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978-0-521-71990-2 - West European Politics in the Age of Globalization

Hanspeter Kriesi, Edgar Grande, Romain Lachat, Martin Dolezal, Simon Bornschier and Timotheos Frey

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West European Politics in the Age of Globalization

Over the past three decades the effects of globalization and denationalization have created a division between ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ in Western Europe. This study examines the transformation of party political systems in six countries (Austria, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the UK) using opinion surveys, as well as newly collected data on election campaigns. The authors argue that, as a result of structural transformations and the strategic repositioning of political parties, Europe has observed the emergence of a tripolar configuration of political power, comprising the left, the moderate right, and the new populist right. They suggest that, through an emphasis on cultural issues such as mass immigration and resistance to European integration, the traditional focus of political debate – the economy – has been downplayed or reinterpreted in terms of this new political cleavage. This new analysis of Western European politics will interest all students of European politics and political sociology.

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Preface and acknowledgments

This book is the result of a joint project of two teams of political scientists, one at the University of Zurich, the other at the University of Munich. The origins of this project date back to a hot summer afternoon in 2001, when Hanspeter Kriesi gave a presentation of some of his ideas about the impact of globalization on the transformation of Western European party systems before the special research programme (SFB) on ‘Reflexive modernization’ at the Technical University of Munich. The presentation was well received by the small audience of dedicated colleagues who did bear with the heat. Edgar Grande reacted by proposing to set up a joint comparative research project designed to test these largely speculative ideas. Eventually, the project got going in late 2002, with the joint support of the German Research Foundation (SFB 536 – Project C5), and of the Swiss National Science Foundation (1214-68010.02). Martin Dolezal together with several research assistants joined Edgar Grande to form the Munich team, while Simon Bornschier, Timotheos Frey, Romain Lachat and Hanspeter Kriesi constituted the Zurich team.

The two teams closely collaborated from the start, and evenly divided the challenging task of data collection in six selected countries – Austria, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the UK – between them. We assembled data both for the political supply by the parties, and for the political demand by the voters. Unsurprisingly, our decision not to rely on the readily available expert data for the supply side, nor to use the data provided by the Manifesto group, but to create our own data on the basis of an analysis of the public debate during election campaigns in the media, proved to be particularly consequential. We spent long months setting up the database and eventually coding the selected newspaper articles, ads and TV news. Let us add that, for the Dutch data, we got some decisive help from Jan Kleinnijenhuis and his collaborators from the Free University of Amsterdam, who also provided us with the key methodological ideas for how to code the public debate

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during election campaigns. With regard to the demand side, we used the available election surveys from the different countries. To render these surveys comparable across individual elections and across countries, and make them usable for our own purposes was, however, no mean task, given that there are no standardized formats for election studies in the various European countries. As we suspected, and as the reader will, we believe, come to appreciate on becoming familiar with our work, this investment into the data collection paid off handsomely.

As the corpus on which this book is based was shaping up, we started to present our ideas and tentative results, first to our students and colleagues at our own universities and at the SFB, then to colleagues at conferences in Berlin (a WZB conference on ‘political participation and protest mobilization in the age of globalization’), Budapest (3rd ECPR General Conference), Chicago (Midwest Political Science Association), Duke University (workshop on the ‘analysis of political cleavages and party competition’), Mannheim (the working group ‘Wahlen und politische Einstellungen’ of the German Political Science Association), Munich (a workshop explicitly organized on our preliminary results), Paris (a conference on ‘right-wing extremism in Europe’), Philadelphia (American Political Science Association), Rethymnon (a conference on ‘political change and globalization’) and Vienna (Austrian Political Science Association). We also presented some preliminary results to our colleagues at the SFB in Bremen, the Max-Planck-Institute in Cologne, the Cevipof in Paris, and at universities in Amsterdam, Dublin and Grenoble. We would like to thank all those who attended these presentations, and who provided us with comments. They allowed us to elaborate and revise our thinking about how party systems change in an age of globalization, to correct our interpretations of the six cases we are dealing with here, and to improve several aspects of our statistical analyses. Several colleagues also provided us with precious information on the election studies in their respective countries and helped us with the collection of data from newspapers and TV news. In particular, we would like to thank Kees Aarts, Ulrich Beck, Hans-Georg Betz, Lars-Erik Cederman, Tony Coxon, Roland Erne, Franz Fallend, Matthew Gabel, Olivier Grosjean, Niamh Hardiman, Jude Hays, Simon Hug, Achim Hurrelmann, Galen Irwin, Bob Jessop, Herbert Kitschelt, Jan Kleinnijenhuis, Frank Nullmeier, Philip Manow, Pierre Martin, Erik Neveu, Franz-Urban Pappi, Pascal Perrineau, Philip van Praag,

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