

# The (non) particularities of West European radical left party supporters: comparing left party families

GIORGOS CHARALAMBOUS<sup>1,2\*</sup> AND IASONAS LAMPRIANOU<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Department of Social and Political Sciences, Cyprus Centre, University of Cyprus and Peace Research Institute Oslo, Nicosia, Cyprus*

<sup>2</sup>*Department of Social and Political Sciences, University of Cyprus, Aglatzia, Cyprus and Peace Research Institute Oslo, Cyprus Centre, Nicosia, Cyprus*

So far little has been done to explore similarities and differences between radical left parties and other traditionally perceived party families of the left at the societal level. A noticeable gap thus remains in the study of the European radical left: whether and in what ways social divides form the basis of radical left party support. Using data from the fourth round of the European Social Survey (2008), for five West European countries, we investigate radical left party supporters' socio-demographic and attitudinal characteristics, juxtaposing them with those of social democratic party supporters and green party supporters. Our approach departs from related studies by distinguishing three cognitional operations within the economic left-right axis, that are based on the distinction between ideals and their effects on reality; and by testing for intra-left divides revolving around trust. Based on insights from cleavage research, we devise a number of hypotheses, most of which test positively. Our findings suggest left party families across Western Europe do reflect certain lines of division in society, albeit with qualifications. While structural divides are not found to be significant, there appears to be correspondence between political and attitudinal divides on a three-dimensional space. These concern the cognitive divisions within the economic left-right axis, issues of political trust, and attitudes towards the environment. Our findings have conceptual and empirical implications both for the left and for investigations into cleavage politics.

**Keywords:** radical left parties; social democratic parties; green parties; party supporters; cleavages; attitudes

## Introduction

The study of radical left parties (RLPs) has made significant progress. Above all, the very presence and acceleration of this literature in the past decade denotes a widely held conviction that RLPs constitute a distinct group (or family) that, albeit its internal variations, has solid common denominators, as well as clear differences with other commonly perceived party families, including the other two main ones of the left – social democratic parties (SDPs) and green parties (GPs) (Marks and Wilson, 2000; see also Camia and Caramani, 2012; Bale and Dunphy, 2011; March, 2011; March and Rommerskirchen, 2015). RLP ideology is thus widely

\* E-mail: charalambous.giorgos@ucy.ac.cy

held to travel across borders. But can the same be said in regard to the societal level as well? Group-level theories, theorizations, and analyses are much less convincing if they do not account for the behaviour of the individuals that comprise or support the groups (see Olson, 1965). In this vein, a noticeable gap remains in the study of the European radical left; so far little has been done to explore similarities and differences between RLPs and other traditionally perceived party families of the left at the societal level.

Do radical left party supporters (RLPSs) form a relatively homogeneous and distinct group within national electorates, in terms of their socio-political attitudes and socio-demographic characteristics, in the same way that their preferred parties are believed to do at the political level? What kind of group-specific party appeals, if any, characterize RLPSs? In this article, we explore intra-left similarities and differences at the level of party supporters by testing hypotheses that address the aforementioned questions. Using logistic and multinomial regressions of data drawn from the fourth round (2008) of the European Social Survey (ESS), for five West European countries – Finland, France, Germany, Sweden, and The Netherlands – our investigation compares the socio-demographic characteristics and attitudes of RLPSs to those of social democratic party supporters (SDPSs) and green party supporters (GPSs).

The significance of structural characteristics is tested by including a range of socio-demographic factors in the analysis. Attitudes are modelled on a three-dimensional space: the two main axes upon which social and political divisions in Western Europe are structured – the economic left-right and new politics – as well as an axis of political trust. In methodological terms, our investigation employs a revised view of political and social conflict in Western Europe. First, political trust, a much neglected issue in cleavage research, is incorporated into the analysis in response to the documentation of social and political divides around it, including on the left. Second, the economic left-right axis is operationalized by distinguishing between three dimensions related to particular cognitive operations in interpreting issues of social egalitarianism and economic redistribution.

Our conceptual point of departure is that we focus on party supporters and not voters. We are interested in those citizens who identify closely with left parties. Although vote choice has been used unremittingly to explore the developmental aspects of European party systems, studying the characteristics of voters cannot reveal much about parties' core constituencies. By contrast, party support is more indicative of parties' core constituencies.<sup>1</sup> Much of what we know about the soundness of the party family perspective, and most importantly its sociological

<sup>1</sup> Vote choice is known to be the product of a complex constellation of factors including even the most transient concerns (see Dalton and Klingemann, 2006: part IV). Consequently, no solid assertion can be made about the diachronic nature of RLP voters' social anchorage, if at any given point in time these voters share or do not share the same attitudinal and socio-demographic characteristics. Party support (or identification) on the other hand is seen as a form of social identity. Campbell *et al.*'s (1960) seminal study argued that, although partisan identification is not impervious to change, partisan realignments

aspect, is therefore more likely to depend on whether the supporters (and not all the voters) of specific party families form a distinct social group in terms of attitudes and socio-demographic characteristics or not.

## Theoretical framework

### *Social divides in Western Europe: competing claims*

A strain of literature within cleavage research contends that the positions of political parties on various issues reflect deep and lasting attitudinal and structural fault lines, which are based on social conflict; a full cleavage embodies both social (attitudinal and socio-demographic) and political divides (see Bartolini and Mair, 1990: 215; Deegan-Krause, 2007).

There are now various studies that consider several aspects of cleavage politics empirically significant (e.g. Elff, 2007; Camia and Caramani, 2012). Cleavages and party ideologies are seen as simultaneous to a great extent and this simultaneity is seen as having persisted over time. But cleavage politics are also treated as largely ‘travelling’; put differently, the reflection of political conflict in social divides is considered to be cross-national and characterized by similar patterns across Western Europe (Elff, 2007; Camia and Caramani, 2012). Overall, families are seen as intrinsically linked to social groups. Party families are cross-country groupings of parties, categorized predominantly on the basis of their ideology, and by extension, their links to cleavages (Von Beyme, 1985: 29–158; Mair and Mudde, 1998: 225–226). By implication, party families, despite the various nuances of their individual countries and member parties, have a cross-country societal extension.

On the other hand, a wide array of evidence documents a decrease in the role of traditional, attitudinal, and socio-demographic characteristics for electoral behaviour. The result is a cross-country de-alignment or intense realignment of traditional links between social groups and political actors. In this vein, vote choice is increasingly determined by short-term factors unrelated to issues and structural divides (Knutsen, 2006; Franklin *et al.*, 2009; Van der Brug, 2010). Consequently, the confidence that European parties and party families (including that of RLPs) have an ideologically and/or structurally cohesive group of supporters has been called into question. At best, there appears to be striking variation in the fundamental conflicts within societies, coupled with cross-country differences in the types of issues that dominate the political agenda (e.g. Knutsen and Scarborough, 1995; Henjak, 2010).

But debates as to whether cleavage politics matter are intertwined with disagreements as to if the (limited or otherwise) structuration of politics is based mostly on attitudes or socio-demographics. These discussions remain unsettled, yet

are uncommon. Research that followed has empirically corroborated this pattern (Schickler and Green, 1997; Green *et al.*, 2002; see also Torcal and Mainwaring, 2003: 60).

most cleavage approaches stress the attitudinal dimension. Even the body of research which is convinced that structural factors continue to play a non-negligible role, for example arguing the continuing relevance of class or class-related variables (e.g. Evans *et al.*, 1999; Elff, 2007; Evans and De Graaf, 2013), documents significant variability across West European countries and does concede an overall decline. Moreover, attitudes have increasingly come to be seen as independent from structures (see Deegan-Krause, 2007; Bornschieer, 2009). Knutsen and Scarborough (1995), for example, argued that even economic-related attitudes became increasingly devoid of their structural roots and explained party choice much better than socio-demographic characteristics (see also Tóka, 1998).

An important warning has to be borne in mind nevertheless: at least some of the apparent independence of attitudes and political choices from structures may ‘simply reflect the shift to new and little-studied structural categories’ (Deegan-Krause, 2007: 17). Along with changes in technology, economic development, occupational stratification, and the access to information, certain social groups lose their causal weight as determinants of attitudes and political conflict, while others become more impactful. While structural divides are neither immutable nor enough by themselves to freeze party systems into place, at least some basic divisions are often thought to underlie most political conflicts (Bornschieer, 2009: 8–10).

### *A revised view of ideologies and structures in Western Europe*

Which are the main ideological axes and structural divides that cleavage research recognizes as the most important in Western Europe today? It has gradually become clear from the literature that at least two fundamental dimensions of conflict can be used to disaggregate the general left-right scale: an economic left-right and a new politics dimension – the former involves conflict over economic issues and the latter relates to societal and moral paradigms (e.g. Kitschelt, 1994; Dalton, 2009; Kriesi, 2010).

The economic left-right dimension was initially approached as the identity-related element of divisions based on class (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967). Independent of the significance attributed to any underlying structures, however, attitudinal disagreements over the distribution of resources in society are the defining characteristic of the economic left-right axis. This axis is conceived as a conflict related to social egalitarianism and economic redistribution, also embodying a stance on the issue of welfare provision by the government. Differences in perceptions of inequality stem from different opinions about whether it is the efforts and ability of individuals that condition the distribution of wealth or, alternatively, luck, political power, systemic factors, or illegitimate activities and morals. In turn, these lead to specific attitudes and policy preferences (Alesina and Angeletos, 2005). When people believe that wealth distribution is the product of effort and talent, they might view inequality as a just and inevitable trait of social organization. By contrast, people seeing inequality as something unnatural and related to social

organization itself might be more inclined to support egalitarianism and changes in the distribution of wealth in society (Alesina and Angeletos, 2005).

Still, when analyzing the economic left-right axis, there is a general tendency to be unspecific, in so far as the axis's generality, and therefore the various viewpoints of concern, are on many occasions not taken into consideration. Common values can be shared by individuals with different ideological mindsets, but when it comes to these values' realization in practice, then pragmatism is more likely to set in for the moderates. Common values that are abstract entail a different process of attitude formation from that entailed in stances about policies and the practicality of arrangements within the context of a given reality. Acknowledging social injustice and arguing that something could in principle be done about it, does not necessarily include the belief that it is politically or economically desirable, or even feasible, to remedy that injustice in any way theoretically possible, especially when that belief is expressed with reference to specific government policies (for political psychology experiments that lend support to this argument, see Mitchel and Tetlock, 2009: 134).

From this perspective, there is theoretical ground to assert that the attitudes of an individual (as well as those of a party) on the economic left-right axis may differ depending on whether the issue at hand concerns a government action or a desired goal, or simply abstract values. In the light of an established tradition in political psychology that dates back to Tetlock's (1986) value pluralism model, this may be so, because policy decisions on given issues activate conflicting values. How these policy decisions are seen through will depend on which of the conflicting values prevails and to what extent. It is thus important to realize that people support policies because of combinations of underlying value commitments and that those value commitments might not always be the same (just as people with similar values might support different policies because of other value commitments).

Turning to the new politics axis, this came into use soon after Inglehart's (1977) elaborate study of post-industrial societies. Since then, it has been extensively argued that value-based divides relating to post-materialist issues cross-cut the older distributional conflicts that characterized earlier decades (see Flanagan, 1987; Kitschelt, 1994; Inglehart, 1997; Kriesi, 2010). The result is a soft kind of realignment, as defined by the establishment of new links between social groups and new or established political parties; without, however, old links being weakened to the extent that they are completely replaced by the new ones. Consequently, the attitudinal space of European mass publics has been altered and the agenda of European parties and states redefined. New parties emerging across Europe take a side on the traditional cleavages and come to constitute a new family (of GPs). Established party families that were based on older cleavages (RLPS and SDPs, among others), take a side on the newly appearing issues. The responses that these issues provoke, especially by the radical right, cause the axis to evolve by incorporating new content (see Kriesi, 1998; Bornschieer, 2009).

The new politics axis concerns the conflict between individual liberty and choice on the one hand and authority on the other; the distinction between inclusive or

exclusive conceptions of community; and the differentiation of environmentalist attitudes and more materialist ones. These three components, although they need not always be in alignment with one another, have come to define what was first conceived as a materialism/post-materialism divide in much of Western Europe, in the sense that they tap into issues that are contested in this particular region (see Evans, 2010).

Yet, a third bundle of issues – political trust – also merits consideration according to our revised view of ideologies and structures in Western Europe. Political trust is considered to express confidence in the workings of aspects of the political order. More specifically, political trust denotes attitudes towards the intentions and outcomes/actions of political institutions and leaders. Certainly, this set of issues has never been regarded as constituting a cleavage in West European countries. On the contrary, it has been treated as a cause of lessening party identification and thus also as a sign of cleavage decline (Dalton, 1999). Nevertheless, there are strong indications of a three-dimensional space of conflict where political trust is emerging as a newly formed issue of division at both the political and social level.

At the political level, the division concerning political trust is underpinned by the distinction between protest/opposition and mainstream parties (Sartori, 1976). Scholars have suggested that the former are different than their mainstream competitors in a number of ways: institutional behaviour, programmatic appeals, strategies within the party system and towards the voters, and the expectations their core constituencies have of them. What is of relevance here concerns programmatic appeals. While protest and opposition parties generally tend to have non-centrist or ‘extreme’ ideologies on all issues (see Adams *et al.*, 2006), they also share a critical stance on ‘conventional politics’ and more generally what they conceive as the dominant practices of the political establishment. Radical right parties, for example, frequently employ rhetoric that presents modern democracy as tarnished by corruption and untrustworthy political elites (e.g. Rydgren, 2005). RLPs (and GPs) are usually smaller opposition parties, whereas SDPs tend to be more established parties, more often playing a role in government. In actual fact, there are noteworthy and historical differences between the three left party families’ outlooks on representation in capitalism. Although the reasons and the degree of doing so differs, both RLPs and radical right parties ‘contrapose the political elite against citizens, on the one hand, and against themselves, on the other’ (Schedler, 1996). Indicatively, dissatisfaction with the mainstream parties and the political system appears to be an important driver of voting for both radical right (e.g. Rydgren, 2005; Ford and Goodwin, 2010) and RLPs (Campbell, 2012).

Turning to structural factors, a large body of research is convinced that these continue to play a role in Western Europe. For example, studies by Evans *et al.* (1999), Elff (2007), and Evans and De Graaf (2013) argued for the continuing relevance of class or class-related variables, suggesting that declines in overall loyalty within class groups could be reversed by changes in party strategies (see also Enyedi, 2008). Other scholarly enquiries emphasized the impact of specific

occupational categories, such as unemployment, or of personal financial situations as reflected in levels of economic security. It is apparent that these can have an effect on value change (Abramson *et al.*, 1997) or in particular, attitudes towards the welfare state and immigration (Henjak, 2010).

Further, since the 1990s and in parallel with the widely assumed weakening of class-related characteristics, the significance of non-class structural variables, such as those of age and gender has been especially emphasized. Although competing explanations have been articulated for each of these three's effect on attitudes (ranging from the cultural aspect of globalization to the relations between political protest and generational change), the dominant view sees more libertarian and redistributionist values as resting upon such variables (Kriesi, 1998; Knutsen, 2004).

### *Attitudes, structures and RLP support: a set of hypotheses*

Based on the foregoing, we can settle on what attitudes and structures to test for, but we cannot theorize coherently on the West European radical left. Towards this purpose, a more nuanced and historical understanding of intra-left divisions and realignments is pertinent. Generally speaking, we would expect that RLPs differ from either or both SDPs and GPSs, by being more 'radical', more 'moderate', or undifferentiated depending on the attitudinal or structural divide in question.

RLPs have diachronically shared a distinctly critical view of the capitalist system and especially neoliberalism (see March, 2011). They are the inheritors of an ideology (communism) that emerged from the splits in SDPs across Europe in the early 1920s. These splits in turn crystallized the communist–socialist division on the left part of the class cleavage – over the centrality of the communist party, the role of the Soviet Union, the nature of capitalism, and the issue of reformism vs. revolution more broadly (Eley, 2002).

GPs have traditionally followed a broadly leftist culture oriented towards redistribution (Muller-Rommel, 1989: 8). However, the Greens' leftism has always embodied a distinctive brand of liberal thinking and individualism (Dunphy, 2004; March and Mudde, 2005, conclusions), and a view of social equality that pays less attention to class antagonism and more to the welfare provisions for excluded groups, such as immigrants (Doherty, 2002: 67–69, cited in Dolezal, 2010: 542).

Historically speaking, personal freedom, motivation, initiative, and certain other values have been as important as social equality for both social democratic and ecological thought where liberalism has exerted a strong influence. On the contrary, they have often been sacrificed or interpreted in non-liberal terms in the communist and radical left tradition, largely based on a more structuralist view of human nature (Vassalo and Wilcox, 2006). This basic difference between the morphologies of distinct left-wing ideologies can serve as the starting point of understanding how



the supporters of party families with similar values but different policy assessments and policy proposals diverge in their attitudes.

While both the radical leftists and the moderate leftists may share the same commitment to social equality, a discussion on whether to implement a particular policy in order to help the poor or regarding the costs and benefits of a particular measure can activate a conflict between social equality and other values. This conflict is likely to be resolved differently by the radical leftists than by the moderate leftists, because each group exhibits a different commitment to these other values (see Braithwaite, 1994) – the radical leftists are more likely to have greater allegiance to social equality, whereas the moderate leftists are more likely to have dual allegiances. Hence, each group is likely to respond in a different way to the proposal to increase taxes or the perceived negative impact of higher taxes. Our first hypothesis is premised on these insights and so addresses three aspects of the economic left-right axis that can be considered to increase its importance as a set of attitudinal variables:

**HYPOTHESIS 1:** RLPs have more ‘radical’ positions than SDPs and GPSs in what concerns government action and desired goals but not in terms of abstract values.

On new politics issues, it can be posited that differences exist between the RLPs and SDPs on the one hand and the Greens on the other, while no clear pattern of distinctions emerges between the centre-left and radical left. Post-materialist issues have been assimilated well into the programmes of SDPs (Lipset, 2001) and certain RLPs (see March and Mudde, 2005), partly due to the pressures of green competition on the left flanks of party systems. But they are a flagship matter only for the Greens, whose libertarianism, alternative thinking in respect to culture and the community, and environmentalism place them quite far to the ‘radical’ side of the new politics axis, despite change and evolution in their ranks (Burchell, 2002; Dunphy, 2004: conclusions). Environmental values, especially, are a pertinent characteristic of green politics (Dolezal, 2010: 541). On the whole, we would expect RLPs to differ from GPSs on new politics issues by being more ‘moderate’ in their attitudes, as new politics issues are a more consistent and salient matter for the Greens. We hence hypothesize:

**HYPOTHESIS 2:** RLPs take more ‘moderate’ attitudes on the new politics axis than GPSs.

In what concerns trust, RLPs have diachronically criticized the workings of representation in capitalism, initially rejecting representative democracy as driven by capitalist exploitation (Eley, 2002). More recently, they have argued that neoliberalism dilutes further the legitimacy of political institutions. This is a position held by virtually all RLPs with reference to both the national and EU arenas (Dunphy, 2004; March and Mudde, 2005). Similarly, GPs have tended to focus on the dilution of the participatory and deliberative aspects of democracy and favour



less bureaucracy, more deliberation, more decentralization, and more grassroots participation than that supplied by liberal institutions and established parties (Burchell, 2002). Political trust is a crucial topic of the post-materialist cleavage that spawned these GPs in the 1970s and 1980s; the rise of this cleavage was connected to the declining support for political institutions (Inglehart, 1997).

By contrast, Social Democrats cannot be said to have formulated an elaborate critique of political institutions in contemporary democracies. From the time of Bernstein, political institutions in capitalism were seen, at the very least, as potentially progressive and as the main arena on which class struggle had to concentrate (Eley, 2002). With time, this perception and political strategy has become more pronounced, as SDPs increasingly focussed on the electoral arena and its institutions (Moschonas, 2002). Our third hypothesis is thus based on an issue highlighted frequently in the comparative historical literature on the left, but much neglected in cleavage research:

**HYPOTHESIS 3:** RLPs exhibit more distrust than SDPs.

In what concerns the left, certain historical nuances concerning the relationship between attitudes and socio-demographics need to be addressed. RLPs mostly emphasize class divides, opposition to neoliberalism, redistribution, and the need for a strong welfare state. As such, they can be expected as more likely to attract supporters with less economic well-being than SDPs and GPs, as well as the unemployed, because the latter are associated with insecurity (Lipset, 1981). Accordingly, communist parties' electoral decline was explained by the diminishment of the traditional lower strata (see Waller and Fennema, 1988).

Still, no differences may exist between RLPs and SDPs in terms of class or class-related components, as the weakening of working class support for left-wing parties has not been a phenomenon affecting only the Social Democrats but also the communists (before they even refounded themselves into parties where Marxism–Leninism is one current among many and almost never the dominant one) (Nieuwbeerta, 1996). Even appeals to the welfare state, principally aimed at the de-commodification of labour, are no longer a sufficient attraction for the lower strata of society (Houtman *et al.*, 2008). Moreover, neither the modern radical left (March, 2011), nor the traditional communist parties (Ramiro, 2003) have relied only on working class support. It has been often the case that support from the middle classes outweighed that by the working class, or both oscillated significantly (Ramiro, 2003).

Unemployment, of course, has been on the rise since the 1970s. Yet, in spite of the conviction that the unemployed espouse more materialist values (Inglehart and Abramson, 1994), associated with the non-green left more than they are with the Greens, their more conservative stances in relation to immigration issues (Henjak, 2010) should counterbalance their tendency to support RLPs.

The few structural differences that can be reasonably assumed to exist today between the supporters of different left parties concern education and age. These are

less likely between RLPSs and SDPSs, as both groups exhibit significant cross-country variation among young supporters, as well as different programmatic and political strategies towards youth (see Merkel *et al.*, 2008; Striethorst, 2011). It is the GPs' post-materialist outlooks that can be thought to attract less traditionalized forms of thinking that are partly the result of more education and a younger age (see Dolezal, 2010). Therefore, GPs can be considered as the main poles of attraction for younger and more educated supporters (who are usually located in the middle or even higher social classes). In contrast, the 'gender issue' is invariably present in the appeals of all three left party families (see Caul, 1999) and female voters tend to support left parties in general, not favouring any specific strain of left-wing thought or practice, and choosing a party depending on which value or policy (environment, peace, social care) they prioritize (Knutsen, 2004: 198–200). Similarly, religion – that is religious denomination and whether one ascribes to a religion or not – cannot be assumed to condition party identity on the left. Overall, the effect of religion on party choice has diminished and although it has increased in recent years, it matters in particular for voting for Christian Democratic parties and Conservative parties (Van de Brug *et al.*, 2009). It is against this background that we raise the following hypotheses:

HYPOTHESIS 4: There are no significant differences between RLPSs and SDPSs and GPSs in terms of economic well-being.

HYPOTHESIS 5: RLPSs are less educated and older than GPSs.

HYPOTHESIS 6: RLPs are not supported by women more than SDPs and GPs are.

HYPOTHESIS 7: RLPSs do not differ from SDPSs and GPSs in terms of religion.

## Data and method

### *Data*

We have chosen to employ data from the ESS for two reasons. The ESS includes a party identification variable, which allows us to study party supporters and not simply voters. Crucially, the wording of the relevant question in the ESS includes the option of not identifying with *any* political party (Johnston, 1992), thereby avoiding the encouragement of some respondents with no clear party identification to name the party they were voting for at the time. Moreover, the ESS includes a second question on party identification that is methodologically useful: it asks respondents how closely they feel to the party they listed in the previous question. By including in our samples only those respondents who answered the party support question with 'very close' or 'quite close', we increase the validity of our conceptualization of 'party supporter', as a core affiliate of the party.

Lastly, the fourth round of the ESS allows us to capture more effectively and efficiently than in other rounds, the left-right dimension, as it includes a

questionnaire related to economic redistribution and egalitarianism. Based on the bundle of questions included in the fourth round of the ESS, we achieve a more nuanced conceptualization of the left-right axis that is based on the aforementioned theoretical distinctions rooted in political psychology (see online Appendices 1 and 2).

Our country selection includes Finland, France, Germany, The Netherlands, and Sweden, in which all three kinds of left-wing political parties (RLPs, SDPs, and GPs) have a significant presence and therefore, sample sizes for left party supporters in the ESS data set are satisfactory. Our selection of countries, all of which are West European, also responds to the pronounced differences between Eastern and Western Europe concerning the attitudinal aspects of cleavages (Enyedi, 2008).

### *Operationalization of the ideological axes*

We used specific questions from the ‘welfare attitudes’ theme, which was only used once, in the fourth round of the ESS survey. The variables/questions used for each axis and component are reported in online Appendix 2.

The economic left-right axis: We operationalized three components, each reflecting a distinct cognitive operation to the issue of redistribution: (a) one related to the perceived role of social benefits and its impact on the society – the ‘idealistic’ component; (b) one related to the perceived impact of social benefits and state intervention in the economy – the ‘pragmatist’ component; (c) one related to the desired actions by the government in order to facilitate economic redistribution – the ‘government actions’ component.

Underlying our approach to the operationalization of the left-right orientation of the respondents is the assumption that the second and third of the three components, while referring to distinct approaches towards economic redistribution, are more related between them than they are with the first component.

The new politics axis: We operationalized authoritarianism as a combination of preferences for authoritarian teaching styles and harsher sentences for those breaking the law. Our choice of questions is in line with Enyedi’s argument that authoritarianism ‘unites political goals with psychological dispositions, providing political orientation with non-political anchors’ (2005: 702). Nationalism is captured by two questions referring to attitudes towards immigrants’ impact on the country’s cultural life and on whether immigrants make a country better or worse to live in.<sup>2</sup> Attitudes towards the environment are captured by the respective question regarding care about nature and the environment.

Political trust: Questions that include parliament, parties, and politicians are sufficient for capturing political trust, as they address the two main types of political institutions, as well as the issue of leaders, not simply as individuals, but also as institutionally embedded agents of the political game.

<sup>2</sup> We thus conceive of nationalism, not in the strictly territorial sense, which can be pro-immigration, but in the cultural sense.

*Measurement models for the three axes*

We used multi-group confirmatory factor analysis in order to investigate the configural and the metric equivalence of our models across countries (Steenkamp and Baumgartner, 1998). Metric equivalence requires that the loadings of the factors in the measurement model are invariant across countries and is a strong indication that the cross-cultural equality of the scale intervals on which the latent concept is gauged holds.<sup>3</sup>

The measurement model for the left-right axis is presented in Figure 1. All indices were suggesting a desirable model-data fit (see online Appendix 3, Note 1). The results confirm the innovative nature of our operationalization of the left-right axis. The pragmatist and government action components have substantial correlation between them, while at the same time they are not correlated to the idealistic component. This validates our initial assumption that attitude formation on abstract values related to the economic left-right axis entails a different thinking process to attitude formation on left-right practical matters.

We also investigated the metric equivalence of the model for all the countries of the sample using a multi-group analysis (see online Appendix 3, Note 2). All goodness of fit indices were satisfactory for the purposes of this study so we concluded that we established both configural and metric equivalence.

The measurement model for the new politics axis is presented in Figure 2. All indices suggested a desirable model-data fit (see online Appendix 3, Note 3). We also investigated the metric equivalence of the model for all the countries of the sample using a multi-group analysis. The results confirmed the metric equivalence of the model (see online Appendix 3, Note 4).

The political trust axis consists of the three questions which were discussed above. The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for the five countries of the sample ranged from 0.84 to 0.90, which is appropriate for all practical intents and purposes of this study.

*Socio-demographic (independent) variables*

Seven socio-demographic variables are used as covariates in the logistic regressions: age, occupation (and unemployment), gender, education, income, and religion. Age was measured in years whereas gender was used as dichotomous variable. The combination of education, income, and occupation are used in this study as proxies of social class. Education was modelled as an ordinal variable (1 = primary education, 2 = lower secondary, 3 = upper secondary, 4 = post-secondary and tertiary) and included in all regression models as a Helmert contrast (reference category is 'primary education'). Total household income was included in the models under the heading 'total income bands' and was treated as an interval variable where higher values suggested higher income (treating the variable as

<sup>3</sup> Estimating the models with polychoric rather than Pearson correlations yielded very similar results in our study; we report the results of the Pearson correlation matrices for the sake of brevity.

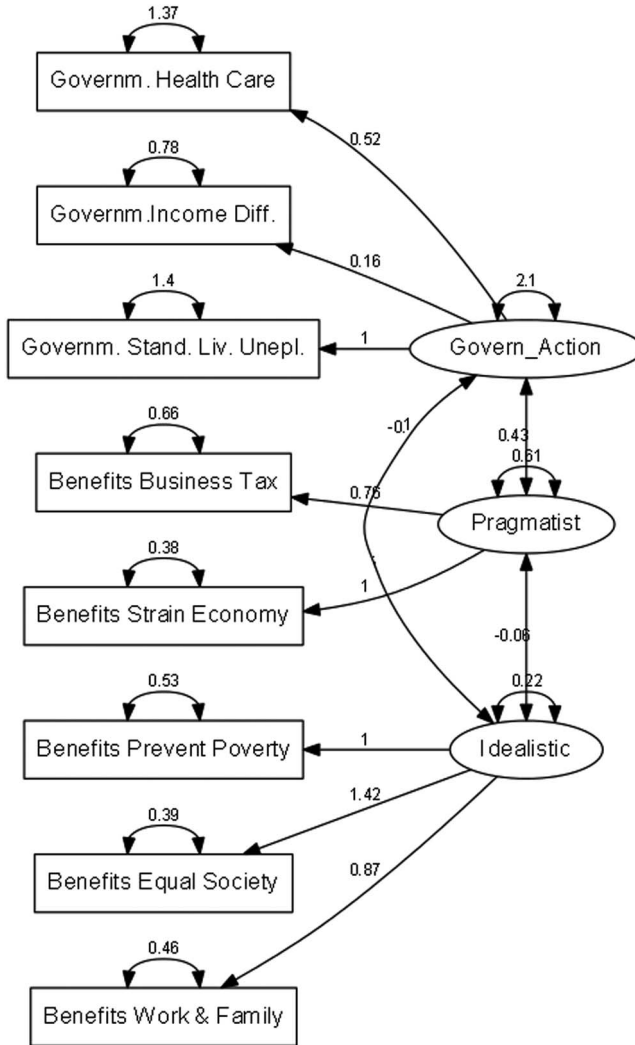
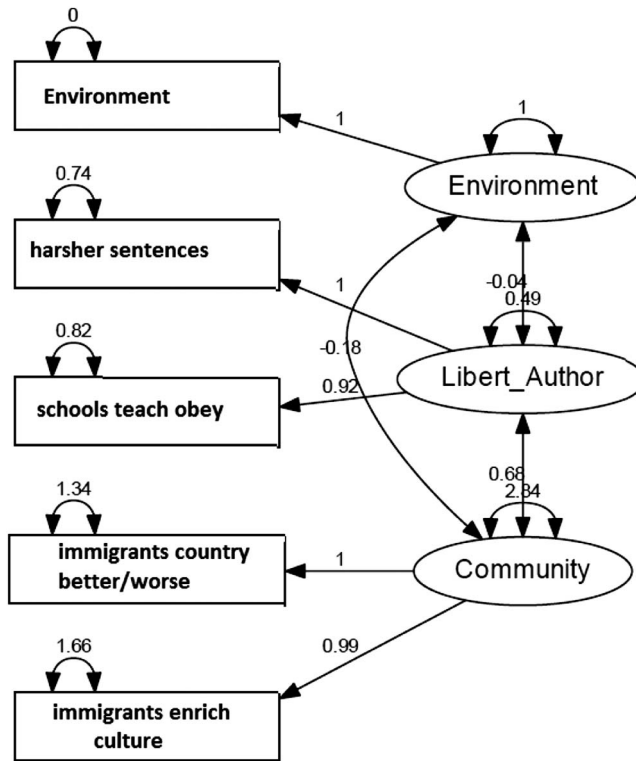


Figure 1 The measurement model for the economic left-right axis (unstandardized values).

ordinal did not practically change the results). We modelled occupation type and unemployment as values of a single categorical variable: those at work were modelled as ‘employees’ or ‘managers’ to distinguish between having jobs of different social status; the rest were categorized as ‘housework’, ‘in education’, ‘retired’, or ‘unemployed’. due to the relatively smaller sample size, it was not possible to perfectly match the elaborate occupation coding of other researchers (e.g. Dolezal, 2010). Still, the inclusion of this variable (i.e. occupation type), in combination with the variables of income and education, allow us to explore further the significance of structural factors such as social class.



**Figure 2** The measurement model for the new politics axis (unstandardized values).

Finally, following the example of Dolezal (2010), we modelled Religion as a categorical variable and compared the two traditional groups (i.e. Catholics and Protestants) with the other respondents (i.e. those not being members of any church, including the very small number of respondents who belonged to other religions).

## Results

Overall, 447 respondents said that they felt closer to RLP, whereas 1763 respondents said that they felt closer to one of the other parties. We present separate models for the structural and the attitudinal independent variables (Tables 1 and 2). Table 3 combines both sets of variables, allowing us to evaluate the net effect of each of the variables in the model. In Tables 1–3, the dependent variable is ‘Feel closer to RLP/Feel closer to GP or SDP’. In all tables (including Table 4 later on), only the statistically significant independent variables are presented.

Table 1 suggests important patterns that attest to clear structural differences between RLPs and the supporters of the other two party families. Income and education have a significant contribution in the models. Income is significant in

Table 1. Coefficients of logistic regression models with party as the dependent variable (radical left party = 1, social democratic party, and green party = 0) (only for the structural variables)

	Germany	Finland	France	The Netherlands	Sweden
Intercept	-1.30 (0.41)	-1.02 (0.18)	-1.20 (0.17)	0.92 (0.51)	-1.27 (0.41)
Age	0.03 (0.01)	-	-	-0.02 (<0.01)	-
Education	-			-	
Lower secondary		-0.17 (0.24)	-0.17 (0.31)		0.54 (0.40)
Upper secondary	-	-0.31 (0.11)	-0.36 (0.11)		0.53 (0.15)
Post-secondary	-	-0.10 (0.08)	-0.26 (0.08)		0.22 (0.09)
Total income band	-0.17 (-0.05)	-	-	-0.10 (0.04)	-0.15 (0.06)
Religion (Catholics and Protestants vs. Rest)	-1.80 (0.25)	-0.90 (0.29)	-0.70 (0.31)	-	-
N	611	393	423	322	461
$\chi^2$	$\chi^2(3) = 92.19, P < 0.001$	$\chi^2(4) = 18.33, P = 0.001$	$\chi^2(4) = 23.65, P < 0.001$	$\chi^2(2) = 9.51, P < 0.001$	$\chi^2(4) = 21.03, P < 0.001$
Nagelkerke R <sup>2</sup>	0.216	0.075	0.092	0.040	0.082
Brier index	0.143	0.139	0.129	0.223	0.109
C	0.761	0.644	0.685	0.611	0.667

Standard errors are presented in parentheses.



Table 2. Coefficients of logistic regression models with party as the dependent variable (radical left party = 1, social democratic party, and green party = 0) (only for the attitudinal variables)

	Germany	Finland	France	The Netherlands	Sweden
Intercept	-0.13 (0.26)	-1.70 (0.18)	-0.98 (0.28)	1.40 (0.50)	-0.96 (0.41)
Government action	0.31 (0.10)	0.51 (0.16)	-	-	-
Idealistic	-1.17 (0.29)	-	-	-	-
Pragmatist	-0.51 (0.20)	-	-	-	-0.84 (0.29)
Political trust	-0.35 (0.07)	-	-0.20 (0.08)	-0.38 (0.09)	-0.26 (0.08)
Environment	-	-	-0.27 (0.11)	-	-
Libertarian/authoritarian	-0.83 (0.22)	1.24 (0.39)	-	-1.17 (0.39)	0.71 (0.28)
Community	-	0.48 (0.15)	-	-0.30 (0.14)	-
<i>N</i>	611	393	423	322	461
$\chi^2$	$\chi^2(5) = 104.77, P < 0.001$	$\chi^2(3) = 21.91, P < 0.001$	$\chi^2(2) = 11.92, P < 0.001$	$\chi^2(3) = 39.54, P < 0.001$	$\chi^2(3) = 30.18, P < 0.001$
Nagelkerke $R^2$	0.243	0.089	0.047	0.159	0.117
Brier index	0.138	0.136	0.132	0.201	0.104
<i>C</i>	0.765	0.657	0.619	0.711	0.694

Standard errors are presented in parentheses.

Table 3. Coefficients of logistic regression models with party as the dependent variable (radical left party = 1, social democratic party, and green party = 0) (all variables)

	Germany	Finland	France	The Netherlands	Sweden
Intercept	0.93 (0.36)	-1.24 (0.22)	-0.73 (0.30)	2.72 (0.70)	-0.14 (0.60)
Government action	0.26 (0.10)	0.46 (0.16)	-	0.26 (0.13)	-
Idealistic	-1.02 (0.30)	-	-	-	-
Pragmatist	-0.44 (0.21)	-	-	-	-0.82 (0.30)
Political trust	-0.34 (0.07)	-	-0.17 (0.08)	-0.39 (0.09)	-0.27 (0.09)
Environment	-	-	-0.30 (0.12)	-	-
Libertarian/authoritarian	-0.80 (0.22)	1.13 (0.40)	-	-1.29 (0.41)	0.60 (0.31)
Community	-	0.37 (0.16)	-0.24 (0.09)	-0.30 (0.14)	-
Age	-	-	-	-0.02 (<0.01)	-
Education	-	-	-	-	-
Lower secondary	-	-0.12 (0.25)	-0.22 (0.23)	-	0.53 (0.41)
Upper secondary	-	-0.30 (0.12)	-0.39 (0.11)	-	0.47 (0.16)
Post-secondary	-	-0.12 (0.08)	-0.28 (0.08)	-	0.15 (0.10)
Total income band	-0.12 (-0.05)	-	-	-	-0.15 (0.06)
Religion (Catholics and Protestants vs. Rest)	-1.58 (0.26)	-0.71 (0.30)	-	-	-
<i>N</i>	611	393	423	322	461
$\chi^2$	$\chi^2(7) = 154.28, P < 0.001$	$\chi^2(7) = 35.74, P < 0.001$	$\chi^2(6) = 34.71, P < 0.001$	$\chi^2(5) = 50.480, P < 0.001$	$\chi^2(7) = 48.31, P < 0.001$
Nagelkerke <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.344	0.143	0.134	0.199	0.177
Brier index	0.124	0.130	0.124	0.194	0.100
<i>C</i>	0.826	0.707	0.713	0.738	0.736

Standard errors are presented in parentheses.

Table 4. Coefficients of multinomial regression models [radical left party (RLP) is the reference category]

	Germany		Finland		France		The Netherlands		Sweden	
	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE
GP: intercept	0.18	0.68	1.00	0.88	0.72	0.83	-2.20	1.00	-0.81	0.94
SDP: intercept	-0.93	0.60	-2.57	0.87	0.61	0.59	-3.55	0.77	-2.47	0.82
GP: government actions	-0.32	0.11	-0.44	0.20			-0.03	0.19		
SDP: government actions	-0.40	0.10	-0.48	0.18			-0.39	0.15		
GP: idealistic	0.72	0.37								
SDP: idealistic	1.25	0.32								
GP: pragmatist									0.93	0.38
SDP: pragmatist									0.93	0.31
GP: trust	0.28	0.08	0.09	0.10	0.05	0.11	0.33	0.13	0.08	0.11
SDP: trust	0.33	0.07	0.23	0.10	0.20	0.08	0.38	0.10	0.35	0.09
GP: libertarian/authoritarian	2.25	0.44	0.13	0.38			1.73	0.46	0.45	0.40
SDP: libertarian/authoritarian	-0.17	0.37	-1.17	0.37			0.44	0.33	-1.14	0.32
GP: community	0.35	0.15			0.13	0.13				
SDP: community	-0.14	0.12			0.28	0.09				
GP: environment	0.72	0.18	1.16	0.23	1.05	0.24	0.82	0.24	0.62	0.22
SDP: environment	-0.05	0.13	-0.05	0.17	0.23*	0.12	-0.13	0.15	-0.21	0.15
GP: age	-0.06	0.01	-0.04	0.01	-0.04	0.01	-0.001	0.01	-0.01	0.01
SDP: age	-0.01	0.01	0.04	0.01	-0.001	0.01	0.03	0.01	0.03	0.01
GP: religion	1.49	0.32	0.32	0.36						
SDP: religion	1.82	0.28	0.84	0.32						
GP: education (lower secondary)			0.14	0.40	0.76	0.60				
SDP: education (lower secondary)			0.41	0.28	0.13	0.24				
GP: education (upper secondary)			0.46	0.17	0.58	0.23				
SDP: education (upper secondary)			0.51	0.14	0.36	0.12				
GP: education (post-secondary)			0.34	0.10	0.33	0.14				
SDP: education (post-secondary)			0.06	0.10	0.26	0.09				
GP: income	0.16	0.06							0.06	0.07
SDP: income	0.10	0.05							0.17	0.06
Log-likelihood	-473.04		-299.17		-297.07		-286.92		-289.06	
McFadden R <sup>2</sup>	0.240		0.250		0.120		0.137		0.172	
Likelihood ratio test	$\chi^2 = 299.05, P < 0.001$		$\chi^2 = 199.16, P < 0.001$		$\chi^2 = 81.11, P < 0.001$		$\chi^2 = 91.456, P > 0.001$		$\chi^2 = 120.35, P < 0.01$	
Proportion RLP	0.22		0.18		0.16		0.36		0.13	
Proportion GP	0.26		0.31		0.13		0.18		0.13	
Proportion SDP	0.52		0.51		0.71		0.46		0.74	

SDP = social democratic party; GP = green party.

Marginally statistically insignificant coefficients (e.g. 0.053) are denoted by an asterisk.

Statistically significant results in bold.

three countries (Germany, The Netherlands, and Sweden) and education is also significant in three countries (Finland, France, and Sweden). Higher income is related to a lower probability for respondents to feel closer to RLP parties. For example, in Germany, respondents who rated their total household income on the 10th (highest income) rather than on the first (lowest income) level, were almost 80% less likely to give a positive response for RLP. The respective probabilities for the Netherlands and Sweden were ~60 and 75%.

Respondents who were more educated were also less likely to feel closer to an RLP party in Finland and France, but in Sweden, more educated people were more likely to feel closer to RLP parties. For example, in France, people who have completed upper secondary education are 30% less likely to feel closer to an RLP party but in Sweden, those who completed upper secondary education are 70% more likely to feel closer to an RLP party.

Interestingly, religion seems to play the most important role in the model: in Germany, the group of Catholics and Protestants were almost 85% less likely to feel closer to RLP (the probabilities for Finland and France were 60 and 50%, respectively). Religion alone, when added as a last predictor in the model, accounted for most of the pseudo  $R^2$ ; in Germany, for example, adding religion as a third (last) explanatory variable increases the pseudo  $R^2$  from 0.07 to 0.22.

Table 2 suggests important patterns that attest to clear attitudinal differences between RLPs and the supporters of the other two party families. Political trust, albeit neglected in the relevant literature, emerges as the most prominent explanatory variable. It is significant in all the countries – but Finland – and is negatively related to feeling closer to an RLP party (more trusting individuals are less likely to feel closer to RLP parties). In the Netherlands, a respondent with the minimum level of political trust (no trust at all) is 98% less likely to feel closer to an RLP party compared with a respondent with the maximum level of political trust (complete trust). Similar (but smaller), effects were recorded for Germany, Finland, and Sweden.

The libertarian/authoritarian axis also emerged as a significant explanatory variable for all the countries but France. The coefficient of the axis had a positive sign for Finland and Sweden and negative sign for Germany and the Netherlands. In Germany and the Netherlands, more libertarian people (less authoritarian) are less likely to feel close to an RLP party. However, in Finland and Sweden, more libertarian people are more likely to feel closer to an RLP party. In Germany and Finland, people who desire a more active involvement of the government are more likely to feel close to an RLP party.

Table 3 combines the structural and the attitudinal independent variables. The addition of the attitudinal variables in the models of Table 1 increases both the pseudo  $R^2$  and the classification indices substantially. For Germany, the Nagelkerke  $R^2$  increases from 0.216 to 0.344; for the Netherlands, the  $R^2$  increases from 0.040 to 0.199. This clearly suggests that the attitudinal variables contribute significantly to the explanation of feeling closer to an RLP party, over and above the contribution of the structural variables. Still, in many cases, the structural variables remain

statistically significant. For example, Religion remains statistically significant for Germany and Finland, and education remains statistically significant for Finland, France, and Sweden.

In Table 4, the dependent variable is treated as a trichotomous variable which can take the values 'RLPSs', 'SDPSs', and 'GPSs'. RLPSs were used as the reference category, so the differences between RLPSs and SDPSs and between RLPSs and GPSs were modelled per country. This is an important analysis because it allows us to model the differences between RLPs and GPs and between RLPs and SDPs. These differences cannot be shown with the simpler, binary models presented in Tables 1–3.

The three components of the left-right axis matter to different extents and in different ways. Attitudes related to government action are associated with RLP support in three countries in terms of RLPSs–SDPSs comparisons; individuals with more positive attitudes towards government actions are less likely to feel closer to an SDP rather than an RLP party. Attitudes regarding abstract values matter only in Germany (more idealistic individuals are more likely to feel closer to the SDP or the GP rather than to the RLP) where an Eastern–Western ideological divide partly structures competition on the left (Campbell, 2012). Attitudes on the 'pragmatist' component of the economic left-right axis matter only in Sweden, where the issue of 'more benefits' and an EU-related erosion of the welfare state is the main ideological weapon of the left party. The nature of the relation is such that more pragmatist individuals are less likely to feel closer to RLPs (compared with GPs and SDPs).

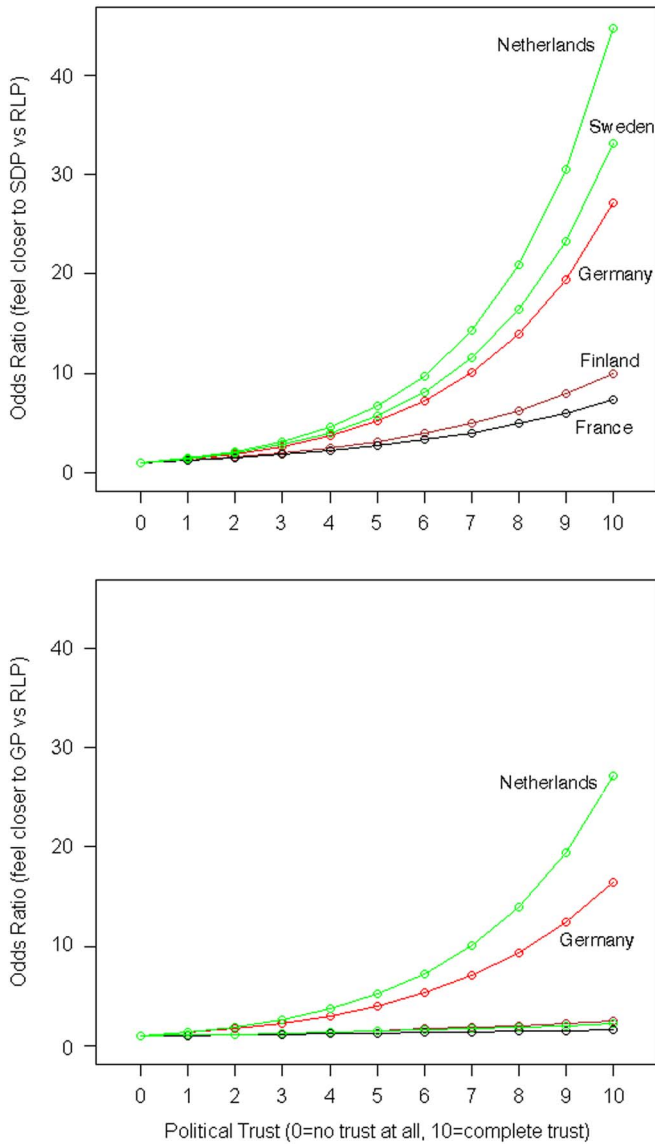
Two out of three components of the new politics axis have no patterned significance for RLPSs–GPSs comparisons. Statistically significant differences between RLPSs and GPSs in terms of the liberty/authority and community exist in only two countries. More libertarian individuals are more likely to feel closer to GP rather than RLP in Germany and the Netherlands. On the contrary, more libertarian people are more likely to feel closer to the RLP rather than the SDP in Finland and Sweden. Individuals who are more pro-community (more nationalistic and less pro-immigrants) are more likely to feel closer to the GP rather than the RLP in Germany and more likely to feel closer to the SDP rather than the RLP in France. But attitudes towards the environment are strikingly significant across all five countries in terms of RLPSs–GPSs comparisons; the more pro-environmental attitudes one has, the less likely that one will support the radical left compared with the Greens. As originally formulated, RLPSs–SDPSs differences on the new politics axis are less significant.

The economic left-right issues that matter distinguish RLPSs from SDPSs through a positive relation between attitudes to government actions and RLP support. This finding coheres entirely with the relevant literature's dominant argument that RLPs are predominantly and cross-nationally the main adherents of a fight against neoliberalism, especially as practiced by contemporary social democracy. This is so, in a similar way, that GPs are predominantly and cross-nationally the main adherents of environment-friendly policies.

Crucially, political trust stands out as a differentiating trait between RLPSs and SDPSs. It has a statistically significant contribution in the model for all countries in

RLPs–SDPs comparisons and for two countries in RLPs–GPs comparisons. The point is that the more distrustful towards political institutions one is, the more likely that one will support the radical left compared with the SDPs or GPs.

Figure 3 visualizes the odds of an individual to support SDP rather than RLP (top figure) and the odds to support GP rather than RLP (bottom figure). The expectation is that very trustful individuals (i.e. scoring 9 or 10 on the trust scale) have 40 times



**Figure 3** The odds ratio to feel closer to social democratic party (SDP) (top figure) or green party (GP) (bottom figure) rather than the radical left party (estimates derived from Table 4).

larger odds to support SDP compared with RLP in the Netherlands. The results are similar for Sweden and Germany, although the odds ratio is somewhat smaller compared with the Netherlands. Similarly, more trustful individuals (i.e. scoring 9 or 10 on the trust scale) in the Netherlands and in Germany have 30 and 20 times larger odds to support GP compared with RLP. In order to exclude the possibility of an endogeneity problem – that the respondents for these parties distrust the institutions because their own parties are not included in them – we consider the trust–SDP relationship in the five countries as a method for cross-checking our results on trust. As in all five countries both the radical left and the Social Democrats were in opposition in 2007 (when the ESS data were collected), it seems highly unlikely that RLPs’ lack of trust compared with SDPs’ was caused by their absence from government.

Age has a statistically significant contribution in three countries as regards RLPs–SDPs comparisons and in three countries as regards RLPs–GPSs comparisons. For RLPs–GPSs, older people are more likely to feel closer to RLP; however, as regards the RLPs–SDPs comparisons, older people are more likely to feel closer to SDP. Religion is significant in Germany and Finland; in the former, Catholics and Protestants feel closer to GPs and SDPs rather than RLPs and in the latter they feel closer to SDPs rather than RLPs. Education is significant in Finland and France where more educated individuals are more likely to support SDPs and GPs.

Moreover, income is now not important in most countries; its coefficient is significant in Germany for RLPs–SDPs and RLPs–GPSs comparisons, and in Sweden for RLPs–SDPs comparisons (wealthier individuals are less likely to feel closer to RLP). Gender does not contribute at all towards differentiating between RLPs and the other parties’ supporters. It has not been found to be statistically significant in any of the countries studied. Unemployment and type of occupation (e.g. managerial position or simply a low-level employee) are not significant in any of the countries.

To sum up this section, rarely do RLPs differ from both GPSs and SDPs on the same variables. The general expectation that RLPs differ from SDPs or GPSs depending on the issue divide in question is clearly vindicated. In addition, all three attitudinal axes embody significant distinctions in terms of either RLPs–GPSs or RLPs–SDPs comparisons. Socio-demographic characteristics seem to be less important – compared with the attitudinal variables – for the most part.

## Conclusions

Our findings provide considerable support for all but the fourth hypothesis, suggesting that left party families across Western Europe do reflect certain lines of division in society, albeit with qualifications. RLPs have more ‘radical’ positions than SDPs and GPSs in what concerns government action and desired goals but not in terms of abstract values; RLPs take more ‘moderate’ attitudes on the new



politics axis than GPSs; RLPs exhibit more distrust than SDPs; albeit not fully, RLPs are less educated and older than GPSs; RLPs are not supported by women more than SDPs and GPSs; RLPs do not differ from SDPs and GPSs in terms of religion. To appreciate these demarcations and qualifications, it is useful to briefly contextualize the cross-country patterns that emerge and consider the ways in which they contribute to the better understanding of RLPs and refine cleavage research.

On all three axes of conflict tested RLPs exhibit differences from either SDPs or GPSs. The analysis provides important evidence that our threefold distinction within the context of the economic left-right axis that is based on the differentiation between ideals and their effects on reality has an empirical face. As expected, these components differently influence the likelihood of supporting an RLP, especially compared with the likelihood of supporting an SDP. RLPs are generally more 'radical' than SDPs on the government's actions but not the idealism or pragmatism component of the left-right axis (except in Germany and Sweden, respectively). From a methodological viewpoint, the broadness of the economic left-right axis as traditionally constructed in most related studies may be missing the detail needed to qualify the cleavage decline that is often detected. By extension, taking note of the cognition processes entailed in attitude formation on issues of the economic left-right axis may help future studies pinpoint various attitudinal nuances in the processes of alignment and realignment.

Nevertheless, the main differences between RLPs and SDPs are with regard mostly to political trust. RLPs exhibit more distrust than SDPs. The importance of political trust revealed in this study may signify the gradual emergence of a third axis of ideological conflict in society. When this division came into being, and how durable it is likely to be, still remains to be explored, but the fact of the matter is that RLPs have a socially entrenched opportunity structure which they can exploit further.

Lastly, attitudes towards the environment are the main separating line between RLPs and GPSs. Whereas the new politics axis as a whole plays a limited role in RLP support, RLPs appear to attribute less significance to pro-environmental positions than GPSs. The older divisions that brought to life and sustained the new politics cleavage on the left now appear to concern only the environment at the societal level.

In so far as there appears to be cleavage-based support within the left, the attitudinal element is considerably more important than the structural one. The relatively negligible partisan relevance of socio-demographic characteristics makes evident that political conflicts within the left are rooted in ideological divides and have little to do with structural categories. In retrospect, we are inclined to argue that the enduring presence of distinct party families on the left must not be understood to reflect structural currents in society.

Future research on the radical left, and the left more broadly, can seek to understand those aspects of left party support that cannot be captured by considerations grounded

in traditional cleavage theory. One way forward would be to extend the search into areas currently receiving little attention, such as the personal credentials of party leaders or (dis)satisfaction with the economy. An additional avenue would be to consider if, and in what manner, dynamics at the political level lead to attitudinal and structural variation among left party supporters.

### Acknowledgements

The authors thank Antonis Ellinas and the anonymous referees for useful comments on previous drafts. In the original stages of the research, G. C. also benefited from discussions with Hideko Matsuo, Geert Loosveldt, Jaak Billiet, and Bart Meuleman during a research visit at the Centrum voor Sociologisch Onderzoek (CeSO), K.U. Leuven.

### Supplementary material

To view supplementary materials for this article, please visit <http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.1017/S1755773915000429>

### References

- Abramson, P., S. Ellis and R. Inglehart (1997), 'Research in context: measuring value change', *Political Behavior* 19(1): 41–59.
- Adams, J., M. Clark, L. Ezrow and G. Garrett (2006), 'Are niche parties fundamentally different from mainstream parties? The causes and electoral consequences of Western European parties' policy shifts, 1976–98', *American Journal of Political Science* 50(3): 513–529.
- Alesina, A. and G.-M. Angeletos (2005), 'Fairness and redistribution: US vs. Europe', *The American Economic Review* 95: 913–935.
- Bartolini, S. and P. Mair (1990), *Identity, Competition and Electoral Availability: The Stabilisation of European Electorates, 1885–1985*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Braithwaite, V. (1994), 'Beyond Rokeach's equality-freedom model: two-dimensional values in a one-dimensional world', *Journal of Social Issues* 50(4): 67–94.
- Burchell, J. (2002), *The Evolution of Green Politics: Development and Change Within Green Parties*, London: Earthscan Publications.
- Camia, V. and D. Caramani (2012), 'Family meetings: ideological convergence within party families across Europe, 1945–2009', *Comparative European Politics* 10(1): 48–85.
- Campbell, A., P. E. Converse, W. Miller and D. E. Stokes (1960), *The American Voter*, New York: Wiley.
- Campbell, R. (2012), 'Values, trust and democracy in Germany: still in search of inner unity', *European Journal of Political Research* 51(5): 646–647.
- Caul, M. (1999), 'Women's representation in parliament: the role of political parties', *Party Politics* 5(1): 79–98.
- Dalton, R. J. (1999), 'Political support in advanced industrial democracies', in P. Norris (ed.), *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Governance*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 57–77.
- Dalton, R. J. and H.-D. Klingemann (2006), *Handbook of Political Behavior*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Deegan-Krause, K. (2007), 'New dimensions of political cleavage', in R. J. Dalton and H.-D. Klingemann (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 538–556.

- Dolezal, M. (2010), 'Exploring the stabilization of a political force: the social and attitudinal basis of green parties in the age of globalization', *West European Politics* 33(3): 534–552.
- Dunphy, R. (2004), *Contesting Capitalism: Left Parties and European Integration*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Eley, G. (2002), *Forging Democracy: The History of the Left in Europe*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Eloff, M. (2007), 'Social structure and electoral behavior in comparative perspective: the decline of social cleavages in Western Europe revisited', *Perspectives on Politics* 5(2): 277–294.
- Enyedi, Z. (2008), 'The social and attitudinal basis of political parties: cleavage politics revisited', *European Review* 16(3): 287–304.
- Evans, G. (ed.) (1999), *The End of Class Politics?*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- (2010), 'Models, measures and mechanisms: an agenda for progress in cleavage research', *West European Politics* 33: 634–647.
- Evans, G. and N. De Graaf (2013), *Political Choice Matters: Explaining the Strength of Class and Religious Cleavages in Cross-National Perspective*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Flanagan, S. C. (1987), 'Value change in industrial societies', *American Political Science Review* 81(4): 1303–1319.
- Ford, R. and M. Goodwin (2010), 'Angry white men: individual and contextual predictors of support for the British National Party (BNP)', *Political Studies* 58(1): 1–25.
- Franklin, M. N., T. Mackie and H. Valen (eds) (2009), *Electoral Change: Responses to Evolving Social & Attitudinal Structures in Western Countries*, Colchester: ECPR Press.
- Green, D., B. Palmquist and E. Schickler (2002), *Partisan Hearts & Minds: Political Parties and the Social Identities of Voters*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Henjak, A. (2010), 'Political cleavages and socio-economic context: how welfare regimes and historical divisions shape political cleavages', *West European Politics* 33(3): 474–504.
- Houtman, D., P. Achterberg and A. Derks (2008), *Farewell to the Leftist Working Class*, New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.
- Inglehart, R. (1997), *Modernization and Postmodernization. Cultural, Economic, and Political Change in 43 Societies*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Inglehart, R. and P. R. Abramson (1994), 'Economic security and value change', *American Political Science Review* 88: 336–354.
- Johnston, R. (1992), 'Party identification measures in the Anglo-American Democracies: a national survey experiment', *American Journal of Political Science* 36(2): 542–559.
- Kitschelt, H. (1994), *The Transformation of European Social Democracy*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Knutsen, O. (2004), *Social Structure and Party Choice in Western Europe: A Comparative Longitudinal Study*, Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.
- (2006), *Class Voting in Western Europe: A Comparative Longitudinal Study*, Lexington Books.
- Knutsen, O. and E. Scarbrough (1995), 'Cleavage politics', in J. W. Van Deth and E. Scarborough (eds), *The Impact of Values*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 393–423.
- Kriesi, H. (1998), 'The transformation of cleavage politics', *European Journal of Political Research* 33(2): 165–185.
- (2010), 'Restructuration of partisan politics and the emergence of a new cleavage based on values', *West European Politics* 33(3): 273–285.
- Lipset, S. M. (1981), *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics*, London: Doubleday.
- (2001), 'The Americanization of the European left', *Journal of Democracy* 12(2): 74–87.
- Lipset, S. M. and S. Rokkan (1967), 'Cleavage structures, party systems, and voter alignments: an introduction', in S. M. Lipset and S. Rokkan (eds), *Party Systems and Voter Alignments*, New York and London: Macmillan, pp. 1–64.
- Mair, P. and C. Mudde (1998), 'The party family and its study', *Annual Review of Political Science* 1: 211–229.
- March, L. (2011), *Radical Left Parties in Europe.*, London: Routledge.
- March, L. and C. Mudde (2005), 'What's left of the radical left: the European radical left after 1989: decline & mutation', *Comparative European Politics* 3(1): 22–49.

- March, L. and C. Rommerskirchen (2015), 'Out of left field? Explaining the variable electoral success of European radical left parties', *Party Politics* 21(1): 40–53.
- Marks, G. and C. J. Wilson (2000), 'The past in the present: a cleavage theory of party response to European integration', *British Journal of Political Science* 30(3): 433–459.
- Merkel, W., A. Petring, C. Hanks and C. Egle (2008), *Social Democracy in Power: The Capacity to Reform*, London and New York: Routledge.
- Mitchell, G. and P. E. Tetlock (2009), 'Disentangling reasons and rationalizations: exploring perceived fairness in hypothetical societies', in J. T. Jost, A. C. Kay and H. Thorisdottir (eds), *Social and Psychological Bases of Ideology and System Justification*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 126–157.
- Moschonas, G. (2002), *In the Name of Social Democracy: The Great Transformation, 1945 to the Present*, London: Verso.
- Müller-Rommel, F. (ed.) (1989), *Politics in Western Europe. The Rise and Success of Green Parties & Alternative Lists*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Nieuwbeerta, P. (1996), 'The democratic class struggle in postwar societies: class voting in twenty countries, 1945–1990', *Acta Sociologica* 39(4): 345–383.
- Ramiro, L. (2003), 'The crisis of Western Communist Parties: reconsidering socio-structural explanations'. Estudio/Working Paper 10/2003, Departamento de Ciencia Política y Relaciones Internacionales, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Madrid, Spain.
- Rydgren, J. (2005), 'Is extreme right-wing populism contagious? Explaining the emergence of a new party family', *European Journal of Political Research* 44(3): 413–437.
- Sartori, G. (1976), *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schedler, A. (1996), 'Anti-political-establishment parties', *Party Politics* 2(3): 291–312.
- Schikler, E. and D. P. Green (1997), 'The stability of party identification in western democracies results from eight panel surveys', *Comparative Political Studies* 30(4): 450–483.
- Steenkamp, J. E. M. and H. Baumgartner (1998), 'Assessing measurement invariance in cross-national consumer research', *Journal of Consumer Research* 25(1): 78–90.
- Striethorst, A. (2011), 'Members and electorates of radical left parties in Europe', Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, Brussels. Retrieved October 2014 from [http://transform.nullundeins.at/uploads/tx\\_news/Striethorst\\_Members\\_and\\_Electorate\\_of\\_Left\\_Parties.pdf](http://transform.nullundeins.at/uploads/tx_news/Striethorst_Members_and_Electorate_of_Left_Parties.pdf)
- Tetlock, P. E. (1986), 'A value pluralism model of ideological reasoning', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 50(4): 819–827.
- Tóka, G. (1998), 'Party appeals and voter loyalty in new democracies', *Political Studies* 46(3): 589–610.
- Van der Brug, W. (2010), 'Structural and ideological voting in age cohorts', *West European Politics* 33(3): 586–607.
- Von Beyme, K. (1985), *Political Parties in Western Democracies*, New York: St Martin's Press.
- Waller, M. and M. Fennemma (eds) (1988), *Communist Parties in Western Europe: Decline or Adaptation?*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.