1</sup> The formula regarding the Left-Right polarisation of relevant parties is:

$$P = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n-1} \sum_{j=1}^{n-1} \text{abs}(P_{j+1} - P_i)}{2X(\text{round}(N/2) \times \text{round}(N/2 - 0.5))}$$

Where  $P_i$  stands the Left-Right policy position of the party  $i$  and  $P_j$  stands for the Left-Right party policy position of party  $j$ , and  $n$  is the  $N$  is the number of parties (Klingemann, 2005).

All my hypotheses deal with change in the structure of the electoral party system. Two of the hypotheses, however, are impossible to test based on the existing indices for two reasons.

The first relates to the failure of the indices to identify change in party system structure. Pedersen (1980:389) demonstrated the inability of the Fractionalisation index to test change in party systems. According to him, this index and the other six indices of fragmentation,<sup>2</sup> cannot measure change since they are insensitive to the identities of the individual parties. Instead Pedersen suggested the use of the TV index. Mair (2002a) also criticised the application of the Fractionalisation and ENP indices for studying party system change, as both indices treat the differences between party systems as a matter of degree rather than kind. In other words, they cannot identify change in the type of party system. Therefore, a study based on any of these indices would fail to identify change in the electoral party system structure. The same argument can be applied to any other index that measures changes of electoral behaviour, such as the TV index. Evans (2002:160) has already criticised the use of indices that capture shifts in voting behaviour to study party system structure. He argued that their use implies the assumption that there is a connection between these two phenomena, despite the fact that high volatility “is precisely a necessary (though not sufficient) condition of a change in party system type.”

The second failure of these indices is related to identification of the durability of the electoral party system structure. Mair (2002a:63-4) explained that the Fractionalisation and ENP indices treat changes in party systems as continuous phenomena, and therefore are biased against the identification of stability, which is essential for identifying an (new) alignment.

#### **8.4 Finding a New Method to Identify Change in the Electoral Party System in the Context of Realignment and Dealignment**

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<sup>2</sup> The other indices were the Gini-coefficient, the index of Fractionalisation as corrected by Sartori, Flanagan’s index of Fragmentation, Milder’s index of Two-Party Competition, the index of Potential Competition and the index of Multipartism.

My challenge is to find a method that enables identification of stability and change in the structure of the electoral party system. This system has two components, which are related to each other: patterns of parties' strength (i.e. electoral support), and party interactions. The new method must be able to capture them both. One way to do this is to examine typologies of party systems that include these two aspects, and to develop necessary conditions for the identification of stability and change in the electoral party system structure in multi-party systems.

Several typologies of multi-party systems can be found in Political Science literature. The first was proposed by Blondel (1968), who suggested distinguishing between two-party systems, two-and-a-half-party systems, multi-party systems with one dominant party, and multi-party systems without a dominant party. Blondel's typology suggested that there are two aspects to the study of multi-party systems. The first is the number of parties – are there two, two-and-a-half, or more parties in the system? The second aspect deals with electoral support for the two largest parties. Blondel observed that in a two-party system the two major parties get at least 90 percent of the votes, in a two-and-a-half-party system the first two parties receive between 75 and 80 percent of the votes, and in a multi-party system with a dominant party, this party will receive about 40 percent of the electorate and gain about twice as many votes as the second-largest party. He also found that in a two-party system the ratio of the difference in electoral support for the two largest parties is 1.6, and in a two-and-a-half-party system the proportion of electoral support between the first two parties is below 1.6.

Sartori's typology (1976) included more categories for multi-party systems, distinguishing between one-party, hegemonic party, predominant party, two-party, moderate pluralism, and polarised pluralism. This classification of the party system was based on two elements, the first of which was the number of parties. Sartori distinguished between limited pluralism, extreme pluralism, and an atomised party system. 'Limited pluralism' includes party systems with three to five parties, while 'extreme pluralism' indicates six to eight parties. Sartori (1976:123), however, did not count all parties participating in the election, but only 'relevant' parties, which in his view were those with either coalition or blackmail potential. There are two problems with this criterion. The first is its meaning. While the first condition – coalition

potential – is clear (defined as a party that has participated in or supported a government coalition), the second is difficult to apply, and researchers have largely ignored it. Klingemann (2005:33), for example, defined relevant parties as those “which either have participated in or supported governments.” The second problem is that Sartori counted parties according to their relevance (or irrelevance) to government coalitions, an aspect that is not part of our domain in this thesis.<sup>3</sup> This is also true for the second element in Sartori’s typology: the ideological distance between parties, or, in Sartori’s words (1976:128) “the overall spread of ideological spectrum of any polity.” For this he distinguished between a centrifugal and a centripetal direction of party competition. Our interest, however, is in patterns of electoral competition between parties and party support, and not in the ideological spectrum of the party systems.

Siaroff (2000), who elaborated on Blondel’s and Sartori’s typologies (Wolinetz, 2006), suggested distinguishing between eight different party systems: two-party systems, two-and-a-half-party systems, moderate multi-party systems with one dominant party, moderate multi-party systems with two main parties, moderate multi-party systems with a balance among the parties, extreme multi-party systems with one dominant party, extreme multi-party systems with two main parties, and extreme multi-party systems with a balance among the parties. The allocation of party systems to one of these categories is based on four criteria: 1. two-party seat concentration (2PSC), 2. the number of parties winning three per cent or more of the filled seats (P3%S), 3. seat ratio between the first and second parties (SR1:2), and 4. seat ratio between the second and third parties (SR2:3). The first criterion distinguishes between a two-party system and a two-and-a-half-party system (in the former the first two parties receive at least 95 percent of the vote, while in the second they receive between 80 and 95 percent). The second criterion distinguishes between two-party systems (in which there are only two winning parties), and two-and-a-half-party systems and moderate multi-party systems (in which there are between three and five winning parties), and extreme multi-party systems (in which there are more than five winning parties). The last two criteria will help us to distinguish between a party system with a dominant party (the ratio between the first two parties will be 1.6 or

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<sup>3</sup> The same can be said against Mair’s (2002a; 2006) typology. He proposed the study of different party systems on the basis of the prevailing mode of government alternation.

more), a party system with two main parties (where the ratio of the shares of the two largest parties will be below 1.6, and that for the second and the third largest parties will be 1.8 or more), and a party system with a balance among the parties (the ratio of the shares of the two largest parties will be below 1.6, and for the second and the third largest parties it will be below 1.8).

These four different criteria again emphasise the most important elements for identifying the electoral party system structure: the number of parties and the electoral support for the two largest parties.

These three typologies of party systems can help us identify important aspects of the study of the electoral party system structure. The first is the level of electoral competition, i.e., how competitive is the contest between parties for votes? Here I distinguish between weak competition, moderate competition, and wide competition. The second aspect is that of electoral strength, or the party dominance structure. Following Blondel (1968) and Siaroff (2000), I differentiate between multi-party systems with one dominant party, multi-party systems with two main parties, and multi-party systems with balance between the parties.

In order to identify the party system structure, I use several indicators.

The first aspect – the level of competition – is identified according to the number of parties. Here I distinguish between three cases: a multi-party system with three to five parties, a multi-party system with six to eight parties, and a multi-party system with over eight parties. Since I am concerned with patterns of electoral support, I count only parties that receive at least three percent of the valid votes. I am aware that by doing so, I will not count all parties that have obtained seats in the parliament, such as the Dutch Second Chamber (*de Tweede Kamer*) (as the (lowest) threshold in the Netherlands (since 1956) stands on 0.67 (Andeweg, 2005:494; Farrell, 1997:70), but I suspect that these parties have very little influence on the interaction between parties before and after the election. Concerning Germany and the second Italian Republic (between 1994 and 2005), which have a mixed electoral system, my research includes only the ‘second vote’ (the votes for party lists). This is in order to make my research comparable to all the other cases, which have electoral systems of proportional representation (PR).

The second aspect – party dominance – is examined by using several indicators to gauge electoral support for the two largest parties. This is a combination of three measures: electoral support for the largest party, electoral support for the two largest parties, and the ratio of the shares of electoral support for the largest and the second largest party. Following Blondel (1968) I hold that a **multi-party system with a dominant party** is a system in which the largest party receives at least 39 percent of the votes and two largest parties together gain less than 75 percent of the votes, or in which the two largest parties gain at least 75 percent of the votes and the largest party receives at least twice as many votes as the second party, so that the ratio of shares of electoral support between the largest and the second largest parties is more than 2. A **multi-party system with two dominant parties** is identified when the two largest parties receive at least 75 percent of the votes and the largest party gains less than twice as many votes than the second largest party. A **multi-party system with balance between the parties** is identified when the largest party gains less than 39 percent of the votes and electoral support for the two largest parties is less than 75 percent.

These two aspects together yield nine different multi-party structures: weak competition with one dominant party (model no. 1), weak competition with two dominant parties (model no. 2), weak competition with balance between the parties (model no. 3), moderate competition with one dominant party (model no. 4), moderate competition with two dominant parties (model no. 5), moderate competition with balance between the parties (model no. 6), wide competition with one dominant party (model no. 7), wide competition with two dominant parties (model no. 8), wide competition with balance between the parties (model no. 9). Table 8.1 displays the conditions for the different models of electoral party system structure.

<b>Table 8.1: The conditions based on the two aspects for different models of multi-party systems</b>			
	Weak competition (3-5 winning parties)	Moderate competition (6-8 winning parties)	Wide competition (9 or more winning parties)
One dominant party (2 largest parties <75% & largest party ≥ 39%, or 2 largest parties ≥75% & largest party/second largest party ≥ 2)	1	4	7
Two dominant parties (2 largest parties ≥75% & largest party/second largest party ≤2)	2	5	8
Balance between the parties (2 largest parties <75% & largest party <39%)	3	6	9

While these indicators can provide a sense of the electoral party system structure, they are based only on election results. It is possible, however, that the main components of the electoral party system change and yet its structure remains the same. This occurs, for example, when the identity of one of the dominant parties changes. Such a change in identity occurs when the largest or second largest party in one of the elections has reached this position for the first time, or when a new pattern is created, for example when a party that has consistently been the second largest succeeds in becoming the largest party for the first time.

These three criteria – number of parties, electoral support for the first two parties, and the identity of the largest parties – encapsulate the possible changes to the structure of the electoral party system. Yet, as I discussed above, this structure might also change



when the parties themselves shift their patterns of electoral competition. This may happen, for example, when there is electoral cooperation between parties, with the parties forming an electoral alliance and creating a cartel. A good example of this is the French party system, in which the parties (due to the French electoral system) encourage electoral agreements during the parliamentary and presidential elections. Another example is that of parties deciding to compete only in specific constituencies and not nationwide, or vice versa. Changes such as these may affect the election results and have consequences for the electoral party system structure; therefore, they will be discussed in depth.

Since each of the criteria can indicate change in the electoral party system, I employed them to test my hypotheses and to examine what happened at the party system level after or during realignment and dealignment. I also operationalised the necessary empirical conditions for validating each one of the possible hypotheses. For identifying the structure of the electoral party system, I analysed its structure in each election year: for each case, in every election year, I decided which model this party system possessed according to my typology, and examined the identity of its two largest parties. The full data is presented in Table 8.2 and in Appendix F. This was done in order to test my hypotheses regarding the possibility of change in the electoral party system and its competitiveness after or during re/dealignment.

H1 concerns the creation of a new durable structure of the electoral party system after or during a period of realignment. A new electoral party system structure is identified when one or more of the typology's three criteria indicate(s) a shift from one model of party system structure to another. The durability of this new structure is identified when it remains in place for a period of at least a decade and in at least three successive elections.

On the other hand, according to H2, during a dealignment the long-standing party system structure will disappear. This is identified when one or more of the typology's three criteria of electoral party system structure indicate(s) frequent changes in the party system structure: at least two changes or more over a period of ten years, in at least three successive elections.

H3 also deals with the patterns of electoral competition during a dealignment period. It is expected that competition between the parties will be increasingly fragmented. This is identified when the typology's criteria point to a shift towards a more fragmented party system and/or when electoral strength is distributed between more parties (for example, a shift from a model of weak to moderate competition, or from two dominant parties to balance between the parties, etc.).

In the next section, I present the results of empirical research into the party system structure in eleven European party systems. In ten of these cases (Austria, Finland, Flanders, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Wallonia) my analysis of the patterns of partisan alignment and of voter alignments along the class and religious cleavages identified a dealignment in both or one of these alignment manifestations at different time-points. H2 and H3 will be examined in all of these ten cases. To examine the effect of partial vs. full dealignment, I will first examine the cases of full dealignment: the periods of time in which both manifestations are in a state of dealignment. I will then analyse partial dealignment, in which only one manifestation is found to be in a state of dealignment.

In two cases, I identified a partial realignment. In Denmark, signs of a partisan critical realignment were found in the 1973 election (which was followed by a new alignment), while the voter alignment along the class cleavage remained stable. In Flanders, a partial realignment was identified when a new voter alignment along the religious cleavage appeared in 1965, during a period of partisan alignment. This situation held until 1985, when voter dealignment along the class cleavage began. However, I decided not to examine the Flemish case as throughout this period (between 1968 and 1978 elections) the current Flemish party system was created as the major parties split one after another (on this issue, see Chapter Four). Thus my hypothesis concerning realignment – H1 – will be tested only for the Danish case.

## **8.5 The Empirical Results**

The principal goal of this analysis is the identification of possible changes in the structure of the electoral party system after or during realignment, and throughout

dealignment, as it is classified by the party system structure – the dominance of a specific party or parties and its competitiveness.

There are two hypotheses regarding possible change during dealignment. One concerns the frequency of shifts in the party system structure. In order to identify a shift, I first need to examine whether a durable structure of the party system has ever appeared in each of the cases under investigation here.

Before identifying any change, I must identify the durable characteristics of the party system structure. Based on Lipset and Rokkan's (1967) seminal piece and more specifically their 'freezing' hypothesis, I assume that the period between 1950 and the mid 1960s was stable, and throughout this period one model of party system structure held firm. Put differently, I expect the typology's three criteria to show that the structure of the electoral party system remained stable from the first election (in or after 1950) onwards, and held at least until the mid 1960s<sup>4</sup>. The data have confirmed this expectation.

Table 8.2 shows that apart from Germany and Luxembourg, the three criteria indicate that in all the cases that experienced dealignment in both manifestations – a full dealignment – or only in one of the manifestations – a partial dealignment – the electoral party systems were stable at least until the mid 1960s.

This is true for Austria (until 1970) and Wallonia (1965) (both with the model of weak competition with two dominant parties, model 2), Sweden (until 1988, with the exception of the 1968 election when the identity of the second party changed temporarily; the model of weak competition with one dominant party, model 1) and Norway (until 1973, the model of moderate competition with one dominant party, model 4). Over the entire period, the Finnish electoral party system structure remained the same (the model of moderate competition with balance between the parties, model 6), but the identity of the first party changed temporarily in the 1962 election.

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<sup>4</sup> As I excluded the German 1953 election, my study of the German party system begins with the 1957 election.

In Flanders, Italy and the Netherlands, the typology suggests that the party system structures were based on two similar models. In Flanders (until 1971) there was weak competition with one or two dominant parties (models 1 + 2) and in the Netherlands (until 1972) there was weak or moderate competition with balance between the parties (models 3 + 6). In Italy throughout almost the entire period the party system can be characterised as exhibiting moderate competition with one dominant parties or with balance between the parties (models 4 + 6), until the first election of the second Italian Republic (the 1994 election), when the identity of the first two largest parties changed.

Concerning my analysis of the structure of the electoral party system in the second Italian Republic, I must clarify that I cannot be sure that the data for electoral support is valid, since the new electoral systems force the parties to form electoral alliances or “pre-electoral cartels of parties,” in Giannetti and Laver’s words (2001:529) (for more details of the new electoral systems, see Chapter Four). As the electoral competition between most of the parties is in patterns of cartels, the share of electoral support for each party does not represent the electoral support for parties competing with each other individually, but it does give an “indication of the relative strength of individual members of the cartel” (Giannetti & Laver, 2001:531).

Only in the cases of Germany and Luxembourg does the typology indicate that the electoral party system stabilised somewhere between late 1950 and the mid 1960s. In Germany, the three typology criteria confirm that the structure of the electoral party system changed in the first two elections – 1957 and 1961 – as the electoral party system structure went from being a moderate competitive party system with one dominant party (model 4) to being a weak competitive party system with balance between the parties (model 3). In addition, in the first election (1957) the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) was the largest party, and in the second election (1961) the Social Democrats (SPD) took its place. These transitions may be due to two reforms in the German electoral system: in 1953, the 5 percent threshold was raised from the regional to the national level, and in 1956 the ‘one-district-seat waiver’ for obtaining a seat amongst the proportional representation distribution seats was replaced by a ‘three-district-seats waiver’ (Sallfeld, 2005:218). These two reforms not only reduced the opportunity for small parties to obtain large electoral support, but they also

explain the electoral alliance between the German Party (DP) and the CDU in some northern constituencies in 1957-61 (Sallfeld, 2005:218). These electoral system reforms together with the DP-CDU electoral pact are the reasons for the decrease in number of parties in 1961 (decreased to four) and for the switch between the CDU and the SPD as the largest party. All in all, the criteria suggest that the stabilisation of the party system emerged slightly later – in 1965 – as the model of weak competition with two dominant parties (model 2), which held until 1987. Concerning Luxembourg, the typology indicates that in the first three elections the party system changed from weak competition with two dominant parties (in the 1951 election; model 2) to one dominant party (in 1954 election; model 1), and then to balance between the parties (in 1959; model 3). This last structure held until 1979, and therefore I assume that the electoral party system only stabilised from the 1959 election onwards.

**Table 8.2: Periods of alignment, realignment (and a new alignment) and dealignment in both alignment manifestations, the party system model, and the direction of fragmentation, in every election year, between 1950 and 2010**

Austria																							
	1953	1956	1959	1962	1966	1970	1971	1975	1979	1983	1986	1990	1994	1995	1999	2002	2006	2008					
Partisan	Partisan alignment									Partisan dealignment													
Cleavage	Voter alignment along class cleavage						Voter dealignment along class cleavage																
Party system structure	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	3	3	3	2	2	2					
Direction of fragmentation						*						↓	↑				↓*						
Type of change						7						6	4				3,7						
Denmark																							
	1950	1953	1953	1957	1960	1964	1966	1968	1971	1973	1975	1977	1979	1981	1984	1987	1988	1990	1994	1998	2001	2005	2007
Partisan	Partisan alignment									Partisan critical realignment and a new alignment													
Cleavage	Voter alignment along class																						
Party system structure	4	4	4	4	4	1	3	3	3	9	6	9	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Direction of fragmentation					↓	↑				↑*	↓	↑	↓	*								*	
Type of change					2	4				1,8	2	1	2	8								7	
Finland																							
	1951	1954	1958	1962	1966	1970	1972	1975	1979	1983	1987	1991	1995	1999	2003	2007							
Partisan	Partisan alignment					Partisan dealignment																	
Cleavage	Voter alignment along class cleavage				Voter dealignment along class cleavage																		
Party system structure	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6							
Direction of fragmentation				*			*						*				*						
Type of change				7			8						7				8						

Flanders

	1950	1954	1958	1961	1965	1968	1971	1974	1977	1978	1981	1985	1987	1991	1995	1999	2003	2007	2010
Partisan Cleavage	Partisan alignment													Partisan dealignment					
	Voter alignment along class cleavage				Voter alignment along class cleavage and a new voter alignment along religious cleavage									Voter dealignment along class cleavage and a (new) voter alignment along religious cleavage					
Party system structure	1	2	1	2	1	1	3	1	1	1	3	3	6	6	6	6	6	3	6
Direction of fragmentation		↑	↓	↑	↓		↑	↓			↑*		↑			*	*	↓**	*↑
Type of change		4	3	4	6		4	3			4,8		1			7	8	2,7,8	1,7

Germany

	1957	1961	1965	1969	1972	1976	1980	1983	1987	1990	1994	1998	2002	2005	2009
Partisan Cleavage	Partisan alignment									Partisan dealignment					
	Voter alignment along religious cleavage									Voter dealignment along religious cleavage					
Party system structure	4	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	6	4	6	6	6
Direction of fragmentation		↓↑*	↓						↑	*	↑*	↓	↑		*
Type of change		2,4,7	3						6	7	1,7	3	4		7

Italy (1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Republics)

	1953	1958	1963	1968	1972	1976	1979	1983	1987	1992	1994	1996	2001	2006	2008
Partisan Cleavage	Partisan alignment				Partisan dealignment										
	Voter alignments along class and religious cleavages								Voter dealignment along religious cleavage and alignment along class cleavage			Voter dealignments along both cleavages			
Party system structure	4	4	6	4	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Direction of fragmentation			↑	↓	↑						*	*			
Type of change			4	3	4						7	7			

*The party system structure in cases of realignment or dealignment*

Luxembourg																		
	1951	1954	1959	1964	1968	1974	1979	1984	1989	1994	1999	2004	2009					
Partisan Cleavage	Partisan alignment																	
	Voter alignments along religious and class cleavages						Voter dealignment along class cleavage and alignment along religious cleavage				Voter dealignments along both cleavages							
Party system structure	2	1	3	3	3	3	6	3	6	3	6	3	6					
Direction of fragmentation		↓	↑				↑	↓	↑	↓	↑*	↓	↑					
Type of change		3	4				1	2	1	2	1,8	2	1					
the Netherlands																		
	1952	1956	1959	1963	1967	1971	1972	1977	1981	1982	1986	1989	1994	1998	2002	2003	2006	2010
Partisan Cleavage	Partisan alignment				Partisan dealignment													
	Voter alignment along religious cleavage				Voter dealignment along religious cleavage													
Party system structure	6	6	3	3	6	6	9	3	3	3	3	3	6	6	6	6	6	6
Direction of fragmentation			↓		↑		↑	↓					↑	*	*			*
Type of change				2	1		1	2,7,8					1	8	8			7
Norway																		
	1953	1957	1961	1965	1969	1973	1977	1981	1985	1989	1993	1997	2001	2005	2009			
Partisan Cleavage	Partisan alignment					Partisan dealignment												
	Voter alignment along class cleavage				Voter dealignment along class cleavage													
Party system structure	4	4	4	4	4	6	4	6	4	6	6	6	6	6	6			
Direction of fragmentation						↑	↓	↑	↓	↑		*						
Type of change						4	3	4	3	4		8						



Sweden																				
	1952	1956	1958	1960	1964	1968	1970	1973	1976	1979	1982	1985	1988	1991	1994	1998	2002	2006	2010	
Partisan	Partisan alignment										Partisan dealignment									
Cleavage	Voter alignment along class cleavage										Voter dealignment along class cleavage									
Party system structure	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	6	4	6	4	6	6	
Direction of fragmentation					*								↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	↑		
Type of change					8								1	4	3	4	3	4		
Wallonia																				
	1950	1954	1958	1961	1965	1968	1971	1974	1977	1978	1981	1985	1987	1991	1995	1999	2003	2007	2010	
Partisan	Partisan alignment								Partisan dealignment											
Cleavage	Voter alignment along class cleavage								Voter dealignment along class cleavage											
Party system structure	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	1	3	6	1	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	
Direction of fragmentation					↑*				↓	↑	↑	↓↓			↑			*	*	
Type of change					4,8				3	4	1	2,3			4			7	7	
<p><i>Index:</i> Partisan or Voter Alignment/ Realignment/ Dealignment as is found based on my analysis of partisanship and voter alignment along class and religious cleavages in chapters Five and Six respectively.</p> <p>Party system structure is the model of the party system as based on the criteria's typology: (1) weak competition with one dominant party, (2) weak competition with two dominant parties, (3) weak competition with a balance between the parties, (4) moderate competition with one dominant party, (5) moderate competition with two dominant parties, (6) moderate competition with a balance between the parties, (7) wide competition with one dominant party, (8) wide competition with two dominant parties, (9) wide competition with a balance between the parties.</p> <p>Type of change are: (1) no of parties increased (2) no. of parties decreased (3) electoral support for the first party increased (4) electoral support for the first party decreased (5) electoral support for the second party increased (6) electoral support for the second party decreased (7) identity of the first party changed or a switch between the first and second party (8) identity of the second party changed.</p> <p>Signs of ↑ stands for increase of competitiveness, signs of ↓ stands for decrease of competitiveness and sign of * stands for a change of the identity of one of the first two parties.</p>																				

The next question is, what occurred in the electoral party system during dealignment? I begin by examining the cases in which both alignment manifestations were in a state of dealignment – a full dealignment – and will then study the cases for which a state of dealignment was found only in one of the manifestations – a partial dealignment.

Table 8.2 specifies for each case the timing of partisan dealignment and/or a dealignment(s) along the class and religious cleavages, and the different party system structures as identified by the typology's three criteria in each election year. It also shows the direction of change – whether the competition between parties became more fragmented (signed as ↑) (for example, when the party system structure shifted from one dominant party to two dominant parties, etc.), or whether the party system structure became less fragmented (signed as ↓) (when, for example, the number of parties decreased). Changes in the identity of one of the first two parties are also flagged (\*). In addition, the table marks the type of change that created the shift in the electoral party system.

A full dealignment was found in eight multi-party systems: Austria (since 1983), Finland (since 1970), Flanders (since 1991), Germany (since 1990), Italy (since 1983), the Netherlands (since 1967), Norway (since 1973), Sweden (since 1991) and Wallonia (since 1987), as is presented by Table 8.2.

Apart from Finland, in all the multi-party systems that experienced dealignment in both manifestations, the party system structure shifted and modification occurred several times, so that at least two modifications are found in a period of ten years and in at least three successive elections, with the exception of the 1980s in the Netherlands, the 1990s in Wallonia and the 2000s in Norway.

In Finland, on the other hand, throughout the period of full dealignment (from the 1970 election onwards), the typology identified only three shifts in the electoral party system: the identity of the second party changed twice (in 1970 and 2007), and in 1991 the identity of the first party changed. On top of this, the modifications were not frequent and occurred a long time after each other: the gap between the first and the second change was more than 20 years (with 6 election years), and that between the

second and the third changes was more than 15 years (with four election years). My finding supports Pesonen's (2001) argument, according to which the Finnish Party System is characterised by continuity at least until the 1990s, with only a few changes occurring. This, according to Pesonen (2001), can be explained by the success of the main parties – the Social Democrats, the Finnish People's Democratic Union (SKDL), the National Coalition (the Conservative), and the Centre party (K) – in broadening their social base with new generations of voters and people in white collar occupations. Shifts in the social base of party support for these parties might be related to the fact that Finland (compared with other Western countries) was industrialised late, and its social changes occurred rapidly (Pesonen, 2001).

Therefore, I can confirm that during a full dealignment the electoral party system changes very frequently, as was expected by H2. Overall, two different patterns of timing for the beginnings of party system structure shifts can be identified. Firstly, there may be a simultaneous shift, as in Germany, Norway, Sweden, where the modifications occurred at the same time that the full dealignment began. Secondly, there may be a follow-up shift, when change in the electoral party system begins several election years after the full dealignment began, as identified in Austria, the Netherlands and Wallonia, where changes were identified after two or three elections (in the 1990, 1972 and 1995 elections, respectively). In Italy, this happened much later. While dealignment in both its manifestations was identified in the 1983 election, changes of the electoral party system surfaced only during the second Italian Republic, when in each election different electoral cartels were formed. While in the first election held after the electoral reform (1994) and in the 2008 election there were three cartels, in 1996, 2001 and 2006 there were only two. In addition, the members of the cartels changed in every election year.<sup>5</sup> A possible explanation for this late

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<sup>5</sup> The electoral cartels in the 1994 election included: 1. Freedom Pole and Good Government (which included Go Italy (FI), the National Alliance, the North League, the Pannella List-Reformers, the Center Christian Democracy (CCD) and the Center Union (UDC); 2. The Progressive Alliance (which included the Party of Democratic Left, the Communist Refoundation, the Greens, the Socialist Party, The Network, the Democratic Alliance, the Christian Socialists (CS), and the remnants of PSI); 3. Pact for Italy (which included the Popular Party and the Segni Pact). In the 1996, 2001 and 2006 elections there were only two electoral cartels. In 1996 there were the Freedom Pole (that included Go Italy (FI), the National Alliance, the Christian Democratic Centre (CCD), the United Christian Democrats (CDU) and the Olive Tree (with the Party of Democratic Left (PDS), the Greens, Pop – SVP- PRI-UD-Prodi, Dini List – Italian Renewal, and the Sardinian Action Party (PSdAz). In the 2001 election there were the House of Freedom (which included Go Italy (FI), the National Alliance (NA), the Center Christian Democracy (CCD), the Center Union (CDU), the Northern League (NL), the New Italian Socialist

effect is the patterns of clientalism, corruption and patronage evident during the first Italian Republic.

Although the Italian electoral system during the first Republic was PR, scholars described the Italian party system as an imperfect two-party system (Galli, 1966) (as cited in (Koff & Kopff, 2000:33). The two leading parties – the Christian Democrats (DC) and the Communists (PCI) – received 64.3 percent of the votes on average until 1992 (Bull & Newell, 2005:39). On top of this, the electoral support for parties was stable mainly due the *partitocrazia*: “the network of state, party and economic elites infiltrated by clientalism, corruption and patronage” (Koff & Kopff, 2000:33). In this system, party leaders were more concerned with gaining rewards for their parties than with working for the national interest, while the vast public sector made many people feel they owed their jobs to their parties, and therefore they tended to vote for their employer (Koff & Kopff, 2000:33).

I will now examine partial dealignment, in which a state of dealignment is found only in one of the two manifestations. I begin with those cases in which partisan dealignment was found, while voter alignment along the class or religious cleavage remained intact. Three cases are relevant here – Italy (in the 1972, 1976, and 1979 elections), Sweden (in the 1982, 1985, 1988 elections) and Wallonia (between the 1965 and 1987 elections). These cases demonstrate that changes of party system structure can occur when the partial dealignment period begins. Notably, these changes occur much less frequently than in cases of a full dealignment.

As mentioned above, in Italy the changes in the party system began much later – only from 1994. In Sweden, they occurred in the third election after the beginning of the

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Party and Independents) and the Olive Tree (with the Democratic Left, Daisy, Sunflower, the Democratic Italian, the Communists, the South-Tyrol People’s Party, and Independents). In the 2006 election there were the House of Freedom (with Go Italy (FI), the National Alliance (NA), the Center Union (CDU), the Northern League (LN), the Movement for Autonomy (MPA), the New Christian Democracy (DC), the New Socialist Party (NSPI), Italy in the World, and others) and the Union (which included the Democratic Left (DS), Daisy (DL), the Communist Refoundation (RC), Rese in the Fist (Rnp), the Party of Italian Communists (PdCI), Italy of Values (IdV), the Greens, the Unions of Democrats for Europe (UDEUR), L’Unione-Prodi, the Alliance for the Aosta Valley, and others). In the 2008 election there were the Democratic Party (PD) (DS and *Margherita*, and the Radical Party) and Di Pietro - Italy of Values (IdV), the Left-The Rainbow (the Communist Refoundation (RC), the Party of Italian Communists (PdCI), the Greens and the newborn Democratic Left) and the People of Freedom (PDL) (which included Go Italy (FI) and the National Alliance (AN) (Ignazi, 1994; 2002; 2007).

partisan dealignment (in the 1988 election). Only in Wallonia, the first shift was identified in the election during which the partisan dealignment began: the party system structure changed. However, the subsequent changes in the party system occurred only after more than 15 years, in the 1977 election and the following three elections.

The second scenario of partial dealignment is when voter alignment along at least one of the cleavages disappears, while the electorate (as partisan) remains aligned with its party. This period is very short in three cases – Finland (only between 1966 and the subsequent election in 1970), Flanders (between 1985 and 1991), Germany (only between 1987 and the subsequent election 1990) and Norway (between 1965 and 1973). In Finland, Flanders and Norway, voter dealignment occurred along the class cleavage and in Germany along the religious cleavage. Modifications of the electoral party system were identified only in the German 1987 election and in the 1987 Flemish election. This type of partial dealignment over a longer period is found in other cases: Austria (between 1970 and 1983) and Luxembourg (in which the dealignment along the class cleavage began in 1979, and along both cleavages began in 2004).

In Austria the typology indicates that a shift of party system structure over the period of partial dealignment occurred only at the beginning of the period, in 1970, when the identity of the second party changed.

Regarding Luxembourg, in the period from 1970 to 1999 (when there was voter alignment along the religious cleavage, but dealignment along the class cleavage), the typology suggests that the Luxembourgian electoral party system structure was one of balance between the parties, but the scale of competition swung between weak and moderate (models 3 and 6). In addition, the typology suggests that in the 1999 election the identity of the second party changed.

Fluctuation in the competition scale during this period occurred due to shifts in the supply side: in 1984 the number of relevant parties went down from six to five, when two parties (the Social Democratic Party (PSD) and the ‘list of Enrôlés de force’) did not contest the election. The number of relevant parties also decreased in 1994

election as the two Green parties – Green Alternative (GAP) and the Green Left Ecological Initiative (GLEI) – ran together for the parliament.<sup>6</sup>

All these cases again demonstrate that transformations of the electoral system party system in a partial dealignment do not occur very frequently. In addition, similar to the case of a full dealignment, in some of these cases the shifts occurred either when the process of erosion began (such as in the cases of Austria and Germany), and in the following years (as is found in Luxembourg and Wallonia). In other cases it occurred only in later elections (Flanders and Sweden).

The next question concerns what kind of modification occurred, and whether it pointed in a specific direction. According to H3, I expected that during periods of dealignment the structure of the electoral party system would become more fragmented, indicating that party balance became more dispersed.

My typology, which evaluates changes of the party system structure, identifies a shift based on three criteria: the number of parties, the electoral support for the two largest parties, and the identity of these parties. The first two criteria give an indication of the degree of fragmentation; as I explained above, an increase of the number of parties or a decrease of the electoral support for the first two parties indicate that the party system has become more fragmented. The opposite trend suggests that the fragmentation of the party system has decreased. A change in the identity of one of the first two parties, however, does not imply that the level of fragmentation has altered.

Table 8.3 summarises the shifts identified in all eight cases during periods of full dealignment. I treat each shift as an independent event, regardless of its timing.

In total, 43 shifts were counted. Twelve (27.90 percent) of them indicate that the electoral party system in a multi-party system becomes more fragmented during a period of full dealignment, as the number of parties increased and/or the electoral support for the first two largest parties decreased. However, almost the same number

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<sup>6</sup> The two parties officially merged in 1995.

of shifts – ten (23.26 percent) – reveal that the direction of fragmentation changed, as the number of parties decreased and/or the electoral support for the two largest parties increased. On top of this, many more transformations – twenty-one (48.84 percent) – occurred when the identity of one of the two largest parties changed, indicating no change in the level of fragmentation!

Moreover, upon closer inspection of the trends for each case separately (presented in Table 8.2), it is clear that in all cases except Finland, Italy and Wallonia, two directions of fragmentation were found! Put differently, my examination based on the typology's three criteria demonstrates that during a period of full dealignment, the party system not only becomes more fragmented.

**Table 8.3 – Changes of party system structure, as identified by the typology's three criteria, over periods of full and partial dealignment**

		The party system became more fragmented	The party system became less fragmented	No change of party system competitive
Full dealignment	Number of parties	4 (9.30%)	2 (4.65%)	
	Electoral support for first-two parties	8 (18.60%)	8 (18.60%)	
	Identity of the first two parties			21 (48.84%)
	<b>Sum = 43 (100%)</b>	<b>12 (27.90%)</b>	<b>10 (23.26%)</b>	<b>21 (48.84%)</b>
Partial dealignment	Number of parties	7 (38.89%)	3 (16.67%)	
	Electoral support for first-two parties	4 (22.22%)	1 (5.56%)	
	Identity of the first two parties			3 (16.67%)
	<b>Sum = 18 (100%)</b>	<b>10 (58.82%)</b>	<b>5 (29.41%)</b>	<b>3 (16.67%)</b>

Different results were found during periods of partial dealignment. In total, 18 transformations were identified, ten of which (58.56 percent) indicate increased fragmentation. In addition, only five shifts (27.78 percent) occurred in the opposite

direction (the number of parties decreased or the electoral support for the first two largest parties increased), and three of these shifts (16.67 percent) occurred in no specific direction (the identity of the two largest parties changed). No difference concerning the type of change was identified regarding the two sorts of partial dealignment.<sup>7</sup> This demonstrates that during partial dealignment, regardless of in which manifestation it occurs, there is more chance that the shifts of the electoral party system will point towards an increasing level of fragmentation.

The next question is, what occurs during and after realignment in a multi-party system? The only case that may answer this question is Denmark, for which I identified a partisan (critical) realignment. My analysis of partisanship in Chapter Five demonstrates that Denmark experienced a critical realignment (which occurred in the 1973 election) followed by a new alignment.

First, I had to analyse the party system structure before the partisan realignment began and identify the party system structure according to my typology. The typology's three criteria suggest that between 1950 and 1960, the party system structure was that of moderate competition with one dominant party (model 4). In 1964, the structure transformed into one of limited competition with one dominant party (model 1), as the number of parties decreased. In the following election (1966) it again transformed, this time into a model of limited competition with balance between the parties (model 3), as the electoral support for the dominant party – the Social Democrats (SD) – declined below 39 percent. In the critical election (1973) the electoral party system structure became that of wide competition with balance between the parties (model 9). This occurred when the number of parties increased and the Progress Party (FP) (a party that ran for the parliament for the first time in this election) became the second largest party. In the 1975 election, the number of parties decreased and the party system was characterised as that of moderate competition (model 6), but in the following two elections – 1977 and 1979 – it again swung between the models of wide and moderate competition (models 9 and 6 respectively), due to changes in the number of parties. Since then, the party system structure remained one of moderate

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<sup>7</sup> In the case of partial dealignment as is indicated by partisan dealignment, from seven shifts that are identified, four of these changes indicate on increasing levels of fragmentation. In the case of voter dealignment along the cleavage, from eleven transformations, six of them point out on higher fragmentation.



competition with balance between the parties, and only in the 2001 election did the identity of the largest party change: the previously first party – the Social Democrats (SD) – lost its position as the largest party to one of the second largest parties – the Danish Liberals (V) – for the first time since 1950! The Danish Liberals succeeded in holding their position in the following two elections (2005 and 2007).

In the critical election moment and in the two subsequent elections the Danish party system transformed, and has stabilised only since the 1979 election (during the new alignment), retaining the same structure until the 2001 election. This evidence partly supports H1, as it indicates that the electoral party system structure modifies with critical realignment. Contrary to our expectation, the Danish case also suggests that in case of critical realignment in multi party system, post effect shifts may occur in the succeeding elections, immediately after the critical election. The transformations in the 1964 and 1966 elections, *before* the critical realignment phase, however, require closer examination. These changes indicate opposing trends: on one hand, the number of parties in the 1960 election decreased (an indication of less fragmentation), while on the other hand the electoral support for the first party (SD) declined below 39 percent. Nevertheless, the model of party system that appeared in the 1966 election (seven years before the partisan realignment began) and held until 1973 (the critical election) might indicate that shifts in the electoral party system precede those of the alignment manifestation. These findings might suggest that a partisan (critical) realignment can be identified first in the electoral party system, before it gathers speed with the momentum of a critical election.

## **8.6 Changes in Party System Structure during periods of Realignment and Dealignment –Discussion and Conclusions**

This chapter presents a solution to a problem that has been insufficiently discussed in the literature of re/dealignment: the effects of these phenomena on the party system structure in multi-party systems. Firstly, it clarifies that the possible effect of electoral re/dealignment is felt in what is called the ‘electoral party system’. It is expected that with critical realignment a new durable electoral party system will be created. Regarding dealignment, two expectations can be identified. One expectation is that the stable and durable electoral party system structure will disappear without a new,

stable structure being formed, and the second implies that the party system structure becomes more fragmented.

This chapter demonstrates that the existing methods used to examine these possible effects cannot differentiate between the diverse models of party system structure, as the indices (such as the Fractionalization index, and the Effective Number of Parties) produce continuous numbers and are not sensitive to shifts concerning party identity. To address these deficiencies, I developed a typology that can assist in identifying the electoral party system structure at any point in time for every multi-party system. This typology is based on three criteria: the number of parties, the electoral support for the two largest parties, and their identity. The chapter then presented the results of empirical research into ten cases in which full dealignment (when dealignment is identified in both alignment manifestations) or partial dealignment (when dealignment is identified only in one of the alignment manifestations) has been identified at some point between 1965 and 2010, and one case in which a partial realignment has occurred since 1973.

This typology of electoral party systems has shown that during periods of full dealignment, the party system structure modifies very frequently, indicating that this party system is no longer stable and durable. Put differently, the empirical research confirms that when dealignment occurs in both alignment manifestations, it affects the electoral party system structure. The effect is not necessarily immediate, but in a few cases it did appear shortly after the full dealignment started. This later effect is true also for periods of partial dealignment. On top of this, the empirical analysis demonstrated that during this period the party system structure modifications occurred only occasionally.

Equally importantly, the empirical research has demonstrated that during full dealignment, the party system structure does not necessarily become more fragmented, but the direction of competition also swings towards the opposite direction. In cases of partial dealignment, on the other hand, there is more chance that the level of fragmentation will increase!

Regarding the effect of partial realignment on the electoral party system structure, this research has tested only one case in which a combined model of partisan realignment appeared: a critical realignment and a new alignment discovered in Denmark. The Danish critical realignment election was that of 1973. The typology suggests that the party system structure changes not only in the peak moment – the critical election – but also in the first few subsequent elections, while shifts cease as time goes on. In addition, the typology has uncovered a few transformations of the electoral party system that occurred before the process of partisan (critical) realignment began, which might suggest a much more complex effect. However, these last findings are based on only one case study and should be tested in other similar cases.

## CHAPTER 9

### ALIGNMENT, REALIGNMENT AND DEALIGNMENT IN MULTI-PARTY SYSTEMS FROM 1950 TO 2010 – CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

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On 18<sup>th</sup> April 2011, a few days after the official results of the Finnish national election were published, Ilkka Ruostetsaari (a Finnish political analyst) told the AFP news agency that the election outcome was astonishing: "The True Finns' victory, surpassing every poll and every expectation of a drop on election day... plus the total collapse of the Centre – the whole thing is historic," (BBC mobile news Europe, 18 April 2011; <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-13107620>). No political analyst or poll predicted these developments in the latest national election in Finland, in which an extreme-Right party – the True Finns – succeeded in obtaining almost the same number of votes as the Social Democratic party, with an increase of 15 percent from the previous election. Through this result, the True Finns took the position of one of the established parties, the Centre, and became the third largest party in Finland with 39 seats in the parliament, only three seats less than the Social Democrats and four seats more than the Centre. Yet, from a comparative perspective there is nothing new in this story of unexpected election results and the electoral success of a relatively new party. Similar events have occurred earlier; to name only a few examples: Dutch party the List of Pim Fortuyn (LPF) received 17 percent of the votes when it ran for the first time in a parliamentary election and became the second largest party. Much earlier, in 1973, the Danish Progress party (FP) ran for parliament for the first time and achieved 15.9 percent of the votes, becoming the second largest party.

These instances of earthquake elections stand contrary to the empirical and theoretical arguments of early Political Science literature. Sixty-five years ago, when the study of

political behaviour began<sup>1</sup>, two of the main approaches for studying party support – the social-psychological and the social-structural approaches – argued for the existence of voters’ long-term party allegiance. The two approaches differ in how they explain the mechanism that created this voter alignment. As Chapter Two presented, the socio-psychological approach looks at individual party allegiance, which is created by identification and/or long-term party support. The socio-structural approach argues that the durable connection between voters and parties is created along socio-structural cleavage lines.

Since the 1970s, there has been an empirical dispute in Political Science literature about whether or not the connection between voters and political parties in Western democratic countries has remained relatively stable and structured. Chapter Three outlined this discussion and showed that based on existing research, we cannot come to a definite conclusion as to whether and how the party systems of Western democratic countries have changed since the 1970s, and what shifts, if any, have occurred. Studying this long debate presents us with three different research results. The first suggests that the party systems are still in an alignment. The relationship between voters and parties has hardly changed: voters are still affiliated to political parties in much the same way as they always have been, and the connection between voters and parties is stable.

The other two empirical results argue for the recognition of a change in the patterns of alignment. The social-psychological and the socio-structural approaches, which emphasise ‘alignment’, are also the basis for explaining these new empirical developments.

The second empirical argument influenced by the socio-structural approach suggests that since the 1970s, the connection between voters and parties has been changed by the appearance of a new cleavage, which functions as a basis for a new voter alignment. According to this view, at some point since the 1970s we have witnessed a wide-scale realignment. The third empirical argument suggests that since the 1970s

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<sup>1</sup> According to Carmines and Huckfeldt (1996:223), the birth of the modern era in political behavior research was marked by the publication of Lazarsfeld and his colleagues’ book *The People’s Choice* in 1944.

the party systems of industrialised democracies have been experiencing a process of dealignment: the connection between voters and political parties has diminished but a new or alternative connection has not asserted itself. One of the models for explaining dealignment follows the social-psychological approach, stressing the psychological aspects behind voter behaviour, and holds that cognitive transformation and mobilisation of voters has unravelled their connection with political parties. This model assumes that some of the traditional functions of political parties are no longer needed.

Chapter Three demonstrated that these different results are rooted in a conceptual problem, reflecting what is in part an empirical dispute and in part a conceptual dispute. The conceptual problem is that there is no single agreed operational definition for either realignment or dealignment. These two closely related concepts are used in very different ways by different authors, and are applied at a number of different levels of analysis. Indeed, there are probably too many operational definitions of realignment and too many indicators (which function as operational definitions) associated with dealignment. The operational definitions of realignment and the indicators of dealignment differ from one another at three levels – the electorate, the party system structure, and the cleavage. As far as the electorate is concerned, we see major differences between the treatment of voters as individuals and the treatment of voters as members of various social or ideological groups. The concept of ‘cleavage’ is defined in three different ways – as an electoral distribution, a socio-structural division, and as a major conflict. Finally, the literature of realignment and dealignment is not clear regarding the effect of a change in the third level – the party system structure.

In order to solve this conceptual problem, I suggested examining the question of stability and change of voters-parties ties and its effect on the party system structure using a semi-modular approach, which separately analyses two sorts of alignment manifestation: partisan alignment and voter alignment along a cleavage. This assists us to identify empirically, and to understand both theoretically and conceptually, the development of the processes underlying realignment and dealignment. This study is designed as a comparison between “relatively similar” cases, which examines eleven European multi-party systems between 1950 and 2010.

Chapter Five followed the socio-psychological approach in its attempt to examine the first manifestation of alignment – partisan alignment. It analysed trends of partisanship as articulated in its two meanings: party identification and stable party support. It was necessary to combine these two articulations not only because of the absence of strong evidence for decreasing numbers of party identifiers, but also due to major scholarly critique of the phenomenon of ‘party identification’ in a multi-party system. Trends of long-term party supporters were measured in patterns of party support between two successive elections for the whole electorate (including those who did not participate in the election and those who cast blank or invalid votes). This was achieved by employing two indicators that are based on individual-level data (i.e. the proportion of those reporting support for the same party in two succeeding elections) and aggregate data (its equivalent estimation, the Electoral Total Partisans index (ETP) (for an explanation of this index, see Appendix A). Combining the results of the two manifestations of partisanship, Chapter Five showed that partisanship eroded over time in all the case studies but two (Luxembourg and Denmark). This indicates that a partisan dealignment has occurred. The shift to partisan dealignment happened in two waves. The early and the major wave had already begun in the mid 1960s and ended in the early 1970s, while the second smaller wave began in the early 1980s and concluded in the early 1990s.

Voter alignments along the class and religious cleavages were examined in Chapter Six, which represented the second approach (the socio-structural). It identified that voter alignment along class cleavage was stronger than alignment along the religious cleavage in all the case studies, regardless of religious domination, apart from Germany and the Netherlands. The measurement of cleavage electoral closeness was obtained by employing the Bloc-Weighted Cleavage Salience index (WCS) (for an explanation of this index, see Appendix A). In two other cases – Italy and Luxembourg – alignments along both cleavages were found to be salient at the same level. Denominational difference has little effect on the appearance of erosion of the alignment along the dominant cleavage. In some predominantly Protestant countries, this erosion began in the mid 1960s, while in predominantly Catholic and mixed countries it began in the 1970s and early 1980s. However, in two cases – Italy and Sweden – (one predominantly Catholic the other predominantly Protestant), it

commenced only in the early 1990s. On top of this, Chapter Six revealed that the weakening of the alignment along the class cleavage occurred much earlier than for the religious cleavage, as the latter only began diminishing in the mid 1980s (with the exception of the Netherlands). Evidence of persistence of voter alignment along the class cleavage was found in Denmark, and in Flanders this persistence was evident for the new alignment along the religious cleavage.

The evidence of both manifestations of alignment provides a detailed picture of the phenomenon of alignment and an indication of its durability. Chapter Seven analysed the evidence for stability and change in both manifestations. It identified that the transition from alignment into dealignment or realignment in at least one of its manifestations, occurred during a short period of about twenty years, between the mid 1960s and mid 1980s, in all of the eleven European multi-party systems. In the vast majority of the cases, diminishing of patterns of alignment were identified throughout the mid 1960s and mid 1970s. This substantiates earlier arguments that suggested the alignment between voters and parties in most of the European multi-party systems diminished at some point between the mid 1960s and mid 1970s; e.g. (Dalton, et al., 1984c; Sartori, 1994:50).

This analysis of state transitions into realignment and dealignment has identified that realignment in one of the alignment manifestations only occurs when no change occurs in the other manifestation, which remains in a situation of alignment. This means that only a small portion of the electorate is available to become attached to other parties, and to be involved in realignment along a new cleavage. This is coherent with Stubager (2010a), who found that the realignment of Danish voters along the new cleavage of education has been embodied by small parties.

Examination of these state transitions along the temporal dimension has demonstrated that the dealignment process can begin in either manifestation, and has two phases of development. It starts in one of the manifestations (the partial phase), and then spills over into the other manifestation, at which point the process of dealignment runs wider and deeper and evolves into a full dealignment.



In Chapter Eight, we found that over period of dealignment the electoral party system is no longer stable and durable. On top of this, we saw that there is a difference between a full dealignment and partial dealignment when it comes to their effects on the party system structure. During periods of dealignment at both manifestations – full dealignment – the structure of the electoral party system changes very frequently. However, when the dealignment process occurs in only one of the manifestations – partial dealignment – the shifts of party system structure happen only occasionally.

Based on a typology of party system structure (that uses three criteria: the number of parties, electoral support of the two largest parties, and their identities), Chapter Eight demonstrated that the changes of party system structure following partial or full dealignment may not take effect at the beginning of a dealignment process, but rather may occur later on. These findings validate Lipset and Rokkan's (1967:50) freezing hypothesis, as the erosion of voters-parties ties began in some of the case studies in the mid 1960s, but its effect on the party system structure commenced only in the 1970s, with the exception of the creation of the sub-national party systems in Belgium.

In addition, my analysis has demonstrated that in periods of partial dealignment there is high probability that the competition between the parties will be more fragmented. During a period of full dealignment, on the other hand, the competition between parties does not necessarily become more fragmented, but the party system structure transforms in both directions – both more and less fragmentation is evident.

All in all, we can summarise the development of the process underlying dealignment in a multi-party system as *a process that begins with erosion of the alignment of voters along the main cleavages or with declining levels of partisanship (this is the first phase, in which the process is partial). The process will then progress and become wider and deeper, so that no mechanisms of voter alignment – partisanship or alignments along cleavages – will function (this is the second phase, in which the process becomes a full dealignment). Throughout the two phases of the dealignment process, the structure of the electoral party system will be modified, but the shifts will not necessarily begin immediately. During its partial phase, modifications of party system structure will occur only occasionally and chances are high that the party*

*system structure will become more fragmented. In the second phase of full dealignment, the party system structure will change very frequently, but will not necessarily become more fragmented.*

My empirical analysis and my conceptual contribution to analysis of the dealignment process in multi-party systems emphasises the crucial necessity of studying the phenomena of alignment along two of its manifestations – partisans and along cleavages. In my empirical research, I demonstrated that both realignment and dealignment begin as shifts in either one of the manifestations of alignment. Therefore, a study that does not examine both manifestations of alignment will not examine the whole picture: therefore, it may not be able to pin down electoral transitions or to distinguish between the two phases of the dealignment process.

Sartori (1984:22) reminded us that “[c]lear thinking requires clear language. In turn, a clear language requires that its terms be explicitly defined.” As the concepts of ‘realignment’ and ‘dealignment’ emerged in reaction to the conceptualisation of ‘alignment’, which is a complex phenomenon in itself, I believe that both these terms should be employed only in this context and should not be used in the study of related issues. In addition, as was discussed in Chapters Two and Three, the concepts of ‘alignment’ and ‘realignment’ suffer the problem of homonymy (one word, many meanings), as is evident by the two mechanisms of alignment, and the diverse definitions employed by scholars. A solution for this problem, proposed by Sartori (1984:38), is the use of separate terms. I have demonstrated that realignment and dealignment both commence in one manifestation of alignment, while the other manifestation remains temporarily in a situation of alignment. This finding, along with Sartori’s suggestion, strongly suggests that when one studies either phenomenon (realignment or dealignment), he/she should specify the alignment’s manifestation (for example, partisan dealignment, or voter realignment along a cleavage): the generic terms of ‘realignment’ or ‘dealignment’ should not be used.

My empirical research, however, included only European multi-party system countries. It is recommended that future research apply these conceptual findings to countries with multi-party systems in which the main cleavages are not socio-

structural (for example, Israel), and to countries with different socio-structural cleavage histories (for example, new democracies).

The identification of state transitions from alignment into realignment or dealignment is based in the major part of this research on indices of volatility – the ETP and WCS. Regarding the use of these kind of indices (i.e. those that are based on measurement of electoral volatility) in the study of the effect of the dealignment process (in its partial or full phase) on the party system structure, I have proved that any index based on volatility cannot be employed in the study of electoral party systems, as there is no association between the two. As Evans (2002:160) has previously explained, “[high volatility] is precisely a necessary (though not sufficient) condition of a change in party system type.”

I have demonstrated in this research that during a full dealignment, the party system does not become more fragmented. Earlier research had already showed that the fragmentation level increased mainly in a specific period: the 1980s to 1990s (Best, 2007)<sup>2</sup>, as measured by the index of Effective Number of Parties (ENP) (for an explanation of this index, see Appendix A). Moreover, the same research pointed out that in Denmark, Finland and the Netherlands (if we combine the Christian parties), the ENP level had already raised in the 1950s to 1960s (Best, 2007:25), a period widely assumed to be characterised by stable party systems. These empirical results have revealed the absence of continuously increasing trends of fragmentation during a period of dealignment. This observation, together with scholarly criticism of the application of this index for studying party system change (see Chapter Eight), prove that any index which measures fragmentation (for example, ENP, or Dunleavy and Boucek’s (2003) index of Number of Parties) should not be employed for studying the effect of the dealignment process on the party system structure. It should be noted that my research has only examined cases of (European) multi-party systems. Further research must be done into fragmentation in other types of party systems, for example two-party systems.

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<sup>2</sup> This research examines Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States; between 1950 and 2005.

In this research, I only focused on the two main socio-structural cleavages and did not examine alignment along any alternative new cleavage (such as the Post-Materialist or the globalisation cleavages). However, my findings suggest that realignment may occur when one of the alignment manifestations is effective. This confirms that for the time being, realignment in either alignment manifestation is not evident. If it was evident, increasing volatility rates would be observable “as a result of this repositioning and realigning of established parties” (Kriesi et al., 2008a:13-4) along the new cleavage. This being the case, volatility rates would drop not long after the new alignment appeared. However, I found empirical evidence that almost all the case studies are going through (full) dealignment, with steady high level of volatility.

My empirical research confirms for Political Science researchers and for politicians that most European multi-party systems are currently in a state of disconnection between voters and parties. This has been the case since some point in time between the mid 1960s and mid 1980s and will probably continue for a long time: no signs of realignment have appeared. Therefore, dealignment should not be viewed in a negative light, but rather should be seen as part of what Enyedi (2008:299) called “the process of democratization, when ‘voters begin to choose’.”

# APPENDIX A

## INDICES

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### 1. Volatility indices

**The Total Volatility index (TV)** measures the quantity of voters that shift their vote between two consecutive elections, calculated as the total percentages which point to change for each party between two successive elections. The total change for all of the parties is then divided by two.

The change in the strength of party 'I' since the previous election ( $\Delta P_{i,t}$ ) is calculated as:  $P_{i,t} - P_{i,t-1}$ .

Therefore, the total change of the party system (total net change) (TNCt) is calculated as:

$$\sum_{i=1}^n \frac{\Delta P_{i,t-1}}{2}$$

(Pedersen, 1979, 1983)

**The Bloc Volatility index (BV)** is calculated by using the Total Volatility index, but the calculation is based on blocs of parties rather than on individual parties.

The formula for Bloc Volatility is:

$$(\text{Bloc Volatility} = \frac{|P_iV + P_jV + P_kV| + |P_oV + P_mV + P_nV|}{2})$$

or simply  $|P_iV + P_jV + P_kV|$

where PV is the individual volatility of parties i,j,k, etc.

(Bartolini & Mair, 1990:313)

**The Cleavage Salience index (CS):**  $\frac{\text{Bloc volatility}}{\text{Total volatility}} * 100$

**The Bloc-Weighted Cleavage Salience index (WCS):**

$$WCS = \left(1 - \frac{BV}{TV}\right) * BES$$

where BV is bloc volatility, TV is total volatility and BES is bloc electoral support (in numbers).

**The Electorate Total Partisan index (ETP)** is the TV index's complementary number, calculated by subtracting the TV index level from the percentages of the valid votes in the current election.

$$VV_{i,t} - \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{\Delta EP_{i,t} - \Delta EP_{i,t-1}}{2}$$

\* Change in the electoral strength of party 'I' (as measured by its proportion of valid votes from the whole electorate in the current election) since the previous election ( $\Delta EP_{i,t}$ ) is calculated as:  $EP_{i,t} - EP_{i,t-1}$ .

\* This is divided by two, in order to account for the fact that when one party "wins", the other party "loses".

\* Subtracting the index score from the fraction of valid votes in the current election ( $VV_{i,t}$ ).

## 2. Other indices

**Rae's Fragmentation index** is computed as:

$$1 - \sum_{i=1}^n T_i^2$$

$T_i$  = any party's decimal share of the vote (Rae, 1967)

**Laakso and Taagepera's (1979) Effective Number of Parties (ENP)** is calculated as:

$$1 / \sum P_i^2$$

$P_i$  = the proportion of votes (or seats) won by party i.

## APPENDIX B

### COMPOSITION OF PARTY BLOCS ALONG THE DIFFERENT CLEAVAGES, PER CASE

	Class Cleavage	Religious Cleavage
Austria	Socialists (SPÖ), Austrian People's Opposition (WÖV)/Communists and Left Socialists (KuL)/ Communist Party (KPÖ), Democratic Progressive Party (DFP), Socialist Left Party (SLP)/ The Left	Austrian People's Party (ÖVP), the Christians (DC)*
Denmark	Social Democrats (SD), Communist Party (DKP)/ The Unity List (ELRG), Socialist People's Party (SF), Left Socialist Party (VS)	Christian People's Party (KrF)/ Christian Democrats (KD)
Finland	Social Democrats (SSP), the Finnish People's Democratic Union (SKDL)/Left Alliance (V), Social Democratic League of Workers and Smallholders (TPSL)*, Communist Party (SKP)*, For Peace and Socialism (KTP)*, The Finnish Workers' Party (STP)*	Christian League (SKL)/ Christian Democrats (KD)
Flanders	Flemish Socialist Party (BSP), Flemish Socialist Party – Different) (SP. A) & SPIRIT (SPSp)*, Communist Party (KP)*	Christian People's Party (CVP)/ Christian Democratic and Flemish (CD & V), Christian Democratic and Flemish (CD & V) & (NVA)*
Germany	Social Democrats (SPD), Communist Party (KPD), All-German People's Party (GVP)*, Action for Democratic Union (ADF)*, German Peace Union (DFU)*, Democratic Socialist (PDS)/ the Left (L)	Christian Democratic Union (CDU), Christian Social Union (CSU)
Italy	Communist Party (PCI/ PDS), the Democrats of the Left (DS)* Proletarian Unity*, Party of the Italian Communist (PdCI)*, Communist Re-foundation (RC)*, Continuous Struggle (LC)*, Socialist Party (PSI), New Italian Socialists Party (NPSI)*, United Socialist Party *, Social Democrats (PSDI),	Christian Democrats (DC), Popular Party (PPI)*, Christian Democratic Centre (CCD)*, Christian Democratic Centre (CCD) - United Christian Democrats (CDU)*/Union of Christian and Centre Democrats (UDC)*, Segni Pact*

	Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity (PSIUP), Democratic Party of Proletarian Unity for Communism (PdUP)*, Democratic Proletarian (DP), Democrats Socialist (DS), Italian Socialists (SI)*, Democratic Party (PD)*, The Left-The Rainbow (SA)*	
Luxembourg	Socialist Workers' (POSL)/ Social- Democratic Party (LSAP) Communist Party (PCL), Socialists, Social Democratic Party (PSD), Independent Socialists, The Left	Christian Social Party (PCS)/ Christian Social Peoples Party (CSV)
the Netherlands	Communist Party (CPN), Labour Party (PvdA), Democratic Socialists 70 (DS 70), Pacifist Socialist Party (PSP), Green Left (GL), Socialist Party (SP)	Anti Revolutionary Party (ARP), Catholics/ Catholic People's Party (KVP), Christian Historical Union (CHU), Political Reformed Party (SGP)*, Reformed Political League (GPV), Roman Catholic Party (RKPN)*, Catholic National Party (KNP)*, Evangelical People's Party (EVP)*, Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA), Reformed Political Federation (RPF)*, Christian Union (CU)*
Norway	Labour party (DNA), Communist Party (NKP), Socialist Left Party (SV)	Christian People's Party (KrF), Christian Unity Party (KSP)*
Sweden	Social Democrats (SdaP), Communist Party (SKV)/ Left Party (V)	Christian Democratic Party (KdS) (the results of 1985 are those with the Centre Party (C))
Wallonia	Francophone Socialist Party (PS), Communist Party (PC)*	Christian Social Party (PSC)/ Democratic Humanistic Centre (CDH)

\* Assignment of party by author based on party ideology.



## APPENDIX C

### NATIONAL SURVEYS DATASETS AND SOURCES

	File numbers	Source	
Belgium 1991	P1228	Data Archiving and Networked Services (DANS)	
Belgium 1995	P1422		
Belgium 1999	P1693		
Belgium 2003			
Denmark 1971-98	ZA-Nr. 3911	ISPO - K.U.Leuven, PIOP - U.C.Louvain The European Voter Database* Danish Data Archive (DDA)	
Denmark 2001	dat12516		
Denmark 2005	dat18184		
Finland 1991	FSD1018		
Finland 1995	FSD1031	Finnish Social Science Data Archive (Pesonen, et al., 1991) (Gallup, 1995) (Moring & Gallup, 1999) (Karvonen, et al., 2003) (Paloheimo, et al. 2007)	
Finland 1999	FSD1042		
Finland 2003	FSD1260		
Finland 2007	FSD2269		
Germany 1961-94	ZA-Nr. 3911	The European Voter Database* ZACAT	
Germany 1998	ZA3083		
Germany 2002	ZA3861		
Germany 2005	ZA4559		
Germany 2009	ZA5303		
Italy 1994	ITA1994		Italian National Election Studies (ITANES)
Italy 1996	ITA1996		
Italy 2001	ITA2001		
Italy 2006	ITA2006		
Italy 2008	ITA2008		
the Netherlands 1967	P0044	DANS	
the Netherlands 1972	P0353		
the Netherlands 1977	P0354		
the Netherlands 1981	P0350		
the Netherlands 1986	P0866		
the Netherlands 1989	P1000		
the Netherlands 1994	P1208		
the Netherlands 1998	P1415		
the Netherlands 2002-03	P0353		
Norway 1965-97	ZA-Nr. 3911		The European Voter Database* Norwegian Social Science Service Data (NDS)
Norway 2005			
Sweden 1956-98	ZA-Nr. 3911		
Sweden 2002	VALU2002 (0787-001)		The European Voter Database* Swedish Social Science Data Service
Sweden 2006	VALU2006 (0844-001)		

\*GESIS

## APPENDIX D

### NAMES OF VARIABLES, PER DATASET

		PI	Turnout recent election	Party support recent election	Turnout present election	Party support present election	Weight variable
Belgium	1991			V44		V31	v_weight
Belgium	1995			Q59	Q43.1	Q42	Lsv_vla; Lsv_wal
Belgium	1999			R43	Missing	R35_1	Lsp_belg
Belgium	2003			q23_1		q32	w_agev_vla w
Denmark	1971-98	STRENGTH	RECALL TURNOUT	RECALL CHOICE	TURNOUT	PARTY CHOICE	for 1998 election: weigpo98
Denmark	2001	V0051	V0032		V0022		vegtede partiandele fv
Denmark	2005	V0118	V0037		V0020		politisk wegt
Finland	1991		V130	V131		V264	My calculation
Finland	1995			V110		V73*	My calculation
Finland	1999		Q32	Q33	Q3	Q5	My calculation
Finland	2003		Q32	Q33	Q9	Q10	My calculation
Finland	2007		Q23	Q23b	Q21	Q21c	My calculation
Germany	1961	STRENG61	TURNOUT2	PARTY CHOICE2	TURNOUT	PARTY CHOICE	--
Germany	1965	STRENG65					
Germany	1969-94	STRENGTH					

Germany	1998	V7	V194	V196		V197*	My calculation
Germany	2002	vpidststrk	V330		V70*		My calculation
Germany	2005	V17c (Staerke der Parteinaehe)	V21 (Teilnahme BTW05)	V22b (Zweitstimme BTW02)	V18 (Teilnahme BTW05)	V19b (Zweitstimme)	My calculation
Germany	2009	POST052	PREV087		POST002	POST004	My calculation
Italy	1994	--	Q34		Q14	Q27	--
Italy	1996	--	Q133		Q143	Q154	--
Italy	2001	--	E7		E20	--	
Italy	2006	--	C80_2 (C808)		C133B (C119)	C140 (CAMERA1. C.123)	--
Italy	2008	--	D053		D119	D123	--
the Netherlands	1967	--	V054		V026	--	
the Netherlands	1971	R226, R230	V272	V273	V763	V764	My calculation
the Netherlands	1972	VAR224, VAR226	V154	V155	V143	V150	My calculation
the Netherlands	1977	V159, V161	V94	V95	V315	V323	My calculation
the Netherlands	1981	V019	V016	V017	V512	V513	My calculation
the Netherlands	1982	V1021	V1171	V1172	V1045	V1046	My calculation
the Netherlands	1986	V024	V203	V204	V180	V181	My calculation
the Netherlands	1989	V027	V055	V056	V146	V147	My calculation
the Netherlands	1994	V026	V055	V056	V280	V281	My calculation
the Netherlands	1998	V0058	V0165	V0166	V0610	V0611	CBD
the Netherlands	2002	V0112	V0235	V0236	V0646	V0647	SDELM02
the Netherlands	2003	--	V0646	V0647	X0195	X0196	SDELM03
the Netherlands	2006	V065	V220	V 221	V510	V512	SOCIO DEM FOR ALL WAVES

Norway	1965-97	STRENGTH	RECALL TURNOUT	RECALL CHOICE	TURNOUT	PARTY CHOICE	--
Norway	2005	V299 (pidstyrk)	V242		V220	V223	
Sweden	1956-98	STRENGTH	RECALL TURNOUT	RECALL CHOICE	TURNOUT	PARTY CHOICE	Only for 1970 and 1976: Weight 70, Weight 76
Sweden	2002	--	V20		V7		My calculation
Sweden	2006	--	V13		V7		My calculation

\* question of vote intention

**Names of variables as they appeared in the national election surveys, which  
were collected in the European voter datasets**

		STRENGTH	RECALL TURNOUT	RECALL CHOICE	TURNOUT	PARTY CHOICE
Denmark	1971	V254		V241		V318
	1973	V161		V154		V146
	1975	V64		V40		V33
	1977	V177		V207		V26
	1979	V161		V165		V94
	1981	--		V182		V232
	1984	V110		V63		V2
	1987	--		V38b		V8b
	1988	--		*V92		s3
	1990	V245		V148		V143
	1994	V32		V31		V11
	1998	V45		V44		V4
Germany	1961	V175	--		V90	V91
	1965	V172	--	V202	V113	V114
	1969	--	V183	V185	V615	V617
	1972	V306	V170	V172	V263	V266
	1976	V553	V513	V515	V434	V437
	1980	V299	V10	V12	V246	V248
	1983	V396	V278	V278	V272	V274
	1987	V418	--	V206	V361	V362
	1990	V607	V172	V173	V489	V490
	1994	V176	V172	V173	V9	V11
Norway	1965- 97	Strength	Recall		Turnout	Choice
Sweden	1956- 98	PIS	VOTER	PARTYR	VOTE	PARTY

## APPENDIX E

### TURNOUT, INVALID VOTES AND ‘NOT VOTING’ RATES IN FLANDERS AND WALLONIA

The data for these two regions were calculated based on constituencies-level data, as is specified in Caramani (2000) and based on the official election results. Due to the discussion on the Brussel-Halle-Vilvoorde area, some districts in this area were excluded (Brussels was excluded between 1961-91, and from 1995 onward the Anderlecht, Brussel, Elsene, Schaarbeek, Sint-Gillis, Sint-Jans-Molenbeek, Sint-Joost-Ten-Node, and Ukkel were excluded). Table 1 specifies the turnout and valid votes rates for each region, in each election year, over the same period, while Table 2 presents the constituencies distribution per region between 1950 and 2010.

<b>Table 1: Turnout and valid vote, per region, in each (national) election year</b>				
	Flanders		Wallonia	
	Turnout	Valid votes	Turnout	Valid votes
1950	93.41	88.35	92.18	87.63
1954	93.76	88.75	92.84	87.95
1958	93.81	89.15	93.04	88.50
1961	93.14	88.24	91.48	86.58
1965	92.61	86.06	90.63	84.49
1968	91.11	84.25	88.74	83.43
1971	92.63	84.59	90.22	83.95
1974	91.49	84.06	89.20	82.52
1977	95.89	89.39	94.81	87.31
1978	96.05	88.37	93.71	85.34
1981	95.75	88.61	93.69	86.88
1985	94.84	88.05	92.91	85.64
1987	94.74	88.68	92.54	86.37

1991	94.28	88.23	91.67	84.33
1995	92.51	86.09	90.53	82.92
1999	92.30	87.12	89.36	81.53
2003	93.36	89.32	83.65	83.65
2007	92.68	88.54	89.91	75.45
2010	90.82	86.05	87.68	81.27

<b>Table 2: The constituencies of Flanders and Wallonia, 1950-2010</b>	
Flanders	Wallonia
Antwerpen, Mechelen, Turnhout, Leuven, Brugge, Veurne-Diksmuide-Oostende, Kortrijk, Roeselare-Tielt, Ieper, Gent-Eeklo, Sint Niklaas, Dendermonde, Aalst, Oudenaarde, Hasselt, Tongeren-Maaseik, Aarlen-Marche-Bastenaken	Nivelles, Mons, Soignes, Tournai-Ath-Mouscron, Charleroi, Thuin, Liège, Huy-Waremme, Verviers, Arlon-Marche-Bastogne, Neufchâteau, Namur, Dinant
Antwerpen, Mechelen-Turnhout, Leuven, Brugge, Veurne-Diksmuide-Ieper-Oostende, Kortrijk-Roeselare-Tielt, Gent-Eeklo, Sint-Niklaas-Dendermonde, Hasselt-Tongeren-Maaseik	Nijvel, Mons-Soignes, Tournai-Ath-Mouscron, Charleroi-Thuin, Liège-Luik, Huy-Waremme, Verviers, Arlon-Marche-Bastogne-Neufchâteau-Virton, Namur-Dinant-Philippeville
Antwerpen, Limburg, Oost-Vlaanderen, Vlaams-Brabant, West-Vlaanderen	Luxemburg, Henegouwen, Luik, Namen, Walloon Brabant
Antwerpen, Limburg, Oost-Vlaanderen, West-Vlaanderen, Leuven and kantons of Halle, Vilvoorde, Lennik, Meise, Zaventem and Asse	Luxemburg, Henegouwen, Luik, Namen, Walloon Brabant

## APPENDIX F

### THE IDENTITY OF THE TWO LARGEST PARTIES, PER CASE, BETWEEN 1950 AND 2010

	Period	First party	Second party
Austria	1953-1966	Social Democrats (SPÖ)/Austrian People's Party (ÖVP)	
	1970-1999, 2006-	Social Democrats (SPÖ)	Austrian People's Party (ÖVP)
	2002	Austrian People's Party (ÖVP)	Social Democrats (SPÖ)
Denmark	1950-1966	the Social Democratic Party (SD)	the Agrarian Liberals (V)
	1968-1971	the Social Democratic Party (SD)	Conservatives (KF)
	1973-1977	the Social Democratic Party (SD)	Progress Party (FP)/the Agrarian Liberals (V)
	1981-1998	the Social Democratic Party (SD)	Conservatives (KF)
	2001-	Agrarian Liberals (V)	the Social Democratic Party (SD)
Finland	1951-58, 1966	Social Democrats	Agrarian Union (M), Centre Party (K)/Finnish People's Democratic Union (SKDL)/ Left Alliance
	1962	Agrarian Union (M), Centre Party (K)	Social Democrats
	1970-87	Social Democrats	National Coalition/Finnish People's Democratic Union (SKDL)/ Left Alliance
	1991-2003	Centre Party (K)	Social Democrats
	2007	Centre Party (K)	National Coalition
Flanders	1950-1978	Catholic Party (CVP/PSC), Flemish Christian People's Party (CVP)	Socialist Party (POB/BSP/PSB), Flemish Socialist Party (BSP)
	1981-1995	Flemish Christian People's Party (CVP)	Flemish Socialist Party (BSP)/ Party of Liberty and Progress (PVV)
	1999	Party of Liberty and Progress (PVV)	Flemish Christian People's Party (CVP)
	2003	Party of Liberty and Progress (PVV)	Flemish Socialist Party (BSP)
	2007	Christian Democratic	Flemish Bloc (VB)



	2010	and Flemish (CD & V) New Flemish Alliance (N-VA)	Christian Democratic and Flemish (CD & V)
Germany	1953-57 1961-87; 1994-2005 1990, 2009	Christian Democratic Union (CDU) Social Democrats (SPD) Christian Democratic Union (CDU)	Social Democrats (SPD) Christian Democratic Union (CDU) Social Democrats (SPD)
Italy	1953-1992 1994-	Christian Democrats party (DC) Go Italy (FI)/ Democratic Party of the Left (PDS), in 1996 the Party of the Democratic Left (PDS), in 2006 the Olive Tree List, in 2008 the Democratic Party (PD)	Communist Party (PCI), in 1992 Democratic Party of the Left (PDS)
Luxembourg	1951-1994, 2004- 1999	Christian Social Party (PCS), Christian Social Peoples Party (CSV) Christian Social Party (PCS), Christian Social Peoples Party (CSV)	Socialist Workers' (POSL), Social-Democratic Party (LSAP) Democratic Party
the Netherlands	1952-1972 1977-1994, 2003- 1998 2002 2010	Catholic People's Party (KVP)/ Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) Labour Party (PvdA) Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD)	Labour Party (PvdA) Labour Party (PvdA) People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD) List Pim Fortuyn (LPF) Labour Party (PvdA)
Norway	1953-1993 1997-	Labour party (DNA) Labour party (DNA)	Conservatives, Unionist Party (H) Conservatives, Unionist Party (H)/ Anders Lange, Progress Party (FRP)
Sweden	1952-1964 1968-	Social Democrats (S) Social Democrats (S)	People's Party, People's Party the Liberals (FP)/ The Right Party (Conservatives), Moderate Unity Party Agrarian Party, Center Party/ People's Party, People's Party the Liberals (FP)/ The Right Party (Conservatives), Moderate Unity Party
Wallonia	1950-1961	Socialist Party (POB/ BSP/PSB),	Catholic Party (CVP/PSC),

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1965-2003, 2010	Francophone Socialist Party (PS) Francophone Socialist Party (PS)	Walloon Christian People's Party (PSC) Walloon Christian People's Party (PSC)/Party of Liberty and Progress (PLP)
2007	Party of Liberty and Progress (PLP)	Francophone Socialist Party (PS)

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## SAMENVATTING

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Toen men begon met het bestuderen van politiek gedrag, 65 jaar geleden<sup>1</sup>, pleitte twee van de destijds invloedrijkste stromingen voor het bestuderen van partijbinding, de sociaal-psychologische en de sociaal-structurele stroming, voor het bestaan van een langdurige relatie tussen partijen en kiezers.

De twee stromingen verschillen van elkaar in de manier waarop zij het mechanisme uitleggen dat ten grondslag ligt aan kiezersalignment. Zoals beschreven in Hoofdstuk 2, kijkt de sociaal-psychologische stroming naar individuele partijbinding, welke tot stand komt door vereenzelviging en langdurige kiezersbinding. De sociaal-structurele stroming bepleit de totstandkoming van kiezerstrouw aan partijen langs de lijnen van sociaal-structurele scheidslijnen.

Vanaf 1970, zien we dat er een empirische discussie wordt gevoerd onder politieke wetenschappers rond de vraag of de relatie tussen kiezers en politieke partijen in westerse democratieën al dan niet stabiel en gestructureerd is gebleven. Hoofdstuk 3 beschrijft deze discussie en laat zien dat we, gebaseerd op huidig onderzoek, geen uitsluitsel kunnen geven of en hoe partijstelsels in westerse democratieën zijn gewijzigd sinds 1970 en of er verschuivingen hebben plaatsgevonden. De genoemde empirische discussie voorziet ons van drie verschillende onderzoeksresultaten. De eerste suggereert dat de partijstelsels nog steeds in een toestand van ‘alignment’ verkeren, waarin de relatie tussen de partijen en de kiezers nauwelijks is veranderd. Kiezers zijn traditiegetrouw geaffilieerd met een partij en de kiezer-partijrelatie is stabiel. Het tweede onderzoeksresultaat past in de redeneertrant van de sociaal-structurele stroming. Zij suggereert dat de kiezer-partijrelatie vanaf 1970 is veranderd door de totstandkoming van een nieuwe scheidslijn die functioneert als de basis voor een nieuw kiezersalignment. Volgens dit gezichtspunt zien we vanaf 1970 op brede schaal re-alignment. Het derde onderzoeksresultaat ondersteunt het empirische argument dat de partijstelsels van geïndustrialiseerde democratieën vanaf 1970 door een proces van dealignment gaan. Binnen

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<sup>1</sup> Volgens Carmines & Huckfeldt (1996:223) wordt het begin van het moderne onderzoek naar politiek gedrag gemarkeerd door de uitgave van het boek van Lazarsfeld en zijn collega's: *The People's Choice* in 1944.



dit kader, is de oude kiezer-partijrelatie zwakker geworden, terwijl de vorming van een andere relatie nog niet zijn intrede heeft gedaan. Eén van de modellen die wordt gebruikt voor het beschrijven van dealignment, volgt de sociaal-psychologisch benadering, waarbinnen de psychologische aspecten van kiezersgedrag worden benadrukt. Deze vertrekt vanuit de aanname dat de cognitieve transformatie en de mobilisatie van kiezers hun binding met een partij hebben ontrafeld.

Hoofdstuk 3 laat zien, dat het bestaan van drie verschillende onderzoeksresultaten te maken heeft met een conceptueel probleem dat op zichzelf weer deels een empirische en deels een conceptuele discussie is.

Het conceptuele probleem bestaat eruit dat er geen operationele definitie bestaat voor realignment en dealignment waarover consensus bestaat onder alle politieke wetenschappers. Deze twee nauw verwante concepten worden op uiteenlopende manieren gebruikt door de verschillende wetenschappers en toegepast op verschillende analyseniveaus. De operationele definities van realignment en de indicatoren voor dealignment verschillen van elkaar op drie verschillende niveaus: het electoraat, de scheidslijn en het effect van een verandering in partijstructuur.

Om dit conceptuele probleem te kunnen oplossen, stel ik voor om nader te kijken naar stabiliteit en veranderingen in kiezer-partijrelaties en hun effect op de structuur van partijstelsels, waarbij ik gebruik maak van een semi-modulaire aanpak. Met deze semi-modulaire aanpak kunnen de twee verschijningsvormen van alignment gescheiden worden geanalyseerd. De twee verschijningsvormen zijn partij-alignment en kiezersalignment als gevolg van een scheidslijn. Met deze aanpak kunnen “relatief vergelijkbare” gevallen worden onderzocht, in dit geval elf Europese meer-partijstelsels – Oostenrijk, België, Denemarken, Finland, Duitsland, Italië, Luxemburg, Nederland, Noorwegen en Zweden, allen tussen 1950 en 2010.

In Hoofdstuk 5 bestudeer ik hoe aanhangers van de sociaal-psychologische benadering de eerste verschijningsvorm van alignment – partij-alignment pogen te onderzoeken. Zij analyseren trends in partijaanhang die tot uiting komen in de twee betekenissen van het woord: partijvereenzelviging en stabiele steun aan een partij. Zij analyseren trends onder trouwe partijaanhang door patronen in partijaanhang te meten voor twee opeenvolgende verkiezingen voor het hele electoraat (Hierin worden ook kiesgerechtigden die geen stem

uitbrachten of een blanco of ongeldige stem uitbrachten meegenomen). Hiervoor werden twee indicatoren gebruikt die zijn gebaseerd op individual-level data (d.w.z. het aandeel dat aangeeft in twee opeenvolgende verkiezingen voor dezelfde partij te hebben gestemd) en geaggregeerde data (die worden geschat door de Electoral Total Partisans Index (ETP), waarbij de TV index wordt afgetrokken van het percentage ongeldige stemmen in de meest recente verkiezingen). Hoofdstuk 5 laat zien dat, wanneer de resultaten voor de twee verschijningsvormen van partijaanhang worden gecombineerd, deze afneemt voor op twee na alle gevallen (Luxemburg en Denemarken zijn de uitzonderingen). Dit laat zien dat partijdealignment heeft plaatsgevonden. De verschuiving naar partijdealignment vond plaats in twee golven. De vroegste en grootste golf begon reeds in de midden jaren '60 en eindigde begin jaren '70. De tweede en kleinere golf begon in de vroege jaren '80 en nam af in de begin jaren '90.

In Hoofdstuk 6 wordt kiezersalignment langs de klasse en religieuze scheidslijnen onderzocht onder de sociaal-structurele benadering. De electorale loyaliteit aan een zuil is gemeten door gebruik te maken van de Bloc-Weighted Cleavage Salience Index (WCS) (naar de aangepaste index van Bartolini en Mair (1990) Cleavage Salience (CS) index<sup>2</sup> en te controleren voor de electorale steun voor de blokken die de scheidslijnen vormen.

Het verschil in denominatie heeft weinig effect op de afname van alignment langs de meest dominante scheidslijn. In sommige overwegend protestantse landen, begon deze afname in de midden jaren '60 terwijl deze in overwegend katholieke en gemengde landen begon in de jaren '70 en de midden jaren '80. In twee gevallen, echter – Italië (overwegend katholiek) en Zweden (overwegend protestant) begon de alignment pas af te nemen tegen het begin van de jaren '90. Bovendien laat Hoofdstuk 6 zien dat de afname van alignment langs de klassenscheidslijn veel eerder plaats had dan die langs de religiescheidslijn. Deze laatste begon pas af te nemen in de vroege jaren '80 (m.u.v. Nederland). In Denemarken bleef de kiezersalignment langs de klassenscheidslijn voortbestaan, terwijl in Vlaanderen kiezersalignment langs de religiescheidslijn persisteerde.

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<sup>2</sup> De CS index combineert het niveau voor Bloc Volatility (BV) – het aantal personen die het scheidslijn 'oversteken' en een partij in het blok aan de andere steunen – met de Total Volatility, of Net Volatility (de geaggregeerde volatiliteit die wordt gemeten door de volatiliteit in een partijstelsel voor een bepaald verkiezingsjaar te vergelijken met die in het voorgaande verkiezingsjaar).

De bewijsvoering ten faveure van de twee verschijningsvormen van alignment geeft een gedetailleerd plaatje van het alignmentfenomeen en zijn bestendigheid. In Hoofdstuk 7 wordt het bewijs voor stabiliteit en verandering in beide verschijningsvormen geanalyseerd. Hier wordt vastgesteld dat de overgang van alignment naar dealignment of realignment langs tenminste een van de verschijningsvormen plaatsvond in een periode van ongeveer 20 jaar, lopend van midden jaren '60 tot midden jaren '80. In veruit de meerderheid van de gevallen werd een afname van alignment vastgesteld in de periode van midden jaren '60 tot midden jaren '70.

Een nadere analyse van de toestandsovergangen naar realignment en dealignment laat zien dat realignment binnen een van de verschijningsvormen van alignment alleen plaatsvindt als geen verandering binnen de andere verschijningsvorm optreedt. De verschijningsvorm blijft in een toestand van alignment. Een studie naar de toestandsovergangen langs de tijdsas laat zien dat het proces van dealignment kan beginnen in beide verschijningsvormen en twee fasen doorloopt. Dealignment begint in één van de verschijningsvormen (de partiële fase) en loopt daarna over in de andere verschijningsvorm. Vanaf hier verbreedt en verdiept het proces van dealignment zich en evolueert naar een toestand van volledige dealignment.

In Hoofdstuk 8 presenteer ik mijn bevindingen dat gedurende een periode van dealignment het electorale partijstelsel al niet meer stabiel en duurzaam is. Daarnaast is er een verschil tussen volledige en gedeeltelijk dealignment wanneer wordt gekeken naar het effect op de partijstructuur. In het geval van dealignment voor beide verschijningsvormen (volledige dealignment) verandert de structuur van het partijstelsel heel frequent. Als het dealignmentproces zich daarentegen alleen voltrekt in één verschijningsvorm (gedeeltelijke dealignment), is er slechts incidenteel sprake van verschuivingen in de partijstructuur.

Hoofdstuk 8 laat zien dat, kijkend naar de typologie van de structuur van een partijstelsel (die drie criteria omvat: het aantal partijen, electorale steun voor de twee grootste partijen en hun specifieke identiteit), veranderingen in de structuur van het partijstelsel als gevolg van gedeeltelijke of volledige dealignment zich niet zozeer aan het begin, maar later in het dealignmentproces optreden. Deze bevindingen valideren de freezing hypothesis van Lipset en Rokkan (1967:50) tegen de situatie waarin de afname van de binding tussen kiezers en partijen volgens sommige studies reeds begon rond midden jaren '60, maar het effect op de structuur van het partijstelsel pas in de jaren '70 zichtbaar werd. België vormt daarop een uitzondering met twee sub-nationale partijstelsels.

Mijn analyse toont ook aan dat in perioden van gedeeltelijk dealignment de competitie tussen de partijen naar alle waarschijnlijkheid meer gefragmenteerd zijn. In een periode van volledige dealignment, daarentegen, is de competitie tussen partijen niet noodzakelijkerwijs gefragmenteerder: de structuur van het partijstelsel kan zowel meer als minder fragmentatie vertonen.

Samenvattend kunnen we zeggen dat het proces dat ten grondslag ligt aan dealignment in een meerpartijenstelsel *begint met de afname van de alignment van kiezers langs de voornaamste scheidslijnen tussen partijaanhangers (dit is de eerste fase, waarin er (nog) sprake is een gedeeltelijk dealignment proces). Het proces verbreedt en verdiept zich daarna met als gevolg dat de fundamentele onder kiezersalignment – partijbinding en alignment langs scheidslijnen - niet meer functioneren (dit is de tweede fase, waarin een situatie van volledige alignment ontstaat).*

In de loop van de twee fasen van het dealignmentproces verandert de structuur van het electorale partijstelsel, maar de veranderingen treden niet noodzakelijkerwijs met onmiddellijke ingang in. Gedurende de gedeeltelijke fase, zijn de veranderingen in de structuur van het partijstelsel slechts incidenteel van aard en kan deze met grote waarschijnlijkheid gefragmenteerd raken. In de tweede fase van volledige dealignment, verandert de structuur van het partijstelsel frequenter, maar is deze niet per definitie gefragmenteerder.