

The old cleavages are (not) dead. Long live the new groups?
Representation of class, religious groups, women, ethnic minorities and age
groups in European countries

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1. Introduction

The decline of the old cleavages

Party politics of a large part of the 20th century have been marked by the cleavages described in the seminal work by Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan (1967): church versus state; working class versus bourgeoisie, centre versus periphery, and urban versus rural. Cleavage politics implies a strong and stable fusion of party and group identity (Bartolini 2005; Bartolini and Mair 1999 ; Knutsen & Scarbrough 1995). A political landscape defined by cleavages features a neat mapping onto each other of identities, ideologies and political actions. It is defined by a fixed connection between social structure – i.e. social groups and their interests- on the one hand, and political agency – i.e. political parties giving coherence and political expression to the beliefs, values and interests of those social groups- on the other hand. In the words of Bartolini (cited by XXX): “A structural division is transformed into a cleavage if a political actor gives coherence and organized political expression to what otherwise are inchoate and fragmentary beliefs, values and experiences among members of some social group.”

Today that type of group based politics with political parties representing specific groups in society, for instance socialist parties representing the working class, seems to have come to an end (Dalton et al 1984; Franklin et al 1992). The reasons fuelling this evolution in post-industrial society are multiple, and include tertialization, mediatization, affluence, cognitive mobilization, individualization and secularization (Enyedi 2008: 289). These phenomena impacted first of all upon the sheer existence of social units in society, and also lessened the group closure, i.e. social groups relying on group party channels to be informed and satisfy their preferences, and the ability of social groups to discipline their members. Citizens stopped living in closed and homogeneous socio-political ‘pillars’. The result of the process of de-structuring of the traditional cleavages, or the de-alignment of traditional links between social groups and parties, is a decline of structural and ideological voting in Western and Central Europe (van der Burg 2010). Electoral behaviour became volatile and ‘floating’ on the waves of short term issue-position, popularity of party leaders and the retrospective evaluation of government performance (Enyedi 2008, Enyedi and Deegan-Krause 2010). This lead, for instance, to the (perceived) death of class voting (Clark and Lipset 1991). At the same time, political parties no longer appeal to these traditional social groups like blue collar workers and turn to an catch-all strategy (Kirchheimer 1966, Katz and Mair 1995, Przeworski and Sprague 1988). Parties became free from social structural anchors (Enyedi 2008).

Traditional cleavages have lost considerable relevance and voting behaviour has become individualistic and flexible. Some scholars, however nuance the picture of de-structuring and de-alignment. Enyedi (2008) and Kriesi (2010) draw attention to significant counter-tendencies that point to the continuous relevance of group based politics. Firstly, although blue collar workers increasingly vote for radical right populist parties and leftist parties wins votes from the middle class, class patterns in voting behaviour not lost all relevance. It has been shown that class divisions still matter for policy positions of voters on socio-economic issues (role of trade unions, organisation of social security, etc.). These issues are however, increasingly overtrumped as vote determinants by socio-cultural or left-libertarian topics (attitudes towards ethnic minorities, etc.). On these topics, workers often take a more authoritarian stance, which drives them to (extreme) right parties (Van der Waal et al, 2007). This attractiveness of rightist parties does however not mean that their class position no longer determines their points of view on socio-economic topics.

Secondly, the de-structuration or de-alignment theses suffer from conceptualisation problems and heavily depend on the use of class categories that no longer adequately characterize contemporary social structures. When social status is captured by employer relations, working environment, task structure, the autonomy of the job, life styles, consumption patterns, or the ability to change residence, some studies show that it still informs voting behaviour (Evans 1999; Oesch 2008).

Thirdly, other social structures like religion, region and ethnicity still define political behaviour in large parts of Europe (Enyedi 2008). Furthermore, also gender structures contemporary mass politics (Inglehart and Norris 2000) and age groups (retired people versus people on the labour market) might increasingly do so in the near future (Enyedi 2008).

When electoral participation is added to the mix, the picture becomes even more nuanced in that the groups of voters that still tend to vote according to the cleavage logic, still exist, but the electoral process increasingly fails to include them. Some scholars contend that the decreasing weight of traditional class position is due to the fact that for instance immigrants tend not to vote (Enyedi 2008). Hence, class is still important but is simply no longer translated in electoral information. Also Tóka and Gosselin (2010) point to the possibility that electoral alignments are in fact still stabilized, and this the case in spite of cleavage decline. However, the group of voters with such clear voting predispositions constitutes a decreasing share of the population. In the same vein, van der Brug's research (2010)

concludes that structural voting is still alive and kicking, but it is the strongest in the oldest age groups and, hence, will 'phase out'.

The rise of a new value-based cleavage?

Another important debate concerns not so much the irrelevance of the old cleavages, but the relevance of a new cleavage based on value orientations. This value cleavage has been given different names: 'authoritarian/libertarian' (Flanagan 1987; Kitschelt 1994; Dolezal 2010); 'libertarian-universalistic/traditionalist-communitarian' (Bornschieer 2010); materialist/post-materialist (Inglehart 1977); self-expression/survival (Inglehart and Baker 2000).

Controversy exist about whether this division based on values is indeed a cleavage that meets the definitional requirement of socio-structural origins and well-defined socio-structural bases. One must be willing, as Kriesi (2010) and Enyedi (2008) suggest, to stretch the concept to the extent that it includes group-specific party appeals, group-specific behaviour and polarized political systems, regardless whether they are caused by social categories or institutions and values. Indeed, the value-based cleavage does not neatly fits on social categories or identities. Nevertheless, it has some structural roots in terms of social-structural categories of class, occupation, education, generation, and nation (Kriesi 2010; Stubager 2009).

Furthermore, the groups defined on value orientation might not feature the same type of closure, social control and sanctioning as was the case with the traditional cleavages. But the highly diverse and specialised new media do allow for a high level of in-group orientation – what Blumler and Kavanagh (1999) call the 'electronic equivalents of gated communities'. Present-day media techniques also feed into cleavage politics in another important way: parties can tailor their strategies to specific groups, of whom they have more detailed information than ever before (Enyedi 2008: 297). This allows for cleavage-centred strategies, at the same time as catch-all-strategies to cater the median voter as well as specific groups.

A shifting meaning of equality: from redistribution to recognition

The literature on political cleavages sketched in the above paragraphs suggests that traditional cleavages have blurred and consequently that the relevance of representing class and religious interests

has diminished. At the same time, however, the representation of new groups in society has gained interest. Especially the under representation of women and ethnic minorities is questioned (Phillips, 1995) and efforts are made to enhance their representation. This shift from class and religion to other groups occurred simultaneously with a new conception of equality.

According to Fraser (1997) the retreat from economic egalitarianism has been assisted by new ways of thinking about political equality. The old politics of redistribution with a firm focus on class was replaced by a new politics of recognition focussing on identity groups like women and ethnic minorities. In her seminal work *Which Equalities Matter?* (1999) Anne Phillips elaborates on the fact that through much of the twentieth century inequality was understood as primarily a class phenomenon, something to do with the distribution of income and wealth and the effects of private property (Phillips 1999: 21). Today equality is thought to be foremost a political or cultural matter implying a recognition of the different identities based on, for instance, race and gender. The new concept of political equality links equality with acknowledgement of difference, which radically differs from the economic equality that was very much about erasing (class) differences. Identity politics proclaims that in order to reach equality for women and ethnic minorities their different position in society needs to be taken into account and dealt with in such a way that it does not trump equal treatment. Indeed, Phillips contends that ignoring the different nature of these identity groups, and instead holding on to race or gender neutrality, results predominantly in expecting of ethnic minorities and women to conform to norms and institutions that were not developed by them or for them. This is the opposite of equal treatment and, hence, equality can only be reached 'through difference' (Phillips 1999: 25). Furthermore, the recognition approach or identity politics is different from the 'live and let live' strategy of tolerance because the latter does not imply the that difference and equality are thought of together (Phillips 1999: 28).

In sum, political equality that gained importance in the last few decades predicts a stronger focus on groups like ethnic minorities and women. Nevertheless, Phillips stresses, the turn towards political equality need not (and should not) lead people away from matters of social and economic concern (Phillips 1999: 15). Quite on the contrary, "commitment to political equality gives new urgency and importance to the case for economic equality, and this is particularly so because of what is implied in recognizing other citizens as one's equals." (Phillips 1999: 19) Hence, ideally class (or social status groups or groups based on occupation and education) should not drop off the political radar.

This shift from an economic understanding of equality towards a more political understanding, ties in with the reevaluation of a deliberative fashion of democratic decision making as opposed to a procedural one that focuses on the right to vote and run for elections. Deliberative democratic decision-making entails dialogue, discussion based on argument and talk, and hence the quality very much depends on whether all voices are being fairly heard. This echoes the earlier point that group based politics is not dead, because good deliberative democracy requires that the views, interests and needs of groups are recognized and included in the decision-making process.

New concepts of political representation

As mentioned above, groups based politics have not withered away with the decline of class based strategies. The latter might not have completely disappeared (yet) and new groups have come to the fore. Being rational actors political parties develop strategies to connect to these groups and win their votes. Overall, political parties apply two types of strategies in that respect, one related to descriptive representation, the other related to substantive representation. The descriptive representation strategy concerns the inclusion of blue collar workers, women, ethnic minorities, age groups, ... on the electoral lists, and the increased presence of these groups in elected assemblies and governments (for ethnic minorities see: Bird 2004; for women see Krook 2009; for blue collar workers see Wauters 2011). The substantive representation strategy is about parties and politicians making claims to represent the interests, views and needs of specific groups. For doing that, parties often count on descriptive representatives of the group concerned, but they can also forge alliances with civil society organisations or establish women's or ethnic minority wings within the party structure in order to feed electoral and party programmes with group interests (Celis, Eelbode and Wauters 2011).

Concerning the substantive representation of group interests and how this relates to society, recent developments in the representation theory importantly stress the aesthetic and cultural dimension of representation. According to Saward (2010) representative should be regarded as an "artist", a "maker of representations", a "portrayer of the represented" (Saward 2010: 16). In the process of making claims to represent someone (or a group) the representative creates the represented and their interests. This approach differs fundamentally from earlier theories on representation that consider substantive representation only in terms of a principal-agent relationship in which the representative 'brings in' already existing interests. The claims making approach to representation, in contrast, conceives responsiveness as more dynamic, as a 'two way street' (Severs 2010, 2011). Responsiveness of the

process of representation can, in this view, be established by elected representative's claims echoing prior existing claims ('classic responsiveness'), or when elected representative's claims are accepted by the represented ('a posteriori responsiveness') (Severs 2010: 418)

In other words, representatives can echo the claims of groups, but can also construct groups through the process of making claims for them and what is in their interests. Similarly, Enyedi (2008: 3) points at the role of agency in cleavage politics. Parties are able to define the identity of social coalitions, to create new relations among social background variables and parties can intensify group consciousness and group specific voting. In his words: "whether new conflicts can institutionalise into cleavages depends to a large extent on the elite's support of the old order, they can have group specific appeals" (Enyedi 2008: 296).

2. What this paper does and does not

In his Stein Rokkan lecture Kriesi concluded: "The crux is to identify theoretically and empirically the relevant social divisions of a world in flux, and to study their political formation." (ref) This paper (partially) takes on this task. It investigates how relevant traditional or new social divisions are in contemporary European parliaments: are old cleavages still relevant for the representation and mobilization strategies of MPs? Have they been complemented or replaced by new groups? This paper's aim is to describe the prevalence of group based strategies of MPs in contemporary parliaments and our level of analysis is the MP representing (or not) specific groups. It is our aim to map which groups are represented by MPs, and the parties they belong to. The latter enables us to answer the question whether class is still represented, or whether it is indeed true that socialist/social-democratic parties have abandoned blue collar workers in favour of middle classes, and that rightist populist parties have taken the working class in focus. It also allows us to see to which extent parties are focused on one specific group (as was the case in cleavage politics) or whether parties apply a catch all strategy and address plural groups.

It is however not our aim to establish whether this representation of groups is part of cleavage politics. We do not deal with the organisational structures of groups in society and how political parties are rooted in these, neither do we investigate voter behaviour of these groups. This paper adds important insights to the cleavage scholarship in that it investigates whether MPs today see the need to represent

'old groups' like class and religious groups, and whether and/or new groups are addressed. Regarding the latter we leave the issue in the middle whether these groups are addressed as part of the new value-based 'cleavage', e.g. the representation of minority rights as an expression of progressivity or democratic values like inclusion. As said, we also ignore the matter whether these old or new groups (still) form a 'real' cleavage or not thereby meeting all the definitional requirements to claim such a label. Nevertheless, taking new views on representation and the agency role of parties in cleavage politics into account, it is, firstly, reasonable to assume that when the representation of old groups occurs, it is a stronger indication that this cleavage is still or again relevant, than of the contrary. Secondly, it is also reasonable to assume that in case new groups are represented this is a stronger indication that cleavage building is occurring, or might occur, than the opposite.

Another issue, however important, that the paper not addresses is the issue whether groups are represented within the framework of economic or political equality, whether group representation is occurring in a redistribution or recognition logic. Hence, if our analysis would show that class is still the focus of group based political actions we cannot tell whether this is still framed in the old cleavage philosophy of economic redistribution, or whether it concerns political equality for, for instance, low educated people. Hence, we cannot reassure Phillips completely that economic egalitarianism is still a concern for MPs today when we would conclude that parties are still concerned with class. Nevertheless, we assume that Phillips would agree that attention for the political equality for low classes is better than no political concern for them at all.

3. Methodology

Our analysis is based on survey data of the Partirep MP Survey, which contains data about characteristics, attitudes and behaviour of regional and federal MPs in 13 European countries (N = 1972).¹ These countries are Austria, Belgium, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. These data were weighted according to the party strength in each parliament and a correction factor for the overrepresentation of the Swiss regional parliamentarians was also included.

¹ PARTIREP MP Survey, funded by the Belgian Federal Science Policy BELSPO: www.partirep.eu.

As outlined above, it is the aim of this paper to investigate whether old cleavages are still relevant for the representation and mobilization strategies of MPs and whether these cleavages have been complemented or replaced by new divisions. To that end, we should first indicate what we understand when talking about 'old' and 'new' cleavages. Old cleavages refer to the classic cleavages identified by Lipset & Rokkan (1967) and include class and religion. Class contains three social groups: workers ; employers and self-employed ; and farmers and fishermen. New cleavages make reference to value-based groups divided on the basis of gender, age or ethnic origin. On the basis of age, a distinction can be made between two subordinate groups: old people and young people.

In order to tap the representational strategies of MPs, questions about both their attitudes and their behavior were incorporated in the questionnaire. Research has shown that MPs who are aware of the problems of the social group they belong to and attach importance to these problems, does not always succeed in translating these attitudes into behavior due to constraints such as party discipline (e.g. Cowley & Childs, 2003). Therefore, it is important to make a distinction between attitudes and behavior in our analysis. The first attitudinal question asked MPs about how important it is for them personally to promote the views and interests of various groups in society. Substantive representation of social groups can be stimulated in two ways: either by descriptive representatives, who can bring in their experience in the representational process, or by additional resources, such as contacts with relevant organizations, who can feed MPs with their experiences and expertise and can point them to possible topics that are relevant for their social group. A second question measures the attitude towards the former element, namely the necessity to have a balanced descriptive representation of specific social groups in parliament. A third question relates to the latter aspect, i.e. contacts with organizations. This question no longer examines attitudes, but behavior. MPs are asked how often in the last year they had contact with organizations defending the interests of particular social groups.

We assume that by including in our analysis this diverse mix of aspects of representational attitudes and activities, we will obtain a realistic picture of the positioning of MPs.

4. Results

4.1. Are cleavages (still) important?

Table: Mean and standard deviation of answers on questions about representation for the several social groups and median for the ordinal variable about contacts with relevant organisations

		How important is it to you, personally, to promote the views and interests of... (1: of no importance – 7: of great importance)	How important is it that the various groups (...) are present in Parliament in proportion to their number in the population? (1: not at all important – 4: very important)	In your role as an MP, how often in the last year have you had contact with the following groups, persons or organizations? (1: (almost) no contact– 5: at least once a week) MEDIAN	
Class: employees	Mean	5,68	2,74 0,82	3,00	
	Stddev	1,24			
Class: employers and self-employed	Mean	5,16			3,00
	Stddev	1,42			
Class: farmers and fishermen	Mean	4,67			2,00
	Stddev	1,72			
Religion	Mean	3,96	1,89	2,00	
	Stddev	1,90	0,79		
Gender	Mean	5,60	2,89	3,00	
	Stddev	1,33	0,92		
Age: young	Mean	6,04	2,67 0,80	4,00	
	Stddev	1,10			
Age: elderly	Mean	5,81			3,00
	Stddev	1,16			
Ethnic origin	Mean	4,90	2,32	2,00	
	Stddev	1,61	0,86		

- Few attention for representing religious cleavage and for farmers and fishermen and ethnic minorities.
- Class (both employees and to a lesser extent employers), gender and age are relevant for representation.

4.2 Are cleavages related to each other?

Categorical Principal Component Analysis (Optimal scaling)² reveals that the three factors can be distinguished: each based on the sort of question (presenting views, descriptive representation, contacts). The kind of social group that is involved does not seem to matter that much: the values for all kinds of social groups correlate strongly on one given question.

Component Loadings

	Dimension		
	1	2	3
Views young	.708	-,196	,266
Views elderly	.762	-,267	,245
Views employees	.767	-,183	,245
Views employers	.669	-,327	,220
Views women	.803	-,086	,248
Views farmers and fishermen	.737	-,304	,112
Views ethnic minorities	.780	-,101	,203
Views religious groups	.702	-,206	,031
presence in Parliament: gender	,162	.801	,316
presence in Parliament: age	,155	.771	,348
presence in Parliament: social class	,155	.763	,324
presence in Parliament: ethnic origin	,236	.743	,229
presence in Parliament: religion	,240	.516	,039
frequency of contact with youth organizations	-,401	-,143	.529
frequency of contact with organizations for the elderly	-,476	-,085	.510
frequency of contact with workers' organizations and trade unions	-,337	-,309	.521
frequency of contact with employers' organizations	-,223	-,142	.621

² We cannot use 'simple' factor analysis since the variables at stake here are ordinal variables

frequency of contact with women's organizations	-,461	-,351	,356
frequency of contact with farmers' organizations	-,312	,061	,477
frequency of contact with organizations of ethnic minorities	-,370	-,302	,342
frequency of contact with churches or religious organizations	-,390	-,161	,468

Variable Principal Normalization.

All cleavages are related.

But the correlation between some groups is stronger than for others, as is shown by calculating Spearman correlations for presenting views of a particular social group.

Correlations

		Church and religious groups	Women	Young people	Elderly	Employees	Employers and self-employed	Farmers and fisherman	Ethnic minorities
Church and religious groups	Corr. Coeff.	1,000							
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.							
	N	1305							
Women	Corr. Coeff.	,306**	1,000						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	.						
	N	1298	1337						
Young people	Corr. Coeff.	,245**	,569*	1,000					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	.					
	N	1305	1337	1352					
Elderly	Corr. Coeff.	,335**	,587*	,655**	1,000				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	.				
	N	1303	1333	1346	1346				
Employees	Corr. Coeff.	,284**	,640*	,558*	,609**	1,000			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000	.			
	N	1300	1331	1342	1337	1342			

Employers and self- employed	Corr. Coeff.	,424**	,404**	,384**	,423**	,389**	1,000		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000			
	N	1300	1326	1337	1335	1329	1337		
Farmers and fisherman	Corr. Coeff.	,529**	,437**	,367**	,456**	,391**	,582**	1,000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000		
	N	1297	1319	1328	1326	1322	1321	1330	
Ethnic minorities	Corr. Coeff.	,399**	,630**	,419**	,432**	,533**	,315**	,378**	1,000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	
	N	1293	1314	1323	1320	1317	1315	1312	1323

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlation between all groups, but between some groups stronger than between others:

Maybe 3 kinds of clusters of groups can be distinguished: (but these come not forward from the Categorical Principal Component Analysis)

1. women, employees, young and old, and (ethnic minorities)
2. farmers, fishermen, self-employed, employers
3. religious groups

4.3 Differences between parties on cleavages

A. New groups and workers

Table 1: Comparison of mean ranks of three variables related to representation of old/young, women, ethnic minorities and workers, according to the party family one belongs to ³

³ A Kruskal-Wallis test is conducted to estimate whether differences on each variable are significant. A Mann-Whitney U test is conducted to estimate whether the mean ranks of the parties differ from the social-democratic party (as reference category). The numbers in the tables are mean ranks. This means that all observations are ordered according to their score on a variable and that based on this order a mean rank is calculated.

Women

	Christian-democratic	Conser-vative	Green	Far-right	Liberal-democratic	Other ⁴	Social-democratic
Importance of presenting views ***	620,21 ***	570,88 ***	764,19	614,16 **	566,10 ***	726,06	737,82
Importance of descriptive representation ***	587,59 ***	480,19 ***	1009,85 ***	424,49 ***	578,07 ***	644,34 ***	793,86
Frequency of contacts with relevant organisations ***	700,79	609,92 ***	802,48	450,97 ***	561,20 ***	590,14 ***	748,09

*** p < .001 ; ** p < .01 ; * p < .05

Employees

	Christian-democratic	Conser-vative	Green	Far-right	Liberal-democratic	Other	Social-democratic
Importance of presenting views ***	617,78 ***	530,18 ***	643,31 ***	632,22 ***	514,29 ***	685,58 **	794,93
Importance of descriptive representation ***	649,31 ***	447,84 ***	860,44 *	517,24 ***	647,35 ***	569,77 ***	773,30
Frequency of contacts with relevant organisations ***	606,68 ***	649,30 ***	643,55 ***	427,65 ***	502,86 ***	682,68 **	819,96

Young people

	Christian-democratic	Conser-vative	Green	Far-right	Liberal-democratic	Other	Social-democratic
Importance of	680,00	624,65	662,11	684,73	604,25	714,90	702,23

⁴ Including communists, regionalists, agrarians, etc. Party families with N lower than 50 are taken together in this rest category

presenting views (p = 0.53) ns		*			**		
Importance of descriptive representation *** (+ old)	673,93	546,57 ***	760,48	503,15 ***	650,42 *	668,45	722,94
Frequency of contacts with relevant organisations ***	730,44	681,24	534,05 ***	652,95	602,41 **	611,16 *	705,62

Old people

	Christian-democratic	Conser-vative	Green	Far-right	Liberal-democratic	Other	Social-democratic
Importance of presenting views ***	681,99	631,00 *	554,33 **	738,49	566,77 ***	717,29	704,86
Importance of descriptive representation ***	See young						
Frequency of contacts with relevant organisations ***	778,22	626,15 **	422,45 ***	677,57	553,90 ***	528,78 ***	733,96

Ethnic minorities

	Christian-democratic	Conser-vative	Green	Far-right	Liberal-democratic	Other	Social-democratic
Importance of presenting views ***	585,41 ***	548,51 ***	815,14 ***	393,74 ***	647,90 ***	760,24 **	745,97
Importance of descriptive representation ***	560,91 ***	522,32 ***	909,25 **	463,01 ***	641,75 **	692,19	758,55
Frequency of contacts with relevant organisations	612,66 ***	649,33 **	813,17	381,27 ***	638,08 **	638,09 **	761,17

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- Left-right divide

- Social-democratic and Green MPS find it almost equally important that views of old/young and women, are represented, but Greens prefer descriptive representation and Social-democrats do use more contacts with organisations. As for ethnic minorities Green MPs are more keen on representing them, while social-democratic MPs score higher on representing employees/workers.

B. Religious groups

Table 2: Comparison of mean ranks of three variables related to representation of religious groups, according to the party family one belongs to⁵

	Chr-dem	Conserv	Green	Far-right	Lib-dem	Other	Soc-dem
Importance of presenting views ***	823,99	785,10	422,57 ***	588,34 ***	565,39 ***	684,59 **	568,61 ***
Importance of descriptive representation ***	791,26	716,13 *	506,16 ***	575,43 ***	648,70 ***	674,38 **	601,28 ***
Frequency of contacts with relevant organisations ***	857,16	759,92 *	546,56 ***	522,99 ***	599,78 ***	626,44 ***	617,05 ***

*** p < .001 ; ** p < .01 ; * p < .05

Christian-democratic MPs score higher than MPs from other parties.

⁵ An Kruskal-Wallis test is conducted to estimate whether differences on each variable are significant. A Mann-Whitney U test is conducted to estimate whether the mean ranks of the parties differ from the christian-democratic party (as reference category)

C. Self-employed and employers

	Christian-democratic	Conser-vative	Green	Far-right	Liberal-democratic	Other	Social-democratic
Importance of presenting views ***	783,58	736,25	541,23 ***	755,42	801,50	641,75 **	558,75 ***
Frequency of contacts with relevant organisations ***	746,50	793,50	486,31 ***	530,30 ***	743,88	606,95 **	635,51 ***

No significant differences between parties from the (centre-)right (Christian-democratic, conservative, liberal-democratic)

4.4 Differences between parties on attitudes and behaviour

A scale value is calculated based of the median scores of all groups on an aspect of representational activity.

	Christian-democratic	Conser-vative	Green	Far-right	Liberal-democratic	Other	Social-democratic
Importance of presenting views **	677,04	615,97 **	645,95	654,09	598,23 **	755,30	708,65
Importance of descriptive representation ***	632,36 ***	500,47 ***	897,89 **	425,27 ***	627,93 ***	647,01 **	770,18
Frequency of contacts with relevant organisations ***	774,58 *	709,75	567,96 **	453,87 ***	569,98 ***	606,95 **	719,30

- Green MPs emphasize descriptive representation, Christian-democratic ones contacts with relevant organisations.

- Conservative and liberal-democratic MPs do not attach much importance to group representation

5. Conclusions

We have investigated in this paper whether old cleavages are still relevant for the representation and mobilization strategies of MPs and/or whether they have been complemented or replaced by new groups.

It appears from the survey results in 14 European countries that cleavages (both the classic and the new ones) are still relevant for the representational behaviour and attitudes of MPs. Some preliminary findings can be formulated: green and social-democratic MPs seem to care most for workers, women and ethnic minorities, but greens appear to prefer descriptive representation as social-democrats do use more contacts with organisations to further the interests of these groups. As for religious groups, Christian-democratic MPs are most likely to take care of their interests mostly by establishing contacts with these groups. Finally, for employers and self-employed, parties from the right have most attention.

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