

Political institutions and the social anchoring of the vote

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1. Introduction

Does the fact that individuals share certain important social, demographic or group-membership features make them likely to make similar voting choices? How much are those choices and the party system configurations that result from them anchored in measurable social features of voters? In other words, how strong is structural voting – ‘the extent to which party choice is determined by voters’ structural positions’ (Van der Brug 2010) – in different countries?

There are at least three main things that, in the last decades, electoral research have established with regard to these issues. First, there seems to have been a point in time in the history of (at least some) democracies when the answer to the questions in the previous paragraph was ‘a lot’. Famously, Lipset and Rokkan (1967) suggested that social cleavages along religious, class and other lines, had contributed, during democratization processes and in historically contingent combinations, to define social groups of voters with conflicting interests and values, as well as corresponding party labels and organizations representing those groups. Such alignments between voters and parties were made stable both through political socialization and parties’ organizational linkages to society, particularly through the role of unions and organized religion. By the time Lipset and Rokkan wrote, it was argued that those alignments, reflecting processes that had taken place many decades before, had become ‘frozen’, a diagnostic that confirmed by immediately subsequent works (Rose and Urwin 1969). This seemed to square rather well with a particular view about what allowed parties to perform a representative role in a democracy: a *popular* claim to representation (Saward 2010), based on the notion that mass parties, rooted in social cleavages, could function mainly as ‘agents’ or ‘vehicles’ for relatively stable and enduring social interests.

The second that seems relatively established is that, as ‘social cleavage theory’ was being proposed, this supposedly frozen ground was already thawing. The signs

became clear since the early 1970s and have accumulated with time. The most telling and synthetic indications were the increases in electoral volatility detected in Western democracies (Pedersen 1979; Budge 1982; Dalton, McAllister, and Wattenberg 2002) and the declining importance of social membership variables as predictors of vote choices in studies based on post-election surveys. To be sure, the latter diagnostic is not entirely unanimous. It has been argued that several fundamental social markers of one's resources, values, and interests continue to be or have even increasingly become – as in the case of gender – significant correlates of the vote in several countries (Manza and Brooks 1998; Evans 2000; Brooks, Nieuwbeerta, and Manza 2006). However, when we move our attention from the effects of particular variables on the vote to our overall ability to explain vote choices in elections on the basis of socio-structural variables, most of the evidence points to the notion that our combined knowledge of voters' occupational status, organizational memberships, religious affiliation, and religiosity, for example, has become decreasingly useful to account for the variety of electoral choices they make. Whether one treats the vote as a choice between a party of the left and a party of the right (Dalton, Flanagan, and Beck 1984; Franklin, Mackie, and Valen 1992; Oskarson 2005), as a discrete choice without any pre-imposed unidimensional left-right structure (Nieuwbeerta and De Graaf 1999; Dalton 2002; Knutsen 2004; Van der Brug, Hobolt, and de Vreese 2009; Van der Brug 2010), or both (Franklin 2009), the observed trend is, generally speaking, one of declining explained variance by models of vote choice.

The third basic finding that emerges from this literature is that the extent to which the vote is socially anchored seems to vary widely between political systems, independently of any underlying trend of decline. All of the above-cited studies that detected a 'decline in cleavage politics' have also observed such cross-national variations. They have been less successful, however, in finding explanations for them. Much of the difficulty arises from the limited sources of data that have been available so far. Until the emergence of projects such as the *Comparative Study of Electoral Systems* (CSES), available evidence about the strength of socio-structural voting was limited to a restricted number of comparatively well-studied advanced electoral democracies with an established tradition of national election studies. Although such 'most similar systems' design was well suited to the detection of trends over time in a particular set of countries,

it was less well suited for the explanation of cross-national differences. Furthermore, the degrees of freedom available to scholars wishing to test hypotheses in any systematic fashion remained small.

The main goal of this chapter is to address this shortcoming in the literature. Along the lines of the theoretical framework of this volume, I will examine the extent to which variations in political institutions help explaining the extent to which party systems are different in terms of the social anchoring of the vote in legislative elections. In particular, I am interested in the role of those institutional rules that structure how votes are converted into seats in legislative elections and govern policy-making and executive-legislative relations. It has often been argued that those rules are likely to be consequential for structural voting. As Kitschelt puts it in a recent discussion concerning cross-national variation in the role of social cleavages in vote choices, the decisions made by voters in elections are ‘refracted’ by the institutional rules ‘that codify in a democracy what preference articulations count (votes) and how they count in the choice of representative bodies and executives’ (Kitschelt 2010: 661). In other words, rules organizing elections and policy-making are likely to have consequences for the likelihood that stable alignments between parties and socially defined groups of voters can be formed and sustained through time. However, as I will explain later in the chapter, results of the few existing empirical studies in this regard have been somewhat contradictory (Norris 2004; Huber 2011), and they have neglected to systematically examine the importance of institutional factors other than electoral systems. Furthermore, I will confront findings about the importance of institutional contexts for structural voting with other conventional hypotheses, namely those focusing on the role of social modernization and a country’s experience with democratic rule.

The chapter takes advantage of the CSES data in order to address these sources of cross-national variations in a relatively large – albeit if only in comparison with most previous studies – number of democracies and elections. It provides, as far as I know, the first multivariate and multilevel analysis of the correlates of variations in structural voting across countries. I proceed as follows. The next section – section two – presents and discusses several theoretical arguments and hypotheses about the kind of fundamental structural system-level characteristics of polities that may affect why the social anchoring

of the vote should be deeper in some countries than in others. Section three, after discussing the measurement problems involved in the study of structural voting, presents the empirical analysis. In a first stage, I follow Huber's (2011) approach, originally developed for the study of ethnic voting, to estimate indices that capture the extent to which, in a particular national election, an individual's vote choice can be predicted by simply knowing things like that individual's gender, whether he or she belongs to a union, his or her socio-economic status, and his or her religious affiliation and frequency of religious attendance. Then, in a second stage of this multilevel analysis, I examine the extent to which political institutions and other system-level factors explain variations in those indices. Section four concludes.

2. Why system-level differences in the social anchoring of the vote?

What political, institutional, and social macro-level factors explain why, in some countries, the social characteristics of voters may be better predictors of the vote than in others? In other words, what contextual factors explain differences in the extent to which voting choices are socially anchored? In this section, I present four main hypotheses. While some have already been explicitly advanced as explanations of cross-national variations in structural voting, others, to my knowledge, have not.

2.1 Electoral rules and types of democracy

In their seminal work on the subject, Lipset and Rokkan pointed out that, to a great extent, political institutions were shaped by the configuration of interests in society. The choice of an electoral system, for example, was to a large extent a reflection of existing cleavages and of the efforts of established parties to 'consolidate their position' (Lipset and Rokkan 1967: 30). However, Lipset and Rokkan also provided illustrations of how institutions ended up, in turn, affecting the incentives of political and social actors to engage in alliances or to preserve pre-existing divisions, and thus the particular shape of party systems and party alignments with society. Electoral rules, for example, by imposing different thresholds for political representation of emerging social movements, created different incentives for alliances with already established parties (Lipset and Rokkan 1967: 31). Similarly, they called attention to the extent to which particular

‘traditions of decision-making’ – more or less centralized, more or less accommodating of conflicts – affected the likelihood that new inputs into the political system might be converted into policy and, thus, the adoption of more or less confrontational and divisive strategies of emerging social interests and movements (1967: 26). In sum, Lipset and Rokkan were not really proposing any kind of sociological determinism in what concerned the shape and anchoring of party systems, and were quite willing to concede something that later research was to establish more clearly: that the nature of the party system and its alignment with social interests is the result of a interaction between pre-existing cleavage structures and established institutional rules (Ordeshook and Shvestova, 1994; Neto and Cox, 1997).

This suggests possible paths for the exploration of the relationship between electoral rules and the extent to which structural voting may prevail in a particular democracy. One generic argument that has been advanced is that, in majoritarian electoral systems, in order to secure the electoral majorities which are necessary to obtain power, parties have incentives to extend their electoral appeals beyond the confines of narrowly defined social groups. Conversely, if more permissive electoral rules allow parties to form and survive by exploring socially defined electoral niches – as it tends to be the case in PR systems – clearer alignments between parties and social groups become more likely (Horowitz 1993; Norris 2004).

In fact, taking into account the logic of ‘winner-take-all’ politics and Lipset and Rokkan’s own arguments about ‘traditions of decision-making’, a broader argument could be plausibly made about different ‘types’ of democracy, rather than just electoral rules. Lijphart’s seminal distinction between majoritarian and consensual democracies (Lijphart 1984; 1999) suggests that electoral laws combine with other institutional features to form two different types of democracy, majoritarian and consensual, organized around the basic principles of, respectively, concentration of power and its diffusion. PR systems, higher levels of party system fractionalization, strong parliaments, and coalition cabinets all tend to go together in existing democracies, fostering a general diffusion of power. Conversely, majoritarian electoral systems, lower levels of party system fractionalization, weak ‘arena’ parliaments, and majority governments combine to foster concentration of power.

This concentration of power seems inimical to the preservation of party appeals directed at particular social groups or to the generation of socially homogeneous party constituencies. The more the system is governed by a winner-take-all logic – with little room for accommodating minority interests through participation in the executive and lack of institutional and partisan checks on executive power – the more parties are left with little avenues to seek their goals besides pure electoral victory, which in turn requires the abandonment of narrow appeals aimed at mobilizing particular social segments of the electorate. And if levels of party fractionalization are lower – another element of majoritarian politics – the existence of cross-cleavages becomes more likely, leading parties to deemphasize certain cleavages and to blur conflicts in those dimensions where their bases are divided (Zielinski 2002).

What has been the empirical support for these hypotheses? Dalton, for example, finds the predicted relationship between the number of parties and ‘class voting’: the more fractionalized are party systems, the stronger the relationship between social class and vote choice (Dalton 2008). More generally, Norris (2004) shows that, under majoritarian electoral systems, structural features of voters tend to explain less variance in the vote than in PR or mixed systems. However, not all findings point in this general direction. Huber (2011), for example, in the context of the study of ethnic voting, finds it to be *weaker* in PR systems than in majoritarian systems. He speculates that this may result precisely from how easy it is, in PR systems, to mobilize voters on different issues. Given the heterogeneity of preferences in members of any social group, parties aiming to attract voters on the basis of an ethnic appeal soon find competition from other parties who try to attract them on the basis of other appeals, something that contributes to ‘diffuse the cohesiveness of group voting behaviour’ (Huber 2011). In sum, the empirical evidence concerning the relationship between majoritarian or consensual political institutions or some of its components – such as the electoral or the party systems – has remained somewhat contradictory to this day.

2.2 Presidentialism

There may be more to say about the relationship between political institutions and structural voting than focusing exclusively on the electoral rules that prevail in legislative

elections or the extent to which a democracy is ‘majoritarian’ or ‘consensual’. An additional hypothesis, as far as I know, has not yet been systematically investigated: it relates *presidentialism* to a lower social anchoring of the vote.

Of course, some of the possible consequences of presidentialism are, in a sense, partially captured by the notions of ‘consensual’ vs. ‘majoritarian’ democracy. If we focus strictly on the composition of executive power, presidentialism’s election rules and unipersonal executive office already ensure, by definition, ‘majoritarianism’, and whatever effects we expect of majoritarian institutions on structural voting would not require any consideration of ‘presidentialism’ per se. However, there might be additional aspects of presidential systems that, in comparison with parliamentary systems – regardless of whether they are majoritarian or consensual – are likely to make structural voting less prevalent. The crucial aspect here concerns the separate origin and survival of the executive in relation to the legislature that characterizes presidentialism and the consequences it brings about for the establishment of links between social groups and the parties that present themselves in legislative elections.

On the one hand, it is not indifferent whether legislative elections coexist with presidential elections that determine the composition of the executive, as in presidential systems, or whether legislative elections solely contribute to determine the executive’s composition, as in parliamentary systems. In the former case, voters are systematically exposed to two different sorts of electoral appeal: from parties, in legislative elections, and from candidates, in presidential elections. Given the incentives provided by the majority rule for their election, policy positions and electoral appeals on the part of presidential candidates tend to be more personalized, more centrist, and more aimed at the median voter (Wiesehomeier and Benoit 2009). What this also means is that, in presidential systems, even legislative elections run under PR can be contaminated by a majoritarian logic. As far as we know, this is precisely what seems to happen. Samuels and Shugart (2010), for example, show that in the rare instances where we are able to observe moves from pure parliamentary regimes to rules that promote a separation between origin and/or survival of the executive and legislature, we also tend to observe a change in the organization and behaviour of parties that leads – at least for the larger parties – towards ‘vote-seeking’ strategies, greater personalization of politics, and a lower

importance of ideology in legislative elections than what happened in a pure parliamentary system. In other words, under presidentialism, party appeals in legislative elections tend to become ‘presidentialised’ and permeated by a majoritarian logic, even if the particular institutional rules that govern legislative elections would not lead us to predict such outcome.

On the other hand, the separation in the origin and survival of executives and legislatures that characterizes presidentialism also means that party unity and loyalty in the legislature become less important, giving MP’s less incentives to behave cohesively and breaking linkages not only between legislators themselves but also between them and the party leadership (Carey and Shugart 1995). From this point of view, what presidentialism does to electoral party politics is to allow candidates in legislative elections to differentiate from each other and to serve their specific constituencies, rather than adopting national party platforms and build linkages with broadly defined social groups and interests. There is considerable evidence that presidentialism leads, from this point of view, to greater intraparty divergence, to a ‘personal vote,’ and to a low level of nationalization of politics (Carey and Shugart 1995; Morgenstern and Swindle 2005; Morgenstern, Swindle, and Castagnola 2009). These developments, by being inimical to the establishment of strong and stable links between parties and social groups, should lead us to expect presidential systems to be characterized by lower levels of structural voting.

2.3 Social modernization

Not all hypotheses relating macro contextual features of a political system with the prevalence of structural voting focus on institutional rules. In fact, the most conventional idea about this is that *social modernization* should drive the extent to which voting is socially anchored: the more socially and economically developed a country is, the lower structural voting should be. As the argument goes, modernization has brought about changes in class structures and social stratification that are thought to generate new conflicts of interests, to disturb previous alignments between parties and social groups, and to weaken ties between individuals and those organizations – such as churches or unions – that in the past had given expression to collective identities and worked as

intermediaries between parties and society (Dalton, Flanagan, and Beck 1984; Clark and Lipset 2001; Dalton 2002; Norris 2002). Modernization is also thought to bring along changes such as secularization and the increase of the skills and cognitive mobilization of citizens, and, thus, changes in their generic values and attitudes towards politics, leading to the emergence of new value conflicts that cross-cut previous alignments and undercut the impact of social cleavages - such as class or religion - in the vote. Although there is disagreement on the real nature of those new value cleavages,¹ it is relatively clear that they have generically emerged as a result of the transition from industrial to post-industrial societies and economies.

As it was formulated, this is basically an account of one of the reasons why structural voting is thought to have experienced a secular decline in a particular set of advanced post-industrial democracies. But this account has also been extended to become a hypothesis about what may explain broad cross-national differences in this respect: in more socially and economically developed societies, voting choices should be less anchored in traditional social cleavages (Norris 2004). Empirical support for this hypothesis, however, has remained limited. In what remains, to our knowledge, the broadest cross-national comparison in the literature, Norris compared the strength of ‘cleavage politics’ – as captured by the variance in an ordinal measure of ‘left-right vote’ explained by a model containing variables measuring age, gender, education, income, union membership, religiosity and belonging to a ‘linguistic majority’ – in 37 elections that took place between 1996 and 2002 in 32 countries, using the CSES’s module 1 data. Instead of lower levels of explained variance in the ‘post-industrial’ societies, Norris found, in fact, that the explanatory power of social characteristics of voters was, on average, *higher* in the post-industrial than in the industrial democracies. Of course, the fact that the models were not the same in all countries and elections (with variables such as union membership, religiosity, or belonging to a linguistic majority missing on some of them) and the inclusion of an attitudinal variable (left-right self-placement) as part of this ‘social cleavage’ model suggest questions about the soundness of the comparison and what it might be really capturing. But in any case, the main point is that, even with the

¹ See, for example, Inglehart and Rabier (1986) and Inglehart (1997), on the one hand, and Kitschelt (1994) and Kriesi (1998), on the other.

use of a (comparatively large) set of countries, support for a modernization theory of cross-national differences in structural voting seems to be absent.

2.4 Democratic experience and timing of democratization

A final generic hypothesis I will address in this chapter relates a country's experience with democracy (or the timing of its democratization) with the social anchoring of the vote. There are good reasons to believe this relationship should exist. Mainwaring and Zoco (2007), in their study of electoral volatility in old and new democracies, propose two mechanisms through which one country's democratization may influence the extent to which parties are able to build stable alignments with voters. One argument is that the longer the history of democratic political competition in a particular country, the more likely it is that voters have been able to form partisan attachments and 'that parties win over some relatively stable clientele groups, routinise their electoral appeals and build a more stable base' (Mainwaring and Zoco 2007: 161). In other words, older democracies should exhibit lower levels of electoral volatility, and one of the reasons why that should occur is that the mere passage of time under democratic partisan competition helps forging alignments between parties and stable clienteles.

An alternative mechanism relates the existence of such alignments not to the length of democratic experience in any given moment but rather to the *timing* of democratization. The alignments between voters and parties that Lipset and Rokkan (1967) described in their classic piece were forged in a particular historical period and in set of countries experiencing an opening up of their political structures to competition and participation as they were undergoing crucial 'national revolutions'. In those cases, parties became both the main vehicles for the aggregation of social preferences and the source of social and political identities, reinforced by socialization and links to organizations such as churches and unions (Pizzorno 1981). 'The stronger loyalties and organizations in the earlier cases of democratization helped parties build deep roots in society and helped stabilize patterns of interparty competition' (Mainwaring and Zoco 2007: 166). In contrast, countries that have democratized later have done so in very different social and political contexts. In these countries – so-called 'third wave' democracies – new democratic parties were formed after the emergence of modern mass

media (particularly television) as the main channels of political intermediation, parties played a less central role in the expansion of citizenship, and their formation took place in a context of already weakened links between individuals and secondary organizations (Mainwaring and Torcal, 2006: 209; see also Scarrow 2010). As a consequence, party system institutionalization, citizens' attachments to existing parties, and, thus, the social anchoring of the vote, are likely to be lower in 'third wave' democracies.

However, one of the problems with dealing with cross-sectional data, such as the one we have available for this chapter, is that it becomes very difficult to distinguish the effects of length of *experience* with democracy from the effects of *timing* of democratization. Without panel data, such as the one used by Mainwaring and Zoco, measures of the former will correlate almost perfectly with measures of the latter. Besides, there is another – and deeper – question that needs to be posed in this regard. There is a powerful counter-argument to the notion that voting behaviour in older democracies should be more socially anchored. Instead of contributing to forge increasingly stronger links between social groups and parties, democratic experience may in fact perform the opposite role. The expansion of the suffrage and the transfer of social conflicts to the institutionalized setting of democratic representation, deliberation, and policy-making may precisely serve to defuse the very cleavage-based conflicts that gave origin to those alignments in the first place. As generations succeed and such conflicts find political resolutions, previous loyalties tend not to be transmitted and to gradually weaken (Franklin, Mackie, and Valen 1992). In fact, it may be the case that the relationship between length of democratic rule and structural voting turns out to be the opposite of conventional expectations: one of the consequences of the conflict-resolution process allowed by political representative democracy may be that 'in new and consolidating democracies, cleavages are often of greater importance than in today's established democracies' (Van der Eijk and Franklin 2009: 98). Therefore, we can find in the literature two alternative – in fact, opposite – expectations about the relationship between experience with democracy and the social anchoring of the vote.

3. Socio-structural voting in 34 legislative elections

3.1 Measurement

Studies of the socio-structural anchoring of the vote have remained a battleground between perspectives that focus on the strength of the relationship between specific social/group membership variables and the vote and those that focus on the overall relevance of social differences to vote choices. It is a battleground between what have been described as, respectively, sociological and political science traditions (see Franklin 2009 and 2010). In this paper, our basic research question is clearly linked to the latter tradition. However, even within this generic line of inquiry, many different analytical and methodological choices need to be made, namely in what concerns the manner in which the impact of social variables on the vote can be gauged.

There are a few things one would like to be able to avoid when assessing the strength of structural voting in different countries. The first would be to focus on effect sizes, i.e., on the size of the regression parameters describing the relationship between a particular social demographic feature of voters and their vote choice. Say that one is interested in assessing the importance of religious denomination in explaining vote choices. Since both party systems and the distributions of religious denomination are different in each country, there is no obvious way of aggregating such scores to obtain a generic country-specific measurement of, say, religious voting in different countries. Besides, effect sizes do not take group sizes into account. Imagine that in two countries, 1 and 2, it so happens that Catholics are three times more likely than Protestants to vote for party family A instead of party family B. However, imagine also that, for example, party families A and B are very large in country 1 and very small in country 2. The previous finding, interesting as it is, would tell us little about the overall anchoring of the vote in those countries in terms of religious denomination. This was, in fact, one of the reasons why scholars studying structural voting have tended to pay less attention to effect sizes than to the explained variance in models where vote choices are regressed on independent variables capturing social characteristics of voters (Franklin 2010), thus allowing the examination of general measures of structural voting across time and across countries.

A second thing one would like to avoid, however, is imposing a particular left vs. right coding to the dependent variable – vote choice – in order to obtain comparability

between countries and elections (Franklin, Mackie, and Valen 1992; Norris 2004). Several problems result from this. It is certainly true that, in most Western democracies, the impact of union membership on the vote, for example, can probably be reasonably well gauged by testing the extent to which belonging to a union makes voters opt for a Communist, Socialist or Social-Democratic party instead of a Liberal, Christian Democrat or Conservative party. However, imposing a left-right unidimensionality is unlikely to work well in democracies where alignments between parties and voters may have developed in other historically contingent ways or where the concepts of ‘right’ or ‘left’ are more fluid and indeterminate. Furthermore, while the assumption of ‘left-right unidimensionality’ may work reasonably well when examining the effects of, say, union membership or religiosity on the vote, it is much less clear that it captures the consequences on the vote of being, say, a woman, a farmer, or a member of a particular ethnic group. A related problem that results from coding vote choices in terms of ‘left vs. right’ is one of potential over-aggregation. Even if we stay within Western party systems, the rise of green, left-libertarian or radical right parties (Kitschelt 1988 and 1989; Kitschelt and McGann 1995) in many countries, and the survival of Communist parties in others, raises important doubts concerning how well can a simple ‘left vs. right’ treatment capture the relevant differences between vote choices and how they are related to the social features of voters. In response to these problems, one might feel tempted to solve them by treating individuals in each country and election as having made discrete choices between different parties or party families, without imposing any left-right dimensionality or aggregation, and then use measures of fit resulting, say, from multinomial or conditional logit models, to compare the social anchoring of the vote. Unfortunately, however, although pseudo R-squares and other measures of fit are useful in comparing different discrete choice models predicting the same outcomes and using same sample, they do not provide comparable estimates across data sets and with different choice sets (Tabachnick and Fidell 2007).

One solution to these problems consists on using propensity to vote (PTV) questions for each main party, treating these ‘party utilities’ as dependent variables and turning the unit of analysis into a respondent/party combination, without imposing any aggregation or implied left-right structure in the dependent variable (Van der Eijk and

Franklin 1996; Van der Eijk 2002; and Van der Eijk et al. 2006). This approach has been used in a few analyses of structural voting (Van der Brug, Hobolt, and De Vreese 2009; Franklin 2009; Van der Brug 2010). However, PTV questions² are not available in most post-election surveys. Our CSES surveys, in modules 1, 2 and 3, contain one set of questions that alluringly approximate a PTV measure, i.e., a set of like-dislike scores vis-à-vis all major parties in the party system.³ But as Van der Eijk and Marsh show (2007), like-dislike scores have much worse properties than PTV scores, especially in what concerns the absolutely central aspect of the relationship with actual vote choices.

How to proceed, then? In this chapter, we follow Huber (2011) approach to these problems, developed in the context of the cross-national study of ethnic voting. Consider a country with Blue voters and Green voters, and three parties: Chocolate, Vanilla and Strawberry. How well can one predict whether a randomly selected voter will choose Chocolate, Vanilla or Strawberry on the basis of knowing whether that voter is Blue or Green? How can we, so to speak, measure the ‘colour voting’ phenomenon in this country? Huber’s approach consists on drawing on the Gallagher’s (1991) least-squares index to measure the disproportionality of election systems. However, instead of calculating differences between votes and seats for parties, Huber uses it to calculate indices capturing the difference between vote shares for the electorate as a whole and vote shares for a particular group (say, the percentages of vote for each party among, say, Blue voters). If V_g^j is the proportion of individuals in group g that supports party j , V_j the proportion of individuals in the electorate that support j , and p is the number of parties, then ‘structural voting’ (SV) for a particular group in a given election is obtained by

² One common way of formulating them, used in the European Election Studies, is: “We have a number of parties in [country] each of which would like to get your vote. How probable is it that you will ever vote for the following parties? Please specify your views on a 10-point-scale where 1 means “not at all probable” and 10 means “very probable”.

³ “I’d like to know what you think about each of our political parties. After I read the name of a political party, please rate it on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means you strongly dislike that party and 10 means that you strongly like that party. If I come to a party you haven’t heard of or you feel you do not know enough about, just say so. The first party is PARTY A.”

$$SV_g = \sqrt{\frac{1}{2}} \sum_{j=1}^p (V_g^j - V_j)^2$$

To obtain an overall measure of cleavage voting for the country as a whole, cleavage voting for each party can be summed and weighted by the size of each group. If G is the number of groups and s_g the proportion of group g in the electorate, then

$$SV' = \sum_{g=1}^G (SV_g \times s_g)$$

However, the theoretical maximum of SV' is below 1 and it is sensitive to number of groups. Thus, Huber proposes to weigh SV' by a function of the number of groups:

$$SV = \frac{1}{\sqrt{\frac{G-1}{2G}}} \sum_{g=1}^G (SV_g \times s_g)$$

The properties of SV are particularly interesting for our purposes. First, it ranges from 0 to 1. In our example, if in a given election Blue and Green voters distribute themselves among the parties in the exact same way, $SV=0$. Conversely, if all Blue voters chose one party while all Green voters chose another, $SV=1$. Second, the measure is sensitive to group size. Imagine that Blue and Green voters distribute themselves by parties similarly in two different countries. However, in country 1, Blues and Greens represent equal proportions of the electorate, while in country 2 Greens are only 10% of the electorate. In the latter case, SV will be lower. Finally, weighing by a function of the number of groups ensures that, for any number of groups in any given election, SV will be equal to 0 if the distribution of the vote for each group is the same.

While groups can be defined in ethnic or ethno-linguistic terms, as in Huber's study, they can also be defined in other ways. For example, members and non-members of unions form two groups, and Huber's measure can be used to assess the extent to which knowledge of membership of individuals in a union helps us predicting, in any

given election, his or her vote choice. Men and women form two groups on the basis of gender. Individuals defined in terms of the frequency of their religious attendance can also be thought of as forming groups, and the same occurs with those belonging to different social classes or religious denominations. Thus, using Huber's measure, we can extend our analysis to other manifestations of structural voting. What do we find if we do that? This is the issue addressed in the next section.

3.2 Indices of structural voting

For this analysis, we use 34 post-election surveys conducted in 33 countries, which are contained in the CSES module 2 dataset. We have not considered elections that have taken place in non-democratic regimes, which led to the exclusion of Kyrgyzstan, Hong-Kong, and Russia. Furthermore, we study here exclusively legislative elections, which led to the exclusion of the presidential election surveys in Chile and Peru.

Considering the relevant socio-demographic variables available in the CSES surveys, we focus our analysis on class voting and on its organizational dimension (i.e., trade-union membership), on religious voting (both in terms of religious denomination and religiosity), and on gender voting. Ideally, to get a broader view of structural voting and to replicate Huber's findings, one would like to be able to include a measure of ethnic voting too. However, a question about ethnicity was asked in only 16 of our 34 election surveys, which forced us to exclude ethnic voting from the analysis. Conversely, of the 34 CSES surveys, all contained a question determining whether the respondent belonged to a trade union. Socio-economic status is measured by a nominal variable with four categories, based on answers to questions about the respondent's occupation. The four categories are 'white-collar' (non-manual employees), 'worker' (workers engaged in manual labour), 'self-employed' (covering entrepreneurs, shop-keepers and professionals), and farmers. This variable was available for 28 of the 34 elections considered. Admittedly, this is far from being a very nuanced social stratification measure, something that we should take into account when analyzing our measure of 'class voting' and comparing to other indices, but which in any case does capture the basic distinction between manual and non-manual workers so often employed in many studies.

In the case of religion, we faced a few data problems. First, in several countries, the church attendance question was not asked in the survey. Second, in some of those where the question was indeed asked, the scales used to measure church attendance were different. Therefore, we distinguish simply between individuals who report attending religious services at least once a week (coded as 1) from all other individuals (coded as 0). And in the surveys where no church attendance question was asked but a religiosity question was ('How religious are you?'), we coded as 1 those who responded 'very religious'. Overall, only in two of the 34 countries – Norway and Taiwan – were we left without any way to distinguish highly religious individuals from others. Questions about religious denomination were asked in 29 elections. Finally, we look at gender, for which we have measures in all 34 surveys.

Table 1 displays 157 indices: 34 for both gender and union voting; 32 for religiosity; 29 for religious denomination; and 28 for class (or more appropriately, 'socio-economic status') voting. To improve readability, cells with higher indices are displayed with darker colours. Purely for presentational purposes, countries are sorted by average levels of structural voting, although we should be aware that, for some countries, there are missing cases.

Table 1. Indices of structural voting (SV) in 34 elections

	Social class	Union membership	Religious denomination	Religiosity	Gender
Czech Republic	0.14	0.06	0.21	0.15	0.12
Netherlands	0.07	0.06	0.27	0.14	0.06
Sweden	0.20	0.15	-	0.04	0.07
Switzerland	-	0.11	0.16	0.12	0.06
Slovenia	-	0.02	0.16	0.13	0.08
Canada	0.06	0.06	0.22	0.15	0.05
Finland	0.18	0.09	0.10	0.10	0.04
Bulgaria		0.01	0.30	0.05	0.04
Norway	0.10	0.09	-	-	0.09
Israel	0.08	0.07	0.12	0.13	0.06
Italy	0.12	0.08	-	0.08	0.07
Hungary	0.08	0.10	0.10	0.11	0.04
Belgium	0.09	0.08	0.14	0.07	0.04
Germany	0.08	0.08	0.13	0.10	0.03
Australia	0.06	0.14	0.12	0.04	0.03
New Zealand	0.06	0.07	0.10	0.10	0.06
Romania	-	0.06	0.14	0.04	0.06
Spain	0.14	0.02	0.07	0.12	0.02
Albania	0.11	0.04	0.06	0.05	0.11
Poland	0.12	0.04	0.01	0.13	0.06
United States	0.07	0.05	0.11	0.09	0.04
United Kingdom	0.08	0.10	0.12	0.02	0.04
Iceland	0.10	0.06	-	0.01	0.12
Japan	0.12	0.06	0.02	0.08	0.06
Brazil	0.07	0.04	0.13	0.04	0.05
Portugal 2005	-	0.06	0.07	0.09	0.03
France	-	0.04	0.10	0.05	0.05
Korea	0.08	0.02	0.13	0.01	0.05
Ireland	0.08	0.04	0.04	0.10	0.03
Denmark	0.11	0.04	-	0.01	0.06
Taiwan	0.05	0.04	0.06	-	0.04
Portugal 2002	0.06	0.06	0.00	0.08	0.03
Mexico	0.08	0.03	0.04	0.04	0.03
Philippines	0.06	0.02	0.02	0.04	0.02
Average	0.09	0.06	0.11	0.08	0.05

0.20
0.10
0.00

The first thing that emerges even from a cursory observation of Table 1 is the fact that some countries seem to consistently display either comparatively high or low levels of cleavage voting. The fact that Switzerland, Sweden, or Israel, for example, emerge with comparatively high levels of structural voting in what concerns many socio-

demographic variables, or that the Czech Republic also stands out among Eastern European countries in this respect, is not particularly surprising in the light of previous studies (Norris 2004; Van der Brug 2010). Conversely, countries such as the Philippines, Mexico, and Taiwan appear here, also as in other studies (Norris 2004), with consistently very low levels of structural voting. This suggests the possibility that some common underlying factors may be driving the social anchoring of the electorate down or up, regardless of the particular socio-demographic variable with which one is concerned.

At the same time, however, it is also clear that generic measures of structural voting are likely to miss out on relevant differences in the importance of variables in different countries. In Sweden, for example, social class and union membership appear as comparatively strong predictors of the vote. In the 2002 elections under analysis, both the Swedish Social Democrats and the Left Party did considerably better among the (large number) of union members than, in contrast, the Moderate or the Christian Democratic parties. Similarly, while the Social Democrats did particularly well among workers, those voters who were self-employed or white collar were rather more likely to vote for the Moderate or the Liberal People's Party, while farmers flocked to Centre Party. In contrast, however, religiosity seems to be of almost no consequence in Sweden. The Netherlands exemplifies a contrasting situation. In the 2002 elections, Catholic and (to a lesser extent) Protestant (Calvinist) voters were much more likely to choose the Christian Democratic Appeal party, while the Christian Union party also managed to attract an important share of Protestants (but, predictably, not Catholics). At the same time, individuals professing no religion were rather more likely to vote for the Labour or the Green parties, while the small share of Muslim voters massively concentrated their vote in the Labour party. In contrast, occupational variables played little role in structuring the vote in the Netherlands 2002 election. Although farmers, for example, did seem to display very different voting patterns from other groups defined in terms of socio-economic status, their very small number in the sample ends up resulting in an index of class voting for the Netherlands that is among the lowest in our sample of countries.

Many of these variations in terms of the different prevailing cleavages structuring the vote in different countries have been known for some time. In Rose's seminal study of 12 Western democracies (1973), Scandinavian countries emerged as those where

occupational cleavages contributed more to structure the vote, which in turn appeared to be of little to no relevance in countries such as the Netherlands, Ireland, Canada, the UK or the US. Similarly, he found that the Netherlands stood out as a country where religion played a crucial role, a finding replicated by the more recent comparative study by Van der Brug (2009). Our results, albeit expanding the cross-national scope of comparison, generally tend to replicate these patterns. In other words, even if it the case that structural voting is experiencing a secular decline, many of the known differences between countries seem to be highly resilient.

3.3. The determinants of structural voting

Now equipped with indicators of structural voting that describe the relationship between socio-demographic features of individuals and their vote choices, we can move to the second and central stage of our multilevel analysis: testing hypotheses concerning the relationship between macro-level features and the prevalence of structural voting. The hypotheses are the following:

H1: More consensual democracies should display higher levels of structural voting.

H2: Presidential regimes should display lower levels of structural voting.

H3: Higher levels of socioeconomic development should be associated with lower levels of structural voting.

H4a: Longer experience with democracy/more recent democratization should result in lower levels of structural voting

H4b: Shorter experience with democracy should result in higher levels of structural voting.

Hypothesis 1, stating that consensual democracies should favour a stronger electoral politicization of social divisions, is tested by using the indicator of consensual democracy introduced in chapter 2 earlier in this volume. More specifically, we use the *Consensual democracy on the executive-parties dimension* index (Vater and Bernauer 2009), which is constructed by adding standardized score of variables capturing the

disproportionality of the electoral system, the effective number of parliamentary parties, and the dominance of the executive over the legislature in the period from 1997 up to the date of each election. Values range from -2.45 (United Kingdom) to 1.97 (Belgium). For presidentialism, we use a dummy variable identifying the presidential regimes in the sample with value 1: Brazil, Korea, Mexico, the Philippines and the United States.

A first look at bivariate relationships is relatively encouraging in what concerns the role of political institutions in increasing or decreasing structural voting. Take Figure 1, for example, which displays plots and simple regression lines concerning the relationship between consensual democracy and the different indicators of structural voting in our countries. In all cases, the relationship is positive, as predicted, although clearly stronger in some cases than in others. Similarly, the bivariate relationship between presidentialism and structural voting is in line with what we should expect. Figure 2 shows the average levels of structural voting for presidential and non-presidential regimes: in all cases, structural voting is, on average, lower in presidential than in parliamentary or semi-presidential regimes.

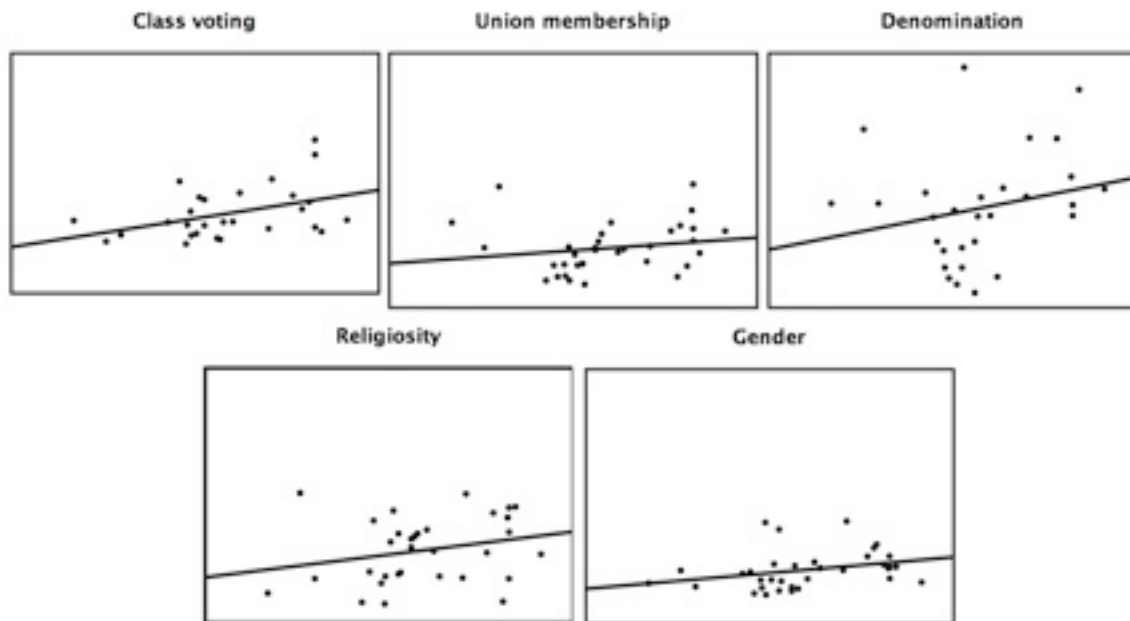


Figure 1. Plots of structural voting indices (y axis) against consensual democracy (executives-parties) index (x axis), with linear regression fit lines.

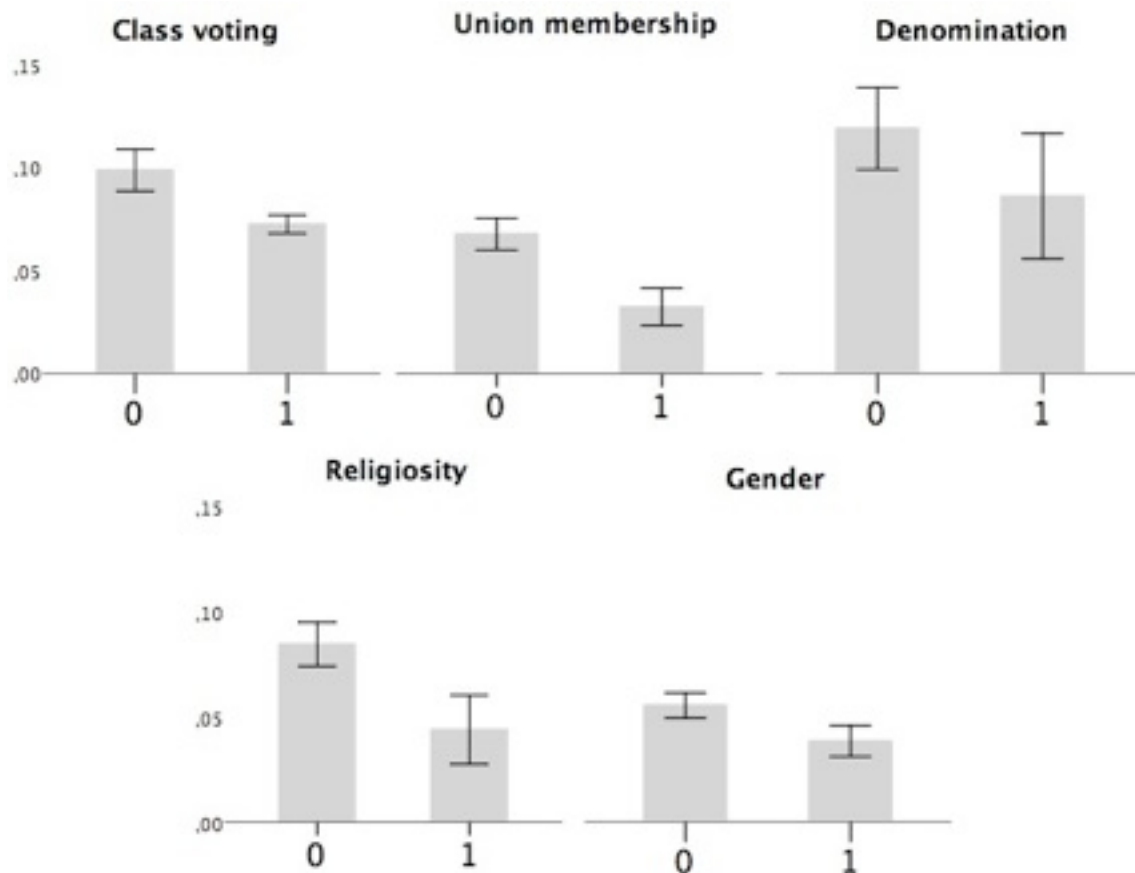


Figure 2. Average values of structural voting indices for presidential systems (1) and parliamentary or semi-presidential systems (0). Error bars are 90% confidence intervals.

To what extent do these relationships resist multivariate analysis? We regressed all structural voting indices on the consensual democracy and presidentialism variables, as well as on the remaining ones relevant for our hypotheses. The notion that structural voting should be lower in highly developed democracies is captured by using GDP per capita at constant 2000 US dollars for each election year in each country (source: World Bank, World Development Indicators). Since the variable is highly skewed – ranging from \$1,073 (Philippines, 2005) to \$38,246 (Japan, 2004) – we use the natural log of GDP per capita. The variable *Years since democratic election* captures the number of years elapsed until the election year since a particular country first had a value of 6 or above on Polity IV’s democracy. Since the variable is also highly skewed, with values ranging from 204 (United States) to 6 (Mexico), we use its natural log. Besides, following Huber (2011), we add a control variable to all models, the level of fractionalization in society along the different socio-demographic variables. As Huber

notes, the extent to which societies are actually diverse along the different socio-demographic variables – or, instead, highly homogeneous – will obviously affect how they serve as predictors of the vote. For this purpose, we use the aggregate distributions found in the different surveys for union membership, socio-economic status, religiosity, and religious denomination, and estimate fractionalization indices for all countries along all variables, using Fearon’s formula (2003).⁴ Finally, for the case of gender voting, we take into account Manza and Brooks (1998) suggestion that higher levels of female labor participation rate (source: World Bank, World Development Indicators) should increase gender voting. We use OLS to regress all structural voting indices on the previously described independent variables. Since the indices vary between 0 and 1 but OLS may lead to predictions outside the range, we employ a logistic transformation of the dependent variable, $\log(CV/(1-CV))$. Table 2 presents the estimates.

Table 2. The determinants of structural voting

	Social class	Union membership	Religious denomination	Religiosity	Gender
Consensual democracy	.07 (.06)	.07 (.09)	.34*** (.10)	.28*** (.09)	.10** (.05)
Presidentialism	-.44*** (.12)	-.50** (.20)	-.65* (.34)	-1.28*** (.32)	-.36* (.18)
(ln) GDP per capita	.10 (.08)	.02 (.12)	-.17 (.26)	-.08 (.14)	.01 (.13)
(ln) Years since democratic elections	-.01 (.09)	.23** (.09)	.04 (.18)	.10 (.17)	-.13 (.10)
Fractionalization	2.50*** (.72)	.58 (.94)	2.99*** (.92)	3.99*** (1.02)	-
Female labour participation	-	-	-	-	.03** (.01)
Constant	-4.63*** (.81)	-4.00*** (1.02)	-2.05 (2.13)	-3.20*** (.90)	-4.08*** (1.08)
N	28	34	29	32	34
R-squared	.42	.45	.47	.50	.30

*p<.10; **p<.05; ***p<.01; White Heteroscedasticity-Consistent Standard Errors in parenthesis

⁴ The exception is gender, where “fractionalization” is basically close to a constant in all countries.

Control variables perform generally as predicted, with higher social fractionalization along the different socio-demographic attributes of individuals leading to a greater strength of structural voting (with the exception of union membership, albeit the sign is positive) and higher participation of women in the labour market leading to more gender voting. We also have a few negative findings. Table 2 shows that hypothesis 3, relating socio-economic development with structural voting, finds no empirical support. There are two cases - union membership and gender voting - where the estimates themselves are very close to zero and, in the remaining cases, the coefficients have opposite signs and are always far from conventional levels of statistical significance. Similarly, the contradictory expectations concerning the relationship between length of experience with democratic rule and the strength of structural voting seem to result mostly in the absence of a relationship between the two variables. Only in the case of union membership voting do we find that it tends to be more prevalent in older democracies. We tried alternative codings of this democracy variable, namely, a simple dummy variable identifying ‘third wave’ democracies (i.e., countries that had become democratic only since 1976) and a measure of years of *continuous* democracy until the date of the election. However, results remained fundamentally unchanged for all models. These null results are also not due to multicollinearity problems: the highest variance inflation factor (VIF) found for any coefficient in any model is 3.02, below the conventional cut-off levels above which multicollinearity starts being a problem.

In contrast, political institutions do seem to go a long way in accounting for why structural voting is stronger in some countries than in others. Early on, we had seen that some countries seemed to display low levels of structural voting across the board, suggesting the existence of common underlying factors that decreased the overall social anchoring of the vote from all points of view. Table 2 shows that presidentialism is likely to be one of those factors. Hypothesis 2 is supported in all cases: all coefficients are negative, as expected, and all are statistically significant at conventional levels. Hypothesis 1 receives a more qualified support. Consensual institutions – with more permissive electoral systems, a larger number of parties, and stronger parliaments – are indeed associated with greater levels of religious and gender voting, but not class or union membership voting.

What is the magnitude of these institutional effects? Table 3 displays marginal effects, capturing the change in the value of the different dependent variables produced by a 1-unit change in the value of our two institutional variables, consensual democracy and presidentialism. For the case of consensual democracy, we also show the predicted effect of a change from the minimum (UK) to the maximum (Belgium) values. In the case of presidentialism, since a dummy variable was used, a 1-unit change and a change from minimum to maximum value are essentially the same thing.

Table 3. Marginal effects

		Social class	Union membership	Religious denomination	Religiosity	Gender
Consensual democracy	1-unit change	-	-	.04	.02	.01
	From max to min	-	-	.18	.09	.04
Presidentialism	1-unit change	-.04	-.03	-.07	-.09	-.02

Although the values themselves may seem small at first sight, they are not so small when we take into account the distribution of the dependent variables. For example, we can gather from Table 3 that, in comparison with parliamentary or semi-presidential systems, presidentialism decreases the predicted value of the index of religiosity-based voting by about two standard deviations and the predicted value of all remaining indices by about one standard deviation. Similarly, if we focus on the effect of a move from the minimum to the maximum value of consensual democracy, voting based on religious denomination is predicted to increase by almost three standard deviations, two standard deviations in what concerns religiosity, and one standard deviation in gender voting. In sum, in spite of the decline experienced in the social anchoring of the vote in modern democracies that the literature has documented, crossnational differences also seem to be, as we also saw early on, considerably resilient. This appears to result, to a considerable extent, from something that is itself equally resilient in any political system: the kind of institutional rules shaping elections, policy-making and executive-legislative relations.

4. Conclusion

Lipset and Rokkan (1967) are often presented as the seminal source for a kind of ‘sociological’ approach to the explanation of voters alignments with parties, through which the emergence of parties, their positions, and the overall shape of the party system are seen as reflection of the composition of social groups and the main cleavages in society. However, as Franklin reminds us, this does not do entire justice to Lipset and Rokkan’s thinking: they ‘expressly recognized that different party systems in different countries resulted from different historical developments and different institutional settings’ (Franklin 2010: 655). Among those institutional settings, they argued, electoral and policy-making rules and norms played an important role (Lipset and Rokkan 1967: 26-31). Thus, if such factors were consequential for the formation of voter-party alignments in early decades of the 20th century, there are good reasons to believe not only that their legacies might still be visible, as Lipset and Rokkan argued was still the case in the late 1960s, but also that they may continue to be relevant for how parties appeal to particular segments of society and how voters respond to those appeals.

What we found was that cross-national differences in the extent to which voting behaviour is socially anchored seem indeed to be largely driven by institutional factors. A major factor – in fact the most systematically operative across all types of structural voting we examined – is one that, given the Western European bent of most comparative studies on ‘cleavage politics’ and its decline, had not been examined yet: presidentialism. Institutional rules that create a separation between the origin and survival of parliaments and executives seem to create disincentives for the adoption, in legislative elections, of appeals to socially defined and rooted groups of voters, thus promoting greater social heterogeneity of party constituencies. In this chapter, we saw presidentialism undermining structural voting of all kinds, including the role of occupational and social class variables, religion, and gender. A second institutional factor that seems to be relevant is, less surprisingly, a country’s type of democracy, in Lijphart’s sense. In democracies where electoral systems are less permissive, where party system fragmentation is lower and executive dominance over policy-making is more pronounced, the anchoring of the vote on religious and gender differences turns out to be weaker. Unlike what occurred with presidentialism, however, not all forms of structural

voting are equally related to the majoritarian vs. consensual aspects of democracy: that is the case, in our countries, with the relationship between vote choices and one's occupational status and union membership, i.e., the traditional markers of the 'class cleavage'.

At the same time, we found that other commonly advanced hypotheses about expected declines (or rises) in structural voting do not seem to work particularly well when trying to account for cross-national variations. It has been suggested, for example, that a country's continued experience with democracy is likely to increase (for some) or decrease (for others) parties' alignments with particular social groups. But with the exception of the relationship between union membership and the vote – apparently a feature more prevalent in older democracies – we found no evidence that this contributes to structure differences between countries. It has also been suggested that social modernization, bringing changes in the composition of social classes, in occupational structures, in the role of the church and unions, and in the cognitive skills of individuals, has decreased the extent to which parties are able to align with social groups. But again, although these explanations may contribute to explain shifts in the strength of structural voting within countries, we found little evidence that they are helpful in accounting for crossnational variations, something that previous studies already suggested (Norris (2004). That 'electoral behaviour is primarily *political* behaviour that is shaped by the supply side of politics at least as much as by autonomous processes in society' (Thomassen 2005: 265) is a message that seems to be resilient to the expansion of our scope of cases beyond Western European democracies.

To be sure, 'economic development' may be far too broad a concept to capture the consequential social variations in this respect. For example, we did see that the integration of women in the labour market, which has taken places at different levels in different countries regardless of levels of 'economic development', was related to greater amounts of gender voting, as previous studies on the United States suggested it might be (Manza and Brooks 1998). And as our results concerning the fractionalization variable suggest, societal contexts and conditions clearly do make a difference. For example, it does not come as a big surprise that in countries such as Portugal, Ireland, the Philippines, or Poland, for example, with tiny religious minorities and an overwhelming

majority of Roman Catholics, religious denomination has failed to emerge as a relevant political cleavage. However, this also suggests that the specific social transformations that can be relevant from this point of view are likely to be both more specific than ‘economic development’ and to affect specific forms of structural voting, rather the social anchoring of the vote in general. It is also true that our ability to make broad comparisons through time and space remains somewhat limited. The addition of more countries and elections to our sample of 34 cases, the introduction of a time dimension, and more refined measures of the social attributes of voters at the individual level would certainly contribute to expand the kind of hypotheses that can be tested and the robustness of the findings. The main message of this chapter, however, is that institutional rules and the incentives they generate for parties and voters are a promising approach to explain variations in the extent to which voting choices remain anchored in social divisions in contemporary democracies and why such anchoring has historically remained stronger in some countries than in others.

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