

RUSSELL J. DALTON
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PAUL ALLEN BECK

Electoral Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies

Realignment or Dealignment?



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Electoral
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in Advanced
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Democracies

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This book is dedicated to
JACQUES-RENÉ RABIER
for his invaluable contributions
to comparative social research

CONTENTS

List of Figures	ix
List of Tables	xi
Acknowledgments	xv

ONE:

Introduction

1. **Electoral Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies** 3
RUSSELL J. DALTON, PAUL ALLEN BECK, and SCOTT C. FLANAGAN

TWO:

Frameworks for Analysis

2. **The Changing Structure of Political Cleavages in Western Society** 25
RONALD INGLEHART
3. **Political Remobilization in Welfare States** 70
RISTO SÄNKIAHO

THREE:

Patterns of Realignment

4. **The West German Party System between Two Ages** 104
RUSSELL J. DALTON
5. **The Dynamics of Issue Evolution: The United States** 134
EDWARD G. CARMINES and JAMES A. STIMSON
6. **Electoral Change in Japan: A Study of Secular Realignment** 159
SCOTT C. FLANAGAN
7. **Secular Trends and Partisan Realignment in Italy** 205
SAMUEL H. BARNES

FOUR:	
Patterns of Dealignment	
8. The Dealignment Era in America	240
PAUL ALLEN BECK	
9. And the Walls Came Tumbling Down: Party Dealignment in The Netherlands	267
GALEN IRWIN and KARL DITTRICH	
10. Dealignment and the Dynamics of Partisanship in Britain	298
JAMES E. ALT	
11. Critical Electoral Change in Scandinavia	330
OLE BORRE	
12. Continuity and Change in Spanish Politics	365
PETER MCDONOUGH and ANTONIO LÓPEZ PINA	
FIVE:	
Patterns of Stability	
13. Canada: The Politics of Stable Dealignment	402
LAWRENCE LEDUC	
14. France: The Stalled Electorate	425
MICHAEL S. LEWIS-BECK	
SIX:	
Conclusion	
15. Political Forces and Partisan Change	451
RUSSELL J. DALTON, SCOTT C. FLANAGAN, and PAUL ALLEN BECK	
References	477
Index	505

LIST OF FIGURES

2.1 The Trend in Class Voting in Four Western Democracies, 1948–1983	30
2.2 Economic Issue Positions and Left-Right Self-placement among Western European Publics, 1979	44
2.3 Noneconomic Issue Positions and Left-Right Self-placement among Western European Publics, 1979	45
2.4 Support for Nationalization of Industry and for Developing Nuclear Power among Electorates of Western European Political Parties, 1979	49
2.5 Support for Nationalization of Industry and for Developing Nuclear Power among Candidates to European Parliament, 1979	50
2.6 Correlations between Issue Positions Taken by Candidates of Given Parties, and Social Background Characteristics of Their Electorates	54
3.1 Easton's Model of Political Support	73
4.1 Party Images on the Left-Right Dimension, 1976–1983	116
4.2 Party Images on Cleavage Dimensions, 1976–1980	117
4.3 Old Politics and New Politics Dimensions, 1974–1980	119
4.4 The Placement of Social Classes in the Party Space, 1974–1980	121
4.5 The Placement of Educational Groups in the Party Space, 1974–1980	122
4.6 The Placement of Generations in the Party Space, 1974–1980	123
4.7 The Placement of Education Groups in the Party Space for Prewar and Postwar Generations, 1974–1980	125
5.1 Four Hypothetical Models of Issue Realignment	136
5.2 Mean Party Positions on Government Responsibility for Jobs and Standard of Living: A Reconstructed Time Series	143
5.3 The Decay of Interparty Polarization on the Jobs and Standard of Living Issue	143
5.4 The Desegregation Attitudes of Party Identifiers, 1945–1980	146
5.5 The Growth of Party Differentiation on Desegregation: Actual and Predicted	149
5.6 Growing Party Differentiation on Desegregation: Congress and the Mass Electorate	150
5.A Reconstructed Partisans by Reported Identification: A Panel Analysis	156

5.B Party Identifier Desegregation Attitudes in Cross Sections and by Reconstruction	157
6.1 A Path Analysis of Japanese Voting Behavior, 1976	177
6.2 Dimensions of Political Conflict in Japan, 1976	181
8.1 Partisanship of the American Electorate, 1952–1980	243
9.1 Mean Placement of Parties on Left-Right Scale, 1968–1982	273
9.2 Vote Switchers between KVP and Other Parties, 1967–1977	278
9.3 Vote Switchers between CDA and Other Parties, 1977	279
9.4 Vote Switchers between PvdA and Other Parties, 1967–1977	280
9.5 Vote Switchers between VVD and Other Parties, 1967–1977	281
9.6 Vote Switchers between D'66 and Other Parties, 1967–1977	282
9.7 Percentage of Switching Voters, 1948–1982	288
10.1 Decline of Partisan Strength in Britain, 1964–1979	301
10.2 Beliefs of Labour Party Identifiers, 1964–1979	307
11.1 Electoral Strength of Social Democratic and Communist Parties in Scandinavia, 1947–1981	335
11.2 Relationship between Change in Support for the Norwegian Labor Party and Left-Wing Parties, 1953–1981	337
11.3 Electoral Strength of Scandinavian Conservative Parties, 1947–1981	340
11.4 Electoral Strength of Scandinavian Liberal Center Parties, 1947–1981	342
11.5 Change in the Social Democratic Vote and Party Identification in the Danish Election Surveys, 1971–1979	349
11.6 Trend in the Index of Class Voting in the Scandinavian Countries, 1955–1979	352
12.1 Selected Social and Political Indicators by Age, 1980	374
12.2 AID Analysis of the Determinants of Orientations toward Franco, 1978	380
12.3 AID Analysis of the Determinants of Orientations toward the Suárez Government, 1978	381
12.4 THAID Analysis of Partisan Preferences, 1980	384
13.1 Stability and Change in the 1979–1980 Elections	416
14.1 Party Identifiers, 1948–1981	432
14.2 The Distribution of Left-Right Ideology among the French Electorate, 1973, 1978, 1981	441

LIST OF TABLES

1.1 Fractionalization of Democratic Party Systems, 1955–1975	9
1.2 Volatility of Democratic Party Systems, 1948–1977	10
2.1 Factor Analysis of Issue Positions of Candidates to the European Parliament	35
2.2 Correlation between Left-Right Self-placement and Position on Specific Issues among Western Elites and Publics, 1979	39
2.3 Factor Analysis of Issue Preferences and Left-Right Self-placement of Western Publics, 1979	41
2.4 Economic Development and Support for the Classic Economic Policies of the Left among Publics of European Community Countries, 1981	47
2.5 Correlation between Issue Positions of Candidates of a Given Party and Positions Taken by Electorate of That Party, 1979	52
2.6 Correlation between Policies Supported by Candidates of a Given Party and Characteristics of That Party's Electorate	55
2.7 Factor Analysis of Left-Right Group Sympathies and Establishment/Antiestablishment Attitudes in Eight Nations	60
2.8 Electoral Cleavages Based on Social Class, Religious Practice, and Personal Values, 1973–1979	64
2.9 Left-Right Self-placement According to Social Class, Religious Practice, and Personal Values, 1973–1979	65
2.10 Support for Social Change by Social Class, Religious Practice, and Personal Values, 1976–1979	66
2.11 Electoral Cleavages Based on Social Class, Religious Practice, and Personal Values, 1976–1979	67
3.1 The Establishment-Antiestablishment Dimension in Six Nations	79
3.2 The Distribution of Ideology Types	80
3.3 Political Alienation by Establishment Categories	81
3.4 Political Efficacy by Establishment Categories	82
3.5 Political Action by Establishment Categories	83
3.6 Ideological Thinking by Establishment Categories	85
3.7 Postmaterialist Values by Establishment Categories	86
3.8 Issue Orientations by Establishment Categories	88
3.9 Regression Analysis of the Establishment Dimension	89
4.1 Principal Components Analysis of Issue Saliency, 1961–1983	110
4.2 The Distribution of Value Priorities, 1970–1982	111
4.3 Issue Orientations by Social Groups, 1961–1983	113
4.4 The Strength of Partisanship, 1972–1983	126

4.5 Class Voting Differences, 1953–1983	127
4.6 Generational Voting Differences, 1953–1983	128
4.7 Class Voting Indices by Generation, 1953–1983	129
5.1 The Evolution of Interparty Differences on Desegregation: A Dynamic Growth Model of Issue Realignment	148
6.1 Vote by Party in the Postwar Japanese House of Representatives Elections, 1946–1980	161
6.2 Party Vote Shares in High and Low Density Prefectures, 1980	168
6.3 Party Support by Occupational Environment, 1976	169
6.4 Party Support by Community Integration, 1976	173
6.5 Party Support by Value Preferences, 1976	176
6.6 Index of Class Overrepresentation by Party Support, 1976	183
6.7 Party Cleavages on Ideology, Demographics, and Community Integration, 1976	185
6.8 Party Cleavages on Value Preferences, 1976	189
6.9 Party Cleavages on Five Issue Dimensions, 1976	190
6.10 Changes in the Percentages of Nonidentifiers and LDP Supporters, 1955–1981	196
6.11 A Comparison of Party Identification and Vote Discrepancies in the Late 1950s and 1970s	198
7.1 Popular Vote Shares for the Chamber of Deputies Elections, 1946–1983	213
7.2 Partisan Preferences in the Italian Electorate, 1968–1981	215
7.3 Strength of Party Attachments, 1968–1981	216
7.4 Pattern of Vote Switching, 1972, 1975, 1979	219
7.5 Partisan Preference and Partisan Stability, 1972	221
7.6 Leftist Party Preferences among Cohorts of First Voters, 1968– 1981	224
7.7 Partisan Preference and Support for Radical Social Change, 1972–1981	227
8.1 Stability in Party Identification, 1950s versus 1970s	244
8.2 Patterns of Partisan Change, 1950s versus 1970s	246
8.3 Partisanship by Age Cohort, 1952–1980	248
8.4 Patterns of Partisan Change by Age Cohort, 1950s versus 1970s	251
8.5 Home Partisan Environment, Education, and Young-Adult Partisanship	256
8.6 Transmission of Partisanship from Parent to Child, 1965	258
8.7 Partisan Change from Adolescence to Adulthood, 1965–1973	260
8.8 Antiparty Feeling among Young Adults and Their Parents, 1973	262
9.1 Popular Vote Shares for the Dutch Parliamentary Elections, 1946–1982	269

9.2 Percentages of Voters Who Express an Identification with Their Party, 1967–1982	285
9.3 Timing of the Vote Decision, 1971–1982	286
9.4 Timing of the 1971 Vote Decision and the Stability of the Vote, 1967–1977	287
9.5 Number of Preferences for Party (Panel Study, 1971–1977)	290
9.6 Number of Times Preferring D'66 by 1977 Vote Choice	291
9.7 Vote Preferences of Youngest Voters, 1971–1982	294
9.8 Indicators of Party Attachment by Vote Cohort, 1982	295
10.1 Expectations for the British Economy, October 1974	314
10.2 Expect Worse Off for Family, February 1974	315
10.3 Sorry Britain Is in Common Market, February 1974	317
10.4 Retrospective Evaluations of Performance, February 1974	319
10.5 Seven-Point Party Identification, June 1970	320
10.6 Seven-Point Party Identification, February 1974	322
10.7 Seven-Point Party Identification, October 1974	324
10.8 Predicted and Actual Dealignment in 1970 and 1974	327
11.1 The Scandinavian Parties Arranged into Partisan Blocs	333
11.2 Exchange of Social Democratic Votes with Left-Wing and Bourgeois Votes in the Scandinavian Countries, 1950–1979	338
11.3 Exchange of Conservative Votes with Liberal Center and Socialist Votes in the Scandinavian Countries, 1950–1979	343
11.4 Change in the Socialist Vote across Election Periods in the Scandinavian Countries, 1950–1968 and 1965–1979	345
11.5 Distribution of Party Identification in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden	347
11.6 Exchange among Danish Party Identifiers, 1971–1979	351
11.7 Age, Social Class, and Socialist Voting in Sweden, 1976	353
11.8 Issue Voting on Left-Right Items Appearing in Several Surveys in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, 1960–1979	357
11.9 Issue Voting on the EEC Issue in Norway, 1969–1977	360
11.A Support for Four Partisan Blocs in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden at Parliamentary Elections, 1947–1979	363
11.B Party Identifiers, Vote Defectors, and Nonidentifying Voters of the Five Largest Parties in Denmark, 1971–1979	364
12.1 Summary Results from Second and Third Spanish General Elections, 1979–1982	366
12.2 Government Performance and Popularity of Political Leaders by Recognition of Left-Right Scale, 1978 and 1980	372
12.3 Correlations between Four Indicators of Cleavages, 1980	376
12.4 Factor Analysis of Franco and Suárez Government Evaluations, 1978 and 1980	378
12.5 Distribution of Partisanship among Final THAID Groups, 1980	385

12.6 Turnover Matrix of Partisan Identification, 1978–1980	386
12.7 Party Identification by Economic Situation in 1978 and Political Situation in 1980	389
13.1 Attributes of Partisanship in Canada as Measured by Three National Samples, 1974–1980	405
13.2 Multiple Regression Analysis of Canadian Voting Behavior, 1980 Federal Election	408
13.3 Voting Behavior of New Voters in the 1974, 1979, and 1980 Federal Elections	412
13.4 Selected Characteristics of Party Identification in Canada by Age Cohorts, 1980	413
13.5 Voting Behavior of Transient Voters in the 1974, 1979, and 1980 Federal Elections	415
13.6 Electoral Turnover, 1974–1979	418
13.7 Electoral Turnover, 1979–1980	418
13.8 Party Identification and Voting Behavior, Turnover in Three Elections, 1974, 1979, and 1980	421
14.1 French Legislative Election Results, 1958–1981	427
14.2 Social Class and Vote Intention, 1978	435
14.3 The Correlation of Traditional Factors with Vote Intention, 1958–1981	436
14.4 Religion and Vote Intention, 1978	437
14.5 The Distribution of Left-Right Ideology among the French Electorate, 1946–1981	440
14.6 Ideology and Vote Intention, 1978	442

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We see two lessons to be learned from this volume. First, the past decade has been a period of dramatic political change in most democratic party systems. New issues have come to the fore, traditional party coalitions are disappearing, and mass politics has shed all pretenses that the future holds an end to ideological conflict.

This volume developed from a 1979 conference at Florida State University concerning electoral changes in the industrialized democracies. At the conference, the contributors to this volume first began to describe the changes now transforming these political systems. We were impressed by the similarity of our findings, even though we initially approached the topic from different perspectives. While the changes had unique expressions in each system, they nonetheless have enough in common to require truly comparative explanations. Indeed, these parallels led us to document the political changes now affecting advanced industrial democracies and to evaluate the causes and consequences in a more systematic fashion.

The continuing discussions and revisions that followed this conference refined our understanding of the processes of partisan change, although we readily admit that our knowledge is still incomplete. However, during this period we had a haunting concern that these phenomena were the temporary manifestations of a passing age of affluence; many scholars have, of course, argued this point. But as the volume progressed, the pace of political change intensified—two new Dutch elections, a Socialist victory in France, a premature election in West Germany, and the emergence of new parties in Britain (SDP), West Germany (the Greens), and Finland and Austria (ecologists). As editors, we have learned the true meaning of the Chinese proverb “May you live in interesting times.”

The second lesson of this volume is a statement on the discipline of political science and comparative politics. Almost every contributor to this book is affiliated with a national election study team in his respective country of specialization. This means that the contributors bring a wealth of electoral and survey data to bear on the questions of this volume. More important, this volume stands as a tribute to the development of a truly international community of political scientists. Although we occasionally differed in theoretical interests or in the interpretation of data, we share a common scientific language and method that enables us to discuss and evaluate these theories in a comparative framework.

Numerous debts have been accumulated in the years of compiling this volume. Of course, our greatest debt is to the individual chapter authors for

their outstanding contributions. We also would like to thank Florida State University, especially Dean Warren Mazek, of the College of Social Sciences, and Monte Palmer, Chairman of the Department of Political Science, for the financial support of the initial conference. Innumerable colleagues commented on various portions of the manuscript, and we want them to know their suggestions were appreciated. Russell Dalton would like to acknowledge the research fellowship of the Fulbright Commission in West Germany, which provided support for the initial drafting of several chapters. Scott Flanagan received generous support for his work from the National Science Foundation and the Bunko Hosono Foundation. Paul Allen Beck's work was supported by the Policy Sciences Program at Florida State University. The continued support of the Department of Political Science at Florida State University, especially the assistance of Susanne Miles and Betty Messer, was essential to the completion of the book. We are grateful to Suzanne Parker for her careful work in preparing the index.

After considering numerous drafts, revisions, and editorial suggestions, it is impossible to separate the unique contribution of each editor. All three of us share equally in the substantive and intellectual efforts of this book, and each has carefully reviewed the entire volume.

RJD
SCF
PAB

*Tallahassee,
Florida*

ONE
Introduction

1.

Electoral Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies

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The First Waves of Change took many by surprise. Postwar economic recovery had ushered in unprecedented prosperity in the industrialized democracies. Many of the basic economic problems that historically plagued societies seemed on the verge of resolution. Theorists linked this dawning age of affluence to an era of consensual politics and an end to ideology (Bell, 1960; Lane, 1965; Lipset, 1964). However, student protests and political demonstrations in the 1960s challenged these views. The equal rights movements, Vietnam War, and environmental protection efforts combined to produce over a decade of unrest in American politics. The May Revolts in France brought students and intellectuals to the barricades, and the government to the brink of collapse. In Germany, the universities emptied in support of antiwar marches and social reform. The stability of postwar Japanese politics was jolted by student protests and citizen movements. Ethnic and regional conflicts intensified in Britain, Belgium, and Spain. Everywhere democracy seemed to be in crisis (Huntington, 1974; Crozier et al., 1975; Dahl, 1970; Habermas, 1973). Among virtually all the nations represented in this volume, the political unrest of the mid-sixties and early seventies stood in marked contrast to the halcyon politics of a decade earlier.

Student demonstrations and political protests were visible and violent indicators of political change. They were the leading edge of broader and deeper changes that have been occurring in advanced industrial democracies. Evidence of these changes emerges from the schools, the workplace, the home—and the political system. The era of stability that seemed to be dawning less than two decades ago was quickly convulsed by massive changes in almost all areas of political life.

One area involves the issues of popular concern (Inglehart, 1977; Baker et al., 1981: Chaps. 6 and 11). Industrial societies aimed at providing affluence

and economic security. The success of advanced industrialism has fulfilled many basic economic needs for a sizable sector of the population. Thus concerns are shifting to new societal goals. Several of these new issues are common to advanced industrial democracies: social equality, environmental protection, the dangers of nuclear energy, sexual equality, and human rights. In some instances, historical conditions focused these general concerns on specific national problems; for example, racial equality in the United States or ethnolinguistic conflicts in Belgium, Canada, Spain, and Great Britain. However, all of these issues have been loosely integrated into a new political agenda, an agenda which has stimulated new political conflict over the past two decades.

Another broad area of change involves the style of politics (Barnes, Kaase et al., 1979). Greater public participation in economic and political decision-making has become an important social goal. This development is closely tied to the spread of protest, citizen action groups, and unconventional political participation during this period; but it involves more. Citizens are less likely to be passive subjects and more likely to insist on being participants in the decisions that affect their lives (Dalton, forthcoming, Chaps. 2-4).

While political change and social unrest now may be less visible than during the late 1960s, the process of change is continuing. The war in Vietnam is over, but protests over nuclear energy, women's rights, environmental quality, and disarmament are still with us. Moreover, attitudinal data indicate that many of the liberalizing trends begun in the 1960s have continued through the 1970s, even if their behavioral manifestations have decreased, or become less newsworthy (Yankelovitch, 1974; Inglehart, 1981).

In addition, the 1970s and early 1980s increasingly have witnessed the emergence of a conservative counterattack around the issues raised by the New Left during the 1960s (Lipset, 1981b). A new morality has given rise to a new set of conservative social issues, and in response a New Right has surfaced in many countries to reassert traditional values as reflected in the movements against abortion, equal rights for women, gay rights, and life-style issues. In some countries, the New Right has mounted counter-socialization campaigns aimed at insulating the young from the new morality through the growth of private church schools and the censorship of public libraries. Many nations have witnessed mass assaults on the welfare state, usually through movements to reduce spending and taxation.

What is new about the New Left and New Right is not only the issues that define their policy priorities but also the kinds of alignments and coalitions they are forging within national electorates (Ladd with Hadley, 1975; Miller and Levitin, 1976). The New Left has drawn disproportionate support from the new middle class, while the New Right has attracted various blue-collar and previously apolitical Fundamentalists. Moreover, the New Right is not simply antiliberal in the traditional sense, as one of its primary appeals has

been a reassertion of individualism and self-initiative in its fight against big government and bureaucratic regulations. Indeed, the New Right combines some of the elements of classical liberalism as exemplified by the antitax movements, efforts to limit (or reduce) the size of government, and attempts to return power to local levels of government that are more susceptible to citizen control.

Even as recession weakened the economies of the industrialized nations in the early 1980s and economic issues again dominated the political agendas, the traditional coalitions of the industrial political order failed to reemerge. Unprecedented postwar unemployment in the United States, Germany, and Britain, for example, has not heightened dramatically the class basis of politics. It seems that several decades of prosperity have altered the social structure of these societies, protecting most citizens from the worst ravages of unemployment and increasing the size of the middle class. That a return to the old issues has not reproduced the Old Politics provides even more compelling confirmation of the proposition that change is the dominant feature of advanced industrial politics.

While the initial shock waves of change that were set in motion in the 1960s have passed, the process of change is continuing. Furthermore, time is needed for these processes to run their course. It is too early to tell whether a new Left and Right will replace the old Left and Right in most advanced industrial societies. And if so, what realignments in electorates and party systems will such changes entail? Further distance will be necessary to place the events of the last two decades in their proper perspective. One intent of this research is to assemble the material necessary to begin such an evaluation.

The theme of this volume is that fundamental changes are taking place in democratic political systems. Postwar generations reared in this new environment are bringing new concerns and skills to bear on the political process. These developments are introducing new tensions into democratic party systems. As a result, stable party alignments are fragmenting, and the traditional sociopsychological bonds between voters and parties are weakening. We admit at the outset that we cannot provide a simple prediction of what the future holds. Indeed, the chapters in this volume describe the rich variety of national responses to these forces of change. The unique institutional and political circumstances of each system should be expected to redirect these forces and adapt them to the national context. We will, however, search for a common pattern behind these trends and discuss the possible outcomes for democratic party systems.

THE SOURCES OF CHANGE

Over the past generation, most of the nations in this volume reached at least the threshold of advanced industrialism. The social and economic changes

involved in this transition often were of revolutionary proportions. In economics, for example, living standards rose to an unprecedented level of affluence. This growth was most dramatic in Italy, Germany, and Japan, where over the past twenty-five years (1953 to 1978) Gross Domestic Product per capita grew in real terms by 235, 265, and 595 percent, respectively (International Monetary Fund, 1979). In most Western democracies, contemporary income levels are two to four times greater than at any time in prewar history. Recent economic problems have slowed—but not reversed—this pattern. Affluence still exists, now tempered by slower growth rates.

Concomitant with increasing affluence was a restructuring of the labor force. The farming sector virtually disappeared in most Western democracies, and the industrial sector remained stable or declined. With advanced industrialism came a marked shift in the labor force to the service sector. Several of the nations in this volume already have passed Daniel Bell's threshold for post-industrialism—half of the labor force employed in the tertiary sector (Bell, 1973; International Labour Organization, 1981). In addition, because of the expansion of national and local governments, public employment now constitutes a significant share of the labor force in most of these nations.

Advanced industrialism is associated not only with changes in the relative size of the three principal industrial sectors, but also with changes in the context of the workplace and the residential neighborhood (Dahl and Tufté, 1973; Verba et al., 1978; Steiner et al., 1980). The continuing decline of rural populations and the expanding size of metropolitan centers stimulated changes in life expectations and life-styles. Urbanization meant a growing separation of the home from the workplace, a greater diversity of occupations and interests, an expanded range of career opportunities, and more geographic and social mobility. With these trends came changes in the forms of organization and interaction. Communal forms of organization were replaced by voluntary associations, which, in turn, became less institutionalized and more spontaneous in organization. These changes reflect the fact that communities are less bounded, that individuals are involved in increasingly complex and competing social networks that divide their loyalties, and that interpersonal and institutional attachments are becoming more fluid. Finally, this weakening of institutional loyalties and traditional social networks is associated with the undermining of traditional values and a growing volatility in political behavior.

These economic and social changes were joined by an expansion of educational opportunities. Throughout the Western world, there has been a steady growth in compulsory education and a virtual explosion in university training. For example, over half of all American doctorates awarded in this century were earned in the past ten years. Similarly, over the past twenty-five years the proportion of the population attending colleges and universities increased by 347 percent in the United States, 472 percent in Britain, 503 percent in Germany, 815 percent in Sweden, 429 percent in Japan, and by almost equally

high rates in most other industrial democracies (Taylor and Jodice, 1983). More educational opportunities mean a growth in political skills and resources, producing the most sophisticated electorates in the history of democracies. And even this education level will look paltry in comparison to electorates in the year 2000.

These increases in education and information-handling skills were accompanied by a parallel increase in information resources. The growth of the electronic media—especially television—was exceptional. Other information sources, such as book and journal publications, also increased. Even more revolutionary was the growth of electronic information processing—that is, computers, information retrieval and storage systems, word processing, and related technological innovations. More computers were produced in 1981 than in all previous years combined. Information is no longer a scarce commodity. The contemporary information problem is how to manage an ever-growing volume of complex and sophisticated knowledge. Moreover, new ideas are now diffused much more rapidly throughout mass publics, and as a result, new mass movements can emerge from obscurity to widespread popularity almost overnight.

Thus the transformation of Western democratic societies is due to more than simply the politics of affluence. Indeed, if it were not, this book might be dated by the slowdown in economic growth rates since the OPEC oil shocks in the 1970s and the world recession of the 1980s. Changes in the occupational and social structure are altering life conditions and life-styles. The expanding political skills and resources of the electorate are changing political processes. And even though economic growth rates have slowed, the living standards of advanced industrial societies are still far better than a generation ago. Recent discussions of the politics of scarcity and economic decline are both premature and too narrow in addressing the changes that democratic societies are experiencing. The social, cultural, and economic trends of advanced industrialism have not regressed to prewar standards. Contemporary electorates remain fundamentally different from their predecessors.¹

EVIDENCE OF PARTISAN CHANGE

Until recently, the prevailing theme in comparative party research was the persistence of democratic party systems. In addition to Lipset and Rokkan's treatise on the freezing of cleavage alignments, the empirical studies of Rose and Urwin concluded that the major question facing researchers was to explain

¹ A number of analysts have predicted a dire economic future for industrial democracies. This would spell a fundamental reversal in the trends we have described if the prognostications become true (see Meadows et al., 1972; Forrester, 1971).

the observed stability in democratic party systems (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967, Rose and Urwin, 1969, 1970)

Clearly, something has changed dramatically in the last decade. The parties are being presented with new demands and new challenges. Partisan change—rather than partisan stability—is a common pattern in virtually all of the nations examined here. This volume will focus on documenting and explaining these changes.

A major factor in the destabilization of democratic party systems was the initial inability or unwillingness of the major established parties to respond fully to the new demands being placed upon them. First, the agenda of advanced industrial politics is still evolving, and the political payoffs of adopting specific issue positions have been unclear. Second, since contemporary political leaders were schooled in the earlier era, they are less responsive to new and unfamiliar demands. In addition, many of these new issues cut across the traditional lines of party alignment. Thus the larger parties often are internally divided on these issues (Inglehart, this volume Chap. 2, Berger, 1979, Baker et al., 1981 Chap. 12). Caution might be advisable in this situation. However, this caution introduces new tensions into these party systems.

The immediate result of these trends is a *decomposition* of electoral alignments in many Western nations. Parties are fragmenting, and the social and psychological bonds that traditionally link voters to specific parties are weakening—party systems have entered a period of flux (Daalder and Marr, 1983). For example, in some instances smaller parties—like the PSU in France and the Center party in Sweden—have altered their positions to reflect changing political conditions. In other cases, new parties have formed specifically to represent new political perspectives. Such parties include the D'66 in The Netherlands, Glistrup's tax party in Denmark, the Radicals in Italy, the recent ecologist parties in France and Germany, and the Australian Democrats. In still other cases, a large proportion of the electorate has turned away from the entire party system, leading to a dealignment in Britain and the United States.

This decomposition of democratic party systems can be documented in several ways. One aspect of decomposition involves the fractionalization of modern party systems. Until recently, researchers argued that democratic party systems were gradually evolving toward large "catch-all" parties that would stabilize and unify the party system (Kirchheimer, 1966). Data on the fractionalization of party votes find just the opposite (Table 1.1).² Between 1955

² The fractionalization scores are based on the party vote shares for the election closest to the time points given in Table 1.1. Fractionalization is computed as

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

TABLE 1.1
 Fractionalization of Democratic Party Systems, 1955–1975

Country	1955	1965	1975	1965–1975 Change
United Kingdom	.536	.588	.683	+.095
Japan	.750	.671	.761	+.090
France	.836	.755	.840	+.085
Denmark	.737	.763	.827	+.064
Norway	.714	.743	.805	+.062
Luxembourg	.676	.717	.769	+.052
Belgium	.674	.748	.797	+.049
United States	.494	.478	.518	+.040
Finland	.798	.808	.836	+.028
Sweden	.703	.708	.723	+.015
Switzerland	.786	.822	.835	+.013
Ireland	.646	.632	.643	+.011
Spain	—	—	.784	—
Austria	.597	.581	.567	–.014
Canada	.663	.699	.673	–.026
Germany	.697	.610	.583	–.027
Italy	.759	.758	.718	–.040
Netherlands	.765	.838	.749	–.089
Period average	.695	.701	.725 ^a	

SOURCES: Fractionalization of vote shares data for 1965 and 1975 are from Taylor and Jodice (1983); 1955 data were compiled by the authors.

^a Period average for 1975 does not include Spain.

and 1965, party fractionalization is relatively constant for the nations examined in this volume, with increases in some nations balancing decreases in other nations. Beginning in the mid-sixties, the cumulative impact of social, economic, and political trends stimulates the introduction of new parties and the breakup of established parties. Consequently, the fractionalization of party vote shares increases between 1965 and 1975 for all but five of the nations we study.

Another indicator of decomposition is the volatility of the party system; that is, fluctuations in voting results between elections. As old cleavages weaken and new concerns arise, interelection volatility should increase. Mogens Pedersen has documented the growth of aggregate party volatility during the past three decades (Table 1.2).³ The immediate postwar years were a time

These data are drawn from Taylor and Jodice (1983), except for the 1955 time point, which was computed by the authors. For additional discussion of increasing fractionalization, see Mayer (1980), Wolinetz (1981).

³ Most data are drawn from Pedersen (1979b), except for Canada, Japan, Luxembourg and

TABLE 1.2
Volatility of Democratic Party Systems, 1948–1977

<i>Country</i>	<i>1948–1959</i>	<i>1960–1969</i>	<i>1970–1977</i>	<i>1960–1970 Change</i>
Norway	3.4	5.2	17.1	11.9
Denmark	5.5	8.9	18.7	9.8
Netherlands	6.3	7.9	12.7	4.8
Luxembourg	14.3	11.4	16.0	4.6
United Kingdom	4.4	5.2	7.9	2.7
Switzerland	1.9	3.7	6.4	2.7
Sweden	4.8	4.3	6.6	2.3
Finland	4.4	6.9	9.1	2.1
United States	2.5	2.9	3.2	0.3
Austria	4.1	3.9	3.1	–0.8
Japan	37.4	7.1	6.1	–1.0
Italy	10.3	8.0	6.8	–1.2
France	21.8	11.9	10.6	–1.3
Ireland	10.9	6.8	5.0	–1.8
West Germany	15.2	9.5	4.9	–4.6
Belgium	7.9	10.3	5.5	–4.8
Canada	9.0	14.8	8.1	–6.7
Period average	9.7	7.6	8.7	

SOURCES: Canada, Luxembourg, the United States, and Japan compiled by the authors; other nations are from Pedersen (1979b).

of substantial partisan volatility, largely due to party instability in the newly formed party systems of West Germany, Japan, and Italy. Interelection shifts in aggregate party support for all fourteen nations average 9.7 percent during this period. In the 1960s, party alignments stabilized, and party volatility decreased to 7.6 percent. This trend reverses in the 1970s as new issues challenge the existing party alignments, and party volatility increases to an average 8.7 percent change between elections. Moreover, these aggregate measures of party change undoubtedly underestimate the individual changes occurring within the electorate.⁴

the United States, which were computed by the authors. Partisan volatility is the sum of the vote share for new parties plus the percentage gained by parties that increased their vote share since the last election.

⁴ One problem with Pedersen's volatility index is that it measures partisan change at the aggregate level, and this cannot be used to infer the stability of individual partisan preferences. Most individual level data indicate substantially higher, and increasing, levels of partisan volatility (DeVries and Tarrance, 1972; Petersson, 1978; Barnes, this volume: Chap. 7; Crewe et al., 1977). Even in the West German case where aggregate party volatility is decreasing, individual voter volatility is increasing (Conradt, 1981: 130).

Half of our nations thus display a general pattern of increasing party volatility over the postwar period, but even the clearest deviations from this trend—Germany, Japan, Italy, and France—are notable exceptions. These nations instituted a democratic party system *de novo* following the collapse of wartime authoritarian regimes. In these cases, the postwar period was one of (re)instituting and stabilizing a democratic party system. However, the chapters in this volume will document the impact of advanced industrialism even in these nations.

The aforementioned tables thus provide convincing evidence of the general decomposition of contemporary party systems. We cannot say how long these trends will continue, nor where they will lead. It is clear, however, that party fractionalization and volatility have increased. In addition, these data underscore the importance of unique national conditions in determining the course of party change. Parties, and entire party systems, may follow different courses in responding to advanced industrial politics. In one nation, parties might split on new issues, leading to increased fractionalization. In another nation, the parties may adopt ambiguous or flexible positions on the new issues, leading to greater volatility between election results. On the whole, these two dimensions of party system change are only weakly interrelated ($r = .26$). Thus, although the cumulative effects of advanced industrialism might provide the stimulus for partisan decomposition, the chapters in this volume describe how the unique institutional and political factors of each nation channel and direct these electoral forces.

A TYPOLOGY OF ELECTORAL PERIODS

In describing the changes occurring in democratic party systems, the chapters in this volume frequently will rely on a typology derived from American electoral behavior. We distinguish between three general types of electoral periods—stable alignments, realignments, and dealignments. All three focus on the long-term bases of party support and are differentiated by the condition of party loyalties.

The “normal” electoral period is one of *stable alignments*, marked by a constancy in party coalitions and aggregate partisan equilibrium (Campbell, 1966; Pomper, 1967). This surely does not imply complete stagnancy in the party system. Even in a time of unchanging partisan balance, the electorate is in a state of flux. What is different about periods of stability is that the coalitional basis of long-term support for the respective parties remains unaltered. Interelection differences represent only momentary defections from enduring partisan loyalties. These periods are thus conceptualized most appropriately as eras of dynamic equilibrium.

Ever since the publication of *The American Voter*, the long-term party loyalties producing a stable alignment in American politics are defined as

psychological identifications with a particular political party (Campbell et al., 1960; Converse, 1976). These loyalties are seen as analogous to religious or class identifications in their durability and meaning. Periods of electoral stability could be measured in terms of these underlying partisan attachments. For example, in spite of large Republican presidential victories in 1952 and 1956 in the United States, identifications with the two major parties were highly stable throughout the 1950s.

In the wake of its success in explaining American electoral behavior, the party identification index, and (often only implicitly) its conceptual underpinnings, was exported to other party systems as a measure of enduring partisan loyalties. Almost from the beginning the American import seemed out of place.⁵ The independence from vote that justified a separate concept of enduring partisan loyalties in America was more difficult to find in other political systems. Rather, partisanship and vote seemed to travel together. Changes in voting patterns were relatively rare, but when they did occur, party loyalties often were altered to bring them into line. Furthermore, a close relationship was found between social group (especially religion and class) and party in other nations, leading investigators to question whether party loyalty was an independent force.

The idiosyncrasies of American electoral politics probably lie behind the difficulties encountered in applying American conceptions of party loyalty to other democracies. What is challenged by the non-American results is the concept of party loyalty as a psychological identification with a party, not the idea of a standing partisan decision. The notion that party loyalties exist that reflect an enduring preference for a particular party and its candidates is widely accepted in comparative research (Budge and Farlie, 1977; Budge et al., 1976; Rose, 1974). What apparently differ are the reasons for party loyalty. In non-American settings, we often find that standing partisan commitments are explained by the social coalitions underlying party support. W. Phillips Shively argues that when strong social group identifications are matched by clear party positions on social cleavage issues, as they are in most European systems, then there is less need for voters to develop a party identification (Shively, 1972). In the United States, by contrast, partisan loyalties often develop an existence independent of their roots.

In sum, party loyalties may reflect a sense of party identification or the party cues derived from social characteristics. When these long-term partisan commitments are widespread and relatively constant at both the aggregate and individual levels, we shall refer to this as a stable alignment period.

⁵ Differences in the meaning of partisanship for non-American electorates were first reported in Campbell and Valen (1966), and Butler and Stokes (1974). Several chapters in Budge et al (1976) have developed more fully the case against party identification. For a somewhat different view of partisanship outside of the United States, see Baker et al (1981 Chap 8), and Can and Ferejohn (1981)

The previous section has shown that democratic systems are in a state of flux. Stable alignments are weakening, as is witnessed by the increasing volatility and fragmentation of these party systems. One interpretation of this trend is that it marks a temporary surge in short-term forces that are already beginning to recede. This scenario argues that partisan alignments will re-stabilize as these short-term forces recede, with few significant changes from the previous cleavage structure. However, if structural changes in industrialized societies are the driving force behind the recent decomposition of electoral alignments, then this cannot be considered a short-term force and the possibility of more fundamental partisan change exists.

One potential pattern of change is for electoral systems to experience a *partisan realignment*. A realignment may be defined as a significant shift in the group bases of party coalitions, and usually in the distribution of popular support among the parties as a result.⁶ For example, the New Deal realignment in the United States is traced to, among other things, the entry of large numbers of blue-collar workers, Catholics, and blacks into the Democratic party coalition. In short, a realignment is a time during which the composition of party coalitions undergoes significant change, with many people who earlier would have been unaffiliated, or loyalists of one party, now affiliate with another.

Realignments have been a regular feature of American electoral politics for well over a century and probably since the emergence of the first mass party coalitions around 1800 (Clubb et al., 1980; Sundquist, 1973). Similar historical realignments have occurred in European party systems (Butler and Stokes, 1974: 155–210; Robertson, 1976; Rose, 1974). However, the concept of partisan realignment can be traced to V. O. Key's work in the 1950s (Key, 1955, 1959). Key's examination of changing aggregate voting patterns uncovered two types of realignment in American electoral history. He distinguished between critical realignments caused by sharp massive partisan changes and slower evolving secular realignments. Key's work has been extended and refined by a number of authors. For example, sophisticated cohort analyses indicate that the shift in the overall balance of partisan loyalties in the 1930s was based primarily on the mobilization of new voters, rather than the conversion of voters with established party commitments (Campbell et al., 1960: 153–156; Andersen, 1979; Petrocik, 1981; cf. Erikson and Tedin, 1981). In addition, the pace of realignment (secular/critical) apparently depends on the nature of the realigning issue conflicts and the response of political elites.

⁶ Different definitions of realignment in the research literature make the concept somewhat unclear. Our definition is the conventional one and possesses the virtue of conceptualizing electoral change in terms of the underlying party loyalties of the electorate, thereby separating the phenomenon to be explained from its causes and its effects. For a discussion of the various definitions of realignment and a defense of the definition we use, see Petrocik (1981). Additional discussions of the meaning of realignment may be found in Campbell and Trilling (1979).

Several of the authors in this volume will apply these concepts to determine whether contemporary party systems are undergoing a realignment process.

A second pattern of possible electoral change is a *dealignment*. Strictly speaking, a dealignment is a period during which the party-affiliated portion of the electorate shrinks as the traditional party coalitions dissolve. Dealignment initially was considered to be a preliminary step in a realignment process—the weakening of old party loyalties to facilitate a new party alignment. Ronald Inglehart and Avram Hochstein were the first analysts to treat the decay as a separate phenomenon in describing the decline of American party identification in the late 1960s (Inglehart and Hochstein, 1972). Since their seminal article, party loyalties have continued to decay, leaving the American electorate significantly less partisan by the late 1970s than it was in the 1950s.

With the development of the dealignment-type to characterize a period of weakening party loyalties has come the recognition that dealignment, like realignment, may be a regular feature of electoral politics (Beck, 1979; Burnham, 1970, 1978). But dealignment is difficult to detect without measures of partisanship at the individual level. Voting data record only vote choices, leaving little record of the underlying partisan loyalties that may (or may not) have guided them. Still, American voting records contain circumstantial evidence of partisan decay prior to each realignment since the 1850s. Prerealignment politics has been characterized by large interelection vote fluctuations, unusually successful minor party movements, and declines in turnout. Each of these phenomena is circumstantial evidence of the decay in partisan loyalties that defines a dealignment. When coupled with survey-based evidence of weak partisanship within the electorates of the 1920s and 1970s, the case for dealignment as a distinct electoral period is strengthened. Several of the case studies in this volume note a similar pattern in other democratic party systems.

Dealignment and realignment are employed to describe processes of change, but they also may be used to characterize end states. We may speak of an electorate as dealigned or realigned to refer to the culmination of a change. For example, the American electorate of the 1950s was realigned relative to that of the 1920s as a result of the New Deal realignment. Or, the contemporary American electorate is dealigned relative to that of the 1950s, even if the process of partisan decay has ended. Extending the typology to embrace end states is especially useful for comparative analysis, because it enables us to contrast party systems in terms of the role played by partisan commitments (see Särilvik and Crewe, 1983).

How well can a typology of electoral periods—stable alignments, realignments, and dealignments—derived largely from American politics characterize partisan politics in other democratic nations? At first blush, generalizations from the American electoral experience would seem limited. Among the nations examined in this volume, the United States may well be the “most different system,” especially where electoral politics is concerned. For in-

stance, because of the American two-party system, American theorists tend to equate a realignment in voting patterns with a clear shift in government control. However, in a multiparty system the linkage between voting patterns and government control is more tenuous (King, 1981; Downs, 1957). Voters in a multiparty system can shift their support among parties of the same *tendance*, without affecting control of the government (although government policy might be clearly affected). Similarly, government control might change because of the coalition decisions of party elites, independent of the voters' wishes to reward or punish specific parties. For example, in The Netherlands, citizens normally do not know the likely coalition patterns among the parties until after they vote.

These and other institutional peculiarities of the United States should caution us about the unique context of American theorizing—especially in terms of the linkage between mass and elite change. However, our realignment/dealignment typology is used solely to describe partisan change among the mass public. The typology only requires that voters structure their decisions more or less in terms of enduring partisan loyalties. The concept of standing partisan commitments—either party identification or social group ties—is meaningful in modern democracies. Indeed, over-time continuity in voting patterns throughout the democratic world suggests that standing, rather than *ad hoc*, decisions are the norm. Whenever and wherever it is meaningful to speak of enduring partisan loyalties, our typology may be employed. Whether these loyalties are stable, changing, or in decline will determine the characteristics of electoral politics.

ADVANCED INDUSTRIALISM AND PARTISAN CHANGE

At the present time, it is difficult to predict whether democratic party systems will move toward realignment, dealignment, or a return to previous cleavage alignments. The chapters in this volume each contribute a fresh perspective on the problem. And in the concluding chapter we will try to draw together this evidence to speak with more conviction about the patterns of change. However, as an introduction we can examine briefly the causal processes that may translate the general trends in advanced industrial nations into more specific partisan changes. Previous research has postulated several theories that may provide a linkage mechanism:

Embourgeoisement

An early explanation of the political changes of modern electorates was based on economic factors. Dramatically increasing prosperity presumably produces a considerable overlap in the income and life-styles of the middle class and working class. European workers generally are not struggling to maintain subsistence incomes. They spend Saturdays washing their cars and

Sundays driving into the countryside—clearly not the makings of a Marxian class struggle. With this narrowing of objective class differences, John Goldthorpe argued that a moderation of political conflict would occur as the affluent sector of the working class assumed the values of their middle-class life-styles (Goldthorpe et al., 1968).

This thesis is often linked to the development of advanced industrialism and represents a “consensual” or “middle mass” model of politics. In apparent support of the *embourgeoisement* thesis, extensive research evidence suggests that class voting differences are declining in most democracies (Ladd with Hadley, 1975; Lipset, 1981a; Kemp, 1978; Borre, this volume: Chap. 11; Dalton, this volume: Chap. 4).

Social Mobility Thesis

A related theory explains the decline in class voting as a function of social and occupational mobility rather than the homogenizing effects of affluence. Virtually all of the nations in this volume experienced a decline of the agrarian sector and a more recent rise in the nonmanual service sector. In some nations, dramatic changes in the size of these sectors have occurred within a few short decades. Growing social mobility means that a child’s ultimate social placement is increasingly different from his/her parents. For instance, many farmers’ children who had conservative political upbringings have moved into unionized, leftist, working-class contexts in the cities, while many working-class children from urban, leftist backgrounds have moved into conservative, white-collar occupations (Stephens, 1981: 175; Hamilton, 1967).

These forces of urbanization and occupational mobility are blurring traditional class and economic alignments. Some socially mobile individuals will change their adult class identifications to conform to their new contexts, while others will not. To the extent that individuals adhere to their early political training, class voting will decline. Moreover, as Baker, Dalton, and Hildebrandt point out, the growth of the new middle class further obscures class lines (Baker et al., 1981; Kerr, forthcoming). The new middle class is in an ambiguous economic position. On the one hand, it is relatively affluent, but on the other, it shares some of the same problems as the working class and increasingly seeks security in unionization. This ambiguous class role has contributed to the decline in class voting in many advanced industrial societies. Thus social and occupational mobility also are weakening traditional class alignments.

Mass Society Thesis

A third theory of political change stresses the atomization of society, which accompanies advanced industrialism (Kornhauser, 1959). The rapid socio-economic changes of the past decades presumably have eroded traditional group and institutional networks. The growth of the new middle class, for

example, produced a large social stratum that is integrated into neither the bourgeois nor proletarian institutional structures. Geographic, social, and structural mobility have increased, and this has weakened primary group ties. The rapid expansion of the mass media has enticed the citizen away from personal networks for political information.

These changes have been associated with the decline of institutional affiliations and loyalties. For example, in many advanced industrial societies the church and unions have been very important mobilizers of support for the Right and Left, respectively. There is abundant evidence from The Netherlands, Italy, and elsewhere that church attachments and church attendance are declining, and with them the ability of church organizations to mobilize support for confessional parties (Barnes, this volume: Chap. 7; Irwin and Dittrich, this volume: Chap. 9). At the same time, in many countries the church has retreated from active involvement in politics. The same phenomenon can be found among unions. Studies from both Western Europe and Japan have pointed to a weakening attachment to labor unions. The sense of belonging to a movement, the feeling of class solidarity, the dependence upon unions, and the commitment to unions all have decreased (Korpi, 1978a). Moreover, at least in some countries, traditional union-party attachments also have weakened.⁷ These forces of deconfessionalization, depillarization, and declining institutional loyalties are associated with partisan dealignment.

In short, a traditional political style based on primary networks such as family, the village, the union, or the local church has become less relevant as these ties have eroded. This atomization of the individual should introduce considerable instability and volatility into the political system. Without the stabilizing framework of group ties, these newly independent voters are open to a variety of appeals and may be mobilized for a variety of causes.

Community Integration

A fourth approach focuses on the character of community settings. The social networks and contextual effects literature argue that individuals are likely to adopt the political views of those around them. Beginning with the early American voting studies of Lazarsfeld and his associates, researchers found that small groups tend toward partisan homogeneity and small group opinion leaders are important in transmitting political cues and increasing group uniformity in voting choices (Lazarsfeld et al., 1944; Berelson et al., 1954; Burstein, 1976; Wright, 1977). This model argues that important

⁷ In the Japanese case, for example, the largest national union federation, Sohyo, increasingly has taken a neutral position on party endorsements, as the Socialist party's monopoly on support from Sohyo's constituent unions was broken and the Communist party and other progressive parties won the support of the various affiliated unions. In addition, while Sohyo is the oldest, largest, and most militant union, other more moderate and even politically neutral national federations have grown up over the last two decades.

political cues are derived from face-to-face contacts with family, friends, neighbors, and work colleagues. The contextual effects literature further assumes that these social networks are structured largely by class, ethnic, religious, and other social cleavages. Thus the more homogeneous the community social group context, the more effective will be communal group norms in influencing political attitudes, including partisan attachments.

Advanced industrial societies are associated with high levels of urbanization and residential mobility, which produce a decline in community homogeneity and solidarity. The result has been an attenuation of the impact of residential context on voting decisions. For instance, the decline of community in Japan is directly associated with a decrease in support for the conservative LDP, while the same phenomena are associated with a decrease in support for the Socialist party in Sweden (Flanagan, this volume: Chap. 6; Stephens, 1981). In both cases, as communities became increasingly heterogeneous and transient, their capacity to mobilize votes for the dominant party weakened. In some cases, the community's associational networks assumed politically neutral positions to avoid offending elements in a more heterogeneous community. In other instances, social networks became less effective in integrating a growing number of new and socially diverse residents into the mainstream of community opinion. Therefore, changes in the character and composition of community settings are associated with a decline in the clarity of social and partisan alignments. Thus the theory predicts that as the partisan cues emanating from a voter's residential community become weaker and less clearly defined, political volatility should increase.

Cognitive Mobilization

A fifth approach to contemporary political change focuses on the qualitative increase in the political sophistication of the mass public (Allardt, 1968). Modern society has produced a tremendous expansion of secondary and higher education, as well as a diffusion of greater quantities of political information through the media, especially the electronic media. This, in turn, raised the political resources and cognitive skills of large segments of national populations.

With this new level of political sophistication, mass democracy might reach the open, participatory, individualistic style that Rousseau, Locke, Tocqueville, and other philosophers considered essential to the preservation of democracy. For instance, sophisticated and well-informed voters need not depend on social cues or party identification to make their voting decisions; they can make their own decisions based on the issues and candidate positions (Shively, 1979; Borre and Katz, 1973; Dalton, 1984). Political activity is not limited to "elite-mobilized" participation such as campaign or party activity. With more developed political skills, citizens can initiate and focus activism through "elite-challenging" participation. The result is a weakening of traditional political structures and a shift in the style of political participation.

Cognitive mobilization, then, means that some voters have less functional need for party or social group attachments, and hence those attachments are weakening. On the other hand, this phenomenon also means that some previously unpoliticized and unmobilized constituents can be reached more effectively by political information and brought into the political process. This potential for expanding the politicized portion of the electorate is particularly evident in cases where the electronic media and computer mailings are used to target and mobilize previously apolitical constituents around new issues and movements. While the first type of voter is dealigned and not likely to develop an enduring partisan attachment, the second type presents political elites with a sizable pool of previously marginal participants that may become aligned with a party. Either of these processes, the weakening of old party ties or the mobilization of new attachments, may produce electoral change. And both phenomena seemingly are related to a growing plethora of single-issue movements and parties—from a women's liberation party in Japan, to an environmental party in Germany, to the right-to-life movement in the United States.

Aging Party System

A much different view of contemporary political change suggests a "life-cycle" approach to party systems (Clubb et al., 1980; Beck, this volume: Chap. 8). Allegiances to the present party systems often were born from the traumatic socialization experiences of the 1930s and 1940s, or the even earlier partisan contests as suffrage was being extended. With the passage of time, party systems may begin to "age." Some constituent elements of a party's support base may become alienated as its policy promises and slogans are enacted in government programs that fail to provide the expected solutions to group problems. The issues that initially structured party conflict may lose relevance over time, as these issues are resolved or new ones come to the fore. New voters in particular are likely to find little meaning in the old appeals that defined a party's support base. Paul Beck argues that there is often a cyclical pattern to the life of party systems, based on socialization experiences (Beck, 1974).

This perspective suggests that the political changes of the past decades represent the strains of aging. A revitalization or realignment of these party systems would adjust them to contemporary political realities. Thus we may not be witnessing a revolutionary change in democratic politics, only a reoccurring "biological" process.

Value Change

A final approach to the study of electoral change posits a link between advanced industrialism and the values of the mass public. Basic value priorities presumably reflect the childhood environment when these values are first socialized, and they tend to persist through the life cycle. Thus the tremendous

postwar changes in personal and societal conditions may be altering the value priorities of the mass public.

Ronald Inglehart argues that the citizenries of industrial democracies are experiencing a shift from materialist to postmaterialist values (Inglehart, 1977, 1979a). Older generations who often experienced economic need or insecurity during their formative years maintain a relatively high priority for materialist, or Old Politics, values such as economic gains, domestic order, and social and military security. Postwar generations have been reared during a period of unprecedented affluence, economic well-being, and personal security. Consequently, many young people apparently are reaching a saturation level in regard to basic economic needs, and are shifting their attention toward post-material, or New Politics, goals.

Scott Flanagan has conceptualized the process of value change in somewhat different terms—as a decline in respect for authority, conformity, religiosity, and the work ethic (Flanagan, 1982a, 1982b). In place of these more traditional values, he finds a growing emphasis on values that are instrumental for securing the goal of self-actualization—self-assertiveness, nonconformity, openness to new ideas, equality, the pursuit of leisure activities, a better quality of life, and a tolerance for a variety of life-styles.

Regardless of how it is conceptualized, a process of value change clearly is occurring. Evidence of generational changes in value priorities is available for almost twenty industrial democracies—including most of those studied in this volume (Inglehart, 1981). New Politics values also are commonly found among other social groups identified with advanced industrial politics: the new middle class and the better-educated. To the extent that these value concerns gain in salience relative to Old Politics concerns, the emerging New Politics value cleavage potentially can restructure contemporary party politics.

Each of the aforementioned models contributes to our understanding of the political changes occurring in industrial democracies. But each model also has its weaknesses. For example, the *embourgeoisement* model sees the working class as the major source of political change. In fact, advanced industrial politics appears linked primarily to change within the middle class. The decline of class voting, for example, is due mostly to the increasing liberalism of the middle class (Baker et al., 1981: Chap. 7; Ladd with Hadley, 1975: Chaps. 5–6; Kemp, 1978; Lipset, 1981a). Similarly, the universities—not the unions—are the institutional home of recent protest movements; the conservative Ivy League, Oxbridge, and Grandes Ecoles of the 1930s have become the anti-establishment bastions of the 1970s.

The social mobility, mass society, community integration, cognitive mobilization, and aging theses also are compatible with many of the trends discussed in this volume. However, a weakness of all these models is that they offer no direction for the politics of advanced industrialism. Old patterns will break down, but there is no suggestion of what new patterns might develop

in their place. These theories are compatible with the rise of protest movements and political activism in the past two decades, but they fail to explain the similarities in the issues of protest across several nations. The observed commonalities between nations were a stimulus for this volume. Thus these theories need to be integrated into a larger model of political change.

We believe that the significance and influence of advanced industrialism is not based on any one of these processes, but upon the effect of several reinforcing sources of change. Historical transformations in political systems are very infrequent experiences. Only when several forces overlap—as they do with advanced industrialism—can fundamental political change occur (Tofler, 1980). Thus only by combining several of the theories described previously can we accurately model the process leading to advanced industrial politics.

The process begins with the weakening of traditional political alignments, following either the social mobility, mass society, community integration, or the aging party systems thesis. These eroding cleavages mean that many social groups are open to new political appeals and might be mobilized by new issues or a new ideology. If the parties can capture these new issues or ideologies, the widespread partisan mobilization of a realignment may result. Dealignment represents the absence, however temporary, of channeling partisan directions. The growth of these newly “independent” voters is naturally greatest among the groups identified with advanced industrialism: the young, the new middle class, and the highly educated. The postmaterialist values of these same groups provide them with new goals for citizen action.

At the same time, the values and societal goals that these groups represent have created a new set of issue cleavages. Groups that feel threatened by the direction in which the New Left agenda is moving society are beginning to organize and formulate counter-ideologies around which a New Right may take shape. As a result, the Old Politics, structured largely on class cleavages, is being replaced by a New Politics based on a new set of societal cleavages—the new middle class versus the old middle class; affluent, skilled, blue-collar workers versus a poor, unskilled, and largely unemployable social substratum; the public sector versus the private sector; the young versus the old; traditional values versus the new morality; the technocrats versus the exponents of direct democracy (increased popular control). These cleavages are crosscutting, and hence it is difficult to predict from our present perspective how they may cumulate and what types of political changes they may stimulate. However, in several of the studies in this volume we can already witness ongoing partisan changes, even if the end states of those processes are still somewhat obscure.

Finally, the processes of political change involve more than simply exchanging one set of issues and cleavage alignments for a new set. A fundamental change in social relations also is involved. Citizen direction of social and political life signifies a basic change in the role of the mass public and

in the distribution of political power between masses and elites. Until recently, such a broadening of decision-making was probably unworkable, even if political elites would have tried. However, the revolutionary growth in cognitive mobilization is broadening the potential for citizen action. In addition, new technologies are increasing the potential for assessing mass preferences and perhaps more importantly are vastly expanding the capabilities of rising political elites to identify and mobilize new issue constituencies. Consequently, some citizen groups on both the Left and Right have struck out in new directions. A process of political change has begun.

OVERVIEW

The remainder of this book is organized into five sections. The first section is comprised of two broad theoretical chapters that describe various aspects of the trends and processes that are taking place in advanced industrial societies. The following three sections are composed of single-nation case studies. These have been grouped according to whether the predominant process under investigation can be described as one of realignment, dealignment, or stable alignment. The processes of realignment and dealignment are not mutually exclusive, but generally a single process tends to dominate, which allows for an initial classification of cases. Each section is prefaced by an introduction that identifies the major themes developed in the section and compares and contrasts its constituent studies. The concluding section in the volume draws upon the findings of the various case studies and attempts to place them in a more coherent theoretical framework.

TWO
Frameworks
for Analysis

2.

The Changing Structure of Political Cleavages in Western Society

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The cleavage structures underlying politics in Western nations have changed profoundly during the past two decades. As a result, the textbook definitions of “Left” and “Right” (or, in the American context, of “liberal” and “conservative”) are only partly valid today.

Political cleavages are relatively stable patterns of polarization, in which given groups support given policies or parties, while other groups support opposing policies or parties. For almost a generation, the nature of (1) the groups and (2) the policy issues aligned with Left and Right have been changing.

In the classic model of industrial society, political polarization was a direct reflection of social class conflict. The working class was considered the natural base of support for the Left—that is, of support for change in an egalitarian direction. And the key issue underlying the Left-Right polarization was conflict over ownership of the means of production and the distribution of income.

As industrializing society gives way to advanced industrial society, there is a growing tendency for politics to polarize along a new dimension that cuts across this conventional Left-Right axis. Increasingly, support for social change comes from a postmaterialist base, largely middle class in origin. This group has raised a new set of issues that tend to dominate the contemporary political agenda.

Today many of the most controversial issues and the most important po-

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litical movements polarize along a materialist-postmaterialist dimension. The environmentalist movement, the opposition to nuclear power, the peace movement, the women's movement, the limits to growth movement, the consumer advocacy movement—all are manifestations of conflict over an issue dimension that is only loosely related to conflict over ownership of the means of production and to traditional social class conflict. The fact that these movements have taken the center of the stage in contemporary politics reflects a long-term shift in the value priorities of Western publics (Inglehart, 1977, 1981).

Thus far, this new axis of polarization has had only a limited impact on voting behavior. Long-established political party loyalties, reinforced by party organizations and institutional linkages with labor unions and churches, are highly resistant to change. People continue to vote for the parties prevailing in their milieu, which their parents or even grandparents may have supported. To a considerable degree, Lipset and Rokkan (1967) were correct in speaking of a "freezing of party alignments" dating back to the era when modern, mass-party systems were established. Although deep-rooted political party alignments continue to shape voting behavior in many countries, they no longer reflect the forces most likely to mobilize people to become politically active. Today the new axis of conflict is more apt to stimulate active protest and support for change than is the class-based axis that became institutionalized decades ago.

This disparity between traditional political party alignments and the dynamics of contemporary issue-polarization places existing party systems under chronic stress. For extended periods of time, the traditional party systems may appear to be in business as usual—until suddenly, a basic restructuring occurs. Sometimes the change manifests itself in the emergence of new political parties, as in The Netherlands or Italy. But the capture of long-established parties by new elites is an even more promising avenue to success, for major political parties represent great psychological and institutional investments; established voting patterns are not lightly discarded. At the same time, this inertia means that party alignments can lag behind social change until the major ideological cleavage cuts squarely across established party spaces. When this happens, the alternatives are realignment or dealignment: the parties must either reorient themselves or risk being split—or suffer a gradual erosion of partisan loyalties. In many Western nations, from Great Britain and West Germany to the United States, that situation prevails.

FROM CLASS-BASED TO VALUE-BASED POLITICAL POLARIZATION

The idea that politics is a struggle between rich and poor can be traced back to Plato. But unquestionably, the most influential modern version of this idea has been Karl Marx's argument that throughout industrial society, social

class conflict is inevitably the central fact of political life. Marx's influence is reflected not only in a vast literature of social criticism, but also in the existence of an entire family of political parties that were inspired by his writings and, in varying degrees, purport to be guided by his analysis today.

The idea that politics in industrial societies is a class struggle has received strong support in the findings of empirical social research. Thus in his classic and immensely influential work, *Political Man*, Seymour Martin Lipset (1960: 223–224) concludes, “The most important single fact about political party support is that in virtually every economically developed country the lower income groups vote mainly for the parties of the Left, while the higher income groups vote mainly for the parties of the Right.”

In another influential study based on data from four English-speaking democracies, Robert Alford (1963) found that in virtually every available survey, manual workers were more likely to vote for parties of the Left than nonmanual workers. Calculating a “class voting index” (obtained by subtracting the percentage of nonmanual respondents voting for the Left from the percentage of manual respondents voting for the Left), Alford found a mean index of +16 for the United States, and one of +40 for Great Britain.

More recent empirical analyses have demonstrated that religion is also a major factor, but confirmed that social class is one of the most powerful bases of political cleavage, towering above other variables, when it is not dominated by ethnic cleavages such as religion, language, or race (see e.g., Rose and Urwin, 1969; Lijphart, 1971, 1979; Rose, 1974).

Nevertheless, there were grounds for believing that a paramount role for social class voting might not be an immutable fact of political life. Campbell et al. (1960) argued that class voting in the United States, to a considerable extent, reflected a cohort effect. It was most pronounced among the generation that came of age during the Great Depression, and weaker among both older and younger groups. They speculated that class voting may vary inversely with prosperity, with substantial time lags due to cohort effects.

The present author (1971, 1977) carried this line of reasoning farther, presenting evidence of a pervasive intergenerational shift from materialist to postmaterialist value priorities among the publics of advanced industrial society. The postmaterialist outlook is linked with having spent one's formative years in conditions of economic and physical security. Hence, throughout Western society, it is far more prevalent among the postwar generation than among older cohorts, and tends to be concentrated among the more prosperous strata of any given age group.

The political implications are significant and at first seem paradoxical. Postmaterialists give priority to such goals as a sense of community and the nonmaterial quality of life, but they live in societies that have traditionally emphasized economic gains above all. Though they tend to come from the most privileged and economically most favored strata of society, they tend

to be relatively dissatisfied with the kind of society in which they live and relatively favorable to social change. Though recruited from the higher-income groups that have traditionally supported the parties of the Right, they themselves tend to support the parties of the Left when they become politically engaged.

Conversely, when postmaterialist issues (such as environmentalism, the women's movement, unilateral disarmament, opposition to nuclear power) become central, they may stimulate a materialist reaction in which much of the working class sides with the Right to reaffirm the traditional materialist emphasis on economic growth, military security, and domestic law and order.

The rise of postmaterialist issues, therefore, tends to neutralize political polarization based on social class. Though long-established party loyalties and institutional ties link the working class to the Left and the middle class to the Right, the social basis of *new* support for the parties and policies of the Left tends to come disproportionately from middle-class sources. But at the same time, the Left parties become vulnerable to a potential split between their postmaterialist Left, intensely engaged by new issues, and their traditional materialist constituency.

In 1972, this phenomenon temporarily shattered the Democratic party in the United States. In 1981, it contributed to a possibly more permanent division of the British Left, split between a Labour party that had been captured by a neo-Marxist and neutralist left wing, and a new Social Democratic party that won over much of the party's mass constituency. Throughout the past decade, a somewhat similar cleavage has threatened to split the German Social Democratic party, torn between a postmaterialist "Young Socialist" wing and the labor-oriented main body.

Though the postmaterialist left was unable to take over the Social Democratic party, it did succeed in launching "Green" or environmentalist parties that had, by 1982, won seats in six of the eleven West German state parliaments. More important, the postmaterialist Left threatened to eliminate the Free Democrats from the federal parliament and take over their role as the party holding the balance of power at the national level. The postmaterialist basis or support for the environmentalist parties in Germany and France has been demonstrated by Buerklin (1981), Muller-Rommel (1982), and Fietkau et al. (forthcoming).

In multiparty systems with straight proportional representation, the viability of new parties is greater than in the countries just discussed. Hence in The Netherlands, Scandinavia, and Italy, this phenomenon gave rise even earlier to small but influential postmaterialist parties (Lijphart, 1981). Leftist in policy orientation, their social base is largely middle class.

After a lull in the middle 1970s, West European politics again shows widespread political upheaval. And despite the economic difficulties of the present period, postmaterialist issues continue to play a major role. Through-

out the Western world, the most massive political demonstrations that have taken place in recent years have *not* been directed against unemployment or declining real income—on the contrary, the largest and most intense ones have been aimed at preventing the construction of nuclear power plants, highways, airports, military installations, hydroelectric dams, and other projects that might reduce unemployment. Now, as earlier, labor is concerned with unemployment, wages, and inflation, but political activism continues to reflect mainly postmaterialist concerns. Recent economic uncertainty seems to have slowed the growth of postmaterialism in Western Europe but has not stopped it. A postmaterialist value-type was more widespread at the end of the 1970s than at the start of that decade, and had shifted from being predominantly a student phenomenon, to being an important influence among elites (Inglehart, 1981, 1983).

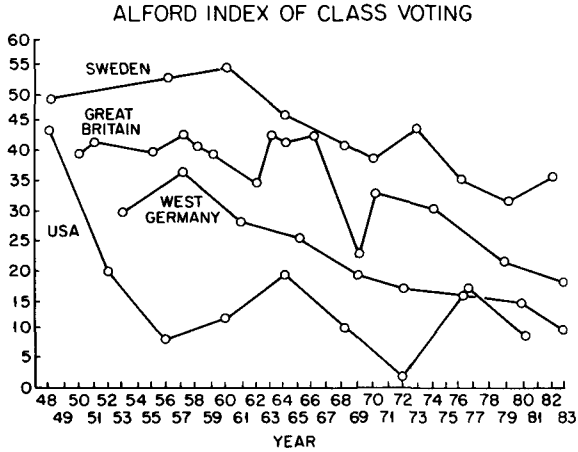
Our hypotheses concerning the emergence of a postmaterialist Left imply a long-term decline in social class voting. Has it taken place?

Alford (1963: 226) examined this possibility himself and concluded, “There had been no substantial shift in the class bases of American politics since the 1930s, despite the prosperity since World War II and despite the shifts to the Right during the Eisenhower era.”

Alford seems to have been correct in his interpretation of the evidence he examined; indeed, social class voting in the United States actually *rose* during the period he dealt with, reaching a peak about 1948 as the generation of the New Deal matured. But more recent studies by Glenn (1973), Abramson (1975, 1978), Books and Reynolds (1975), Inglehart (1977), Baker, Dalton, and Hildebrandt (1981), and Stephens (1981) support the conclusion that during the past few decades there has been a secular decline in social class voting, not only in the United States but throughout the Western world.

This tendency is probabilistic, not deterministic. A variety of factors affect the voters' choice—among them, long-term party loyalties (sometimes transmitted from one generation to the next), religious and other group ties, the personalities of given candidates, the relative positions of the various parties on key issues, and the current economic situation. These factors can cause large fluctuations in class voting from one election to the next within a given nation, and help account for wide variations in class voting between countries. But a growing body of evidence points to the conclusion that underlying these fluctuations and cross-national differences, a long-term decline in class voting has taken place during the past thirty years. Thus in the revised edition of *Political Man*, Lipset (1981a) updates his own earlier conclusions about social class voting with a chapter that sums up several of the findings just cited. His graph, which I updated, is shown in Figure 2.1. The fluctuations we see in Figure 2.1 are sometimes dramatic, but the downward trend is unmistakable and seems to have continued into the 1970s, despite the economic setbacks of that decade.

FIGURE 2.1 The Trend in Class Voting in Four Western Democracies, 1948–1983^a



SOURCE: Inglehart (1983).

NOTE: Table entries are Alford indices of class voting

As Figure 2.1 demonstrates, class voting in the United States fell almost to zero in 1972, when the McGovernites captured the Democratic presidential nomination, mobilizing the postmaterialist constituency effectively, but also bringing a massive desertion of working-class voters. Many of the latter returned to their traditional party allegiances, under a centrist candidate in 1976. Still, class voting in the United States remains low—and even this modest level largely reflects its persistence among older voters: among the youngest American age cohorts, it is close to zero (Abramson, 1978). West European data show a similar pattern suggesting gradual decline, linked with generational differences. For the European community as a whole between 1976 and 1979, the class voting index for those more than fifty-four years old was +24; for those aged eighteen to thirty-four, it was only +15.

Class voting has declined. However, to grasp the implications of this phenomenon, we need to know *why* it has taken place. Does it reflect an inter-generational value change of the type we have hypothesized? If so, we can anticipate that it will continue, as younger, relatively postmaterialist age groups replace the oldest, most materialist-oriented age cohorts in the electorate. Or is the phenomenon a direct reflection of current economic conditions? In this case, we would expect a reversal of the downward trend in the present era, and a possible return to the politics of social class conflict that characterized the 1930s and 1940s.

These are part of a set of questions that will be addressed in this chapter, for the decline of social class voting is only one aspect of a broader trans-

formation of political polarization. And in some ways, class voting patterns give an *understated* impression of what has been going on. For voting behavior is shaped, to a considerable extent, by an internalized sense of political party identification in given individuals, and by institutional ties between given parties and given social networks, such as labor union or church. Insofar as this is true, voting behavior has a good deal of inertia; it does not necessarily respond to current conditions, but may continue to reflect old alignments long after the circumstances that gave rise to them have changed. Other indicators of political polarization may reflect the dynamics of contemporary politics more directly.

For example, one of the standard questions in the Euro-Barometer surveys, sponsored by the European communities, asks whether the respondent favors revolutionary political change, gradual reform, or defense of the established order. One can use responses to this item to measure social class polarization by examining the differences between the responses of those with manual and nonmanual occupations.

Because this item does not require the respondent to indicate a political party preference, it is less constrained by the influence of long-term political party loyalties than is the Alford index—and should reflect the decline (or rise) of social class polarization more immediately than does the latter. In an era of declining class polarization, this item should show smaller social class differences than those linked with party preference; in times of sharply rising social class conflict, it should show *more* class polarization than the Alford index.

We will also use the respondent's self-placement on a Left-Right ideological scale as an indicator of political polarization. Previous research has demonstrated that this measure reflects a partisanship component, as well as an ideological component (Inglehart and Klingemann, 1976). Some respondents place themselves at a given point on this scale because that is where the party they support is conventionally located; placing oneself on the Left (or the Center, or Right) is more or less a surrogate for party identification. For these people, Left-Right self-placement would have much the same inertia as party identification itself.

For many respondents, however, this scale taps one's overall ideological position: it seems to be a summary measure of one's stand on the most important current political issues. Insofar as this is true, our hypotheses imply that the political meaning of "Left" and "Right" (or of liberal and conservative, in the American sense) has been changing. With the rise of new issues, identification with the "Left" increasingly would come to connote support for new causes such as environmentalism, with a diminishing tendency to evoke the classic issues such as nationalization of industry. Similarly, self-placement on the Left would have a declining linkage with working-class status.

To some observers, this prospect seems almost inconceivable. Commenting on a surprisingly weak observed correlation between Left-Right self-placement and social class, Budge, Crewe, and Farlie (1976: 135) argue, "In our opinion the absence of a class influence on the Left-Right continuum is somewhat surprising and must raise doubts about its validity. For if the working class are not substantially located to the Left and the middle class to the Right, what meaning does the continuum have?"

If we define the Left as that portion of the spectrum supported by the working class, then this finding does, of course, invalidate Left-Right self-placement. But this is a circular and rather fruitless definition of the Left-Right dimension. If, as we argue, this dimension is a summary measure of one's overall ideological position—based on the issues that are most salient at a given time—then the relationship between the Left or Right and any given social group is an empirical question, and one that is subject to change over time. In West Germany, the sudden rise of new political movements has made the question "Is the meaning of Left and Right changing?" a subject of more than academic interest (Murphy et al., 1982; Klingemann, 1982; Buerklin, 1982). We will present evidence that the Left-Right ideological dimension *does* tend to assimilate whatever issues are most salient—and that its meaning has, to a surprising degree, already shifted to reflect the New Politics dimension.

The two key hypotheses underlying this chapter can be summarized as follows:

1. *An Issues Polarization hypothesis:* A new issues dimension has attained a salience that now approaches that of the economic issues dimension that traditionally has been considered *the* basis of political polarization. The former dimension has arisen so recently that it has not yet been assimilated into one overarching Left-Right dimension. By contrast, the clerical/anticlerical split *has* largely become assimilated to a Left-Right partisanship dimension; in the long run, this may also happen to the new noneconomic issues dimension. However, since the issues underlying this dimension have *not* yet been resolved or institutionalized, they now constitute a more potent source of discontent and support for change than does the conventional Left-Right dimension.
2. *A Group Polarization hypothesis:* Closely linked with the rise of a new issues dimension has been the rise of a new axis of group polarization, alongside the familiar working class-middle class polarization. The growing salience of both this group polarization axis and the new issues dimension reflects a shift in the value priorities of Western peoples.

The sources of these structural changes can be traced on two levels: at the individual level, the emergence of a politically active and articulate post-materialist minority has had a major impact on both the issue agenda and the

group basis of politics in Western nations. Placing greater importance on the social and aesthetic quality of life than on economic and physical security, the postmaterialists have emphasized new issues (such as environmentalism) or brought a new perspective to ageless ones (such as military expenditures). Not only are the postmaterialists themselves more apt to respond to these issues than to the classic labor-versus-management issues, but by bringing them to the center of the stage, they have sometimes engendered a materialist reaction. This reaction mobilizes segments of the working class, as well as the traditional middle class, in defense of materialist values—and in opposition to proposed social change. Though a minority, the postmaterialists now tend to control the issue agenda, and their impact tends to reshape patterns of group polarization.

At the societal level, these shifts can be viewed as a logical response to changing circumstances. Economic issues are less urgent at a high level of economic development than at a low one. Economic growth is almost necessarily given priority by poor societies, once it is realized that it is possible to attain, and can bring an end to starvation. But at a high level of development, economic growth may no longer be a means to avoid hunger, but a means to provide the average family with a second car. This goal not only has less urgency, but may introduce elements of noise, pollution, and crowding that can become counterproductive to the maximization of human utilities.

At both individual and societal levels, there tend to be significant time lags between economic change and its political consequences—which is why the New Politics began to emerge a number of years *after* the various postwar economic miracles. At the individual level, political change is linked with the process of intergenerational population replacement. Postmaterialism began to have a major impact only when the postwar generation reached a politically relevant age in the late 1960s. At the societal level, political change theoretically could take place rather quickly—except that it tends to be retarded by social networks and institutional ties that can be highly resistant to change.

Political party identification, in particular, tends to resist changes in established political patterns, influencing an individual to remain loyal to whatever party he/she supported in the past, and even whatever party his/her parents supported. Hence if social class voting was strong in the past but has been weakened by relatively recent factors, it will be preserved most strongly among those who have relatively strong loyalties to established parties. Conversely, the impact of postmaterialism will be greatest on those political orientations that are least strongly linked with established party loyalties.

TWO FACES OF LEFT AND RIGHT

Our first hypothesis is that a new dimension of political conflict has become increasingly salient, reflecting a polarization between materialist and post-

materialist issue preferences. In order to test this hypothesis, let us examine how Western elites and publics polarize in response to a battery of thirteen items included in surveys carried out in all nine nations belonging to the European community in spring 1979. Surveys were conducted simultaneously with: (1) representative national samples of the publics of each nation (as part of the Euro-Barometer surveys) and (2) a sample of 742 candidates running for seats in the European Parliament. The latter sample should give a reasonably good indication of the issue preferences of West European political elites. It includes politicians belonging to all of the important political parties in all nine nations. In social background, these respondents resemble the members of the respective national parliaments (in which many of them hold seats).

Our battery of questions was designed to measure preferences on a wide range of issues: not only those that have become salient in recent years (such as nuclear power, terrorism, and abortion) but also such classic economic issues as nationalization of industry, redistribution of income, and the government role in the economy

This battery was worded as follows:

We'd like to hear your views on some important political issues. Could you tell me whether you agree or disagree with each of the following proposals? How strongly do you feel? (Show CARD)

1. Stronger public control should be exercised over the activities of multinational corporations.
2. Nuclear energy should be developed to meet future energy needs.
3. Greater effort should be made to reduce inequality of income.
4. More severe penalties should be introduced for acts of terrorism.
5. Public ownership of private industry should be expanded.
6. Government should play a greater role in the *management* of the economy.
7. Western Europe should make a stronger effort to provide adequate military defense.
8. Women should be free to decide for themselves in matters concerning abortion.
9. Employees should be given equal representation with shareholders on the governing boards of large companies.
10. Economic aid to Third World countries should be increased.
11. Stronger measures should be taken to protect the environment against pollution.
12. Stronger measures should be taken to protect the rights of individuals to express their own political views.
13. Economic aid to the less developed regions of the European community should be increased.

The respondent was shown a card offering the following categories for response to each item: "Agree Strongly," "Agree," "Disagree," and "Disagree Strongly."

Table 2.1 shows the results of a factor analysis with varimax rotation, based on responses to this battery of items, among candidates for the European Parliament. For reasons of space, only the results from a pooled sample of 742 candidates from all nine nations are shown here; separate nation-by-nation analyses show essentially the same patterns, with minor variations.

TABLE 2.1
Factor Analysis of Issue Positions of Candidates to the European Parliament

<i>1. Economic Left-Right (37%)</i>		<i>2. Noneconomic Left-Right (14%)</i>	
More government management of economy	.764	Stronger measures against terrorism	.776
More public ownership of industry	.708	Develop nuclear energy	.733
Reduce income inequality	.642	Stronger defense effort	.727
Public control of multinationals	.633	Women free to choose abortion	-.574
Equal representation for employees	.615	More public ownership of industry	-.451
More aid to Third World	.372		

SOURCE: Survey of Candidates for European Parliament conducted in spring 1979. For sampling details, see Inglehart et al. (1980).

NOTE: Table entries are factor loadings from a factor analysis with varimax rotation. All factor loadings above .300 are shown.

The expected pattern emerges, with striking clarity. Our first factor is based on six items designed to tap the classic economic concerns; the most sensitive indicators of this dimension are one's attitude toward government management and ownership of the economy. The second factor shows a quite distinct content: its four highest-loading items are those designed to tap the New Politics. Nuclear energy and abortion are new issues—they literally did not exist as political issues a generation ago; terrorism has a long history, but its present form is new. Defense, obviously, is not a new issue—quite the contrary, it is probably the oldest concern of the state. But domestic opposition to one's own defense establishment took on new overtones during the war in Vietnam. Opposition to the war came to be motivated much less by traditional conservative reasons (above all, opposition to heavy government expenditures and higher taxes) than by a postmaterialist concern for the impact of the war on the purported *enemy*. Though the defense issue is ancient, both the mo-

tivations and social bases that underlie it have changed. A fifth item—concerning public ownership of industry—clearly does *not* fit our expectations, but it is by far the weakest-loading item. Its presence here signals the fact that this question plays a salient and pivotal role in the ideological structure of professional politicians—something that is not equally true of mass publics. As we will demonstrate shortly (see Table 2.3), the issue preferences of Western *publics* are structured in an almost identical fashion: similar analysis also reveals two dimensions, based on almost exactly the same items as those in Table 2.1—except that “public ownership of industry” does *not* load on the second factor.

We hypothesize that the second dimension reflects a materialist/postmaterialist polarization, rather than traditional social class conflict. Whether or not this is true remains to be demonstrated. First, let us examine the degree to which we actually *have* two distinct dimensions.

Varimax rotation can identify two or more independent components of an attitudinal structure even if the variables are only *relatively* distinct. And among the elites, these two dimensions *are* only relatively distinct. The mean correlation among the three highest-loading items on the first dimension is .50; the mean correlation among the three highest-loading items on the second dimension is .45; the mean correlation *between* the two sets of items is $-.33$. In other words, at the elite level we find two distinguishable issue clusters, but they are by no means unrelated. In a principal components analysis, *all* of these items show substantial loadings on what could be interpreted as an overarching Left-Right ideological dimension, or superissue.

Nevertheless, it is meaningful to distinguish between these two issue clusters. Indeed, unless we do so, we lose sight of a major shift in the meaning and social bases of Left and Right. Moreover, though they tend to be integrated into an overarching Left-Right structure at the elite level, among the general public the two clusters are almost totally unrelated. To be specific: among European publics, the mean correlation among the three items concerning public ownership, public management, and income inequality is .28; the mean correlation among the items concerning terrorism, nuclear energy, and defense is .23; but the mean correlation *between* the two sets of items is $-.05$. At the public level, we are dealing with two completely independent dimensions. In part, this finding reflects a pronounced and pervasive tendency for mass publics to show less attitudinal constraint than elites. But it is also true, as we will see later, that the two issue clusters are fundamentally different in nature and antecedents.

The fact that the two issue dimensions are distinct and relatively independent does *not* mean that they are unrelated to a broader Left-Right orientation, even among mass publics. For politics frequently demands a dichotomous choice: a politician must join or oppose a given coalition, or a voter must choose between Giscard and Mitterrand. The effort to build a winning coalition

provides a powerful incentive to depict politics in bipolar terms that dichotomize the good guys and the bad guys. The Left-Right image is an oversimplification, but an almost inevitable one that in the long run tends to assimilate all important issues.

We suggested earlier that the Left-Right dimension, as a political concept, is a higher-level abstraction used to summarize one's stand on the important political issues of the day. It serves the function of organizing and simplifying a complex political reality, providing an overall orientation toward a potentially limitless number of issues, political parties, and social groups. The pervasive use of the Left-Right concept through the years in Western political discourse testifies to its usefulness. Insofar as political reality can be reduced to one underlying dimension, then one can distinguish readily between friend and foe, and between the good and bad positions on given issues, in terms of relative distances from one's own position on this dimension.

To be sure, social conflict is rarely if ever unidimensional. Thus, to speak in terms of Left and Right is always an oversimplification—but an extremely useful one. In order to describe individually the relationships between a mere dozen issues or parties, one would need to make sixty-six pairwise comparisons; fourteen issues or parties would require ninety-one comparisons. This degree of cognitive complexity is hopelessly unmanageable in practical politics. Ideologues and politicians almost inevitably tend to sum up the alternatives in terms of such all-embracing concepts as "Left" and "Right" that provide a relatively simple guideline for forming alliances or appealing for mass support.

The core meaning of the Left-Right dimension, we believe, is whether one supports or opposes social change in an egalitarian direction. Typically, the Left (or, in America, the liberal side) supports change, while the Right opposes it (see Lipset et al., 1954). It is also important to specify the *direction* of desired change. While conservative movements may be content to defend the status quo, reactionary ones may seek change in the direction of greater *inequality* between classes, nationalities, or other groups.

The utility of the Left-Right concept rests on the fact that through the years, and from one setting to another, the basic political conflicts quite often *do* reflect a polarization between those seeking social change and those opposing it. The concept is sufficiently general that as new issues arise, they usually can be fitted into the framework. The specific *kinds* of change may vary, but the question of *more* or *less* equality is usually involved, whether it be between social classes, nationalities, races, or sexes. Moreover, there is some continuity in which groups seek change. Generally, those who are least favorably situated in a given social order are most likely to support change. Hence over the years, certain social groups and political parties have come to be identified with either the "Left" or the "Right."

Representative samples of the publics of the nine European community