

The Structure of the European Attitudinal Sphere, 1999-2008

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Abstract

The paper analyzes the structure of political attitudes in Europe from the point of view of party elite configurations, and concludes that the covariation of attitudes is best captured by a five- or a six-dimensional model. Left-right identification could be well interpreted in terms of two dimensions. Between 1999 and 2008 xenophobia and Euroscepticism converged in Europe, but in some countries non-xenophobic Euroscepticism has an independent role to play. The orientation of the citizens tends to reflect the configurations known from party politics, but religiosity was found to be positively associated with environmentalism, and pro-state attitudes were detected to combine with Euroscepticism. Left-right identification proved to be most strongly shaped by views on economy, religion and foreigners. Environmentalism was related to the leftist cultural-ideological package via its association with anti-nationalism. In the Eastern part of the continent the demand for strong state intervention was part of a nationalist-authoritarian and culturally conservative attitude-package. Euroscepticism, xenophobia and left-right identification were found to form a peculiar triangle: right wingers tend to be Europhile and xenophobic, in spite of the negative relationship between these two orientations. The influence of attitudes on left-right position is typically high in those countries where left-right positions shape party choice. The influence of economic attitudes is more consequential for ideological identification, while religiosity is more relevant for party choice.

Introduction

The political attitudes of the citizens provide an ideological space within which both voters and political actors can be located. Although mass preferences do not determine the behavior and success of candidates and parties as much as some of the early spatial models (e.g., Downs 1957) assumed, the ways how specific attitudes combine with each other shape and constrain political competition. In multi-party systems they also influence the composition of the coalition governments. Therefore, the bulk of the research targeting the dimensionality of political orientations is focused on European countries. Europe deserves attention also due to the ongoing integration process that exerts pressure on the structure of conflict-lines within the nation-states. The development of a pan-European discursive and political arena provides a common stimulus to which the structures of political attitudes in the nation states need to respond.

The existing research on European attitudinal-ideological structures is rich but lopsided: we know a lot about the relative positions of party profiles but less on the attitudinal cleavages existing within the citizenry. Furthermore, most studies analyzing attitudinal structures have in fact a limited goal: to explain party choice with as few ideological dimensions as possible. As a result, little is known about how politically salient attitudes relate to each other (how, for example, attitudes on the economic role of the state are related to views on religion), to what

extent they compose different configurations across different countries or how much they influence people's political identifications. The principal goal of this article is to answer these questions and to find out whether the one and two-dimensional models employed to characterize the ideological profiles of political parties are applicable to the structure of mass attitudes.

The paper examines the relationships among the most central value-oppositions in Europe, the religious-secular, environmentalist-anti-environmentalist, cosmopolitan-xenophobic, Eurosceptic-Europhile, socialist-capitalist and traditionalist-permissive divides, and investigates their impact on left-right identification. We are particularly interested in two related questions: are the combinations known from elite discourse reproduced at mass level and has Europe arrived to a single, integrated attitude-space or is it divided by significant cross-country and cross-regional differences? Attitudes are analyzed and contrasted at three levels: country, region and Europe. While many studies in the field derive pan-European models from the examination of a few West European countries, we consider the entire continent and report data on 29 to 34 states. As opposed to studies relying only on inductive techniques, the current article combines inductive and model-testing statistical analyses.

The data come from two waves of the European Values Study, 1999 and 2008. These two waves stand for two different periods in Europe's political trajectory. In 1999 the Eastern European countries, Malta and Cyprus haven't been admitted yet to the European Union, but the integration process was in full swing. In 2008 the EU had already 27 members and a number of further countries became either candidates for membership or developed closed cooperation with EU via various Association Agreements. At the same time, the difficulties of the absorption of the new members and the first phase of the global financial crisis cast a shadow on the future of European integration.

Before going to the empirical analyses we briefly discuss the historical and functional origins of the one and two-dimensional models of mass ideologies.

One and two-dimensional spaces in historical context

While most politically relevant attitudes can be classified as either cultural or economic, the big opposition of 19th century European politics was focused neither on economy nor on culture, but on the *par excellence* political issue of democratization: extension of political rights and the establishment of constitutional control over the executive. The identity of the principal political

players was shaped primarily by the struggles that surrounded the dismantlement of feudalistic structures.

Economic issues, the tensions between commerce and agriculture and, later, between capital and labor, were present, but culture had a more obviously divisive role than economy. The *Kulturkampf*, the debate about the role of the Catholic Church and about the place of religious values in a secular society, kept a number of European societies on the verge of violent conflicts. Religious tensions were either crosscut or amplified by the attitudes towards homogeneous and sovereign nation-states.

The 20th century produced a more economy-centered political contestation. But after the 1960s and 1970s scholars detected a newly emerging cultural divide (Bornschiefer 2010, Kitschelt 1994, Kriesi 1998, Ignazi 1992) as issues such as women's rights, pacifism, environmentalism, alternative life styles, participation, minority rights, or immigration, became politicized. The new agenda was supported by growing affluence and security, the rapidly increasing level of education, the expansion of governmental involvement in social and economic matters (Inglehart 1977, 1990). This transformation can be considered to be part of a long-term process of secularization, starting with theism (the rule of external and transcendental authority), followed by modernism (external and universal, but socially constructed, authority) and, finally, by postmodernism (internal and individual authority, see Flanagan and Lee 2003). The political debates became first influenced by the New Left agenda, then by the concerns (primarily law and order and immigration) of the populist right (Ignazi 2003).

In spite of the complexity of issue-divides rooted in history, the most common framework for the analysis of the contemporary political arena is the one-dimensional model. Its validity is supported both by the heuristic value of binary oppositions and by the ideological, one-dimensional language of political actors (Laponce 1981). In spite of the recent successes of parties with populist and idiosyncratic ideological profiles, the left-right terminology faces no rival in European political communication. In this context 'left-right' does not refer simply to a socioeconomic issue dimension, but to the general language of politics, which is able to assimilate any new issue in order to reflect the basic conflict structure of the specific society (Fuchs and Klingemann 1986, 1990). The content of left-right labels have been gradually enriched by new layers of meaning as the focus of politics shifted to new issues (Knutsen and Scarbrough 1995, De Vries et al., 2013; Kitschelt and Hellemans, 1990; Knutsen 1995, Inglehart 1984). Party programs, expert judgments and elite attitudes indicate that on the one end of the continuum one finds economic leftism linked to cultural libertarianism, while the

other end is occupied by the combination of cultural and economic conservatism (e.g. Kitschelt 1994, McDonald and Budge 2008, Laver and Garry, 2000, etc.).

Even some of those who find the one-dimensional models adequate for capturing party politics, suggest a more complex pattern for public attitudes. Van der Brug and van Spanje (2009), for example, claim that while parties compete in a one-dimensional space, the way how citizens think is best captured by a two-dimensional model. Indeed, two-dimensional models are as common as the one-dimensional ones (e.g., Dalton et al. 1984, Dalton 2009, Inglehart 1997, Kriesi et al. 2006, Benoit and Laver 2006, etc.). These models have their roots in social psychology, primarily in Eysenck's model, in which the largely economy based conservative-radical dimension is crosscut by the tenderness-toughness dimension.¹ In political science the two dimensions are typically linked to the archetypical fields of economy and culture. The issue content of the former is fairly stable, comprising topics such as redistribution, economic equality, size of state or the influence of trade unions. The substance of the latter dimension is more country- and era-specific.

In spite of the national variations, many observers see the non-economic issues as integrated into one overarching dimension, most often called authoritarianism versus libertarianism (e.g. Middendorp 1991, Flanagan 1987, Flanagan and Lee 2003, Kitschelt 1994, Kitschelt and McGann 1995) or traditionalism versus modernization (e.g. Flanagan 1987). This overarching cultural dimension is supposed to include preference for self-actualization, autonomy, tolerance for non-conformity, on one side, and preference for order, authority, discipline, nationalism, traditional moral values, and social hierarchy, on the other. The new topics, such as environmentalism, euthanasia, international equality, sexual and gender equality or European integration, are supposed to be built upon such more classical cultural issues as anticlericalism, nationalism or modernism (Dalton 1996, Inglehart 1990, Kitschelt 1994, Kitschelt & McGann 1995, Flanagan and Lee 2003, Kriesi et al 2006, etc.) At the most abstract level the cultural dimension concerns what Kitschelt (2004) calls the 'governance structure of social life', that is, whether one favors or rejects traditional social norms and hierarchical decision making.

Among the many alternative conceptualizations of the cultural dimension three play a particularly pronounced role in the literature: postmaterialism, the GAL-TAN dimension, and the demarcation-integration cleavage. The first, the materialism versus post-materialism divide (Inglehart 1984), has become recently somewhat less popular, partly because those components

¹ Actually the latter was not a genuine attitudinal/ideological dimension but the projection of certain personality traits on the social attitude domain, similarly to Rokeach's dogmatism-dimension.

of Inglehart's postmaterialism scale which go beyond the classic authoritarian-libertarian opposition were found to be less relevant for electoral behavior Middendorp (1989, 1992). The Green/Alternative/Libertarian (GAL) versus Traditional/Authoritarian/Nationalist (TAN) labels emphasize environmentalism as a new issue (Hooghe et al. 2002). Finally, Kriesi's (Kriesi et al 2006, 2008) model places globalization at the center of the cultural conflict. In his approach economic protectionism and social exclusivism are opposed to integrative, culturally libertarian values, producing a "demarcation versus integration" cleavage, an opposition between open and closed society. The divide is rooted in the division of winners and losers of modernization and globalization: in the European case: European integration. The negative reaction to globalization brings together traditionalist and communitarian ideas as part of a challenge to the libertarian-universalistic worldview (Bornschieer 2010).

This condensed summary of the scholarship on the issue-divides point to six potentially relevant conflicts, which are expected to define the political-ideological space in European societies: the religious-secular, environmentalist-anti-environmentalist, cosmopolitan-xenophobic, Eurosceptic-Europhile, socialist-capitalist and traditionalist-permissive divides. Whether these issues can be reduced to fewer latent factors is treated as an empirical question in this paper. Before the analysis of the combinations we describe in a few words each of these issues and formulate our expectations.

The *traditionalism vs. permissiveness* conflict refers to attitudes towards traditional morality on issues such as abortion, homosexuality, euthanasia, divorce, and gender roles. As indicated above, the authoritarianism-libertarianism labels are often used to tap this dimension, but because authoritarianism has specific socio-psychological connotations, and libertarianism is often understood as support for economic laissez-faire ideas, these terms are avoided in the analysis section. We expect this dimension to co-vary strongly with left-right identification given that leftist parties are almost without exception permissive on moral issues and because many right-wing parties champion traditional morality. At the same time these expectations are tempered by the existence of the 'working class authoritarianism' phenomenon and the fact that a number of right-wing parties are libertarian not only in economy but also on cultural matters. The correlation is expected to be weaker in Eastern Europe where economically leftist attitudes often combine with a traditionalist outlook (Kitschelt 1992).

Historically the *religious-secular* conflict used to be considered as "the" second dimension of European politics. Conflict between clericalism and anticlericalism ceased to dominate political agendas, but religion continues to shape political behavior across large part of Europe (Knutson

1995, Oskarson 2005) and religiosity tends to appear on the right-wing traditionalist segment of the value divide. Our expectation is that religiosity will correlate with right wing identity and will be negatively related to left-libertarian attitudes: tolerance, cosmopolitanism, environmentalism, etc. Religiosity is expected to shape left-right identity particularly strongly in those countries that experienced church-state conflict for centuries, i.e. the Catholic countries.

Both logically and historically, the issue of *environmentalism*² is distant from the other socioeconomic and cultural conflicts. Respect for environment has multiple ideological roots, and there is certainly no incompatibility between cultural conservative values and environment protection. Yet, because lately typically leftist parties champion the cause, we expect environmentalism to be positive positively related to the various manifestations of leftist orientation. Given the lack of logical and historical links and given the fact that environmentalism is at odds with prioritizing economic growth and the interests of industry, the integration of the environmentalist views into a leftist orientation, if it occurs, will be regarded as a sign of the power of political elites and of the discourse of New Politics.

Finally, there are the two issues which became particularly divisive recently: xenophobia (anti-immigration) and Euroskepticism. The ideological foundation of *xenophobia* is provided by the more general and comprehensive ideology of nationalism. Its relationship to the socio-economic issue-dimension is debated (for orthogonality see Hooghe et al. 2002 or Hix 1999, for correlation, see Van der Brug et al. 2005). The fact that the radical right is the most xenophobic political force lends plausibility to the expected positive association between xenophobia and the left-right scale.

Euroskepticism may share aspects of xenophobia, but it may also be rooted in the opposition to bureaucracy or market integration. Some scholars connect Euroskepticism to both right-wing and left-wing extremism (e.g. Lubbers and Scheepers 2010, Van der Eijk and Franklin 2007, Benoit and Laver (2006), while others claim that the opposition to EU and EU-policies come increasingly from the right (Hooghe et al. 2002, McLaren 2007). If one considers, in line with Kriesi's model, Euroskepticism as a manifestation of cultural defense against a (regional) form of globalization, then one must expect it to be related to traditionalism, anti-environmentalism, religiosity, xenophobia and right-wing identification. We share this expectation also because in 1999 and 2008 Euroskepticism was primarily represented by radical right wing parties. Before

² We call the opposition to environmentalism "anti-environmentalism". More imaginative suggestions are welcome.

this period the Communists, after this period the radical leftists (Syriza, Podemos, etc.) emerged as most vocal critics of the integration project, but in the 1990s and 2000s the most spectacular attacks on EU came from the right. At the same time, in line with many previous findings in the field, we also examine the possibility for a curvilinear relation.

As the paragraphs above indicated, while there are good reasons to expect certain relationships, there is also enough controversy to warrant the investigation. Given that there is nothing deterministic about the analyzed relationships, the cross-national and cross-regional differences are not only possible but very likely. One must remember that the single most important fact concerning the relationships across issues is that they are not based on logics. The empirical question is what counts as ‘consistent’ in a particular context and whether there are enough consistent citizens to render the ‘inconsistent’ to the status of ‘noise’.

Research questions and hypotheses

The first question refers to the number of attitudinal dimensions. Naturally, the variables used as inputs constrain the number of dimensions one can get as an output. We are in no position to claim that our input variables (24 items, 18 identical across the waves) provide an entirely comprehensive coverage of all potentially important attitudes, but based on the existing literature we are confident that they cover a considerable part of the relevant political agenda.

First, we need to test whether the six dimensions listed above provide a satisfactory representation of the ideological space both in the pooled European sample and in the nation states. Our expectation is that they do, for both time points. Note that this is not a trivial expectation. The lack of overarching organizing principles connecting attitudes to each other has plausibility too. During the last decades large scale socializing agents like churches, trade unions, parties and organized political subcultures have lost some of their influence over the political orientation of the citizens. Since ideological constraints in the mass public presuppose exposure to tightly woven ideological packages offered by elites (Granberg and Holmberg 1988, Carmines and Stimson 1989, Zaller 1992, Hetherington 2001, etc.), the weakening of supply of such offers may have resulted in fragmented value systems, and the development of transient and idiosyncratic value clusters. The ideological convergence of mainstream parties may have had similar effects.

Once it is established that political attitudes have a robust latent structure and that the six discussed attitudes contribute to this structure, the next step is to investigate whether a reduction

of the number of dimensions is possible without major loss of information. To the extent that this is the case we expect the emergence of either a one-dimensional configuration, within which left-libertarians are opposed to right-authoritarians, or a two-dimensional model, containing a cultural and an economic left-right dimension. Traditionalism, xenophobia, Euroskepticism, anti-environmentalism, and religiosity are expected to converge in both instances, and in the first case they are expected to be fused with pro-market attitudes.

The differences across nation-states are expected to be large, but these differences are hypothesized to decrease as the process of European integration progresses: that is, we expect smaller differences for 2008 than for 1999, particularly as far as the differences between old and new member states are concerned. While all included attitudes are likely to play some role in defining left-right identification, economic positions (socialism), xenophobia, religiosity and traditionalism are expected to have a more decisive role than the traditionally less politicized issues of Euroskepticism and environmentalism.

Finally, we need to answer how embedded party choice is in the examined attitudinal and ideological structures and whether attitudes have the same impact on electoral behavior as on left-right identification. Given that electoral campaigns focus more on economic issues than on such traditional cultural domains as religion, we expect the former to shape party choice while the latter to play a larger role in structuring ideological identification. We also expect to find a trade-off between embeddedness in left-right or attitudes, the former prevailing in multidimensional, fragmented and cleavage-ridden polities, while the latter characterizing economy-centered, concentrated party systems.

Next to these straightforward expectations derived from the literature and from the dynamics of European party politics, we consider the explorative part of the paper as important as the hypothesis-testing part. There are in fact good reasons to expect both positive and negative correlations among the attitudes included into the analysis. The actual relationships in the various countries are likely to exhibit considerable variation, and there is no way to predict the character of each combination in advance.

Data, indicators, scales

The subsequent analysis is based on the 1999 and 2008 wave of the European Values Study (EVS). For 1999 29, and for 2008 34 countries were included into the analyses: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta,

Moldova (only 2008), Montenegro (only 2008), Netherlands, Norway (only 2008), Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia (only 2008), Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland (only 2008). For the contrast of the two waves only the 29 common countries were taken into account. The countries were given identical weights, but we also investigated the results by weighting countries according to population size (see Online Appendix³, Tables SCS1-SCS7). The pooled data-set consisted of 36134 respondents in 1999, and of 48790 respondents in 2008.

The analyses which examined separately the two waves used 24 attitude items (see Online Appendix). The comparative analyses were based on those 18 items that were identical. They were expected to form six attitudinal dimensions in the way represented in Figure 1:

Figure 1 about here

It was difficult to find appropriate indicators for Euroskepticism and environmentalism in the data-sets. The former was measured in 1999 by two, in 2008 by four items, while the latter by three items in each waves. But as far as Euroskepticism is concerned only two items (es1 and es2) were identical across the waves, while as far as environmentalism was concerned there was only one (env1). The exploratory factor analyses were run using all possible items, while for the confirmatory factor analysis and for the SEM models only the identical items were used.

ANALYSIS

Items and factors

First, we tested the existence of the six dimensions with the help of an explorative factor analysis (Maximum Likelihood estimation⁴, Varimax rotation). The analysis produced six factors with larger eigenvalue than one, both in 1999 and 2008 (see Appendix table A1 and A2). The high value of KMO statistic (0.79 in both years) indicated that the internal structure of the data is strong enough to claim that a latent structure exists, the hypothesis of a lack of structure can be safely rejected. The six factors explained 38 percent of the variance of the attitude items in 1999 and 35 percent in 2008. They fitted well the theoretical constructs, all items loaded high on the factors to which they were expected to belong. In a few instances they appeared on other factors too, but these cases were also well interpretable (e.g. that the gender-

3 <http://attitudes.pbworks.com/w/file/99352091/EastWestappend.doc>

4 Maximum Likelihood estimate is tailored for continuous level variables, but it works well in case of ordinal level variables, too (Harrington 2008).

related attitudes loaded high not only on the permissiveness factor but also on the religiosity factor). To conclude, the exploratory factor analyses indicated the validity and the stability of the six-dimensional model.

In the next step the fit of the six-factor solution was tested with confirmatory factor analysis (Table 1).⁵ The model assumed that the indicators are related only to their own factor, and that the factors correlate with each other. (We also tested the uncorrelated model but it did not fit the data.).

Table 1 about here

The relevant indicators (see Brown 2006) showed high level model fit in both 1999 and 2008: the RMSEA values were 0.043 and 0.040, the CFI values were 0.93 and 0.94⁶. The only low factor loadings were encountered in the case of the EU-trust (es1) item⁷.

Simplified models of political attitudes

The existence of the correlations among the factors suggests the possibility of a more parsimonious factor structure. We have tried to fit the data to fewer dimensions, by collapsing the six factors into the various alternative models displayed in Table 2.

Table 2 about here

Table 2 shows that it is not possible to fit 1-3 dimensional models to the data without major information loss. Among the 4-5 dimensional models those which united permissiveness and religiosity failed to meet the thresholds, in spite of the high correlation (see below) between these factors. Merging environmentalism, permissiveness and religiosity into a general ‘cultural’ factor fitted the data better, but the RMSE and CFI indicators remained below the standard threshold of acceptability. The model that came closest in power to the original six-factor solution was the one in which Euroskepticism and xenophobia were replaced by a common latent factor, probably best captured by the label ‘nationalism’. It seems that the most important political attitudes in Europe can be captured with either a five- or a six-dimensional model.

5 The confirmatory factor analyses and the later shown SEM models were calculated with the lavaan package of R (Rosseel 2012)

6 Due to the large sample size we did not rely on chi square tests.

7 The confirmatory analyses were also run with the alternative operationalization of Euroskepticism (es1, es3 and es4), but the results were very similar, see Appendix, Table A3.

The covariation of attitudinal dimensions

In the next step we analyzed the correlations among the factors and compared them across the two waves. Within the framework of Structural Equation Modelling comparisons can be done at three levels (Brown 2006). In case of configural invariance the input variables and the direction of their effects are fixed to be identical. Metric invariance demands that the factor loadings are also identical, meaning that the factors are composed in the same way. If the data meet the requirement of metric invariance the differences between the correlations of the compared samples cannot be due to differences in the content of the dimensions. The third level is scalar invariance, which implies that even the intercepts are identical. In this case one can compare not only Beta and B coefficients of regression outputs but also the means of the factors.

Table 3 about here

As Table 3 shows, the data meet the criteria for all three types of invariance. For the subsequent comparison between 1999 and 2008 we will require scalar invariance, as it is the ‘strongest’ among the three standards.

As Table 4 shows, the Pearson correlations among the six dimensions vary from 0 to 0.54.

Table 4 about here

The highest correlations in both years were found between religiosity and permissiveness and between Euroskepticism and xenophobia. Environmentalism proved to be negatively related to both xenophobia and Euroskepticism. Those who were in favor of state intervention in economic and labor relations (‘socialists’) proved to be somewhat more Eurosceptic and xenophobic than the economic liberals. Xenophilia and permissiveness also converged, to a considerable extent. The rest of the correlations were of smaller magnitude. The small size of the coefficients presents a striking contrast to elite patterns. The correlation between permissiveness and environmentalism, for example, was a mere .03 in 2008, in spite of the numerous conflicts between culturally progressive environmentalist-activists and the supporters of deregulation who tend to be both culturally and economically conservative. The positive correlation between environmentalism and religiosity, and between socialism and a number of attitudes, especially Euroskepticism, permissiveness and xenophobia, signify an even starker divergence from elite-patterns.

On the other hand, in most of the cases the correlations had the direction that was expected based on the literature. Environmentalism, for example, was negatively related to both xenophobia and Euroskepticism, indicating that the three New Politics issues may have a

common core. From a theoretical perspective it is especially relevant that there was a negative relationship between environmentalism and xenophobia, in spite of the weak logical connections between these two positions. It seems that elite discourse on these issues has indeed trickled down to ordinary citizens.⁸

The average change in the strength of correlations between 1999 and 2008 was 5 percent, indicating a relatively stable pattern. The strength of the correlations declined (the means moved from 0.19 to 0.15). Together with other findings, like the smaller explained variance in 2008, this result points to a declining level of ideological structuration. Particularly the link between xenophobia and socialism and between Euroskepticism and socialism decreased. While these changes bring mass attitudes closer to elite politics, the decoupling of permissiveness from both Europhilia and xenophilia have the opposite effect.

The covariation of attitudes at country-level⁹ (see Online Appendix, Tables SCL1-SCL4) showed that on a number of aspects European countries have identical attitudinal structures. Xenophobia and Euroskepticism were closely related in virtually all countries (in Bulgaria the coefficient was 0.9 in 1999, in Croatia it reached 0.92 in 2008), to the extent that in many countries, particularly in 2008, the attitudinal structures were better described by the five-factor solution. Xenophobia and Euroskepticism (and obviously, their common factor, nationalism) were negatively related to permissiveness and to environmentalism in virtually all countries. Religiosity and permissiveness were also highly and negatively related almost everywhere, and in some countries the coefficients were above 0.6. The correlations between Euroskepticism and religiosity were weaker, but positive in all cases. Given the diversity of background (from Russia to Belgium, from Iceland to Greece), the existence of such uniform structures is impressive.

In other cases, however, the country- and regional differences played an important role. Religiosity and xenophobia were typically positively correlated (most closely in Greece), but in some cases (e.g. in Great Britain) the relationship was negative. Religiosity and environmentalism were positively related in a few countries (e.g. Poland in 1999 and Slovakia in 2008), but more often than not the link was negative (especially in Great Britain and

⁸ The alternative explanation is that the covariation between these attitudes is due to socio-demographic mechanisms. But controlling for education decreased the strength of the relationship only by .02.

⁹ These models used configural invariance, because the standards of metric and scalar invariance were not satisfied. We also couldn't fit the six factor model in each country, and therefore we had to leave out from this analysis Croatia, Lithuania, Latvia, Portugal, Romania and Slovenia in 1999, and Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, Lithuania, Malta, Moldova, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia and Sweden in 2008. The five-factors model worked rather well in every country except Finland, Malta and Portugal in 2008.

Germany), producing the above noted, surprising, negative coefficient between the two in the pooled data-set.

The largest cross-country differences were encountered concerning the pro-market versus pro-state attitudes (socialism). In the pooled data-set socialism was unrelated to environmentalism. The analysis of the national level revealed that this was so not because of the lack of relationship, but because in some countries (e.g. Hungary, Malta, Estonia, Poland) the link was negative, while in others (e.g. Iceland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Romania) it was positive. The opposition between environmentalists and free market believers is apparently a typically Scandinavian phenomenon. Interestingly, in Germany, where the Green party is member of left-wing coalitions, environmentalists tend to favor a smaller state.

The relationship of permissiveness and socialism also proved to be country-specific. In most Eastern countries permissiveness was related to pro-market attitudes (in 1999 Croatia, in 2008 Romania and Montenegro were the only countries with the reverse pattern), while in the West permissiveness was linked to the preference for a more active state (although by 2008 Belgium, the Netherlands and Sweden joined the Eastern pattern). The expected opposition between capitalism and permissiveness was in fact strong only in a handful of countries: Germany, Spain, France and Greece.

A clear East-West divide emerged also concerning the link between religiosity and socialism: in no Eastern country exists a negative relationship between the two, while in the West the opposite is the case (one finds the Eastern formula only in the Netherlands and in 2008 in Sweden).

The five-factor models indicated a sharp difference between the two regions concerning the nationalism-socialism relationship (see Online Appendix, Tables SCL3-SCL4). Nationalists in the East believe in redistribution (the correlation was particularly high in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia), while in the West they trust markets. In the West positive, though weak, correlations were found only in Iceland, Austria (1999) and Belgium (2008).

The dendrograms of the hierarchical cluster-analyses (Figures 2 and 3) show that indeed, the divide in Europe is between East and West, both in 1999 and 2008. Apparently, Eastern European populations were closer to Russia than to the Western countries in terms of the combinations of various attitudinal dimensions 10 years and even 19 years after the collapse of Communism.

Figure 2 and 3 about here

A contrast of East¹⁰ and West¹¹ (see Table 5) confirms the message of the country-level analyses, and shows that the two regions differ mainly because of the way how economic attitudes are related to cultural attitudes.

Table 5 about here

The analysis of the five-factor model (Appendix, Table A4) shows that the differences between the regions were spectacular also concerning the relationship of nationalism and socialism: in 1999 in the West there was a weak negative correlation (-0.04), which became somewhat more robust by 2008 (-0.14), while in the East a strong positive relation was found in both years (0.33 and 0.31)

The averages of the absolute values of the correlations (Table 6) indicate that the integration of attitudinal structures also differ across the regions. In 1999 the correlations were stronger in the East than in the West. By 2008 the difference between the regions largely disappeared (and according to the five factor solution it reversed). This happened because in the East there was a radical weakening of relationships, while in the West they remained at the same level. This result suggests that what we noted above, a weakening of covariation among attitudes between 1999 and 2008 was, in fact, a product of the changes in the East.

Table 6 about here

But while the absolute values of the correlations indicate different dynamics in the two region, in terms of content the decline of correlations in the East is in some cases a necessary step for a possible ultimate convergence between East and West. The decoupling of nationalism and permissiveness in the East between 1999 and 2008, for example, opens the way towards a Western-style negative correlation between the two in the future.

10 Poland, Slovakia, Lithuania, Hungary, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Estonia, Russia, Latvia, Romania, Croatia, Slovenia

11 Great Britain, Sweden, Austria, Germany, Ireland, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Italy, Greece, Spain, Denmark, France, Iceland

Left-right identification

While political actors polarize on all six attitudinal dimensions, some of these attitudes are likely to be more consequential than others. In order to detect these differences we examined their covariation with left-right identification (a 1-10 left-right self-placement scale), assuming that higher correlation coefficients indicate larger political salience. In the first step we checked the bivariate correlations in the pooled data-set.

Table 7 about here

As Table 7 indicates, all six dimensions were significantly related to left-right identification. Environmentalism and Euroskepticism correlated the least. In line with the elite-patterns, the leftists were somewhat more environmentalist than the right-wingers, and the relationship became stronger in 2008, but the polarization of the political class was only weakly reflected. A larger contradiction with elite-patterns was posed by the way how Euroskepticism was related to left-right self-placements: right wingers were, particularly in 1998, more positive about integration. This can be considered puzzling also because xenophobia, an attitude that was found earlier to correlate strongly with Euroskepticism, behaved as expected: right wingers were found to be more xenophobic. Due to the changes between 1999 and 2008 these relationships became somewhat more aligned with the expectations, but the coefficient of Euroskepticism retained its ‘wrong’ direction. Apparently, there exists a complex relationship among right wing orientation, xenophobia and Euroskepticism (see Figure 4).

Figure 4 about here

The calculations showed (Appendix, Table A5) that nationalism, the united factor of Euroskepticism and xenophobia, correlated positively with right wing orientation. But the triangular relationship between left-right, Euroskepticism, and xenophobia means that replacing the latter two attitudes with their common factor would entail, in this case, a serious loss of information.

Religiosity, socialism and permissiveness were related to left-right orientation in the expected way, but in the latter two cases the degree of correlations declined by 2008. Even so, views on economy remained the closest correlates of political identification. By 2008 xenophobia caught up with religiosity in terms of the size of covariation with left-right identification. It seems that the enlargement of European Union and the financial crisis, combined with the growing volume of immigration, increased the political relevance of the attitude to foreigners.

In order to be able to consider left-right identification as a consequence of attitudes we ran another SEM model, complementing the confirmatory factor model with a regression (Table 8).

Table 8 about here

The regression largely confirmed the above discussed message of the correlation matrix, but it also showed that the traditionalism-permissiveness dimension doesn't add much to the explanatory model once the secularism-religiosity dimension is included. The decline of explanatory power indicate again that the European ideological structures disintegrate, rather than integrate.¹²

We have also considered non-linear relations between political attitudes and left-right. This turned out to be relevant only in the case of Euroskepticism, in line with the fact the Eurosceptic parties appear both on the left and the right extremes (Appendix, Table A6). Replacing the Euroskepticism factor with its squared form produced significant coefficients (-0.295 in both waves). The negative sign implies that the most pro- and the most anti-EU citizens are both leftist. In 1999 the explanatory power of the model using the squared form of Euroskepticism was somewhat smaller (15.1%) than the one using the linear form of the variable (15.8%), but in 2008 it was marginally larger (13.1% instead of 13.5%). The graphs (Figure 5) show that the shift towards curvilinear relationship was not so much the result of the increase of Euroskepticism on the right but rather an outcome of the pro-European turn of the middle.

Figure 5 about here

The country-level regressions did not show as pronounced differences across countries as the ones noted concerning the internal structure of attitudes. The differences tended to be in the magnitudes and not in the direction of the effects. Just as in the pooled data-set, environmentalism and permissiveness played a marginal role in shaping left-right identification in virtually all countries. Religiosity entailed right-wing identification everywhere. In some Catholic countries (Spain, Poland, Lithuania) religiosity was the most consequential attitude-dimension for the left-right position. The economic attitudes had similar impact across the various parts of the continent, but in two countries, in Montenegro and in Hungary in 2008, pro-statist attitudes increased the chance for right-wing identification. Economic attitudes dominated the explanatory models primarily in the Scandinavian countries.

¹² If the regression was run with the united xenophobia-Euroskepticism factor (Appendix, Table 7), the explained variance was even lower due to the contradictory relation of the two attitudes with left-right.

Given the intricate relations among xenophobia, Euroskepticism and left-right, it is not entirely surprising that the five- and six-factor models tell a somewhat different story. In the five-factor model (see Appendix, Table A8) nationalism contributed to leftist identification in the East while it had the opposite effect in the West. Using the six-factor solution (Table 9), however, it turned out that left-right was constructed rather similarly in the two regions, the direction of the coefficients were the same, and only their magnitudes differed. The reason why in the five-factor model the impact of nationalism differed in the two groups of countries was that in the West xenophobia, which has a positive influence on right-wing identification, had the larger impact, while in the East Euroskepticism, an attitude that leads to leftist identification, was more consequential.

In the West the six factor model explained left-right identifications only marginally better than the five factor solution. In the East, on the other hand, the former model was considerably more powerful, increasing the explained variance from 6 to 12%. Apparently, xenophobia and Euroskepticism diverge from each other more in the East than in the West.

Table 9 about here

The contrast of the two groups of countries revealed that religiosity, socialism and xenophobia were more consequential in the West. While the structure of the regression models changed little between 1999 and 2008, in the East the explanatory power of the models declined. The impact of socialism dropped, probably because in the discussed period the left wing parties engaged in austerity measures (Tavits and Letki 2009) and some right wing parties engaged in populist strategies.

In the West the SEM regressions that used the squared form of Euroskepticism (see Appendix, Table A9) performed slightly better than the ones using the original scale (25.4% and 24.9%). In the East such models explained less in 1999 (7.79%) and the same amount in 2008 (4.6%). That is, the claim that Euroskepticism is primarily a left-wing phenomenon applies to the East, while in the West the relationship is more curvilinear. In fact in the West there is a very weak positive correlation between left-right and Euroskepticism (0.05 in 1999 and 0.08 in 2008), but as Table 9 above shows the direction of the relationship changes once one controls for the other attitudes. This confirms that Euroskepticism has two distinct components, a cultural and an economic opposition to liberal Europe. When one controls for xenophobia, therefore, Euroskepticism turns into a leftist force.

The graphs below (Figure 6) show that compared to 1999 the Euroskepticism of the radical

right increased and the center became more pro-EU. In 1999 in the Eastern part of the continent Euroskepticism was an unequivocally left-wing phenomenon. By 2008 the rejection of the EU among leftist citizens subsided, but the overall pattern remained the same because the right (including the radical right) maintained a pro-EU orientation.

Figure 6 about here

Parsimonious models of left-right identification

In the last part of the attitudes-section, we turn to the question whether it is possible to explain left-right identification with more parsimonious models. As we have seen above, the description of the covariations among the original 18 attitude items required either the originally proposed six factors or the five dimensional solutions. If, however, one is ready to lose some of the information on the variance of attitudes, a two dimensional model almost matches the strength of these complex models in explaining left-right identification. This is demonstrated below with the help of a second order factor analysis. The first level was provided by the six dimensions, while at the second level the non-economic factors were united into one general cultural leftism factor. This factor was dominated by permissiveness and secularism, followed by xenophilia and Euroskepticism (Table 10). The weight of environmentalism was marginal. The fact that Euroskepticism is part of the cultural leftist orientation contradicts our expectations, but the analyses above already indicated that this is largely a result of including Eastern European countries into our analysis.

Table 10 about here

The two-factor model performed almost as well as the five-factor model. By 2008 all models lost power compared to 1999 (Table 11).

Table 11 about here

In both waves the impact of economic attitudes on left-right was somewhat higher, but the difference was marginal: the economic and the cultural dimensions were about equally needed to explain self-placement. They were largely orthogonal to each other, and by 2008 their independence increased. The small correlation between cultural and economic leftism was, contrary to expectations, negative. (Table 12).

Table 12 about here

Apparently, it is correct to assume that two dimensions, an economic and a cultural one, provide the fundamental framework of political identification, even if this two-dimensional model cannot capture the internal structure of attitudes.

The contrast of East and West (Table 13, and Appendix, Table A10) proved to be very informative in this regard as well. First, it showed that the orthogonality of the dimensions in the two-dimensional models is to some extent an artifact. In the West cultural and economic leftist orientations correlate positively, albeit very weakly, while in the East there is a more robust negative correlation between the two. The above noted surprising correlation between cultural leftism and economic leftism is in fact an Eastern product (Table 13).

Table 13 about here

These figures reinforce the finding discussed above: the Eastern attitudinal structure has been unraveling between 1999 and 2008, but the difference between the regions remained stark. Apparently, the convergence of economically leftist and culturally traditionalist outlook described by early studies on post-communist party profiles (Kitschelt 1992), remained a structural factor behind mass attitudes even two decades later.

Party choice at country level

Finally, we consider the structure of political space from the point of view of party choice. Given the differences between party systems we need to move from the pooled data-set to the individual countries, and their averages. The six-factor model fit the data only in 16 countries in both waves (and only three Eastern European countries), while the five-factor model could be applied to 25 countries (and to 31 in at least one of the waves)¹³, therefore below we discuss the latter. According to multinomial logistic regressions the five attitudes (socialism, nationalism, environmentalism, progressivism and religiosity) explained about seven percent of the party choice¹⁴ on average, the McFadden Adjusted R^2 was .07 in both 1999 and in 2008. The variance was rather substantial across the individual countries, ranging from 0% in Macedonia, in 2008, to 40% in Malta, in 1999. The figures tended to be higher in the West than

13 The reason for the difference is that earlier the confirmatory factor models were based on covariance matrices, while for party choice the raw data formed the basis of calculations. In the two cases the missing data need to be treated differently.

14 Only parties that received at least 2% of the vote were included.

in the East already in 1999, and the difference between the regions became larger by 2008 as the power of attitudes to explain party choice decreased in the East from five to four percent.

The impact of left-right identification proved to be substantially larger than the influence of attitudes, as indicated by the R^2 -s: .11 (1999) and .12 (2008).

Figure 7 shows how European countries differed from each other in terms of the embeddedness of the party choice in attitudes and in left-right. Most countries are situated in the diagonal, suggesting that where attitudes explain party choice well, left-right also tends to contribute substantially, even after controlling for attitudes. (The Pearson correlation between the impact of attitudes and the net effect of left-right was 0.5 in 1999 and 0.27 in 2008.) The expected trade-off did not materialize.

Figure 7 about here

In the least explained category one finds, together with Ireland, many of the post-communist countries, while Spain, the Netherlands or Czech Republic are in the opposite, embedded cell. Hungary and Poland exemplify those (few) countries where left-right matters but attitudes do not, while the Austrian, Danish and Belgian parties appear as embedded in attitudes, without much added value coming from left-right. Given the changes between 1999 and 2008 we have no firm basis for concluding what makes party systems to be related more to attitudes or left-right, but it seems that, as expected, the tradition of separate subcultures contributes to the former, while the polarization of party politics in the context of a new democracy provides good condition for the latter.

But given that two variables correlate positively, one should rather emphasize that there is a latent 'structuration' factor in European politics. We have noted above that the impact of attitudes on party choice correlates positively with the net influence of left-right on party choice. In fact, these two figures also correlate positively with the impact of attitudes on left-right. The average correlation between the three variables was .73 in 1999 and .58 in 2008. In other words, countries¹⁵ in which left-right is shaped by attitudes happen to be the same countries where both attitudes and left-right shape party choice. These countries can be considered to have highly structured and integrated ideological-political spaces. On the opposite end of this dimension one finds post-communist countries, with some notable exceptions, such as Bulgaria and the Czech Republic (Figure 8).

15 Primarily Nordic (Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands) and Southern (Spain, Italy, Greece) countries.

Figure 8 about here

As far as the role of individual attitudes is concerned, we have noted earlier that left-right was most influenced by economic attitudes, followed by religiosity and by nationalism. Environmentalism was the least relevant attitude in both waves. Table 14 re-confirms these findings, this time at country level.

Table 14 about here

The parallel relationships for party choice are presented in Table 15.

Table 15 about here

According to both η^2 -s of Anova analyses and R^2 -s of regression analyses economic, religious and nationalistic attitudes are important for party choice as well, and environmentalism is relatively inconsequential. But this time religion stands out as the most divisive factor and nationalism and permissive morality have similar weight as economic attitudes. In other words, religiosity is more important for the vote than for ideological identification, while economic attitudes find comparatively weaker expression in party choice. This is contrary to our expectation which was based on the fact that most parties have a clear economic left-right identity, while religion tends to be less central for party discourse. It is also noteworthy that environmentalism has a secondary political relevance not only because it doesn't align closely with left-right, but also because it influences party choice only marginally.

The relative order of attitudes is similar in East and West, but in the latter region all attitudes have a larger impact than in the former. The difference is most pronounced for economic attitudes. Table 15 also shows that between 1999 and 2008 the role of economic attitudes grew in the West, while in the East party choice became even more dominated by religiosity.

Finally, we have examined the complexity of the attitude-party space, with the help of discriminant analyses. Considering only those discriminant functions that explain at least ten percent of the variance one can conclude that in most European countries party choice is best explained by two dimensions. Only one discriminant factor emerged in Spain, Russia and Greece, in 1999, and in Spain, Greece and Croatia, in 2008, and three in Estonia, Luxembourg, Lithuania, Sweden and Slovakia, in 1999, and in Belgium, Great Britain, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia and Sweden, in 2008, but otherwise all countries were characterized by two factors. The Gini-Simpson index (in sociology Gibbs-Martin or Blau index, in party studies Rae's fractionalization index, $1 - \sum s_i^2$ where s is the proportion of each discriminant function) gives a continuous indicator for complexity. Higher values imply complex, multidimensional systems.

The index correlated positively with the effective number of parties (.53 in 1999 and .48 in 2008) and negatively with the impact of left-right on party choice (-.38, n.s. and -.52). These figures indicate that party system fragmentation increases complexity and that the power of left-right to explain party choice is smaller in more complex systems.

The degree of complexity was not related to the influence of particular attitude factors on party choice 1999. In 2008, however, complexity was negatively correlated with the impact of religiosity (-.56) and permissiveness (-.53). The East-West contrast shows that this relationship is due to the patterns prevailing in Eastern countries, where the coefficients were -.64 and -.75. In the West complexity correlates significantly and positively with the weight of environmentalism (.54). Apparently, in the West higher level complexity of party politics goes together with the politicization of environmental issues, while in the East complex systems develop in those countries where the traditional cultural divides play a smaller role.

Conclusions

The analysis of the data showed that the fundamental structure of political attitudes in Europe has been rather stable between 1999 and 2008. It is best describable by either a five- or a six-dimensional model. Fewer dimensions result in major information loss. The traditionalism-permissiveness, secularism-religiosity and nationalism-antinationalism dimensions were relatively closely related to each other, without, however, constituting a unified cultural dimension. Environmentalism was also related to the leftist cultural-ideological package, but only loosely, primarily via its association with anti-nationalism. This latter relationship shows that the postmaterialist left-libertarianism versus anti-postmaterialism elite opposition has some bottom-up support. The convergence between mass attitudes and elite discourse is also indicated by a growing opposition between socialism and nationalism in many Western countries.

On the other hand, the findings revealed that a number of ideological combinations proposed by the elite are shunned by the masses. The negative association prevailing in the party arena between religiosity and environmentalism was completely rejected, and the combination of cultural leftist attitudes (permissiveness, secularism, environmentalism, xenophilia) with pro-state attitudes in economy also failed to trickle down to the voters.

On average Euroskepticism was found to be part of the left-wing cultural orientation, but in the West the curvilinear pattern proved to be more adequate, and we found evidence for an

increasing integration of Euroskepticism into the framework of right wing nationalism. At the same time Euroskepticism, xenophobia and left-right identification formed a peculiar triangle: right wingers tend to be Europhile and xenophobic, in spite of the negative relationship between these two orientations. Therefore, Euroskepticism and xenophobia need to be differentiated, in spite of the high correlation between the two.

Left-right identification was found to be shaped primarily by the socialism-capitalism and the religiosity-secularism dimensions. These two attitudes were joined in 2008 by the xenophobia-xenophilia factor.

The much discussed two-dimensional models materialized in the context of the causal models of left-right identification. To the extent that one regards the significant impact of attitudes on the left-right self-placement as a criterion for their political relevance, one must conclude that the two-dimensional, economic versus culture, framework of politics captures an important aspect of political attitudes, even if not their internal structure.

The analysis revealed a robust East-West divide. We couldn't find a single Eastern country in which the Western pattern of capitalist-religious or capitalist-nationalist ideological combinations would have been replicated. Socialist attitudes combined with environmentalist or permissive orientations also only exceptionally in the East. The reverse correlation of economic and cultural positions in the two parts of the continent was documented at the elite level (e.g. Rohrschneider and Whitefield 2012). The current paper demonstrated that this pattern is reproduced by mass data.

The East has changed more between 1999 and 2008 than the West, but while some Eastern developments, like the decline in the relationship between nationalism and various leftist orientations, brought the two regions closer to each other, others, like the decrease of the impact of economic attitudes on left-right orientation, had the opposite effect. The analyzed six attitudes shaped left-right identification in a similar fashion in the two parts of the continent, but the magnitude of these effects differed considerably. Apparently, Europe possesses a common, left-right, language, but the worldviews of the citizens bind economic and cultural demands strikingly differently in the two parts of the continent.

Party choice proved to be weakly embedded in attitudes, especially in Eastern Europe, but it was more robustly anchored in left-right identification. There was not much trade-off between structuring factors: the impact of attitudes on left-right and on party choice and the impact of left-right on party choice formed one syndrome, separating structured and integrated

ideological-political spaces from inchoate ones. The relative significance of attitudes was similar whether one considered their impact on left-right or on party choice, but the influence of economic attitudes was more consequential for the former, while the impact of religiosity was more relevant for the latter. The relationships between the indicators of the complexity of the attitudinal space of party choice and the impact of specific attitudes indicated that the politicization of environmental issues increased the complexity of party politics in the West, while in the East simple, unidimensional spaces tended to develop in those polities where traditional cultural divides, such as religiosity and permissiveness, prevail.

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