

# **New Social Divisions and Party System Developments**

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# 1. Introduction

The number of studies trying to assess the formation and effects of cleavages in comparative cross country analysis, having in mind the omnipresence of the concept, is still relatively modest. The scarcity can be explained by all sorts of problems that researchers face when they try to develop valid and reliable measure of cleavages. The situation with the data for longer time spans is not much better. Still, the predominant opinion is that the decline of old cleavages, based on class and religion, is something that can be taken for granted. At least that is the message coming from several recent and not so recent accounts of changes in the social base of voting behavior<sup>1</sup>. Conclusions about the decline of structural factors were followed by the explanations that new politically relevant divisions are based on values<sup>2</sup> (Inglehart 1997, 251; 1984, 24-25; Dalton, Flanagan and Beck 1984, 21, 454-455, 474). At the same time, it is argued that the social structure, in the political sense, became much less differentiated (Inglehart 1997; Dalton, Flanagan and Beck 1984; Sankiah 1984).

Changes that reduced the relevance of class and religion are considered to be the consequence of advanced industrialism. Increasing material affluence, higher levels of education, changes in the gender roles, and social mobility created conditions in which the relevance of material welfare and physical security issues declined. New generations socialized in the new environment stopped perceiving them as relevant. Classical redistributive policies of the welfare state started to suffer from declining efficiency, as each new unit of spending added less and less net benefits and more layers of bureaucracy (Inglehart 1997). A new social cleavage is separating those that benefited from the social change, who are supporting new participative style of politics, gender equality, social inclusiveness, and put high emphasis on environment on the one hand, from those who lost, and emphasize traditional values, morality and authority paired by exclusive type of polity (Inglehart 1997; Dalton, Flanagan and Beck 1984)

In such accounts, an individual's position is not defined any more exclusively by his position in the structure of the economy like was it the case with class (Esping Andersen 1993, 15). Life style, consumption habits and attitudes are not any more predetermined by employment to such an extent. Different aspects of life, like work, residence, consumption habits, are not structured in such a way that would enable them to reinforce each other in order to create social closure. The lack of closure coincides with the decline of the socialization impact as the differences between children's and parents' experiences are becoming larger (van der Eijk et al 1992, 422). The consequence of all this is that voting behavior which will emerge from the social structure is hard to predict, since different individual traits can pull in different directions (van der Eijk et al. 1992, 412; Dalton et al 1984, 474)<sup>3</sup>.

Although in theory the picture may look nice, empirical findings reveal a less clear story. The authors that were dealing in greater details with the decline of old cleavages, namely the class cleavages (Nieuwbretta and Ultee 1999; Evans 1999; Franklin et al. 1992), produced very different findings. The reasons for differences are based in the different methods, the operationalization of concepts and the measurement of data. Another thing that comes to light is that the actual level of structural voting in the supposed golden era cannot be

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<sup>1</sup> Nieuwbretta 1999, Inglehart 1977, 1984, 1997, Franklin, Mackie and Valen 1992, Dalton, Flanagan and Beck 1984.

<sup>2</sup> Whether postmaterialist against materialist or establishment against antiestablishment.

<sup>3</sup> Van der Eijk says that: "... in modern societies people derive many identities from their social position, from each of which political orientation may arise, not all pointing in the same direction. Moreover it is impossible to say which of these identities will dominate in any particular set of circumstances." (Van der Eijk et al. 1992, 412).

reliably assessed because the available data are not good enough to make firm conclusions possible<sup>4</sup>.

Apart from highly disputed methods and findings, what characterizes most accounts of class voting is that they tend to operationalize social structure in very rigid terms and do not take into account possible effects of party competition. These theories do not explain why particular social or economic divisions are politically relevant and why they should be important for differences in voting behavior. In most of the accounts mentioned, the effects of party activity and government policy are almost totally absent. People vote according to class or values, and what parties and government do to set the context for choice seem to matter very little<sup>5</sup>. It could be argued that the success in finding the effect of social structure on voting patterns is decisively shaped by the operationalization of the social structure that is adopted in the analysis. Operationalization depends on the selection of criteria that decide what divisions might be relevant and how they can be identified<sup>6</sup>.

This paper argues for a different approach. The starting position is that the impact of the structure on the formation of politically relevant divisions can be assessed only if the social structure is defined in the adequate way. In order to get the right result, the theory should be able to precisely identify what may be the politically relevant divisions and what is their background.

The position of this paper is the social structure is more fragmented in the political sense than it used to be. This fragmentation is the consequence of social and economic trends that are placing the existing social groups in a different context and causing divisions between them on the one hand, and bringing some new groups into existence on the other hand. This difference will in turn have an impact on the party system. It will affect the performance and strategies of existing parties and may, at the end of the day, bring new ones into existence if old parties are not capable of adjusting fast enough.

What type of social division will gain political relevance will depend on the existing social and economic context of various countries. The social and economic contexts are to a large extent shaped by policies that created the welfare state and the national model of corporatism. Therefore, it could be argued that the cleavages of contemporary societies are dependent on the social and economic context that was largely shaped by the welfare state and corporatism.

The focus of the paper is more on the theory. When empirical data are used that it is more to show the relevancy of the topic and the feasibility of the propositions than to make a conclusion. That will be left for another paper.

Following section will provide the context of the change in the social structure, third section will try to establish what type of divisions might be relevant in different contexts, and the last two will try to establish the relevancy of the topic and the feasibility of the propositions.

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<sup>4</sup> Nieuwbretta's (1999) comparative account of industrialized countries found decline in almost all of them. Franklin et al. (1992) found different countries at different levels of class voting and suggested that the general trend is one of decline but it is very unequal as some countries had already declined well before the period covered by their research, and others are just at the beginning of it. The question to be asked here is how they can reliably know that this is the case since they do not have reliable enough evidence for earlier periods. Evans (1999) and his contributors found that the level of stability is surprising and that the difference between conventional wisdom and reality is striking.

<sup>5</sup> This was the point of Mair's (1999) criticism of the approach taken by Evans and his contributors but it could be extended to Franklin's, Mackie's and Valen's account as well.

<sup>6</sup> In his account of class voting, Evans (1999) says that the different way social class is operationalized should have large impact on the results of the analysis. His criticism is specifically directed at the dichotomous (manual/nonmanual) conceptualization of class, which he considers crude and unable to capture all the class divisions that might influence the vote and that depend on the type of work, skills, control over the working environment, the type of employment relationship and control over resources.

## 2. Origins of New Social Divisions

### 2.1. Variation in the Base

There will probably be very little dispute if one were to claim that the welfare state and corporatism are defining characteristics of the postwar period in Western Europe. Their institutions and policies shaped societies more than any other institutions during the same period, and policies of governments and parties revolved around the issues related to them. However, since there are several models of the welfare state that, with some national variations, can be clearly distinguished, we could expect some cross national variation in the form of their influence. These national differences conditioned developments in the social structure, policy responses and the future developments of the welfare states.

Theory differentiates between three types of the welfare state (Esping Andersen 1990), broadly corresponding with continental, Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian countries. The differences are visible in the way entitlements are defined, whether entitlements are administered by service provision or through transfers, how the role of the family is defined, how big the public sector employment is and in women participation in the labor market. Also, there are some differences in the type of national corporatism that goes with the welfare state, namely whether wage bargaining between unions and employers federations is centralized at the national level or decentralized at the sectoral level, how centralized were those two actors what was the role of the state<sup>7</sup>.

Social democratic welfare states were based on the social democratic ideology of universal citizenship. The origin of the right to entitlements was in citizenship itself. The coverage of welfare programs was universal and extensive with high replacement rates for all types of benefits. The emphasis was equally placed on transfers and service provision which, in turn, required high level of public sector employment. These countries were supporting high levels of women participation in the labor market and providing extensive child care facilities to enable that. This created a strong system able to keep the income of all segments of the society relatively high and reduced the occurrences of poverty to very low levels. The type of corporatism connected to this type of welfare state was characterized by centralized bargaining and strong and centralized labor unions in both, private and public sectors. The overall wage structure was formed according to the position of the most competitive sector of the economy and others adjusted to it. Peak level organizations were monitoring compliance and had strong enforcement mechanisms.

Continental welfare states were formed mainly under the guidance of the Christian democratic parties. Their orientation was based on the ideology which presupposed that the society is constituted by organic units, each of which each has its place in the society and is supposed to get its due in terms of rights (Kerberg 1999). Consequently the goal of the welfare state and the purpose of entitlements was status reproduction. The provision of services was very low and most of the programs were based on transfers. The level of entitlements depended on the employment status and its duration. The core unit of the society was the family (with a male breadwinner and a housewife) and the whole system was geared towards it. That is why these states had relatively low level of public sector employment and of women participation in the labor market. Women's participation on the labor market was made very difficult with the virtual nonexistence of day care facilities and negative tax

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<sup>7</sup> What is important here is whether the core industrial unions from the export sector had control over the wage bargaining. If there was an extensive public sector that was at the same time extensively unionized, as in Scandinavian countries (Golden et al 1999, Klausen 1999), there was a potential for conflict over wage determination between public and private sectors (Wallerstein, Moene 1999).

incentives for families with two wage earners (Esping Andersen 1990, 1996, Esping Andersen et al. 1993, Huber and Stephens 2001). The families and women were dependent on the income of husbands and the system had relatively weak abilities to sustain the income level of single-mother families and families that lost their male breadwinner. The core constituency of male workers was heavily unionized and the wage structure of the national economy was determined by the position of the internationally exposed competitive sector. As a consequence, these groups carved a strong position for themselves as insiders in the national economic and welfare system and by today have established themselves as veto groups in some of them.

The Anglo Saxon type of welfare state was not a frequent phenomenon in Europe and its British variant still has some programs with universal coverage. The level of replacements was low but the access to entitlements was universal for all those who qualified. It was more Anglo-Saxon in the term levels of decomodification and corporatism. It had a relatively undeveloped public sector service provision and not particularly high levels of public sector employment.

Any change that took place in these countries should be shaped by the initial conditions mentioned above. The next section describes a number of trends that interacted with initial conditions to produce nationally quite divergent results.

## 2.2. Change in the Aggregate Trends

In the late 1960's and early 1970's a number of trends that were to produce new social divisions started to take shape. They changed the composition of the workforce, the structure of the economy, the levels of employment and unemployment and the educational composition of the society. They also brought the end of the traditional definition of the role of sexes and further increased the influence of the education and skills as determinants of individual position.

In terms of changes in the aggregate social categories, these trends brought an increase in the share of employment in the public sector as a consequence of the rising welfare state, and an increasing share of employment in the service sector as the consequence of the expansion of the service economy. They also brought the decline of the employment in industry, especially among low skill workers, and in agriculture. The first decline in industry was more significant than the others but in some countries the effect was large and parallel, with noticeable consequences for employment levels<sup>8</sup>. The gender composition of the labor market was changed by increasing women participation; the educational composition was affected by the increase in numbers of individuals enrolling into higher education. However, these trends changed the distribution in terms of totals and could not in themselves produce politically relevant divisions differing much from those that were already in place.

The trends mentioned above were followed by a number of trends that were instrumental in the production of the new social divisions. They were changing the context within which different social categories were situated and producing divisions among and within them. Those trends are related mainly to the new conditions of economic scarcity such as high public sector deficits, high unemployment, especially in some categories of the population, downward levels of participation in the labor force, declining economic growth, increasing competition from international markets, capital mobility that was putting national competitiveness under strain, and rising levels of dependent populations. At the same time, the level of public sector spending, and of taxation related to it, reached its peak as a

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<sup>8</sup> Namely in Spain and Italy.

consequence of the growing entitlements and increasing number of claimants (Esping Andersen 1996, Huber and Stephens 2001).

The first group of trends changed the relative composition of the social structure and changed the size of the different groups within it. The second group of trends changed the context in which those groups are placed. All these developments on their own were not enough to produce politically relevant social divisions. What was needed was that different elements of previously homogenous groups start to perceive that the new context was affecting some of them in a different way than the others. Government policies that were favoring or harming them were not the same for all any more. The same process was at work across social groups.

The next section gives a short inventory of potentially relevant divisions based on the existing theories that in the end could shape party strategic responses. It also discusses what shape they might take in different national contexts.

### 3. New Social Divisions

#### 3.1 Theory

In the inventory of the new social division we can find division based on the employment by sector, type of the employment, education, occupation and the type of work, and gender. Consumption style related divisions are also mentioned but the problem with them is that they are relatively hard to measure or find data about.

Division between sectors can take several different shapes. The first is the division between those employed in the private sector and those employed in the public sector (Kitschelt 1994, 16). Private sector employees depend on the ability of their companies to survive on the market, while public sector employees depend on the levels of public spending. The reason why these divisions could become political oppositions is the fact that increase in public spending and taxation levels was taking place pretty much at the same time as decline in the economic growth and the growing public sector deficits. The strength of the conflict was dependent on the size of the public sector and its level of unionization, but it also depended on whether the system of collective bargaining could keep demands from the uncompetitive sectors from harming the competitive ones.

The very same trends created division within the private sector between those employed in the export competitive sector and those employed in the domestic, protected sector of the economy (Kitschelt 1994, 16-17). Increasing capital mobility, decreasing level of capital control and the entrance of low labor costs newly industrialized countries in the world market created visible pressure on the export sector of economy. At the same time, sectors that were producing for domestic market and uncompetitive old industries were not exposed to such pressures and could call for protection measures and subsidies that could create levels of taxation and trade barriers undermining the position of the export sectors.

The second group of divisions is supposed to be founded on the basis of the types of jobs, their focus and the control over the working environment (Kitschelt 1994, 17, 22; Kriesi 1998, 168-169, 401-404 1999). The expansion of the welfare state created large numbers of high skilled, client-interactive, non-routine jobs staffed mainly by women. At the same time, the opening of international competition and capital flows created a number of high skilled service jobs in the private sector and in personal services that are client-oriented but differ in the level of routinization. They also tend to employ more women than other private sector jobs. On the opposite side there is an increase in the number of highly educated managers and

professionals oriented towards the instrumental effectiveness of their organizations and resources (Kriesi 1998 168 1999, 402; Kitschelt 1994, 19).

The difference in the focus of work is separating sociocultural professionals, especially in the public sector (Kriesi 1999, 400-402; 1998 168-169, Kitschelt 1994, 18), who are focused on the clients, their personal situation and their needs on the one hand, and managers mainly oriented toward efficiency in organizational performance and therefore treating people as instrumental to the organizations' goals. It is easy to assume that these individuals tend to have different preferences for social and economic policies grounded in more than just different interests about the size of the budget and taxation. The fact that most of the public sector sociocultural professionals are women and that managers are men, as is true for the public and private sector in general, adds the gender dimension to the division (Klausen 1999, 262-263, 268-269). In addition women are predominant in the service sector, especially among low skilled workers.

The issue of education and the level of skills are closely related to the difference between outsiders and insiders on the labor market (Esping Andersen 1999b, 307-308). The economic trends that caused the division between outsiders and insiders are related to the decline in industrial employment, especially in its manufacturing and low-skill sections. Industry workers in postindustrial times (Esping Andersen 1999a 101-104, 1999b, 298-300; Esping Andersen et al. 1993, 39-40) in advanced industrial countries tend to be relatively high skilled and are predominantly males, and the number of low skilled jobs manned by low skilled male workers declined. At the same time, the participation of women in the labor force increased. Due to differences in the employment patterns of men and women, the division runs between industrial male workers and former workers who enjoy generous retirement schemes and high level of job and social security, and labor market outsiders like women, youth and long term unemployed who have very few organizational resources at their disposal (Esping Andersen 1999b, 304-306). The strength of the cleavage is increasing since the latter groups also tend to have significant difficulties in finding employment and the jobs that they find tend to have a very low level of security.

The gender component of these divisions is the consequence of the fact that male and female wage earners tend to work in different contexts and have different welfare priorities (Klausen 1999, 263). Male employment is heavily concentrated in manufacturing and in the private sector of the economy, while at the same time men tend to be employed in standard type, full time employment and tend to have relatively secure jobs. Women tend to work in the service sector, whether private and public, and outnumber men several times in their participation in unconventional types of employment such as part-time and temporary employment that at the same time means lower level of job security (Klausen 1999, 274). Women in Scandinavia also tend to be more opposed to European integration if it is perceived as a threat to the welfare state and public sector (Klausen 1999, 285).

The theoretical inventory of possible social divisions listed above does not only apply to cross country analysis. As already mentioned above, the differences in welfare state types and in national models of corporatism could account for differences within countries, with some regional commonalities. That is the topic of the next section.

### 3.2. Social Divisions in the National Context

The exploration of national contexts below cannot possibly capture all politically relevant national divisions. Some of them are idiosyncratic and would require a broad case based

analysis. Rather, the aim of this section is to see what type of divisions emerged as a consequence of the particular type of the welfare state that existed in the national context.

In the Scandinavian social democratic welfare states (Esping Andersen 1990, 27-28) that traditionally rely on large public sector service provision, the problem of deindustrialization and increasing women participation in the workforce was solved with the creation of a large number of low skilled and medium skilled, well paid, secure public sector service jobs employing mainly women (Esping-Andersen 1999b, 302; Huber and Stephens 2001; Stephens 1996, 35). Because of the rise in public sector employment, Scandinavian countries were able to avoid the creation of a large section of labor market outsiders. They also managed to avoid reductions in industrial employment by using continental methods of disability and early retirement. The credit for this could be given to active labor market policies and retraining that adjusted the skill levels, the expansion of the public sector and, in the case of women participation, to the availability of large number of child care facilities. This prevented the formation of a poverty trap for low skilled and single parent families, and prevented the exclusion from the labor market of low skilled workers, women and youth.

Due to the magnitude of the employment in the public sector and the strong unionization of both public and private sectors, the main division in these countries may be, and the evidence point that it is, between these two sectors (Knutsen 1998). The levels of taxation and public spending, as well as the openness of their economies create a context that might favor the prominence of this particular division. The fact is that the centralized bargaining in Sweden broke down in the 1980`s because of the conflict between public sector unions on the one hand and employers with private sector unions on the other and subsequent wage settlements were negotiated separately for private sector (Moene and Wallerstein 1999, 236, 246).

Therefore it could be argued that in Scandinavia the main division runs between the private sector, industrial, high skilled, well organized and predominantly male labor force that works in the export competitive sector, and public sector service labor force that is predominantly female, medium to low skilled, also well organized and that has vested interests in high levels of public spending.

Since the public sector employs predominantly women and the private sector employs predominantly men, we can expect that the gender division will have a significant impact. Since the left parties promoted gender equalization policies and presided over the huge increase in women participation rates, the women vote should be biased to the left (Klausen 1999, Huber 1996).

Since the public sector employees are predominantly women and the private sector employs predominantly men we can expect that gender division will have significant impact.

Other divisions that might have political relevance are those among educated segments of the population and the division between industry and services employees. Kriesi`s division between sociocultural professionals and managers should be relevant in the Scandinavian context of welfare state and service sector that is, in terms of employment, bigger than in other parts of Europe. Due to the extensive taxation strong opposition to the welfare state should be present among small entrepreneurs and the self employed.

The issues of environment and nuclear energy, although their source is not in the welfare state itself, should make division between managers and industry on the one hand and services, professionals and large part of the public sector on the other.

In the 1970`s in continental Europe the decline in industrial employment started to gain speed while increasing demands for participation from women brought about the first measures aiming at increasing their participation in the labor force. Those two trends combined created a large excessive supply of labor. A small part of the increase was absorbed by private sector services, and in some cases also by some increases in the public sector

(Visser and Hemerijck 2001, 244), but most of the labor reduction came through the early retirement, disability schemes and unemployment benefits (Esping Andersen 1999b, Visser and Hemerijck 2001, Huber and Stephens 2001). Women participation was still discouraged despite women movement pressures.

The excess labor reduction schemes created a situation in which a large number of people who went into early retirement have vested interest in the preservation of the current levels of welfare provisions. At the same time, the slow job creation, especially in the private service sector, brought a dramatic increase in youth unemployment, women unemployment and long term unemployment. High levels of social spending are preventing any possibility that a significant public sector service employment could be created. Also, high levels of welfare contribution mean high level of labor costs that are preventing the creation of low wage sector that could absorb low skilled unemployment. Mobility from unemployment to employment is low and that creates incentives for those that have secure employment in industrial sector with relatively high pay to resist any change to labor regulations that would put their job at risk. This effectively creates group of people - low skill workers, youth and to some extent women - who are excluded from the labor market and left with little prospect to improve their position. They tend to have higher unemployment rates and are more likely to be unemployed for extended periods of time. Moreover, women and youth employment is heavily concentrated in low security, low pay and part time employment. Esping Andersen (1999b, 295) contends that there is already some type of social closure present<sup>9</sup>.

High skilled industrial workers have vested interests in a system that keeps their jobs secure and gives them high level of security if they end up losing them. These workers also tend to be well organized and, in some countries, they have a significant role in the management of welfare state programs. It is no surprise that they are not very willing to accept any change in the current system that might undermine their position (Hassel 1998, 315-316).

Therefore, what is present in most of continental countries<sup>10</sup> is an insider/outsider labor cleavage. High skilled unionized workers and retired workers are standing on one side, and on the other side are low skilled youth and long term unemployed, and, partially, women. The second division is based on gender and is related to gender employment opportunities and gender equality. A third division could be based on the differences between public and private sectors, due to the privileged positions of the workers in the public utilities and the bureaucracy, their strong unions and high levels of job protection. Also, we could expect conflicts between the highly educated professionals in these sectors, namely between managers and social professionals, over social policy issues.

Finally, a division between service sector and industry could also be expected here. Since the level of low skill employment in public sector services is low and since the low wage sector is very small, the division between service sector and industry might also be connected to the level of education and can be relevant for social policy and environmental issues.

This broad pattern also fits the German case quite well. However the countries in this group show somewhat greater level of national distinctiveness between themselves.

In the case of the Netherlands, government policies first relied on the labor reduction measures mentioned above. But later the government started to promote labor activation policies together with putting increasing emphasis on unconventional types of employment. Those policies reduced the level unemployment and by extending social security benefits to this category of employees it prevented the creation of poverty trap and social exclusion. Yet, as in the cases presented above, unconventional types of employment are mainly concentrated

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<sup>9</sup> In countries that have extensive low wage sector, employment prospects for low skilled are better. But in terms of life chances the situation is not very different (Esping-Andersen 1999b).

<sup>10</sup> Namely in Germany, Italy, Belgium, France and Italy.

among the women and youth (Becker 2001, 21-23). The concentration of women in such employment for can be partly explained by the lack of child care services and family decisions to combine one part-time and one full-time job. The numbers of individuals on disability schemes as well as that of retired people who might be interested in welfare status quo are very large, and the protection of core workers is still significant (Becker 2001, Visser and Hemerijck 2001). What could be expected in Dutch case is that insiders will strongly support mainstream parties, the gender division will have an impact but we should not expect very significant outsider insider division.

In Flanders the levels of unemployment is not significant and the strength of the insider/outsider cleavage should not be so pronounced (Visser and Hemerijck 2001). But in the Walloon part, the levels of unemployment - especially of youth unemployment - are among the largest in Europe. In this case the presence of a significant insider/outsider cleavage can be expected. In all countries, a significant gender division could be expected. Also, due to the size of the industrial sector and the level of unionization, both types of sectoral divisions could be expected to be visible.

In Austria the gender cleavage, especially among young women, can be made stronger by still high barriers to female participation in the labor market (Huber and Stephens 2001, 275). Since most of the large industrial enterprises were until the mid-1990's in the government's hands, and the private sector consisted of small enterprises and petite bourgeoisie, the public private sector division in Austria should have a distinctive character (Knittel 2000, 113-114, Huber and Stephens 2001, 277-278). This distinctive character might divide those who benefited from the "proporz" system and those who believe that the system is corrupt and damaging to economic development.

What is said above about the insider/outsider division is even more relevant for Italy. However, due to the significance of the family where all members draw benefits from one wage earner and an extensive informal sector, the insider/outsider division might be less significant. The regional cleavage, gender division and both types of sectoral divisions could be more relevant in the Italian case.

In the case of Britain the result of the trends mentioned above was an increase in the role of the low wage sector and part time employment for the unskilled, youth and women. The role of unions declined and together with it, the protection of core workers. In this sense the insider/outsider cleavage should not be expected, despite the fact that there are still differences in the level of pay and general job security between groups and the rate of poverty in Britain is significantly higher than in continental Europe and it is mainly affecting those employed in a low wage sector (Esping Andersen 1999b). The division between public and private sectors could exist for the same reasons mentioned for other countries. But due to the size of employment in the public sector, it is unlikely to be equally relevant.

What could be expected in the British case is a new variant of the traditional class cleavage, with the only difference that public sector high educated professionals might be more prone to vote for the left. Gender cleavage could also be expected to be significant.

How those different divisions will be translated into party support depends on the positions taken by the political parties and the coalitions among voting groups that they manage to create. The determinants described above do not create party preferences by default. It could be assumed that voting preferences are formed when the individual is faced with a visible party policy position. The attitudes and preferences that he has are then 'compared' to what he knows about the party's policy and the decision for whom to vote is derived from that. It could be assumed that individuals are able to have at least a vague picture of party policy and that they are also quite aware of what their own preferences and attitudes are. Therefore, it would be reasonable to assume that individuals will decide as a

response to the stimulus of a party position, provided that it is made clear. It is unlikely that parties can reshape individual preferences, but firm preferences over policies can be expressed only when those policies are known.

Since the new type of social structure is much more fragmented and the groups that compose it can have very different preferences, it could be argued that the existing parties will experience significant difficulties in maintaining their existing share of the electoral market. In any case, the selection of any strategy with broad aims will become increasingly difficult<sup>11</sup>. In this case it could be expected that the change in the social structure in the above mentioned direction could produce change in the party system or, if not change, at least increase the level of instability. In this event, we can expect that movements in the party system will follow movements in the social structure. Furthermore, if the direction of the change is toward greater fragmentation of the social structure we can expect that some new parties will emerge, and that some parties will reinvent themselves to adjust to the new conditions.

The next section will try to estimate what is the impact of the new divisions on voting patterns on the sample of countries.

#### 4. Estimating the impact

The purpose of the analysis in this section is to provide some measure of the impact that social divisions described in the previous section have on the voting behavior of particular social groups. In order to develop a full hypothesis, precise information about party policy positions and voter distribution for all the cases under investigation would be needed. Without this data, it is not possible to have precise expectations as to which group will vote for which party. Therefore, the analysis below has an exploratory character rather than aiming at testing a particular hypothesis. It is also limited to assessing whether the theory outlined above has some relevance.

This said, the analysis is expected to show separation between social groups among parties that have different ideological orientations and are consequently expected to have different policy positions and appeals to voters. It is also expected that significance in the types of divisions for particular countries in the analysis will correspond to the significance of divisions that are assumed to have an influence. Lastly, it is also expected that groups supporting new parties will be easier to identify.

The data available for this analysis are postelection surveys conducted in seven countries included in the University of Michigan's CSES module1 data set. The countries and elections included are Belgium in 1999, the Netherlands in 1998, Germany in 1998, Denmark in 1999, Norway in 1997, Sweden in 1998 and Great Britain in 1997. In Belgium surveys were administered separately for Walloon and Flanders and the data comes into two different files. As the party systems of the two parts of the country are also quite different, the two regions will be analyzed separately. Because some areas of Germany and Great Britain - East Germany and Scotland - are overrepresented in the survey data, the files for these two countries are broken into two parts that will be also considered separately. The scope of the analysis is limited only because of data availability. The result of the analysis is also sensitive to the deviance of the particular elections observed from the general election pattern of the countries. Thus the findings will help us to see whether the claims made with respect to the

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<sup>11</sup> Kitschelt and some other authors reject the catch-all type of explanation. Kitschelt comments on the developments at the party level in following manner: "What characterizes... changes, however, is the move away from parties that resemble assembly lines and department stores, offering everything to everyone, to parties that are more akin to craftshops and boutiques, catering to more sophisticated and discriminating customers" (Kitschelt 1996, 149).

emergence of new social divisions have some relevance, but any generalizations will have to await further research.

Countries are examined separately and the vote of particular social groups for every party is analyzed with logistic regression. A dummy variable is created for each party. The independent variables are sectoral employment, type of employment, education, gender, union membership and occupation. Sectoral employment is captured by two separate variables: one distinguishes between private and public sectors with a special category for the self-employed, the other one distinguishes between services, industry and agriculture. For private/public/self-employed, separate dummies are created for the public sector and the self-employed. In the second case, only a dummy for the service sector is created.

For types of employment, three dummies are created for part-time employed, unemployed, as well as for retired and dependants.

To account for occupation two separate dummies are created for sociocultural professionals and managers. Education has three categories, primary finished, secondary finished and higher education but it is kept as single variable with category higher coded with highest value.

Gender and union membership have two categories each and women and union members are coded as 1.

Variables are selected as to allow for the best possible match between categories in the dataset and categories mentioned in this paper. Simplicity and managibility of the analysis were also taken into account in the selection process. The aim was to select variables that would best capture the effect of the social structure. Some variables will not be available for some cases due to the large number of missing cases or because they were not included in the survey<sup>12</sup>.

In order to achieve simplicity some parties in the data sets are merged into combined categories. This was done because of the ideological closeness of these parties (Inglehart and Huber 1995, Knusten 1998, Butge et al 2002) and in some cases also because the number of respondents who reported voting for those parties was relatively small. In the case of Netherlands, parties belonging to the religious right are merged into one category; the same is done with German radical right. In Scandinavian countries, centrist parties are merged into one category<sup>13</sup>. The Socialist Party and Green Left in Netherlands are combined as well.

The tables below shows the logistic regressions coefficients and levels of significance for the ten cases analyzed

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<sup>12</sup> This is the case with union membership, occupation and second sector variables in the Danish data file. Due to missing data, dummies for managers, professionals and service sector could not be created. In the case of Belgium and the Netherlands, the first sector variable was not available and dummies for the public sector and self employed could not be created. For Sweden the dummy for managers could not be created due to the fact that the occupation variable was missing data for that category.

<sup>13</sup> Namely SP, KrF and FPL in Sweden, CP, RV and KdS in Denmark, V, SP and KrF in Norway.

Table 1. Belgium Flanders

	AGALEV	SP	VLD	CVP	VB	VU
Services sector	0,417**	0,334*	-0,176	-0,293*	0,134	0,1
Part time employed	-0,147	-0,223	-0,297	0,367*	-0,17	0,318
Unemployed	0,172	0,72*	-0,107	-0,058	-0,46	-1,57
Retired/Dependent	-0,814***	0,333*	-0,456***	0,661***	0,349*	-0,47*
Gender	0,607***	-0,151	-0,127	0,066	-0,3*	-0,02
Sociocultural Professionals	0,136	-0,519*	0,432**	-0,071	-0,32	-0,02
Managers	-0,497*	-0,733**	0,803***	0,181	-0,34	-0,22
Education	0,753***	-0,319*	0,055	-0,078	-0,45***	0,088
Union membership	0,087	0,56***	-0,407***	-0,012	0,296*	-0,33*
Constant	-4,272***	-2,043***	-0,466	-1,045***	-1,54***	-2,000***

\*=significant at 0,05 level, \*\*=significant at 0,01 level, \*\*\*=significant at 0,001 level.

Table 2. Belgium Walloon

	ECOLO	PS	PRL	PSC	FN	VIVANT
Services sector	0,184	-0,147	-0,076	0,047	0,142	-0,547
Part time employed	-0,323	-0,229	-0,054	0,361	-5,142	0,932
Unemployed	0,375	-0,305	-0,545**	-1,392**	2,694**	0,548
Retired/Dependent	-0,575***	0,201	-0,33**	0,465**	1,588*	-1,07
Sociocultural Professionals	0,004	-0,254	0,222	0,42**	-1,002	-0,471
Managers	-0,318	-0,996**	0,672**	0,628**	-7,598	-5,684
Gender	0,378**	0,146	-0,276**	0,019	-2,435**	0,225
Education	0,626***	-0,567***	0,08	0,317**	-0,171	-0,115
Union membership	-0,173	0,804***	-0,41***	-0,099	0,32	0,478
Constant	-2,898***	-1,608***	-0,271	-2,876***	-3,139	-4,66***

\*=significant at 0,05 level, \*\*=significant at 0,01 level, \*\*\*=significant at 0,001 level.

Table 3. The Netherlands

	PvdA	CDA	VVD	D66	GL/SP	Relig Right
Public sector	0,195	0,015	-0,638**	-0,016	-0,015	0,666*
Self employed	-0,728**	0,503**	0,374*	0,008	-0,273	0,138
Part time employed	-0,285**	0,045	-0,341*	0,057	0,486*	0,41
Unemployed	-0,66	0,381	-2,569**	0,524	0,15	1,269*
Retired/Dependent	-0,065	1,02***	-0,734***	-0,299	-0,157	0,993**
Sociocultural Professionals	-0,382**	0,084	0,319**	0,585***	-0,031	0,152
Managers	-0,101	0,229	0,644***	-0,423	-0,236	-0,031
Education	-0,228**	-0,253**	-0,048	0,726***	0,549***	0,348
Gender	0,434***	-0,234	-0,357**	0,326**	-0,041	-0,208
Union membership	0,584***	-0,011	-0,571***	0,169	0,05	0,274
Constant	-1,822***	-1,396***	0,027	-4,329	-3,000***	-4,422***

\*=significant at 0,05 level, \*\*=significant at 0,01 level, \*\*\*=significant at 0,001 level.

Table 4. Germany (West)

	CDU	SPD	FDP	G	PDS	Radical Right
Public sector	0,003	-0,098	0,074	0,309	1,518*	-1,402
Service sector	-0,125	0,033	0,435	0,25	-2,483*	0,067
Part time employed	0,125	0,168	0,265	-0,161	-6,73	-0,34
Unemployed	-0,804	0,125	-0,147	-1,059	-6,677	-5,272
Retired/Dependent	0,123	0,023	0,173	-1,077**	-1,19	-0,419
Sociocultural Professionals	-0,093	-0,144	-0,56	1,07***	0,077	-0,811
Managers	0,414*	-0,711***	0,655**	0,144	0,701	0,199
Education	0,047	-0,192	0,736***	0,913***	0,361	-0,547
Union membership	-0,754***	0,586***	-0,25	0,02	0,806	0,947
Gender	0,096	-0,305**	0,373	0,026	0,381	-0,45
Constant	-0,389	-0,253	-4,791***	-4,616***	-6,462***	-3,41

\*=significant at 0,05 level, \*\*=significant at 0,01 level, \*\*\*=significant at 0,001 level.

Table 5. Germany (East)

	CDU	SPD	FDP	G	PDS	Radical Right
Public sector	-0,153	0,32*	-0,649	-0,033	-0,3	-0,939
Service sector	0,101	-0,196	-0,548	-0,331	0,535***	-0,182
Part time employed	-0,022	-0,141	0,5	0,605	-0,374	0,335
Unemployed	-1,007**	0,152	-1,286	-0,517	-0,183	1,403**
Retired/Dependent	-0,174	0,004	-0,451	-1,459**	0,307	-1,269
Sociocultural Professionals	0,295	0,036	0,436	0,069	0,069	-0,377
Managers	-0,339	0,233	0,046	0,084	0,336	-1,115
Education	-0,06	-0,359**	-0,175	0,813**	0,588***	0,067
Union membership	-0,102	0,42**	-1,953*	0,044	0,205	-0,629
Gender	0,027	0,118	-0,047	0,007	-0,171	-0,883
Constant	-1,074**	-0,791**	-0,493	-4,376***	-3,005***	-1,837

\*=significant at 0,05 level, \*\*=significant at 0,01 level, \*\*\*=significant at 0,001 level.

Table 6. Denmark

	SF	SD	Center	KF	V	Right
Public sector	0,525***	0,297**	-0,061	-0,571**	-0,403**	-0,46*
Self employed	-0,903*	-1,81***	-0,285	0,745***	0,809***	0,528*
Unemployed	0,591*	0,426*	-0,211	-0,617	-0,673*	-0,48
Retired/Dependent	-0,621**	0,248*	-0,506**	0,184	0,137	0,102
Gender	0,343*	-0,11	0,248	0,077	-0,204*	-0,11
Education	0,144	-0,01	-0,033	0,205*	-0,085	-0,11
Constant	-3,184***	-0,71***	-2,217***	-2,631***	-0,596*	-1,84***

\*=significant at 0,05 level, \*\*=significant at 0,01 level, \*\*\*=significant at 0,001 level.

Table 7. Norway

	SV	DA	Center	H	FRP
Service Sector	-0,727**	0,201	-0,285*	1,363***	0,113
Public Sector	0,522**	0,126	0,224	-0,643***	-0,401
Part time employed	-0,28	-0,252	0,339*	0,371*	0,022
Unemployed	-5,987	-0,371	-0,087	1,008*	0,266
Retired	-0,914**	0,368**	0,298*	0,72**	0,027
Sociocultural professionals	0,092	-0,044	0,067	0,08	-0,318
Managers	-0,321	-0,051	-0,28	0,482*	0,159
Education	0,594***	-0,436***	0,013	0,794***	-0,125
Union membership	0,205	0,527***	-0,108	-0,393**	-0,275
Gender	0,623***	0,016	0,26*	-0,431**	-0,387*
Constant	-4,603***	-0,93***	-1,461***	-3,363***	-1,035**

\*=significant at 0,05 level, \*\*=significant at 0,01 level, \*\*\*=significant at 0,001 level.

Table 8. Sweden

	SV	SAP	Center	M	Greens
Self employed	-1,077*	-0,46	0,432	0,529*	0,366
Service Sector	0,257	-0,33*	-0,369*	0,571**	0,002
Public Sector	-0,026	0,377*	-0,079	-0,557**	0,321
Part time employed	-0,51	0,403*	0,085	-0,343	0,185
Unemployed	0,311	-0,28	-0,124	-0,823*	-0,31
Retired	-0,258	-0,1	0,622**	-0,102	-1,14*
Sociocultural professionals	0,164	-0,19	0,39*	-0,002	0,4
Education	-0,294*	-0,43***	0,351**	0,741***	0,228
Union membership	0,281	0,72***	-0,404*	-0,569***	-0,11
Gender	0,677***	-0,2	0,544***	-0,63***	-0,07
Constant	-3,16***	-0,72	-2,392***	-1,202**	-3,46***

\*=significant at 0,05 level, \*\*=significant at 0,01 level, \*\*\*=significant at 0,001 level.

Table 9. England

	CON	LAB	LDP
Service Sector	0,29**	-0,08	-0,154
Public Sector	-0,261*	0,251*	0,052
Part time employed	-0,22	0,252*	0,214
Unemployed	-0,865*	0,64**	-1,277*
Retired	0,168	0,002	0,105
Sociocultural professionals	0,411**	-0,25*	0,514***
Managers	0,925***	-0,33*	-0,117
Education	-0,055	-0,12	0,325***
Gender	0,214*	-0,1	-0,156
Union membership	-0,56***	0,377***	0,022
Constant	-1,039***	-0,6*	-2,117***

\*=significant at 0,05 level, \*\*=significant at 0,01 level, \*\*\*=significant at 0,001 level.

Table 10. Scotland

	CON	LAB	LDP	SNP
Service Sector	0,57*	-0,27	0,08	-0,037
Public Sector	-0,144	0,148	-0,026	0,072
Part time employed	-0,345	0,043	0,224	0,368
Unemployed	-0,706	0,747*	-5,703	0,255
Retired	0,598*	0,103	0,403	-0,164
Sociocultural professionals	0,95**	-0,68**	0,564*	-0,235
Managers	0,819*	-0,74*	0,699*	-0,107
Education	0,31	-0,27*	0,735***	-0,17
Gender	-0,038	0,018	0,53*	-0,337
Union membership	-1,298***	0,604***	0,072	0,18
Constant	-1,807**	-0,5	-4,635***	-1,058

\*=significant at 0,05 level, \*\*=significant at 0,01 level, \*\*\*=significant at 0,001 level.

In terms of specific patterns the data seem to suggest that in continental Europe there is a visible division between welfare state core constituencies, namely between unionized workers and retired on the one hand, and unemployed on the other. The division is particularly relevant for areas of high unemployment like Walloon and East Germany. There is also clear that gender division is very relevant in all countries, as well as education. Educated groups tend to support both mainstream liberal and new left parties. In some cases that is supported with occupational variables. Which suggests that there is a division described by Kriesi (1998 168-169, 1999 401-402) in place. In Belgian Flanders and Germany, the division between service sector and industry has some relevance. It could be argued that in those countries the service sector employs relatively more educated individuals and the division could be the product of that.

In Scandinavia the difference between public and private sector is very visible, as is the division based on gender. Furthermore the data seem to suggest that there is a division between women between the center parties and the left. It seems that the insider outsider division is relatively weak and that the welfare state dependants are less relevant variable than in continental Europe. Between service sector and industry seems to be relevant division as well, with the service sector being more inclined to support the right parties. There also seems to be an educational bias toward right parties.

As expected, both parts of Britain show what could be described as class voting. Conservatives generally garner support from better off parts of the society, which can be seen by the support they have among well marketized service sector and managers. Labor is supported by the public sector, unions and the unemployed; Liberal democrats have very significant support among educated sociocultural professionals.

The data suggest a generally more fragmented social structure that has some political relevance. It also suggest that the difference between the context has some influence as well. What we can observe from the findings is that some parties have been able to exploit this fragmented social structure and focused on narrow segments of the electorate. The example here could be Green parties, D66, Liberal Democrats, centre parties in Scandinavia, left socialists and some parties of the radical right.

The data presented in the tables below are showing party support among different social groups. The categories in the tables are relatively aggregate and can not tell us exactly what group supports what party. However they can tell us whether there is a division between groups and whether same groups support parties that have different ideological positions.

Table 11. France

	Professions	white collar	nonactive in labor force	workers	Independent business and farmers
PCF	3.4	4.4	4.1	11.3	3.3
PS	44.9	45.6	34	45.3	23.3
VERTS/GE	19.1	22.2	16.5	9.4	5
UDF	20.5	15.5	26.1	12.3	35
RPR	5.6	5.6	16.5	8.5	23.3
FN	4.4	4	3.1	8.5	10

*Source: Kitschelt: "The Radical Right in Western Europe" (1997)*

Table 12. Norway

	Professions	white collar	nonactive in labor force	workers	Independent business and farmers
SF	21.1	15	13.5	13.5	8.3
DNA	21.9	32.7	35.9	42.8	19.6
V	7.8	0.8	2.9	2.4	2
KRF	8.6	5.9	7.6	7.4	13.4
C	4.7	4.6	4.9	5	17.5
H	25.8	25.5	23.4	13.5	25.8
FRP	8.6	9.2	15.8	14.7	12.4

*Source: Kitschelt: "The Radical Right in Western Europe" (1997)*

Table 13. Denmark

	Professions	white collar	nonactive in labor force	workers	Independent business and farmers
SF	17.9	9.5	6.1	17.7	5.6
SD	25	26.9	33.1	48	15.3
RV	10.7	5.4	1	2.6	1.4
CD	7.2	6.2	10.2	4.4	2.8
KrF	7.1	0.8	2	2.6	4.2
V	17.9	12.9	19.4	6.6	29.2
KF	14.3	17.5	18.4	7	27.8
FP	-	4.9	5.2	6.6	11.1

*Source: Kitschelt: "The Radical Right in Western Europe" (1997)*

Table 14. Austria

	Professions	white collar	nonactive in labor force	workers	Independent business and farmers
SPO	28.2	32.4	27.8	42.1	8.7
OVP	24.9	19.1	24	16	57.3
FPO	11.7	9.1	10.1	12.4	11.7
OVG	8.6	7.9	7.6	3.3	-

*Source: Kitschelt: "The Radical Right in Western Europe" (1997)*

Table 15. Italy

	Professions	white collar	nonactive in labor force	workers	Independent business and farmers
DP/PR	2.2	2.9	2.5	2.7	2.8
PCI	15.7	15.8	15.4	27.2	9.9
VERDI	19.1	16.5	11.9	9.3	5.6
PSI	11.7	13.6	11.1	13.2	11.3
PRI	4.8	3.2	2.8	1.2	4.2
DC	30.9	33.3	41.4	34.2	49.3
LN	7	5.4	6.8	5.1	5.6
MSI	2.2	2.9	2.5	3.5	-

Source: Kitschelt: "The Radical Right in Western Europe" (1997)

Table 16. Germany

	Professions	White collar	nonactive in labor force	workers	Independent business and farmers
GRUNE	15.8	8.6	8.1	4.1	0.8
SPD	34.7	38.6	32.4	52.5	18.9
FDP	14.9	10.2	8.1	4.1	10.7
CDU/CSU	30.7	39.4	53.7	34.9	64.8
REP	2	2.5	2.2	2.3	2.5

Source: Kitschelt: "The Radical Right in Western Europe" (1997)

What these tables seem to suggest is that some support of some social groups is very diversified between different parties. This might suggest that the social divisions that divide perviously homogenous groups might be in place. It also might suggest that the level of fragmentation in the social structure is such that there is some space for the new parties. If that is the case the final outcome will be more fragmented party system and the change in systemic characteristics of the party system might take place. That is the topic of the next section.

## 5. Party System Developments

Party systems of west European countries in the several last decades are characterized by the increasing level of instability, increasing level of fragmentation and the emergence of a number of new parties. The previous section suggested that in terms of voting patterns there is some level of fragmentation in the social structure and that it is translated in the voting patterns. This section will argue that such fragmentation in the voting patterns might be related to the fragmentation in the party systems. Increased fragmentation of the party systems in the end produced the change in their systemic characteristics, or to be more precise, in the pattern of interaction between the parties<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> Sartori's definition of a party system (1976, 43-4), states that party system is a pattern of interactions that are the result of inter-party competition and that the system depends on the relations between its elements. System is more than just a combination of different elements and it displays properties that do not belong to any of its component elements individually, but rather to a system as such. The characteristic of a system will depend on how each party influences the functioning of other parties and how it is, in turn, influenced by them. The

Tables 17, 18 and 19 show average levels of vote for new parties, effective number of parliamentary parties and average volatility for 12 countries during the four decades after 1960`s.

It is evident that all three indicators show significant increase in the period under consideration. The level of increase is not similar across cases and across decades but overall trend is clear.

Table 17. Average vote for new parties<sup>15</sup> in 12 countries 1960-

	1960-1969	1970-1979	1980-1989	1990-
Great Britain	11,1	20	28,4	25
Germany	4,9	0,9	4	13,1
Austria	9,8	6,8	12,3	31,4
Sweden	2,5	2,1	5,8	16,4
Netherlands	13,8	20	15,8	29,1
Denmark	6,1	26,4	20,1	18,2
Ireland	6,2	6,1	10,9	21,9
Norway	5,8	14,6	15,8	25,9
Belgium	14,8	24	23,1	30,9
France	3,1	8,6	11,3	34,5
Italy	5,1	4,9	8,5	43,5
Finland	4,1	2,3	7,2	12,5

Table 18. Average number of effective electoral parties in 12 countries 1960-

	1960-1969	1970-1979	1980-1989	1990-
Great Britain	2,47	2,89	3,08	3,14
Germany	2,62	2,36	2,54	3,18
Austria	2,42	2,27	2,55	3,48
Sweden	3,33	3,54	3,63	4,31
Netherlands	4,22	4,47	4,1	5,44
Denmark	4	5,5	5,7	5,4
Ireland	2,87	2,75	2,83	3,9
Norway	3,6	4,36	4,11	5,3
Belgium	3,74	4,35	4,68	5,45
France	3,75	4,44	4,26	5,85
Italy	4,03	3,82	4,54	6,78
Finland	5,43	5,92	5,75	5,79

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structure of competition, therefore, is determined by the pattern of relations between the parties. Structure of competition is the main defining feature of the party system (Mair 1997, 206). Peter Mair (1997, 206) says that: "...it helps to focus attention directly on what is perhaps the most important aspect of the party systems, and what distinguishes most clearly differences between party systems, and that is the *structure of inter-party competition* and especially *the competition for government*." According to Mair (2001, 37-39) systemness of a party system, like that of any other system, is connected to the predictability and stability of the system. In the case of the party system, like it is said, the systemness is depending on how stable is the pattern of interaction within the system, especially the pattern of government formation.

<sup>15</sup> Included in the count are all parties that entered the competition during the period under consideration.

Table 19. Average volatility for 12 countries 1960-

	1960-1969	1970-1979	1980-1989	1990-
Great Britain	5,1	8,1	7,5	8,3
Germany	8,3	4,8	6,4	7,5
Austria	3,7	2,4	6,2	11,3
Sweden	4,5	6,6	8,4	14
Netherlands	9,2	12,2	9,7	21,1
Denmark	6,8	17,1	9,6	12,2
Ireland	6,7	5	6,2	12,1
Norway	5,2	16,9	9,3	15,3
Belgium	9,3	5	8,4	9,1
France	17,6	14	14,7	17,4
Italy	8,1	8,1	7,1	26,4
Finland	8,3	8	10,4	10,2

The data about party policy from different expert surveys (Huber and Inglehart 1995, Knutsen 1998, Laver and Hunt 1992) suggest that in most countries new parties emerged on the positions that were not previously occupied by the existing parties. The only new parties that are deviating from this pattern are Swedish, French and Italian Greens. More detailed look at the Laver and Hunt data reveals that if more than two main left right dimensions<sup>16</sup> are taken into account the result is that all new parties emerged on distinctive positions. It is reasonable to assume that some of those positions had relatively small number of voters, but the distinctiveness of that position created potential for a new party.

Without going into deeper analysis the conclusion that might be drawn is that new parties entered the competition because the aggregate voter distribution changed and existing parties were not fast enough to realize that. Or the new parties were faster. The second explanation, that does not exclude the first, is related to fragmentation. Criteria for social division became more complex and as the consequence of that it becomes impossible for existing party to maintain all previously held support.

It is clear that aggregate indicators of the party system did change. But the fact that they changed does not mean that the party system changed. If we define the party system as the pattern of interaction between the parties the change in the aggregate indicators on their own would not mean very much. The only relevant criteria would be the change in the pattern of interaction between the parties (Mair 1997, 206; Sartori 1976, 43-44).

As the criteria for identifying the party system change the developments that take place at three levels of party competition that Peter Mair (1997, 206-211) uses to distinguish between open and closed patterns of competition will be used here. Those three levels are pattern of alternation in the government, stability of governing alternatives and the openness of government participation to the new parties. On the level of alternation in government there is a difference between the wholesale and partial alternation. Wholesale alternation would mean that no party that was present in the government in the previous term would be present in the new term. Partial alternation is the case where government composition changed only partially and a part of parties from the former government remained in the new government. The second level is the innovation or familiarity in the government formula, whether there are stable partisan formulas of the government, or there are some new combinations of the parties that composed the government before. The third indicator is the range of parties that have access to the government, or, whether the access to the government is restricted to the same

<sup>16</sup> Dimensions dealing with economic and social policy left right. In cases of Italy and Sweden and France the Green parties are very close to mainstream left in most issues. But the difference between them is huge on environmental dimension.

subset of parties all the time or it is also open to the entrance of new parties. The change in the patterns of alternation, innovativeness in the governmental formula and the inclusiveness of that formula will produce the change in the pattern of competition.

Following table summarizes the developments in the party systems of 12 countries.

Table 20. Changes in the party system of 12 countries.

	change in the pattern of alternation	change in the formula of existing parties	entry of new party
Austria	-	-	+
Belgium	-	+	+
Denmark	+	+	+
Finland	-	+	+
France	-	-	+
Germany	+	-	+
Great Britain	-	-	-
Ireland	+	+	+
Italy	+	+	+
Netherlands	-	+	+
Norway	-	-	-
Sweden	-	-	+

As the data suggest the effect of increasing number of parties is reflected in the governmental formula. In some cases the existing parties changed previous formula. That could be ascribed to the changing of ideological position for various reasons; one of the very likely reasons is the reaction to the declining trend in electoral support (Janda and Harmel 1995, Harmel and Svasand 1997) that made some coalitions more feasible than others. The change in the pattern of alternation happened only in four cases, and among them the Irish and Danish case can be of questionable durability. Therefore the final conclusion about the impact on the party system is that apart from the entrance of new parties in the governments and in changes of formula in few cases nothing much happened. But the impact of new parties is visible and the question is what kind of policy impact one could expect from them. To account for that the analysis of what is the relation between the positions of the established parties and the emergence of new parties must be done. The focus should be on the way how established parties react to new parties and changes in their electoral fortunes. If the claim is that the increasing social fragmentation is causing the emergence of new parties, than what should be analyzed is the relation between the change in the distribution of voters and the emergence of new parties, and also between the distribution of voters, new parties and the reaction of the established parties.

## 6. Instead of conclusion

Since this paper is more about theory than about empirical research instead of the conclusion about the findings the summary of the main points will be given in the end. They will have partial outline of the future steps that needed to test empirically claims made in the paper.

First point is that in order to assess the impact of the social structure on the patterns of long term voting behavior, what is needed is a good operationalization of the social structure.

Operationalization should be ideally able to detect the social divisions that have political relevance and it should focus on them.

It is suggested in the paper that social structure in the recent several decades underwent through significant changes that caused increasing fragmentation. What exactly pattern of fragmentation will be in particular countries depends, not entirely, of course, but to a large extent, on the type of the welfare state and economic system of the country.

Differences mentioned will produce different types of politically relevant divisions in the countries concerned.

The new type of social structure is more fragmented than the type that existed before and this is mainly due to the crosscutting effects that new social divisions have.

The link between the social structure and the voting patterns depends on the positions of political parties. Voters do not have party preferences that are conditioned by their position in the social structure. They have policy preferences, or at least vague attitudes toward issues, and how these will be converted into party preferences depends on the party policy.

Due to the fragmentation of the social structure it could be expected that the sizable space for the emergence of the new parties will come up and that political entrepreneurs will make use of it.

Therefore if the impact of the social structure on the voting behavior and party system developments is to be assessed the distribution of voter preferences must be established and the party ideological positions and their movement compared with it.

At the very end one important thing should be mentioned. Any social division has a weak potential to influence the voting behavior if it does not have a certain amount of closure. In the mobile societies of the contemporary capitalist world the level of closure of some social groups can be very weak since the social mobility is very likely to be greater than before. But what matters here is mobility within individual life cycle, and it can be argued that it is rather limited, due mainly to the level and the type of education achieved. But still before turning to the analysis of the impact of the social structure on the political divisions among voters, the level of mobility of individuals over their life cycle groups should be accounted for.

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