



The 'Other' Dimension

Contents, Connections and Sources of Party Competition along the Socio-Cultural Dimension in Europe

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The 'Other' Dimension:

Contents, Connections and Sources of Party Competition Along the Socio-Cultural Dimension in Europe

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Abstract

In Europe, non-economic political issues are seen as secondary, but significant, sources of political competition. There is, however, disagreement about the extent to which these issues form a coherent political dimension. This paper addresses the extent to which this 'other' dimension frames political conflict across Europe. Using expert and public opinion surveys, we first explore the content and compactness of political issues that are argued to form the non-economic dimension. We find consistent evidence across multiple data sources of systematic variance in the importance of this dimension in different European party systems. Despite the rise of new cultural issues, our results indicate that Lipset and Rokkan's cleavage theory provides strikingly powerful predictors of the significance of the 'other' dimension in contemporary political competition.

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Introduction

Politics in advanced democracies extensively revolve around the management of the economy and redistribution of the wealth it generates. The stewardship of the economy is viewed as central to the evaluation of individual political leaders, as well as entire administrations. Simultaneously, many salient political issues – such as: the role of religion in public life; rights of ethnic or sexual minorities; the position of women in society and family; the acceptance of diversity; the type and level of supranational cooperation etc. – neither directly speak to, nor are clearly associated with the economy. Since the 1970s scholars thus refer to this ‘other’ dimension of politics as either materialist-post-materialist (Inglehart 1977, 1990); liberal-authoritarian (Kitschelt 1994); new politics (Franklin et al. 1992); or green/alternative/libertarian versus traditional/authoritarian/nationalist (Hooghe, Marks, and Wilson 2002, Hooghe and Marks 2009). Whatever its name, multiple analysts and research teams highlight the important role of the non-economic dimension¹ in political contestation throughout Western and Eastern Europe (Marks et al. 2006; Kreisi et al. 2008; Kitschelt 1992; Evans and Whitefield 1993; Zielinski 2002). Although the political significance of the ‘other’ dimension is of increasing interest to scholars and practitioners, the profusion of competing names for the dimension listed above is not accidental. The multiplicity and diverse character of political issues potentially connected with this dimension make it much more complicated than economic left-right politics. Thus the extent to which non-economic issues form a coherent and distinctive dimension, as well as the sources of the varying significance of this dimension in politics remain unclear.

This paper consequently addresses the content, cohesiveness and extent of political competition over the ‘other’ dimension in Europe. In doing so, we identify consistent variance in the prominence of non-economic issues in political contest across European countries. In a final step, we explain a striking portion of this variance by considering the historical origins of party competition. We argue that despite a significant change in the content of the ‘other’ dimension over the past century, the way in which this dimension structures political conflict across the continent is profoundly rooted in deep historical legacies of national formation.

This work contributes to the study of political competition in Europe by highlighting the striking structural stability – despite the fluidity of content – of the main lines of conflict across the continent. We suggest that although the contested particulars change with the specific needs and interests of the day, the competitive frame in which they are placed is

¹To avoid repetition we refer to these issues as the ‘other’ dimension, the non-economic dimension, the socio-cultural dimension, or simply the cultural dimension interchangeably throughout the text.

largely abiding.

After discussing the previous scholarship on the ‘other’ dimension, we present the dimension’s structure across the countries included in the Chapel Hill Expert Survey. Next, we examine the role of the socio-cultural dimension in political competition across the party systems of Europe in four ways. An index of dimensional cohesiveness compares the tightness of association between the issues that make up the dimension, and we use the axis of party competition to conceptualize and measure party competition over the ‘other’ dimension. We supplement this information with an exploration of expert uncertainty in party placements, and end this section of the paper by analyzing how much voter preferences on the socio-cultural dimension, measured by items in the European Election Study, affect vote choice. All four measures point towards substantial variation in the importance of the ‘other’ dimension to the party systems of European countries, but also indicate that this variance is consistent across the measures. The dimension appears to be much more important in some countries than others. This finding leads to our final analysis, which explains this variation in the importance of the dimension in political competition across Western Europe through the cleavage theory of Lipset and Rokkan (1967).

The ‘Other’ Dimension

In their classic study on the emergence of cleavage structures and the impact of these cleavages on the party systems of Western Europe, Lipset and Rokkan (1967) identify two primary cultural divisions: on the one hand centre-periphery and religious cleavages emerged from the reformation and national revolutions, the formation of sectoral and class cleavages, on the other hand, arose later out of the industrial revolution in the 19th century. The centre-periphery distinction was based on tensions between the dominant culture and ethnically, religiously, or linguistically distinct sub-groups within a country, while the religious cleavage grew out of the struggle for the control of religious organizations and educational institutions. Lipset and Rokkan highlight how these cultural cleavages (together with the land-industry divide) diversified the competitive landscape of Europe, while the paramount economic cleavage between workers and owners brought the party competition closer together. The two cultural cleavages were also critical in bringing about the freezing of party systems that has been advanced as a key explanation for the stability of these systems throughout the twentieth century (see Bornschier 2009 for a recent overview of cleavage-based research in the Lipset and Rokkan tradition).

The emergence of competition over new values in the final quarter of the twentieth century called into question the frozen nature of the party systems of Western Europe, reorienting the relationship between parties and voters (see, e.g. Franklin et al. 1992; Oskarson 2005). At the individual level, citizens of countries that experienced rapid economic growth in the post-war era displayed increasing interest in personal expression and autonomy on matters of lifestyle and morality (Inglehart 1977, 1990). The rising importance of political competition about abortion, gay rights, the environment, and immigration potentially weaken the historical connections between voters and parties, shift the nature of cultural competition away from religion, and bring about a dealignment or realignment of the party system. Kitschelt's studies of changes within European social democracy (1994) and the emergence of the radical right (1995) illustrate the importance of this dimension of competition, which he refers to as a libertarian-authoritarian continuum. For example, the increasing salience of quality of life issues, multiculturalism, and more participatory forms of politics proved to be a challenge for social democratic parties, as did a macro-economic environment that pushed towards moderation of economic policies. Together, these factors combined to create space for competitor left-libertarian parties that were more economically left and socially liberal than social democrats. Kitschelt argues that the ability of these left-libertarian competitors to capture voters with more liberal preferences on social issues and the environment explains the rise of Green parties throughout Western Europe and the struggle of social democratic parties after oil-shocks of the mid-1970s.

More recently, ongoing processes of globalization or denationalization have created groups that benefit or suffer from these changes, which has in turn generated shifts in the structure of political spaces and party competition across Western Europe (Kriesi et al. 2006, 2008). Entrepreneurs and those employed in open competitive sectors, as well as individuals with cosmopolitan attitudes form the 'winners' from and advocates of denationalization. The management and labor of protected industries, workers with less competitive skill-sets, and individuals with strong, exclusive national identities make up the 'losers' from globalization and those that resist the forces of denationalization. Kriesi and colleagues still see politics in Europe as two-dimensional, but argue that the new critical juncture of globalization has shifted the nature of these dimensions. The cultural dimension is less defined by religion in the contemporary era and increasingly oriented around European integration (Kriesi 2007) and immigration, with the defense of tradition represented in more ethnic and nationalist terms. This speaks to our belief that although the content of the 'other' dimension may change across time and national contexts, the organizational structures and strategies of ex-

isting actors in a given party system have been shaped by formative conflicts over older facets of the cultural dimension, and this shapes the nature of contemporary cultural competition as well.

Kriesi, et al. emphasize the importance of parties that capitalize on the ‘losers’ of globalization as the drivers of change in Western European party systems (p.929). They share with Hooghe and Marks (see, e.g. 2009) a belief in the importance of appeals to identity, particularly exclusive conceptions of national identity, as more important for activating the political force of this group than arguments based in the defense of their economic interests. Returning to the language of ‘traditional, authoritarian, nationalist’ (Tan), parties with extreme Tan profiles are particularly concerned with defending national sovereignty; these parties stridently oppose immigration as well as European integration because of the perceived threat that foreigners, international institutions, and cosmopolitanism pose to the national community (Hooghe, Marks, and Nelson 2002). The opposition to EU integration of parties near the Tan pole remains apparent in the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) data up to the present day (Bakker, et al. 2012). Parties with green, alternative (an emphasis on participatory democracy), libertarian (Gal) profiles, however, are more supportive of integration, particularly in areas such as EU environmental policy, EU asylum policy, and strengthening the powers of the European Parliament (Marks, et al. 2006). In general, a party’s stance on the cultural divide is a more powerful predictor of the party’s stance on most aspects of European integration than Left/Right (Hooghe, Marks, and Nelson 2002; Marks, et al. 2006).

Recent empirical evidence uncovers significant variance in the amount that the economic left-right, socio-cultural, and European integration dimensions are interrelated in the party systems of the EU member states (Bakker, Jolly, Polk 2012). These authors find that the economic left-right and socio-cultural dimensions are relatively distinct from one another in some countries, but much more inter-related in others. Diversity in the content and meaning of the socio-cultural dimension across the sample should not surprise us, for as Marks et al. (2006, p.157) report, in some countries this dimension: “is oriented around environmental protection and sustainable growth; in others, it captures conflict about traditional values rooted in a secular-religious divide; and in yet others, it is pitched around immigration and defense of the national community”. And while in the West most economic left-wing parties are also ‘left’ on the social dimension, the relationship between economic left-right and the ‘other’ dimension in the East is more mixed. In some countries, like Bulgaria and Hungary, the economic left-wing parties are the social right-wing parties (as expected by Kitschelt

and McGann 1995 and Marks et al. 2006) while other East European countries, such as Latvia and Slovenia, mimic the western relationship (Rovny and Edwards 2012). These initial indications that the cohesiveness and distinctiveness of the socio-cultural dimension varies across Europe motivate our more focused investigation of the content and uniqueness of the ‘other’ dimension within the party systems and electorates of contemporary European societies which we turn to in the following section.

The Content of the ‘Other’ Dimension

The preceding section suggests that although the ‘other’ dimension may have developed from the religious and center/periphery cleavages associated with the nation-building process, the contemporary content of non-economic politics has changed. In order to examine the content of the ‘other’ dimension in modern party systems, we perform a principal factor analysis on the policy-specific CHES questions from 2006 and 2010 related to the ‘other’ dimension. The current structure of the socio-cultural dimension is dominated by two groups of issues in both eastern and western Europe (see table 1). The first and most significant group, concerns cosmopolitanism versus nationalism. Although the values associated with these issues correspond across the two regions, eastern Europeans care more about domestic ethnic minorities, while western Europeans are more influenced by immigration. This is logical given the prevalence of ethnic minority rights concerns in eastern Europe, compared with the rising salience of immigration in western European politics. The second group of issues pertains to secular modernism versus traditionalism. In both regions, it contains less salient issues concerning the role of religion in determining people’s lifestyles.²

The ‘other’ dimension predominantly consists of issues pertaining to the ethno-cultural character of society on both sides of the continent. Despite this content uniformity across western and eastern Europe, it is not clear whether the cultural dimension plays the same role in different party systems. The next section turns to address the variance of political competition over the ‘other’ dimension.

²This analysis is consistent with most recent works on party competition in western Europe (cf. Kriesi et al. 2008; Bornschier 2010).

Table 1: The Structure of the Socio-Cultural Dimension in Europe

	Western Europe			Eastern Europe		
	Factor 1 (Cosmo.)	Factor 2 (Secular.)	Saliency 0-10	Factor 1 (Cosmo.)	Factor 2 (Secular.)	Saliency 0-10
Ethnic minority	0.92	0.24	5.76	0.90	0.19	5.71
Security	0.14	0.10	4.88	0.15	0.07	4.50
Regions	0.22	0.00	5.08	0.54	0.05	4.57
Urban-rural	0.38	0.53	4.11	0.18	0.67	5.04
Immigrant integration	0.92	0.28	6.19	0.87	0.39	3.97
Immigration policy	0.96	0.18	6.35	0.75	0.52	4.02
Religion	0.53	0.73	4.49	0.28	0.72	4.48
Social lifestyle	0.71	0.65	5.89	0.44	0.83	5.08
Civil liberties	0.89	0.34	6.31	0.63	0.63	5.57
Eigenvalue	4.38	1.52		3.15	2.52	
Proportion	0.69	0.24		0.55	0.44	

Principal factor analysis with varimax rotation. Saliency of each issue assessed by experts on a 0-10 scale. Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2006 and 2010.

Competition over the ‘Other’ Dimension

This section addresses the variance in the extent to which the socio-cultural dimension structures competition across party systems in Europe, which we assess in a number of ways. First, we use principal factor analysis on issue items from the CHES to develop an *index of dimensional cohesiveness*, measuring the tightness of association between different political issues connected with the ‘other’ dimension. Second, we address the amount that political parties actually compete over the socio-cultural dimension, by conceptualizing and measuring the *axis of party competition*. Third, we assess expert uncertainty in placing parties on this dimension. Finally, we turn to analyze the extent to which voter preferences on the socio-cultural dimension determine their voting behavior. This section demonstrates that there is significant variance in the role the ‘other’ dimension plays in political competition in Europe. The crucial finding, however, is, that this variance is highly consistent. Our four alternative assessments of the ‘other’ dimension all point in the same direction. While in some countries socio-cultural issues only loosely matter in political competition, in others it is the predominant arena of political conflict. Let us consider the four alternative assessments of the ‘other’ dimension in turn.

Cohesiveness of the ‘Other’ Dimension

To investigate the compactness of the socio-cultural dimension as measured by the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (Hooghe et al. 2010; Bakker et al. 2012), we perform principal factor analysis on the nine policy-specific questions included in the 2006 and 2010 rounds of the CHES. These items were designed to measure the latent dimension and consist of questions about the party leadership’s positions on: social lifestyle (e.g. homosexuality), the role of religion in politics, immigration policy, the trade-off between civil liberties vs. law and order, multiculturalism vs. assimilation to integrate newcomers, urban vs. rural interests, political decentralization to regions/localities, participation in international security and peacekeeping missions, and ethnic minority rights.

Principal factor analysis with varimax rotation reveals substantial variation in the cohesiveness of this latent dimension throughout the party systems of Europe. In some countries as few as two factors emerge with eigenvalues greater than one, while in others as many as four factors reach this conventionally acceptable level. Knowing the number of factors does not, however, provide enough information on the relative significance of the various factors in each country. For example, although Poland displays three factors with eigenvalues greater

than one in 2010, the first factor explains the vast majority of the variance, while the other two have much lower explanatory power. In the Czech Republic, however, the first three of four factors over one are almost equal to one another. Table 2 summarizes the results of the factor analyses.

In order to summarize the relative strength of the factors across the various country contexts, we develop an index that represents the cohesion of the ‘other’ dimension across Europe. The index³ sums the relative size of the eigenvalue of each of the first four principal factors⁴:

$$Cohesion = \sum_{i=1}^4 \left(\frac{Ev_i}{\sum_{i=1}^4 Ev_i} \right)^2$$

The closer to 1 on this index, the more cohesive the dimension. In fact a score of 1 on this index suggests that the first factor explains all the variance of the analyzed items, and the subsequent factors explain none – the dimension is totally cohesive. Table 2 summarizes the values of the *cohesion index* for each country and year. Although the cohesiveness index values for a country are rather consistent across the two waves of the survey, the differences in the values cannot be explained by simple distinctions between western and eastern European countries. The extreme opposites: Slovakia with the lowest value of 0.266 in 2010, and Hungary with the highest value of 0.611 in the same year, are both post-communist countries.

Party Competition over the ‘Other’ Dimension

Our second analysis addresses the extent to which parties compete over the ‘other’ dimension in Europe. Scholars frequently simplify party competition to a two dimensional abstraction spanning economic and socio-cultural issues, and assume that the two dimensions are orthogonal to one another (Kitschelt 1992; Laver and Hunt 1992; Kitschelt 1994; Hooghe et al. 2002; Marks et al. 2006; Kriesi et al. 2008). In practice these dimensions are related, but the assumption of orthogonality is often useful for representational purposes⁵.

³This index was initially developed by Rovny and Marks (2011).

⁴The index considers only the first 4 principal factors because this is the highest number of factors with eigenvalues over 1 in our data. This avoids including factors with negative eigenvalues that may be produced by principal factor analysis (as opposed to principal component analysis).

⁵Similarly, maps of Europe assume that the north-south and east-west axes are orthogonal, even though that is only true on the equator (not in Europe) or along one selected meridian (but not more). Orthogonality is a useful simplification even if it is empirically incorrect.

Table 2: Factors and Cohesion Index

Country	Year	EV fac.				Country	Year	EV fac.				No. of factors	Cohesion Index		
		1	2	3	4			1	2	3	4				
Austria	2006	5.91	1.35	1.24	0.44	3	0.482	Italy	2006	4.42	2.38	1.03	0.34	3	0.395
Austria	2010	5.73	1.72	1.42	0.12	3	0.468	Italy	2010	3.94	2.25	1.31	0.39	3	0.361
Belgium	2006	4.40	2.06	1.30	1.07	4	0.339	Latvia	2006	3.70	2.28	1.39	1.30	4	0.300
Belgium	2010	4.59	2.14	0.77	0.72	2	0.395	Latvia	2010	3.96	3.38	1.50	0.17	3	0.362
Bulgaria	2006	3.20	3.15	1.47	1.06	4	0.297	Lithu.	2006	3.47	1.85	1.84	1.11	4	0.294
Bulgaria	2010	3.45	1.85	1.58	1.55	4	0.284	Lithu.	2010	3.90	2.31	1.78	0.31	3	0.345
Czech R.	2006	2.77	2.65	2.26	1.27	4	0.267	Netherl.	2006	4.53	2.82	1.16	0.32	3	0.384
Czech R.	2010	4.21	2.05	1.53	1.16	4	0.320	Netherl.	2010	4.27	2.69	1.04	0.81	3	0.350
Denmark	2006	3.58	2.25	1.68	1.30	4	0.288	Poland	2010	5.98	1.46	1.36	0.13	3	0.499
Denmark	2010	4.66	2.16	1.77	0.31	3	0.374	Portugal	2006	4.43	2.45	2.11	0.01	3	0.372
Estonia	2006	4.69	2.50	1.35	0.46	3	0.374	Portugal	2010	3.78	2.81	2.11	0.30	3	0.330
Estonia	2010	3.61	2.89	2.29	0.16	3	0.332	Romania	2006	4.26	3.20	1.32	0.13	3	0.380
Finland	2006	4.64	2.26	1.43	0.60	3	0.364	Romania	2010	3.41	3.05	1.42	1.08	4	0.300
Finland	2010	4.45	2.16	1.25	1.07	4	0.341	Slovakia	2006	4.30	2.59	1.78	0.13	3	0.367
France	2006	5.21	1.93	1.44	0.33	3	0.416	Slovakia	2010	2.85	2.49	2.02	1.35	4	0.266
France	2010	5.60	1.82	1.35	0.11	3	0.464	Slovenia	2006	4.75	2.17	1.24	0.73	3	0.371
Germany	2006	3.85	3.02	1.19	0.90	3	0.326	Slovenia	2010	5.09	2.71	1.09	0.05	3	0.431
Germany	2010	5.61	1.69	1.67	0.02	3	0.459	Spain	2006	5.44	2.10	0.74	0.17	2	0.485
Greece	2006	6.32	1.45	1.20	0.03	3	0.537	Spain	2010	4.66	2.26	0.81	0.80	2	0.386
Greece	2010	5.96	1.53	1.23	0.22	3	0.493	Sweden	2006	4.57	2.14	1.94	0.20	3	0.374
Hungary	2006	6.40	1.36	1.11	0.12	3	0.544	Sweden	2010	5.10	1.76	1.15	0.71	3	0.406
Hungary	2010	6.76	1.88	0.22	0.12	2	0.611	UK	2006	4.73	2.81	1.17	0.14	3	0.404
Ireland	2006	4.89	3.38	0.66	0.06	2	0.443	UK	2010	6.46	1.33	1.06	0.12	3	0.555
Ireland	2010	3.20	3.09	2.65	0.05	3	0.332								

Parties take positions within this two dimensional space with respect to voters and each other, and formulate ideologies that connect their positions across theoretically separable dimensions. Consequently, parties do not fall randomly onto this two-dimensional space. The structure of party placement can be summarized into an ‘axis of competition’ (Kitschelt 1994). In a two-dimensional political space, the axis of party competition is the relationship between party positioning on dimension x and dimension y :

$$y = \alpha + \beta x$$

Here α is the intercept, while β represents the slope of the competition axis in the two-dimensional political space. This slope is important for our purposes. It outlines the proportion between competition occurring along dimension x ($\beta \rightarrow 0$) or dimension y ($\beta \rightarrow \pm\infty$).

It is possible to draw the regression line that summarizes the positions of political parties within this two dimensional space. The parties’ preferences on the economic left-right dimension, e.g. stances on the redistribution of wealth and an active role for the state in managing the economy, determines the positions on the x axis. The parties’ preferences on the socio-cultural ‘other’ dimension determines the positions on the y axis. The steeper the slope of the line that connects the parties in this two dimensional space, the greater the variation in party positions on the y axis and the more similar the party positions on the x axis. An important indication that political competition is structured by a given dimension is that this axis of competition is relatively simple and coherent because this: simplifies linkages between party leadership and citizens (Layman and Carsey 2002 788), facilitates voter mobilization (Aldrich 1995), and provides a cognitive heuristic for voter decision-making (Downs 1957, Hinich and Munger 1996). We expect that the ‘other’ dimension will structure party competition more in countries where the parties more clearly differ from one another on the authoritarian-liberal social dimension than in their positions on economic left-right.

We produce two measures of the axis of competition. One is the coefficient β from a regression where each party is weighted by its vote share. This reflects the intuition that larger parties are more influential in framing party competition. The other measure takes an absolute value of the weighted β coefficient. The greater this value, the steeper the axis of competition, and consequently the greater the competition along the socio-cultural, rather than the economic dimension. Table 6 in the appendix summarizes the values of the weighted and absolute β coefficient.

As with the cohesiveness index, we again see considerable variation in the amount of competition taking place on cultural politics when measured by the axis of competition. Further, there are striking similarities in the trends between the two measures. Note, for

example, that in Hungary, a country with an extremely cohesive socio-cultural dimension, the ‘other’ dimension is also particularly important for party competition, while Slovakia in 2010 presents an extremely non-cohesive second dimension which also appears less important in political conflict according to the axis of competition. Given the divergent degree to which political conflict occurs along the economic and socio-cultural dimension in Europe, we expect that expert placements of parties should reflect this relative dimensional significance as well.

Expert Uncertainty on the ‘Other’ Dimension

Experts are generally better at evaluating party positions on more salient issue dimensions (Steenbergen and Marks 2007). We expect that experts will more confidently place parties on the socio-cultural dimension when this dimension plays a greater role in political competition of the given party system. Consequently, the (un)certainty of expert placements of parties on the socio-cultural dimension, measured by the expert’s standard deviations, should indicate the clarity or vagueness of competition over this dimension. While expert standard deviations are measured at the party level in the CHES survey, here we aggregate these measures to arrive at a general, country-level (un)certainty over experts’ socio-cultural placement. Table 6 also summarizes the expert standard deviations of the ‘other’ dimension⁶, showing low levels of uncertainty for Hungary, a country where non-economic competition is highly salient, and higher levels of uncertainty for Slovakia, where there is less structure and political significance to the ‘other’ dimension.

Voting Behavior and the ‘Other’ Dimension

Our final assessment of competition over the ‘other’ dimension considers voting behavior. Voters support political parties for a number of reasons. Concerning ideological considerations, voters can differentiate between their preferences on economic and socio-cultural issues. Scholars generally believe that major parties compete over the primary – most often the economic dimension – while minor or niche parties compete over the socio-cultural or other dimensions (Meguid 2005, 2008; Hobolt & De Vries 2010; Rovny & Edwards 2012; De Vries & Hobolt 2012).

Our evidence demonstrating significant variance in the extent to which party systems compete over the ‘other’ dimension, however, suggests an alternative expectation⁷. We ex-

⁶This is based on the gal-tan standard deviations in the CHES data.

⁷Our expectation does not conflict with the view that major parties compete on the primary dimension, while minor and niche parties compete on the secondary dimension. It simply questions the extent to which

pect that in systems where the socio-cultural dimension attracts greater competitive attention, voters are more likely to consider their socio-cultural preferences, even when deciding between major political parties. Consequently, by measuring the extent to which voters consider socio-cultural versus economic issues when voting for major parties, we gain our final method of assessing of the competitive significance of the ‘other’ dimension.

We produce this measure by specifying a vote-choice model. The dependent variable is vote for major left versus major right parties⁸. This choice is modeled as a function of economic and socio-cultural preferences. These are operationalized as factor scores combining voter positions on economic⁹, and socio-cultural¹⁰ issues. The model is estimated in each party system using logistic regression analysis, and controlling for age, gender, education and income:

$$vote\ choice = \beta_0 + \beta_1 * economic\ preference + \beta_2 * socio-cultural\ preference + \beta_3 * age + \beta_4 * gender + \beta_5 * education + \beta_6 * income$$

This vote choice model produces estimates for the coefficients of interest, β_1 and β_2 , in each country. Their relative values reflect the relative significance of economic versus socio-cultural preferences in voting behavior. To summarize the impact of economic and socio-cultural preferences by country, we produce two measures. The first considers the difference: $Difference = |\beta_2| - |\beta_1|$. The second considers the ratio: $Ratio = \frac{|\beta_2|}{|\beta_1| + |\beta_2|}$. These measures are summarized in table 6 in the appendix.

The striking feature of the above-discussed measures tapping the cohesion and significance of the ‘other’ dimension is that they are strongly associated. Table 3 reports the pairwise correlation coefficients of the different measures. All the associations are statistically significant. With the exception of the association between the cohesion index, the expert

the primary dimension is indeed economic and the secondary dimension is socio-cultural.

⁸See table 7 in the appendix for the list of parties considered major left and major right.

⁹This factor is based on principal factor analysis of four economic issue questions from the European Election Survey 2009: Q57 Private enterprise is the best way to solve [country]’s economic problems; Q59 Major public services and industries ought to be in state ownership; Q61 Politics should abstain from intervening in the economy; Q63 Income and wealth should be redistributed towards ordinary people

¹⁰This factor is based on principal factor analysis of seven socio-cultural issue questions from the European Election Survey 2009: Q56 Immigrants should be required to adapt to the customs of [country]; Q58 Same-sex marriages should be prohibited by law; Q60 Women should be free to decide on matters of abortion; Q62 People who break the law should be given much harsher sentences than they are these days; Q64 Schools must teach children to obey authority; Q66 A woman should be prepared to cut down on her paid work for the sake of her family; Q67 Immigration to [country] should be decreased significantly.

standard deviation and vote difference, the correlation coefficients are strong ($r > 0.4$). The expert standard deviations are negatively related to the other measures because the higher the expert standard deviation, the lower their certainty over party placement.

Table 3: Correlation of Measures of the ‘Other’ Dimension

	Cohesion Index	Axis Slope absolute	Expert SD	Vote Difference	Vote Ratio
Cohesion Index	1				
Axis slope absolute	0.475*	1			
Expert SD	-0.196*	-0.460*	1		
Vote Difference	0.231*	0.522*	-0.550*	1	
Vote Ratio	0.439*	0.592*	-0.555*	0.826*	1

Pairwise correlation coefficients. * $p < 0.05$

Furthermore, a principal factor analysis of these five measures produces one factor with eigenvalue greater than one, explaining 96% of the variance. Finally, the Cronbach’s α of these five measures amounts to 0.704. This is quite encouraging given the diverse techniques and data used to construct these measures.

In sum, these analyses suggest that the five measures capture one internally consistent underlying measure of the significance of the socio-cultural dimension. Using different approaches we arrive at reliable orderings of our cases concerning the extent to which the ‘other’ dimension shapes their political competition. We can thus assert with confidence that the ‘other’ dimension is less relevant in countries like Sweden or the Czech Republic, while it is significantly more relevant in countries like Belgium or Hungary. The outstanding question then becomes: what lies behind the variance of the ‘other’ dimension? We consider this matter in the next section.

Explaining the Significance of the ‘Other’ Dimension

Why do some political systems compete along the ‘other’ dimension significantly more than others? The likely answers to this question concern historical, socio-economic and institutional factors. While party systems were shaped by long-standing social divisions and ensuing political alliances, significant changes in the social structure, rising levels of economic development, education and social security, coupled with declining significance of religion, and

increased non-European migration in the post-war era likely altered party competition over the socio-cultural dimension.

The historical account of political competition in Europe suggests that 20th century party systems resulted from lasting historical divisions reaching back to the reformation of the 16th century. Lipset and Rokkan (1967) explain how long-standing conflicts in European societies were translated into political competition represented in party systems. Early, pre-industrial European conflicts, centering on state-church relations and on center-periphery divides, formed the non-economic competition in Europe. Lipset and Rokkan argue that the dawn of industrialization saw the rise of economic contestation in the form of land-industry and worker-owner opposition. The content and significance of the ‘other’ dimension is thus a product of deep historical developments, and early party system formation (Rokkan et al. 1999). The extent to which European systems compete over economic cleavages, versus other divides had been determined by the conflicts and alliances of past centuries (Lipset & Rokkan 1967).

Lipset and Rokkan (1967: 37) provide a summary of historical conflicts and alliances in a number of western European political systems. They derive eight categories of countries depending on the nation-builders’ alignments on the religious and economic fronts. On the religious front, nation-builders either align with a national protestant church (while either facing a significant catholic minority or not); they are secular; or they align with the Roman Catholic church. On the economic front, nation-builders either align with landed aristocracy or with urban interests. Table 4 summarizes Lipset and Rokkan’s categorization.

To operationalize Lipset and Rokkan’s thesis, we develop two measures. First, we simply use Lipset and Rokkan’s eight-point typology, which is conceived as a chronological ordering (cf. Lipset & Rokkan 1967: 38). Since the ordered nature of this measure is questionable, we construct a second measure based on two dummy variables capturing the nation-builders religious and economic alliances. On the religious front, we code collaboration with a national church as 0, and collaboration with the Roman Church as 1. The three countries with secular nation-building elites, Spain, France and Italy, are also coded as 1 given their deep tradition of Catholicism. On the economic front, we code cooperation with urban interests as 0, and cooperation with landed aristocracy as 1. Consequently, the more conservative options (cooperation with or tradition of Catholicism, and cooperation with landed aristocracy) receive higher values on both variables. We then combine these two variables into an additive index, summarized in the far-right column of table 4. This index ranges from 0 (countries with urban-protestant heritage) to 2 (countries with rural-Catholic national tradition). The

Table 4: Lipset and Rokkan Categorization

Type	Religious Front	Economic Front	Country	Religious Dummy	Economic Dummy	Additive Index
1	National Church	Landed	Britain	0	1	1
2	National Church	Urban	Scandinavia	0	0	0
3	National Church <i>Cathol. minority</i>	Landed	Prussia/Germany	0	1	1
4	National Church <i>Cathol. minority</i>	Urban	Netherlands	0	0	0
5	Secular	Landed	Spain	1	1	2
6	Secular	Urban	France / Italy	1	0	1
7	Roman Church	Landed	Austria	1	1	2
8	Roman Church	Urban	Belgium	1	0	1

Source:

Lipset & Rokkan 1967: 37

middle value of 1 denotes mixed cases.

As reviewed above, scholarship after the 1960s contests Lipset and Rokkan’s freezing thesis, pointing to the rise of new socio-cultural political agendas in Europe. The class structure, which no longer hinges on the divide between workers and owners, but rather on different skill endowments, is altered (Kitschelt 2003; Kitschelt and Rehm 2004), while religious attendance declines. The overt politicization of European integration in the last decade of the 20th century fuels Euroscepticism, while decades of immigration led to increasing salience of cultural issues concerning immigration policy and assimilation (Betz 1994, Kitschelt and McGann 1995, Taggart 1995, Lubbers et. al. 2002, Ignazi 2003, van der Brug et. al. 2005, van der Brug and van Spanje 2009, Rovny 2013). This indicates a development of distinct socio-cultural political agendas on the continent in the latter part of the 20th century.

In this context, we expect the prevalence of the ‘other’ dimension to be driven by a number of contemporary socio-economic factors. As suggested by the literature, post-industrial societies are likely to develop particular socio-cultural conflicts. In line with Inglehart’s (1977, 1997, 2008) argumentation, greater economic development, measured by GDP per capita (World Bank), should lead to increased post-materialism, reducing conflict over economic redistributive issues, and opening competition over new socio-cultural concerns. Similarly, the tenacity of traditional religious beliefs, captured by the level of religious attendance, may drive competition on the socio-cultural dimension in the 21st century and we therefore include a measure of religious attendance from the European Election Studies data. This

variable is coded counterintuitively with lower values indicating more frequent religious attendance. Simultaneously, today’s socio-cultural competition is likely to center on ethnic, linguistic and cultural divides. Ethnic fragmentation, operationalized according to Alesina et al.’s ETHNIC measure (2003), together with net migration per capita (World Bank), measure the ethno-linguistic and cultural diversity likely to drive competition over the ‘other’ dimension today.

To assess the significance of the ‘other’ dimension, we fit a regression model¹¹, summarized in table 5. The dependent variable, measuring the prevalence of the socio-cultural dimension in political competition, is the absolute slope of the competition axis (see table 6 in the appendix.). We select this variable over our other measures for a number of reasons. It is the most intuitive measure of relative dimensional significance; it is highly correlated with all our other measures; and we have this measure for the greatest number of observations. We predict the absolute axis slope with the historical variables derived from Lipset and Rokkan’s work. Model 1 in table 5 uses the ordinal eight-category Lipset and Rokkan variable, while model 2 uses the additive index. As mentioned above, we further include measures of GDP per capita, ethnic fragmentation and net migration per capita. Finally, we control for the age of democracy¹², as well as for the level of proportionality of the electoral system as measured by Gallagher’s Disproportionality Index (Gallagher 1991, Gallagher et al. 2011).

The results of the models are striking, even if the low number of observations does caution against overly optimistic interpretation. Both models predict over 72% of the variance of the dependent variable. The most powerful predictors of the prevalence of the ‘other’ dimension are the historical factors defined by Lipset and Rokkan, together with net migration. Indeed, a separate simple regression suggests that the Lipset and Rokkan additive index alone accounts for 57% of the competition axis variance. The political systems that were dominated by national elites aligned with the Roman Catholic church and rural interests in the 19th century exhibit significantly steeper competition axes than systems dominated by national churches and/or urban interests. This is to say that a political alliance between the nation-builders, the Roman church and rural economic elite in the 19th century is associated with greater competitive relevance of the ‘other’ dimension in political conflict more than 100 years later. Greater importance of non-economic issues is also associated with increased

¹¹We rely on OLS regression with cluster corrected standard errors by country, which adjusts for the fact that we include multiple yearly measures for each country.

¹²The age of democracy variable subtracts the year the constitution was formed from the election closest to 2006. Constitution information was collected from the CIA World Factbook (<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>).

Table 5: Explaining the Significance of the 'Other 'Dimension

	(1)	(2)
	Axis	Axis
	Slope	Slope
	Absolute	Absolute
Lipset & Rokkan	0.084***	
<i>8-point Typology</i>	(0.026)	
Lipset & Rokkan		0.268***
<i>Additive Index</i>		(0.061)
GDP/capita	-0.000***	-0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)
Religious Attendance	0.347**	-0.076
	(0.143)	(0.106)
Ethnic Fragmentation	-1.004**	-0.173
	(0.413)	(0.234)
Net Migration/capita	13.883***	8.213**
	(2.607)	(2.924)
Disproportionality	0.028***	0.024**
	(0.008)	(0.009)
Age of Democracy	0.001	0.000
	(0.001)	(0.000)
Constant	-0.124	0.766**
	(0.497)	(0.259)
<i>N</i>	44	44
<i>R</i> ²	0.727	0.721

Robust standard errors clustered by country in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

net immigration. However, separate simple regression shows that the explanatory power of this variable, explaining about 15% of the variance of the competition axis, is limited compared to the historical factors. The results thus underline the primacy of historical divides in explaining the importance of the socio-cultural dimension of party competition in Europe.

Conclusion

We departed from the observation that extensive scholarship views non-economic political issues as secondary, but significant, sources of political competition in contemporary Europe. To assess whether and where these issues combine into a discernible ‘other’ dimension, this paper analyzed the content, cohesiveness and competitive significance of these issues, finding consistent variance in the import of the ‘other’ dimension across the continent. The fact that various data sources and divergent analytical techniques provide a congruous answer to this question is in itself encouraging. It signals that there is structure to the relevance of the ‘other’ dimension. The latter part of the paper thus focuses on explaining this structure.

The primary finding of this analysis is the overwhelming power of historical cleavages in explaining the importance of the ‘other’ dimension in contemporary European competition. Our analyses suggest that the best explanation of current competition over non-economic issues lies in the political conflicts and national alliances of pre-20th century Europe. These divides created a framework for political competition which was erased by neither the coming nor passing of various political regimes; by neither the cataclysmic armed conflicts of the 20th century nor the subsequent reconstructions; by neither the post-war stability and affluence, nor the rise of ‘new politics’ after the 1960s. The framework of political competition in Europe is remarkably stable.

Recently, Franklin and Mackie (2008: 2) have asserted that “[i]n the world of today social cleavages of the type defined by Lipset and Rokkan no longer condition the nature of political life.” Our analysis, however, suggests that the basic structure of European party systems remains diversified from the rather distant past. Our findings concur with Lipset and Rokkan’s (1967: 35) argument that “[t]he crucial differences among the party systems emerged in the early phases of competitive politics, before the final phase of mass mobilization” based mostly on non-economic divides, before the rise of the worker-owner cleavage, which “tended to bring the party systems closer to each other in their basic structure.” Simultaneously, our analysis underlines that the content of the ‘other’ dimension has been altered. Competition over this dimension has little to do with the religious divides pitting

Europeans against each other in centuries past. Migration and ethnic diversity, changing the ethno-cultural fabric of European societies, is at the core of the meaning of the ‘other’ dimension today.

Our finding of structural longevity coupled with issue innovation suggests that European politics may not follow biblical wisdom. The new wine of contemporary non-economic issues seems to fit rather well into old bottles shaped by 19th century glass makers.

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Appendix

Table 6: Measuring the Significance of the ‘Other’ Dimension

Country	Year	Cohesion Index	Axis Slope Weighted	Axis Slope Absolute	Expert SD	Vote Difference	Vote Ratio
Austria	1999		-0.815	0.815			
Austria	2002		-1.301	1.301			
Austria	2006	0.482	-1.134	1.134	1.096		
Austria	2010	0.468	-0.977	0.977	1.390	-0.843	0.279
Belgium	1999		-0.816	0.816			
Belgium	2002		-0.678	0.678			
Belgium	2006	0.339	-0.580	0.580	1.109		
Belgium	2010	0.396	-0.734	0.734	1.264	0.398	0.826
Bulgaria	2002		0.560	0.560			
Bulgaria	2006	0.297	0.621	0.621	1.596		
Bulgaria	2010	0.284	0.334	0.334	1.741	-0.622	0.251
Czech R	2002		0.290	0.290			
Czech R	2006	0.267	0.415	0.415	1.599		
Czech R	2010	0.320	-0.198	0.198	1.795	-1.114	0.108
Denmark	1999		-0.428	0.428			
Denmark	2002		-0.385	0.385			
Denmark	2006	0.288	-0.468	0.468	1.167		
Denmark	2010	0.374	-0.455	0.455	1.382	-1.023	0.331
Estonia	2006	0.374	-0.614	0.614	1.279		
Estonia	2010	0.332	-0.064	0.064	1.620	-0.954	0.244
Finland	1999		-0.284	0.284			
Finland	2002		-0.523	0.523			
Finland	2006	0.364	-0.279	0.279	1.201		
Finland	2010	0.341	-0.084	0.084	1.735	-0.962	0.286
France	1999		-0.589	0.589			
France	2002		-1.418	1.418			
France	2006	0.417	-0.928	0.928	1.620		
France	2010	0.464	-1.145	1.145	1.594	-0.882	0.367
Germany	1999		-0.860	0.860			
Germany	2002		-0.425	0.425			
Germany	2006	0.326	-0.414	0.414	1.294		
Germany	2010	0.459	-0.096	0.096	1.622	-0.240	0.377
Greece	1999		-0.771	0.771			
Greece	2002		-0.464	0.464			

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Country	Year	Cohesion Index	Axis Slope Weighted	Axis Slope Absolute	Expert SD	Vote Difference	Vote Ratio
Greece	2006	0.537	-0.402	0.402	1.643		
Greece	2010	0.493	-0.272	0.272	1.674	-0.827	0.311
Hungary	2002		3.549	3.549			
Hungary	2006	0.544	0.869	0.869	0.987		
Hungary	2010	0.611	2.371	2.371	1.201	0.374	0.726
Ireland	1999		-0.259	0.259			
Ireland	2002		-0.445	0.445			
Ireland	2006	0.443	-0.720	0.720	1.816		
Ireland	2010	0.332	-0.703	0.703	1.457	-0.884	0.215
Italy	1999		-0.487	0.487			
Italy	2002		-0.634	0.634			
Italy	2006	0.395	-0.930	0.930	1.246		
Italy	2010	0.361	-1.299	1.299	1.150	-0.480	0.441
Latvia	2002		0.032	0.032			
Latvia	2006	0.300	-0.359	0.359	2.122		
Latvia	2011	0.362	0.027	0.027			
Lithuania	2002		0.775	0.775			
Lithuania	2006	0.294	0.352	0.352	1.233		
Lithuania	2010	0.345	0.475	0.475	1.670	-0.573	0.062
Netherlands	1999		-0.465	0.465			
Netherlands	2002		-0.555	0.555			
Netherlands	2006	0.384	-0.229	0.229	1.810		
Netherlands	2010	0.351	-0.221	0.221	1.621	0.421	0.591
Poland	2002		0.557	0.557			
Poland	2006		1.044	1.044	1.319		
Poland	2010	0.499	0.701	0.701	1.373	-0.476	0.378
Portugal	1999		-1.271	1.271			
Portugal	2002		-0.977	0.977			
Portugal	2006	0.372	-0.967	0.967	0.977		
Portugal	2010	0.330	-1.090	1.090	0.528	0.042	0.517
Romania	2002		0.926	0.926			
Romania	2006	0.380	0.748	0.748	1.357		
Romania	2010	0.300	0.296	0.296	1.685	-0.153	0.308
Slovakia	2002		0.338	0.338			
Slovakia	2006	0.367	-0.117	0.117	1.718		
Slovakia	2010	0.267	0.329	0.329	1.784	-1.619	0.025
Slovenia	2002		1.002	1.002			

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Country	Year	Cohesion Index	Axis Slope Weighted	Axis Slope Absolute	Expert SD	Vote Difference	Vote Ratio
Slovenia	2006	0.371	-1.491	1.491	1.580		
Slovenia	2010	0.431	-1.919	1.919	1.619	0.312	0.569
Spain	1999		-1.038	1.038			
Spain	2002		-1.041	1.041			
Spain	2006	0.485	-1.398	1.398	1.008		
Spain	2010	0.386	-1.323	1.323	1.181	0.434	0.565
Sweden	1999		-0.433	0.433			
Sweden	2002		-0.073	0.073			
Sweden	2006	0.374	-0.403	0.403	1.459		
Sweden	2010	0.406	-0.300	0.300	2.112	-1.821	0.238
UK	1999		-0.981	0.981			
UK	2002		-1.264	1.264			
UK	2006	0.404	-0.867	0.867	1.101		
UK	2010	0.555	-0.702	0.702	1.315	-0.680	0.373

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Table 7: Party Families

Major Right		Major Left	
OVP	Austria	SPO	Austria
MR	Belgium	PS	Belgium
VLD	Belgium	KzB	Bulgaria
CD&V	Belgium	CSSD	Czech R
NVA	Belgium	SD	Denmark
GERB	Bulgaria	PSOE	Spain
ODS	Czech R	EK	Estonia
V	Denmark	SDE	Estonia
PP	Spain	SDP	Finland
IRL	Estonia	PS	France
ER	Estonia	SPD	Germany
KOK	Finland	PASOK	Greece
KESK	Finland	MSZP	Hungary
UMP	France	LAB	Ireland
CDU	Greece	PD	Italy
ND	Greece	SC	Latvia
KDNP	Hungary	LSDP	Lithuania
FIDESZ	Hungary	PvdA	Netherlands
FF	Ireland	SLD	Poland
FG	Ireland	PS	Portugal
PDL	Italy	PSD	Romania
JL	Latvia	SD	Slovenia
TP	Latvia	Smer	Slovakia
TS	Lithuania	SAP	Sweden
CDA	Netherlands	LAB	UK
VVD	Netherlands		
PiS	Poland		
PO	Poland		
PSD	Portugal		
PD-L	Romania		
PNL	Romania		
SDS	Slovenia		
SDKU-DS	Slovakia		
M	Sweden		
CONS	UK		