Parties and Voters: What Creates the Ties?

Jan-Erik Lane and Svante Ersson*

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Introduction

In Europe, national as well as local elections are open contest, multi-party elections, with a high level of participation. One key question when we interpret election results is, how stable are the ties between parties and voters? Voters may shift from one party to another if they are not pleased with the party they voted for in the last election, or if they are more attracted to another party. Voters may also abstain from voting if they do not find the alternatives attractive. Parties want two things that contradict each other: On the one hand, they want stable support from loyal voters, but on the other hand they also wish to attract new voters. However, election results are based on a zero-sum game, where the gains of one party are offset by the losses of another party, since the share of mandates given to a party is more or less related to the relative strength of the party.

Stability versus expansion is a theme that entails the possibility of considerable losses and retrogression, but also the sweetness of electoral victory. Stability implies that parties receive the same relative amount of electoral support in one election after the other. How is that accomplished? We may distinguish between surface stability, measured by net volatility, and deep structural stability, measured by gross volatility. Parties fear high

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Introduction

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levels of both gross and net volatility, but how can they protect themselves against voter instability?

Scholars have pointed out numerous changes in European electorates and party systems during the early 1990s and speak of "new politics," "changing values," and "volatility." The analysis of the relationships between the electorate (micro) and the party system (macro) necessitates a reassessment of the Lipset–Rokkan hypothesis about "the freezing of the major party alternatives" and "the mobilization of major sections of the new reservoirs of potential supporters." (Lipset & Rokkan 1967, 50). They stated in 1967 that *"the party systems of the 1960s reflect, with few but significant exceptions, the cleavage structures of the 1920s"* (emphasis in original) (ibid.).

It has been argued that this hypothesis is still valid today (Bartolini & Mair 1990; Mair 1993), but is this really true? Two entities are involved here, namely the political parties and the cleavages in the electorate. How stable are these two entities today? Let us begin by examining the basic Rokkan model of distinct and stable ties between political parties and the voters in terms of alignments. What is a frozen party system, and which alignments constitute cleavages?

The Rokkan Mechanism

Participation in elections establishes the relationship between the voter and the political party. The vote may express a deep commitment or partisanship, but it may also be a casual or a nonrecurrent deliberate choice.

In all elections, the relations between voters and parties can change. First, some people switch from one party to another. Second, some people abstain from voting, although they voted in the last election. Third, new voters participate, either because they decide to participate or because they become eligible. And fourth, some people have left the electorate because of death.

We can assess the possible changes in the voter-party relationship at two different levels, the microlevel and the macrolevel. The microlevel represents gross volatility, or the tendency of voters to vote for different parties in different elections. The macrolevel refers to net volatility, or the actual loss or gain of a political party. Extremely high gross volatility does not necessarily mean high net volatility. Figure 1 shows the four possibilities.

All four combinations are possible, but they are not equally probable. Extremely low gross volatility could coincide with extremely high net volatility. It would be possible in for example countries with plurality elections where in each single constituency one single voter could in principle change the outcome. Extremely high gross volatility could result in

180

Fig. 1. Gross and Net Volatility

Net volatility

		Low	High
		Low	High
Gross volatility	High	I	II
	Low	III	IV

zero net volatility, if at the same time no party suffered any net loss, although no one voted for the same party. However, combinations II and III are most probable.

Rokkan's theory about party system stability comprises both gross and net volatility. "Cleavages" connect voters and parties and structure these relationships. "Alignments" are the processes that result in stable cleavage patterns. Two separate model assumptions are involved here:

(1) Cleavages are the glue between voters and parties, which means that gross volatility will be low as long as the cleavages are operating.

(2) Cleavages tend to last for generations, which means that a cleavage such as class would still structure the electorate in countries with a tradition for class-based politics.

When (1) and (2) are both true, the result is the "frozen party system," a hypothesis launched by Rokkan & Lipset in the mid-1960s. However, gross volatility is likely to increase if (1) or (2) is not true. And when gross volatility occurs, it is only a matter of time before net volatility increases.

It is up for discussion how much volatility a frozen party system could stand. It might be able to stand a high level of gross volatility, but could hardly tolerate much net volatility. When a party system collapses, as in Italy in the 1990s, then clearly it cannot be called "frozen."

It has been argued that the frozen party system hypothesis is a rather weak model. It predicts only that certain cleavages will tend to be represented in one election after another, irrespective of whether the parties change. Thus, a swing in voter support from a large communist party to a small social democratic party or vice versa would not signify a party system change, as long as the entire left wing would receive about the same level of support. This aggregate level interpretation of the frozen party system hypothesis means that even if the electorate completely changed their allegiances and all the parties received a totally different level of support, the party system would still be frozen, as long as the traditional cleavages (class, ethnicity,

religion, urban-rural, etc.) were represented by the parties and both sides of the cleavage received about the usual level of electoral support. Party systems would be "un-frozen" only if one or more new cleavages emerged, or if one or two traditional cleavages disappeared.

It seems that Lipset & Rokkan must have had in mind a stronger version of the frozen party system hypothesis than this rather weak version. They apparently claimed that political parties are capable of self-preservation, which will manifest itself in the form of low net volatility as well as low gross volatility.

We should point out that the frozen party system thesis was not only a tentative answer to the question of the historical origins of party conflict but also part of a theory about the "conditions for the development of a stable system of cleavage and oppositions in national political life" (Lipset & Rokkan 1967, 1):

> We hope to throw light on the origins and the "freezing" of different types of *party systems*, and we seek to assemble materials for comparative analyses of the *current alignments of voters* behind the historically given "packages" in the different systems (ibid., 3).

In our opinion, however, both the dealignment processes and the emergence of new politics question the thesis of the frozen party system. In support of this claim, we now examine first the rising volatility and second the shrinking core groups.

Measures of Electoral Change

Let us first look at the individual level changes, often labeled as gross volatility. Butler & Stokes (1971, 337; see also Valen 1981, 332), identify three different indicators of individual electoral change. The first indicator is "party switching" (PS), the second indicator is "overall volatility" (OV), and the third indicator is "total volatility" (TV).

Party switching (PS) covers voters who change their support from one political party in one election to another party in the next election, and who vote in both elections. When we estimate overall volatility (OV), in addition to party switching, we consider all eligible voters in the two elections and define volatile voters as voters who switch between voting and non-voting. Finally, total volatility (TV), in addition to overall volatility, also refers to the total electorate, including those who enter and those who leave the electorate. There are reasons to believe that survey estimates of party switching are more reliable than estimates of total volatility (see estimates in Heath et al. 1991, 20).

Moving to measures of aggregate level electoral change, we will distinguish between net volatility and seat volatility. By "net volatility"

182

we mean net changes in electoral support for the political parties from one election to another, also known as the Pedersen Index (Pedersen 1979, 4). Estimates of net volatility might differ due to the comprehensiveness of the electoral statistics employed, or due to computing criteria, but in most cases they tend to go in the same direction. Finally, "seat volatility" refers to changes in the parliamentary representation from one election to another, measured by the same formula as net volatility.

We rely on three different kinds of data to map electoral changes in ten Western European countries: a) data from election surveys estimating individual electoral change; b) data from the aggregate level used to estimate individual level transitions in two cases (Thomsen 1987 for Denmark; and Zilliachus 1995 for Finland); and c) data from the aggregate level on aggregate level electoral change.

Voter Turnout

As a beginning, let us look at voter turnout, which is not logically connected with stability or gross and net volatility. A long-run decline in electoral turnout would be a major manifestation of growing voter instability. It would signify that more and more voters are dissatisfied with the political parties,

Table 1. Voter turnout 1980–96. Percent

	1980–84	1985–89	1990–94	1995–96
Austria	92.6	90.4	84.1	82.7
Belgium	94.6	93.5	92.7	91.1
Denmark	85.8	86.3	83.7	–
Finland	75.7	72.1	72.1	68.5
France	70.9	72.4	68.9	–
FRG	88.5	84.3	78.5	–
Greece	78.6	82.4	82.5	
Iceland	88.6	90.1	87.6	87.0
Ireland	74.3	70.9	68.5	–
Italy	89.0	90.5	86.7	82.9
Luxembourg	88.8	87.4	88.3	–
Netherlands	84.0	82.9	78.3	–
Norway	82.0	83.4	75.8	–
Portugal	81.2	72.4	68.2	66.7
Spain	79.8	70.3	77.3	78.1
Sweden	91.4	88.0	86.8	
Switzerland	48.9	46.8	46.0	42.3
United Kingdom	72.8	75.4	77.8	–
All	81.5	80.1	79.4	74.9

Sources: Mackie & Rose 1991; updates in *European Journal of Political Research*, various issues; *Keesing's Record of World Events*.

and that they make a negative change in the sense that they abstain from voting. Table 1 shows the development of voter turnout in 18 Western European countries since 1980.

So far, turnout is down in the 1990s. In the eight countries in Table 1 that had elections in 1995–96, the average participation rate was 76.8 percent in 1990–94, compared with 74.9 percent in 1995–96. Whether this trend will result in electoral instability remains to be seen.

Gross Volatility

Moving to electoral instability, we start out at the microlevel, which can be analyzed by means of the concepts of party switching, overall volatility, and total volatility. Although most studies seem to measure party switching the same way, various estimates differ. For example, the estimates of party switching between 1971 and 1972 in the Netherlands vary between 35 percent (Irwin & Dittrich 1984, 288), 26 percent (van der Eik & Niemoller 1985, 357), and 21 percent (Daalder 1987, 230; our calculation). German estimates of party switching between 1980 and 1983 vary from 18 percent (Klingemann 1985, 241; our calculation) to 15 percent (Zelle 1995, 323). We cannot be sure that the authors have used the same methods to estimate overall volatility and total volatility.

These measurement problems notwithstanding, let us look at how these scores are distributed between the countries (Table 2) and interpret them in light of the Rokkan mechanism.

Although these estimates are average values, they indicate a variation between countries. However, looking at the aggregate level, we can see that

Table 2. Individual level electoral change in eight countries, 1950–94. Party switching, overall volatility and total volatility

| | Average Percent | | | N | | |
	PS	OV	TV	PS	OV	TV
Austria	11	8	–	9	6	–
Denmark	21	27	35	14	14	14
Finland	15	–	27	12	–	12
Germany	12	24	38	10	8	8
Netherlands	22	36	31	8	2	6
Norway	24	37	–	7	4	–
Sweden	17	29	34	13	6	6
United Kingdom	21	37	48	7	7	6
All	18	24	33	80	47	52

Sources: See Appendix 1.

Table 3. Individual level electoral change over time. Party switching, overall volatility and total volatility

	Average Percent			N		
	PS	OV	TV	PS	OV	TV
1950–54	11	25	29	5	3	5
1955–59	10	19	27	3	1	2
1960–64	14	25	34	7	4	5
1965–69	16	22	28	9	5	6
1970–74	18	26	37	4	7	9
1975–79	19	24	34	13	8	9
1980–84	16	24	29	9	6	7
1985–89	19	31	36	9	6	4
1990–94	24	40	39	10	6	4
All	18	27	33	79	47	52

Sources: See Appendix 1.

one third of the total electorate changes its vote from one election to another. Proceeding to the variation over time, we find that the long-term trend for gross volatility is an increase from one election to another, but as Table 3 shows, that increase is not linear.

Both overall and total volatility reach 40 percent in the 1990s, which must be considered a high level of gross volatility. It is not clear which voter instability measure is most appropriate, but Table 4 indicates that the three indicators have a high correlation. This is the first key to understanding electoral volatility.

In sum, these three measures of gross volatility all move in the same direction. There is a general rise in gross volatility in the long run, but there are also some fluctuations. We do not predict, however, that the high figures for the early 1990s indicate a permanent high level of gross volatility as we could well see a reversal. The next question is, what implications does this trend have for net volatility?

Table 4. Correlations for PS, OV and TV

	Correlation			N	
	PS	OV	TV	PS	OV
PS	1.00				
OV	0.86	1.00		47	
TV	0.65	0.93	1.00	52	34

Table 5. Net Volatility: Western European Party Systems 1950–96. Means and CV[a] Scores

	Mean	N	CV
1950–54	9.3	23	0.760
1955–59	7.4	25	0.805
1960–64	7.6	20	0.613
1965–69	7.7	21	0.404
1970–74	10.1	25	0.681
1975–79	9.1	28	0.608
1980–84	11.3	24	0.741
1985–89	10.2	29	0.550
1990–94	12.6	24	0.771
1995–96	10.0	8	0.531
All	9.5	227	0.666

Sources: Bartolini & Mair 1990 (to 1985); our own calculations based on Mackie & Rose 1991; updates in *European Journal of Political Research*, various issues; *Keesing's Record of World Events*.

[a] CV = coefficient of variability which is obtained by dividing the standard deviation with the mean value (for the net volatility scores).

Net Volatility

Electoral instability at the microlevel does not necessarily translate into a party system change at the macrolevel. The issue is the probability of a connection between gross volatility and net volatility.

As Table 5 shows, the average level of net volatility in Western Europe is slightly less than 10 percent. The level vacillates over time, but in the long run, it is an upward trend. Net volatility increased in the early 1970s, decreased in the late 1970s, and peaked in the early 1990s. There are now signs of a new decline in the mid-1990s.

The levels of net volatility vary between the Western European countries, even if the CV scores indicate less variation in the 1980s than in the early 1950s. Looking at data from the 1990s, we find that in 1994, Italy exceeded a volatility level of 40 percent (compared with 14 percent in 1992) (Table 6). This could be called an "earthquake election."

A sharp rise in net volatility means a shift in voter allegiances. In Rokkan's terminology, such a dealignment process may be followed by a realignment process that reduces the net volatility scores to what they were before the earthquake election. However, if no permanent realignment takes place, a country may maintain a high level of net volatility in election after election.

Now then, what about the relationship between gross volatility and net volatility? We have corresponding data for party switching (see Appendix 1) and net volatility from 80 observations. The correlation r = 0.74 indicates

Table 6. Net Volatility: Country Scores 1980–96

	1980–84	1985–89	1990–94	1995–96
Austria	4.6	6.3	11.2	4.0
Belgium	16.4	7.1	13.0	6.3
Denmark	11.7	8.0	11.6	–
Finland	10.3	6.9	12.4	10.8
France	13.5	10.5	19.1	–
FRG	6.5	5.9	6.3	–
Greece	27.2	6.3	8.1	–
Iceland	10.4	23.6	13.3	11.6
Ireland	5.5	15.4	15.4	–
Italy	8.3	8.4	28.2	13.7
Luxembourg	14.1	15.9	5.1	–
Netherlands	9.1	7.8	21.5	–
Norway	11.2	9.9	14.8	–
Portugal	7.3	22.3	9.6	20.2
Spain	42.6	10.5	9.3	5.7
Sweden	7.9	7.5	12.8	–
Switzerland	6.1	8.0	7.4	7.4
United Kingdom	11.9	3.9	5.1	–
All	11.3	10.2	12.6	10.0

Sources: Bartolini & Mair 1990 (to 1985); our own calculations based on Mackie & Rose 1991; updates in *European Journal of Political Research*, various issues; *Keesing's Record of World Events.*

that the two measures covary. The fact that an increase in gross volatility is likely to raise net volatility is the second key to interpreting electoral stability or instability. Comparing the estimated level for party switching (17.7 percent) and the level of net volatility (8.6 percent), we may conclude that net volatility on an average captures some 50 percent of the gross volatility as measured by party switching.

The established parties may attempt to protect themselves against the repercussions of electoral instability by means of institutional mechanisms like election formulas and legal thresholds. Even so, Table 7 shows that seat volatility may reach very high levels in some countries while remaining low in a few others.

On average, seat volatility is actually somewhat higher than net volatility. This is the third major key to understanding electoral instability.

Another way to examine voter instability at the microlevel is to determine whether the parties can draw on electoral core groups that remain faithful. In Rokkan's interpretation, these core groups would consist of people defined by one single cleavage, for instance class. We now move on to assumption (2) in the Rokkan mechanism with special reference to class, one example of a cleavage.

Table 7. Volatility in Seats 1980–96. Percent

	1980–84	1985–89	1990–94	1995–96
Austria	2.8	7.7	15.0	4.4
Belgium	14.6	6.8	11.0	6.4
Denmark	12.1	7.5	15.8	–
Finland	9.8	10.8	12.5	10.5
France	35.9	19.4	37.5	–
FRG	6.3	5.6	9.0	–
Greece	27.1	6.3	9.7	–
Iceland	15.1	23.1	13.5	9.5
Ireland	6.8	10.6	16.0	–
Italy	8.7	7.8	33.2	24.1
Luxembourg	12.2	10.2	5.1	–
Netherlands	9.8	8.4	22.0	–
Norway	12.2	12.4	16.3	–
Portugal	23.2	24.6	8.4	22.0
Spain	53.1	9.7	8.6	5.8
Sweden	7.2	7.1	16.1	–
Switzerland	5.0	6.5	9.5	9.0
United Kingdom	12.0	3.8	6.6	–
All	14.1	10.6	15.2	11.4

Sources: Bartolini & Mair 1990 (to 1985); our own calculations based on Mackie & Rose 1991; updates in *European Journal of Political Research*, various issues; *Keesing's Record of World Events*.

Cleavages: Class voting

In the Rokkan theory, it is the "cleavage" that establishes a relationship between political parties and voters. Stability in party-voter interaction is enhanced when core groups in the electorate remain loyal to parties. According to Rokkan's historical approach, one such core group is the working class with its traditional support for the political left, often expressed in the form of "class voting." So how has "class voting" developed? Is class voting on the decline or is it more accurate to talk about trendless fluctuations (Manza et al. 1995)?

Let us take a look at the development in two class voting indexes. The first one is the Alford index of class voting, which – in Korpi's terminology – relates the political distinctiveness of the working class to the political nondistinctiveness of the upper class (Korpi 1972, 629). The other index is the Rose–Urwin index (Zuckerman & Lichbach 1977, 526), which relates the class distinctiveness of the left party to the proportion of the workers among the voters (Korpi 1972). When we calculated these measures, we relied on a number of estimates (see Appendix 2). Table 8 shows averages of class voting data from 1950 to 1994 in eight countries.

Table 8. Class voting 1950–94

Period	Alford's index	Rose-Urwin index	N
1950–54	0.34	0.25	1
1955–59	0.44	0.22	9
1960–64	0.45	0.22	5
1965–69	0.38	0.19	9
1970–74	0.34	0.18	13
1975–79	0.33	0.17	11
1980–84	0.28	0.16	9
1985–89	0.26	0.14	10
1990–94	0.30	0.15	3
All	0.35	0.18	70

Source: See Appendix 2.

We can see that class voting declines over time, but it is doubtful if we can declare class voting dead. Rose & Urwin entered an ad hoc criteria (Rose & Urwin 1969, 11) according to which values greater than an index value of 0.17 indicate cleavage voting, while lower values indicate the absence of cleavage voting. In the 1980s and the early 1990s, the Rose–Urwin index is below this critical limit, but the early 1990s may also display a small resurgence of class voting. However, there is no doubt that the shrinking working class means that class voting is less important today than it was in the 1950s or in the 1960s (Nieuwbeerta 1995).

The impact of traditional cleavages like class on voting is decreasing, but are there any new cleavages? And what *is* a cleavage? Is it a permanent tie between voters and parties? In relation to "new" cleavages, we note a general increase of these new orientations, but there is also a fluctuation over time. Consider for example the data on the rise of post-materialist orientations in Europe. Table 9 lists the average values for post-materialist orientations from 1973 to 1993 in eight Western European countries (Abramson & Inglehart 1995). If post-materialism is a new cleavage in Rokkan's sense, then its attraction has almost doubled in less than twenty years, which probably reflects a process of electoral dealignment and realignment.

Thus, in relation to Rokkan's second assumption, we find clear signs of a declining impact of traditional cleavages like class voting. A new cleavage, post-materialism, is on the rise, but this is a gradual, long-term development. In the short run, there are fluctuations that indicate that we may find examples of a resurrection of class voting as well as a decline in post-materialist orientations in the 1990s. It is impossible to tell whether the Rokkan mechanism with its two assumptions will be replaced by a model

Table 9. Post-Materialist Orientations in Eight EC Countries[a] 1973–93

Year	Percent
1973	9.9
1976	10.8
1977	9.3
1978	12.3
1979	12.0
1980	9.1
1981	8.9
1982	13.0
1983	12.0
1984	13.4
1985	14.1
1986	14.4
1987	16.8
1988	17.6
1989	19.6
1990	18.3
1991	18.6
1992	18.0
1993	16.3

[a] Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands.
Source: Abramson & Inglehart 1995, 12–15.

which focuses on volatility or a model that harbors new cleavages. Perhaps we will see a new theory that covers both trends.

Description or Explanation?

The central question in the debate on the Lipset–Rokkan frozen party system hypothesis is whether the changes in party support (macrolevel) or individual voting behavior (microlevel) have been so significant that we can conclude that the hypothesis is no longer valid.

Yet, we may wish to raise a much more fundamental question in relation to the hypothesis: How did Rokkan conceive of the relationship between the parties and the voters? Modeling the interaction between voters and the parties by means of the sociological conception of a cleavage entails a commitment to a few assumptions, although their applicability cannot be taken for granted.

Why would parties focus mainly on mobilization of their cleavage bases? Why would voters take cleavages into account when they choose a party? An entirely different set of assumptions that recognizes the tactics and strategy of electoral campaigning as well as voter efforts to attain reciprocity in relation to the parties might make it easier to understand electoral change

and party system developments. If we go one step further and simply do away with the concept of cleavages, we might be able to model the interaction between parties and voters in a more dynamic fashion, especially if we recognize myopia, opportunistic behavior, and the impact of the media as the most powerful filters between parties and voters. Perhaps the Rokkan mechanism, i.e. inherited cleavages molding the future, is more misleading than helpful in the interpretation of Western European politics today?

The frozen party system hypothesis is not simply an ad hoc description of a set of countries at a particular point in time. It is part of an ambitious theory modeling the relationship between parties and social groups. Theories are like webs of concepts and propositions, where it is often not clear-cut which ones are important and which ones may be revised without the theory tumbling. However, some concepts and propositions are core ones which call for a revision of the entire framework when they are shaken by empirical refutation.

In Rokkan's theory, the core is the connection between the party system (macrolevel) and the social groups (microlevel) by means of cleavages. It may be shattered in one country like Italy, but a strong theory can always handle a few refutations as long as new ad hoc assumptions are added. In the weak version of the theory, the frozen party system hypothesis could perhaps accommodate extremely high levels of gross volatility as long as net volatility remains low. But can the theory survive, when not only social groups fail to back their parties, but also the parties themselves find it increasingly difficult to "camp on the seesaws" (Hedberg et al. 1976).

Normally, theories do not collapse because of a single refutation. It takes an overwhelming amount of counter-evidence to defeat a theoretical framework. However, in Western Europe the changes since the 1960s have been strong: Voter turnout is down, gross and net volatility are up, and the number of parties has increased. Is this enough to shatter the Lipset–Rokkan model? In any case, once we admit that things are not what they used to be concerning parties and social groups, we can proceed to the core of the model, i.e. the cleavage mechanism that builds on the two assumptions of (1) low gross volatility and (2) the persistence of class-based politics. Such a move might give us a different view of how voters and parties interact.

Conclusion

The critical question in relation to the frozen party system hypothesis is whether the various forms of volatility are empirically related. We find that net volatility as well as seat volatility are about half as large as gross volatility. Therefore, we predict that dealignment processes will sooner or

later change the party system. The frozen party system hypothesis falters, because gross, net, and seat volatility tend to coincide. The correlation between the three measures is high, which means that if a country experiences one form of instability, it will probably also experience the others. Since we know that gross volatility is on the rise, we can conclude that it is only a matter of time before net volatility also rises. Thus, neither the weak nor the strong version of the frozen party system hypothesis is valid.

Our conclusions are that in the long run, voter volatility, gross as well as net, increase simultaneously and that traditional cleavage voting, here exemplified by class voting, is declining. Such findings cast doubt on the frozen party system hypothesis. All the evidence seems to imply that assumptions (1) and (2) are no longer valid – one or both are wrong. In order to understand the floating electorate or the electorate in search of new cleavages, we need new assumptions.

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later change the party system. The frozen party system hypothesis falters, because gross, net, and seat volatility tend to coincide. The correlation between the three measures is high, which means that if a country experiences one form of instability, it will probably also experience the others. Since we know that gross volatility is on the rise, we can conclude that it is only a matter of time before net volatility also rises. Thus, neither the weak nor the strong version of the frozen party system hypothesis is valid.

Our conclusions are that in the long run, voter volatility, gross as well as net, increase simultaneously and that traditional cleavage voting, here exemplified by class voting, is declining. Such findings cast doubt on the frozen party system hypothesis. All the evidence seems to imply that assumptions (1) and (2) are no longer valid – one or both are wrong. In order to understand the floating electorate or the electorate in search of new cleavages, we need new assumptions.

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Appendix 1. Estimates of individual level electoral change from various electoral studies by country and year. Percent

	PS	OV	TV		PS	OV	TV		PS	OV	TV
AUS 1966	11	11		GER 1953	12	38	43	SWE 1956	7		
AUS 1970	12	12		GER 1961	9	22	25	SWE 1960	7		
AUS 1971	3	4		GER 1965	13	29	33	SWE 1964	11		
AUS 1975	4	5		GER 1969	13	24	27	SWE 1968	12		
AUS 1979	4	6		GER 1972	12	22	25	SWE 1970	16		
AUS 1983	9	9		GER 1976	10	19	23	SWE 1973	16		
AUS 1986	16			GER 1980	10	17	22	SWE 1976	19		
AUS 1989	17			GER 1983	15	21	26	SWE 1979	18	22	27
AUS 1994	19			GER 1987	13			SWE 1982	20	25	29
				GER 1990	16			SWE 1985	19	25	29
DEN 1947	21	27	32					SWE 1988	20	28	35
DEN 1950	17	23	33	NET 1967	23		25	SWE 1991	30	37	41
DEN 1953	6	13	20	NET 1971	23		35	SWE 1994	29	38	41
DEN 1957	11	19	29	NET 1972	21		34				
DEN 1960	18	23	32	NET 1977	28		37	UKI 1964	18	35	45
DEN 1964	12	18	32	NET 1981	19		31	UKI 1970	16	34	49
DEN 1966	17	23	29	NET 1982	19		22	UKI 1974	24	42	51
DEN 1968	19	25	29	NET 1989	19	30		UKI 1979	22	37	49
DEN 1971	21	28	37	NET 1994	32	42		UKI 1983	23	40	49
DEN 1973	38	43	49					UKI 1987	19	37	47
DEN 1975	27	32	35	NOR 1969	18			UKI 1992	22	37	
DEN 1977	30	37	41	NOR 1973	24						
DEN 1979	25	32	40	NOR 1977	24						
DEN 1994	30	38	45	NOR 1981	19	31					
				NOR 1985	20	29					
FIN 1951	12		25	NOR 1989	30	38					
FIN 1954	10		23	NOR 1993	33	48					
FIN 1958	12		24								
FIN 1962	21		34								
FIN 1966	15		24								
FIN 1970	21		31								
FIN 1972	11		19								
FIN 1975	18		28								
FIN 1979	17		26								
FIN 1983	14		24								
FIN 1987	19		32								
FIN 1991	15		30								

Note: PS = Party switching; OV = Overall volatility; TV = Total volatility.

Sources: Austria: Haerpfer 1985, 274; Plasser & Ulram 1995, 348. Denmark: Thomsen 1987: Appendix 2; our calculations; Thomsen 1995, 321; our calculations. Finland: Zilliachus 1995, Appendix; our calculations. Germany: Klingemann 1985, 241; our calculations; Zelle 1995, 323. Netherlands: Daalder 1987, 230; our calculations; Anker 1996, Personal communication; our calculations. Norway: Aardal & Valen 1995, 33; Valen & Aardal 1983, 52; Aardal & Valen 1989, 160; Valen et al. 1990, 27; Aardal & Valen 1995, 238; our calculations. Sweden: Gilljam & Holmberg 1995, 30; Holmberg 1981, 40; Holmberg 1984, 29; Holmberg & Gilljam 1987, 87; Gilljam & Holmberg 1990, 108; Gilljam & Holmberg 1993, 73; Gilljam & Holmberg 1995, 33; our calculations. United Kingdom: Heath et al. 1991, 20; Heath et al. 1994, 281.

Appendix 2. Estimates of class voting based upon various electoral studies by country and year

	ALF	RU		ALF	RU		ALF	RU
AUS 1969	0.33	0.15	GER 1953	0.34	0.25	SWE 1956	0.46	0.22
AUS 1971	0.43	0.17	GER 1961	0.35	0.22	SWE 1960	0.48	0.22
AUS 1972	0.35	0.16	GER 1965	0.26	0.15	SWE 1964	0.43	0.19
AUS 1976	0.31	0.12	GER 1976	0.18	0.10	SWE 1968	0.38	0.16
AUS 1986	0.25	0.13	GER 1980	0.18	0.09	SWE 1970	0.36	0.16
			GER 1983	0.21	0.13	SWE 1973	0.39	0.18
DEN 1957	0.62	0.30	GER 1987	0.15	0.09	SWE 1976	0.34	0.16
DEN 1964	0.55	0.25				SWE 1979	0.38	0.19
DEN 1968	0.53	0.24	NET 1956	0.16	0.11	SWE 1982	0.36	0.17
DEN 1971	0.43	0.20	NET 1968	0.17	0.14	SWE 1985	0.34	0.17
DEN 1973	0.37	0.25	NET 1971	0.24	0.22	SWE 1988	0.31	0.14
DEN 1975	0.42	0.25	NET 1972	0.20	0.12	SWE 1991	0.27	0.15
DEN 1977	0.36	0.16	NET 1977	0.27	0.15	SWE 1994	0.31	0.13
DEN 1979	0.30	0.14	NET 1982	0.29	0.15			
DEN 1981	0.25	0.13	NET 1986	0.26	0.13	UKI 1955	0.39	0.21
DEN 1984	0.31	0.15				UKI 1957	0.43	0.22
DEN 1987	0.29	0.13	NOR 1957	0.44	0.19	UKI 1958	0.43	0.23
			NOR 1965	0.45	0.21	UKI 1959	0.40	0.21
FIN 1958	0.64	0.33	NOR 1969	0.42	0.20	UKI 1964	0.43	0.23
FIN 1966	0.55	0.30	NOR 1973	0.36	0.19	UKI 1966	0.36	0.17
FIN 1973	0.37	0.17	NOR 1977	0.36	0.18	UKI 1970	0.26	0.14
FIN 1975	0.45	0.27	NOR 1981	0.32	0.17	UKI 1974	0.34	0.21
FIN 1983	0.32	0.17	NOR 1985	0.29	0.15	UKI 1974	0.36	0.20
FIN 1987	0.31	0.18	NOR 1989	0.17	0.08	UKI 1979	0.28	0.18
FIN 1991	0.32	0.15				UKI 1983	0.32	0.26
						UKI 1987	0.27	0.21

Note: All these estimates of ALF and RU are our own calculations based upon the sources listed below.

Sources: Austria: Haerpfer 1983, 136; Gehmacher 1974, 65; Gehmacher 1982, 65; Plasser & Ulram 1988, 85. Denmark: Worre 1983, 267; Janda 1980, 407; Thomas 1973, 60; Worre 1976, 51, 84; Worre 1978, 39; Worre 1985, 40; Worre 1989, 51. Finland: Allardt & Pesonen 1967, 342; Matheson 1979, 67; Sänkiaho 1993, Appendix. Germany: Linz 1967, 288; Janda 1980, 364; Janowitz & Segal 1967, 609; Pappi 1977, 217; Berger et al. 1986, 277; Dalton 1989, 287. Netherlands: Lijphart 1974, 243; Wolinetz 1977, 379; Rallings & Andeweg 1979, 37; Daalder 1979, 205; Daalder 1987, 229. Norway: Valen 1981, 105–07; Valen 1972, 251; Aardal & Valen 1989, 321; Valen & Aardal 1983, 68; Valen et al. 1990, 70. Sweden: Petersson & Särlvik 1975, 90–1; Petersson 1978, 166; Holmberg 1981, 300; Holmberg 1984, 82; Holmberg & Gilljam 1987, 179; Gilljam & Holmberg 1990, 225; Gilljam & Holmberg 1993, 200; Gilljam & Holmberg 1995, 200. United Kingdom: Alford 1963, 348; Norton 1984, 37; Heath et al. 1991, 68–9.

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Our conclusions are that in the long run, voter volatility, gross as well as net, increase simultaneously and that traditional cleavage voting, here exemplified by class voting, is declining. Such findings cast doubt on the frozen party system hypothesis. All the evidence seems to imply that assumptions (1) and (2) are no longer valid – one or both are wrong. In order to understand the floating electorate or the electorate in search of new cleavages, we need new assumptions.

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