Alignment, realignment and dealignment in multi-party systems : a conceptual and empirical study

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CHAPTER 5

PARTISAN ALIGNMENT, REALIGNMENT OR DEALIGNMENT

"The importance of stable partisan loyalties has been universally recognized in electoral studies, but the manner in which they should be defined and measured has been a subject of some disagreement."
(Campbell, et al., 1960:122)
"Partisanship and vote are very close in parliamentary systems." (Dalton & Weldon, 2007:181)

This chapter focuses on the affiliation of voters to political parties as partisans. It discusses and evaluates the approach of what is called the Michigan School, according to which voters-parties' ties should be studied based on voters' party identification. Due to the major criticism presented by different scholars on the applicability of party identification for European and other multi-party systems, I will also based my study on patterns of long-term party support. This support is expressed by two indicators that measure stable party support in two successive elections. The first indicator is the proportion of those from the electorate who reported voting for the same party, based on individual-level data. The second is its equivalent estimation, the Electoral Total Partisans index (ETP) (which I invented), which is based on measurement of (the complementary number) of the Total Volatility index (TV), based on aggregate data.

This chapter is structured around discussion of partisanship in its two meanings, and the arguments for the decline of partisanship and partisan dealignment. It begins by discussing the interpretation of partisans as party identifiers and presents updated trends of party identifiers. This chapter proves there is no general trend of a decrease in partisans in the ten polities studied in this thesis, and then discusses criticism of the 'party identification' phenomena in multi-party systems. Therefore, it argues for the study of partisanship as durable party support and presents the empirical trends for both indicators of partisanship.

5.1 Dominance and Influence in the Study of Partisanship

The study of the ties between voters and parties is probably one of the most prominent examples of the influence of dominant schools in Political Science literature. In Key's two classic works (1955, 1959), he described changes in the connection between voters and political parties, stating that these shifts occurred as the electorate changed its voting behaviour. Key dealt with the categorisation of elections based on election results as indicators for shifts in voting behavior. Immediately after the publication of Key's articles, Campbell and his colleagues (while following this categorisation) differentiated between elections based on a change in party identifiers (Campbell, et al., 1960:90) (for more on this topic, see (Pomper, 1967). Party identification is a "long-term, affective, psychological identification with one's preferred political party" (Dalton, 2006:179). This different view is based on the Michigan School's emphasis on the function of the concept of party identification. According to the Michigan School, "many people associate themselves psychologically with one or the other of the parties, and that this identification has predictable relationship with their perception, evaluation and actions" (Campbell, et al., 1960:90). They contend that once an individual becomes psychologically attached to a party, he or she will tend to support this party, implying that individuals' psychological party identification is the most important factor for explaining voting behavior (Campbell, et al., 1960:142); see also (Berglund, et al., 2005:107).

The dominance of the Michigan School's explanation of voting behaviour since the 1960s has not only articulated the transmission of the concept 'party identification' to other democratic countries (Borre & Katz, 1973; Butler & Stokes, 1969; Holmberg, 2007), but has also triggered a significant change in the way the phenomena of partisanship is studied.

Up to the publication of Campbell and his colleagues' book – *The American Voter* – the study of (stable) partisanship had been conducted in terms of an individual's past voting record. In their seminal book, Campbell and his colleagues critiqued this assumption, arguing that "such a definition blurs the distinction between the psychological state and its behavioural consequences" (Campbell, et al., 1960:122). The introduction and identification of party identifiers also influenced the way

scholars have defined and studied stability and change in the connection between voters and parties. It is assumed that when a high portion of the electorate changes its party identification and begins to identify with other parties following a stable period, this marks the occurrence of a realignment (Beck, 1974; Inglehart & Hochstein, 1972; Johnston, 1987; Stanley, 1988). Other scholars have followed the same logic, contending that a shrinking party-affiliated portion of voters is empirical evidence for dealignment (Dalton, 2004:32; Inglehart & Hochstein, 1972). Dalton and his colleagues even went one step further and declared that 'dealignment is difficult to detect without measures of partisanship at the individual level' (Dalton, et al., 1984b:14)[1].

5.2 Strong Evidence for Partisan Dealignment?

Numerous studies show changes of party identifiers (in percentages) for individual countries over the years, yet only a few studies have compared the trends in the ten countries examined in this study – Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. These are: Dalton, 2000, 2004; Schmitt & Holmberg, 1995. They all concluded similarly: the level of partisanship has decreased in many European countries, but 'the depth and spread of this development are quite different in different countries and for different periods of time" (Schmitt & Holmberg, 1995:101); see also (Dalton, 2000:25-9; 2004:32). Dalton (who reached similar findings) argued: "[o]ur broader base of empirical evidence now presents a clear picture of partisan dealignment" (Dalton, 2004:32-3); see also (Dalton, 2000:26).

The question remains: is there consensus that all the ten polities under study in this thesis went through partisan dealignment and, if so, when it started?

Firstly, I examine this question using commonly cited indicators – percentages of (strong) party identifiers. Whenever possible, I updated and extended the latest study on this subject (Dalton, 2004), which ended in 1998; this has been done for Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. The results for the other countries

[1] In the same book, Beck (1984b) restricted this argument and stated that this is true only for cases where partisanship reflects a long-standing decision to support a party.

(Austria, Belgium, Finland, Italy, and Luxembourg) were taken from Dalton's book (Table 5.2, p. 33) that presents the longest longitudinal and most up-to-date research available for these polities. I used national election study data whenever available, because they represent the most valid data source for each case (Dalton, 2000:24). In addition, I used socio-demographic weights, if available.

Table 5.1 presents the OLS regression coefficient of percentages of party identification over time (the dependent variable is the percentage of the population having (strong) party identifiers, and the independent variable is the election year as a continuous variable). The use of OLS regression analysis for identifying stability and change in levels of party identifiers is common (see for example, Dalton, 2000; Dalton, et al., 1984a). Using this model, however, has a drawback: the regression coefficients only provide an indication of the existence of a trend (i.e. when the coefficients are different from zero and statistically significant) and the direction of such a trend – increase or decrease (i.e. as the coefficients are negative or positive). Therefore, I could only use the results for measuring whether the level of party identifiers has decreased over time, proving the occurrence of partisan dealignment. In a new partisan alignment, after the voters realign themselves and identify with another party, I would expect the level of party identifiers to be high again. However, the regression coefficients may show there is no trend-shift but a persistent level of party identifiers, therefore not providing information about whether voters switch the party with which they identify. Put differently, running OLS regression analysis prevents the revelation of the beginning of a new partisan alignment. This problem is even more manifest in this dataset as for most of the cases, the time series is very short and begins in the middle of the 1970s, a period in which many scholars suspect that changes in voting behaviour had already started (Dalton, et al., 1984a).

Firstly, I analysed the OLS regression test results to see whether I could identify a decrease in the level of party identifiers over the years, as an indicator of partisan dealignment. Of the ten regression coefficients for the percentage of party identifiers, eight are negative and only five are statistically significant (Austria, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Norway). All the ten regression coefficients for the percentage of strong party identifiers are negative, but only seven are statistically significant (Austria, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Sweden). When

examining each country, only Austria, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands show statistically significant decreases in the levels of both indicators – weak and strong identifiers. However, the period examined for two of the polities – Austria and Italy – is short compared to the other cases, and ends in 1999. I used the Eurobarometer surveys and the 1999 European Election Study as a data source for these two polities in lieu of the national election surveys. However, when running the same regression model based on a different data source – the Austrian exit poll – I receive non-significant coefficients for the series of strong identifiers.[2]

Table 5.1: OLS regression for (strong) party identifiers over time

	% with PID	% identifiers per annum (sig)	% strong identifiers per annum (sig)	Period	Time-points (N)
Austria*	67	-0.916***	-0.663***	1969-1999	7
Belgium*	50	0.09	-0.285**	1975-1999	22
Denmark	51.8	.281	-.04	1973-2005	10
Finland*	57	-0.293	-0.147	1975-1991	4
Germany	78.6	-.46**	-.81***	1961-2009	11
Italy*	78	-0.979***	-0.770***	1978-1999	19
Luxembourg*	61	-0.317	-0.316***	1975-1999	22
the Netherlands	73.9	-.26**	-.24**	1971-2006	10
Norway	71.9	-.47**	-.12	1965-2005	10
Sweden	45.4	-.21	-.60***	1964-1998	13

*p≤0.1, ** p≤0.05, *** p≤0.01 (in two-tailed)

Note: The % with party identification in the first column is the average of the % expressing identification in the first two surveys in each series. The per annum change is the unstandardized regression coefficient.
Nations marked with an asterisk (*) are based on the Eurobarometer surveys and 1999 European Election Study. Other nations are based on their respective national election studies.

For the second group of countries - Luxembourg, Norway and Sweden, I found that the two indicators – possessing party identification at all or possessing strong party identification – have decreased (as the regression coefficients are negative), but the trend of only one of the categories is statistically significant (see Table 5.1). For Belgium, the regression coefficient of the weak party identifiers showed no trend (as the value approximates zero), but since the coefficient of the second indicator – strong

[2] Based on data that is presented by Plasser and Ulram (2000), I could run the same regression model on party identifiers in Austria. Of those possessing strong party identification between 1974 and 1999 (9 time-points) b=0.21 (p=0.37), 30 percent of the respondents reported on strong party identification in 1974; for party identifiers between 1954 and 1999 (13 time points) b=-0.70 (p=0.00), 73 percent respondents reported on having party identification in 1954.

party identifiers – is statistically significantly negative, I include Belgium in this group.

For Finland, the regression coefficients of the two indicators showed negative values. Neither of them is statistically significant, however, probably due to the small number of time-points (only four). In Denmark, the picture is even more blurred as one indicator has a negative coefficient and the other has a positive one. The two, however, are not statistically significant.

The results of the OLS regression analysis are intriguing. For the first group of countries, evidence of partisan dealignment is strong. For the majority of the countries in the second group, however, empirical evidence of partisan dealignment is only found if we accept a 'weak' version of expectations, according to which party identifiers or having strong party identification has eroded over time. Doubts about the reliability of this evidence arise if one takes into account criticism of the application of the 'party identification' model for multi-party systems.

5.3 Some Problems and Criticism of the Application of the Concept of 'Party Identification' to Multi-Party Systems

Campbell and his colleagues' original research (1960:142) posed the concept of party identification, and convincingly explained voting behaviour only for the American two-party system case. The application of this concept in other types of party systems, i.e. European and multi-party systems is not without its difficulties.

The first problem appeared in one of the first research projects conducted on party identification in Denmark, aimed at rendering the directional components of party identification in a multi-party system (Holmberg, 1994:94). In the American case, people may consider themselves as either Republicans or Democrats (Weisberg, 1999:683). For a multi-party system, however, there are two main approaches for measuring the direction of party identification: it can be based on party blocs (for example, party families, cleavage, left-right, etc.) or on individual parties. Borre and Katz (1973) studied the main thesis of the Michigan School regarding party identification and voting choice based on these two approaches. In line with the first

approach, they divided the voters along the most important line of conflict in Denmark – that between the Socialists and Non-Socialists – showing that "party identification predicts voting behaviour better than in the United States" (Borre & Katz, 1973:108). Their study of party identifiers and voting behaviour across individual parties gives a much more fluid picture (Borre & Katz, 1973:77). Holmberg (1994) who only uses the first approach, divided the Swedish parties on a Left-Right scale. He found that for Sweden, the correlation between the direction of party identification (i.e. Left or Right) and party support was not only higher than for the United States, but also too high (ranging between 0.92 and 0.96!). This high correlation may indicate that party identification and party support along the Left-Right axis are not two separate phenomena (Holmberg, 1994:96-6).

More troubling, however, are two objections raised against the Michigan School's model of party identification. The first objection is based on what Schmitt (2002:3-4) called the 'stability assumption.' The first to identify this was Thomassen, who studied 1970 Dutch provincial elections and the 1971 and 1972 Dutch parliamentary elections. He discovered that party identification is less stable than voter preference and suggested a reverse casual relation. He argued: "party identification is not a psychological attachment, but simply a reflection of the vote preference" (Thomassen, 1976:77); see also (Thomassen & Rosema, 2009:52). In much more recent research, Thomassen and Rosema (2009:49) repeated the same research and studied the period between 1971 and 2006, discovering that in the Netherlands the pattern of party identification as less stable than party support has persisted.

Borre and Katz made a similar observation when they discovered that party identification and party preference tended to coincide in the 1971 Danish elections (Borre & Katz, 1973:78). Beck concluded that "[p]arty loyalties are more instrumental elsewhere [besides the U.S.A.] and tend to be less distinguishable from vote choice at any particular time" (Beck, 1984b:234). Put differently, the first objection relates to the concept of 'party identification' as tautological: many people will identify with a party simply because they vote for it (Evans, 2004:25).

The second objection became evident in another study that also examined the Dutch electorate. It is critiques the assumption that voters identify with only one party, or

what Schmitt (2009:137) termed the 'uniqueness assumption'. Van der Eijk and Niemöller (1983:338) were the first to find that more than a third of the Dutch respondents admitted to having multiple party identifications. Schmitt (who conducted the most recent research into this subject) showed that this is true not only in the Netherlands, but in fourteen countries (between 1996 and 2000) where an average of 10.2 percent of the respondents identified with more than one party (Schmitt, 2009:145).[3] These results are even more intriguing in the light of findings showing that voters identify with groups of parties (Ventura, 2001), or only exhibit Left-Right orientations (Percheron & Jennings, 1981).

These strong arguments show the problematic nature of the party identification model for multi-party and European countries. As Thomassen (1976:77) argued, "the concept of party identification has no real meaning in the Netherlands", and as Van der Eijk and Niemöller (1983:339) concluded, "the application of the concept of party identification in relation to voting behaviour in the Netherlands is extremely doubtful". Beck (1984b:234) even argued that the Michigan School party identification measurement "does not seem as appropriate outside of the United States."

In order to tackle the validity issues of 'partisanship', I examine partisan dealignment at the electorate level, focusing on the decline in partisanship, by studying the patterns of partisanship in its alternative meaning as well: the electoral support of the same party over long-term period. This is not to say that the two are interchangeable, in contrast to what Van der Eijk and Franklin (2009:87) contended, but is included as an additional or supplementary element in the analysis of patterns of partisanship. Therefore, I examine partisanship by employing two additional indicators.

5.4 Two Additional Indicators

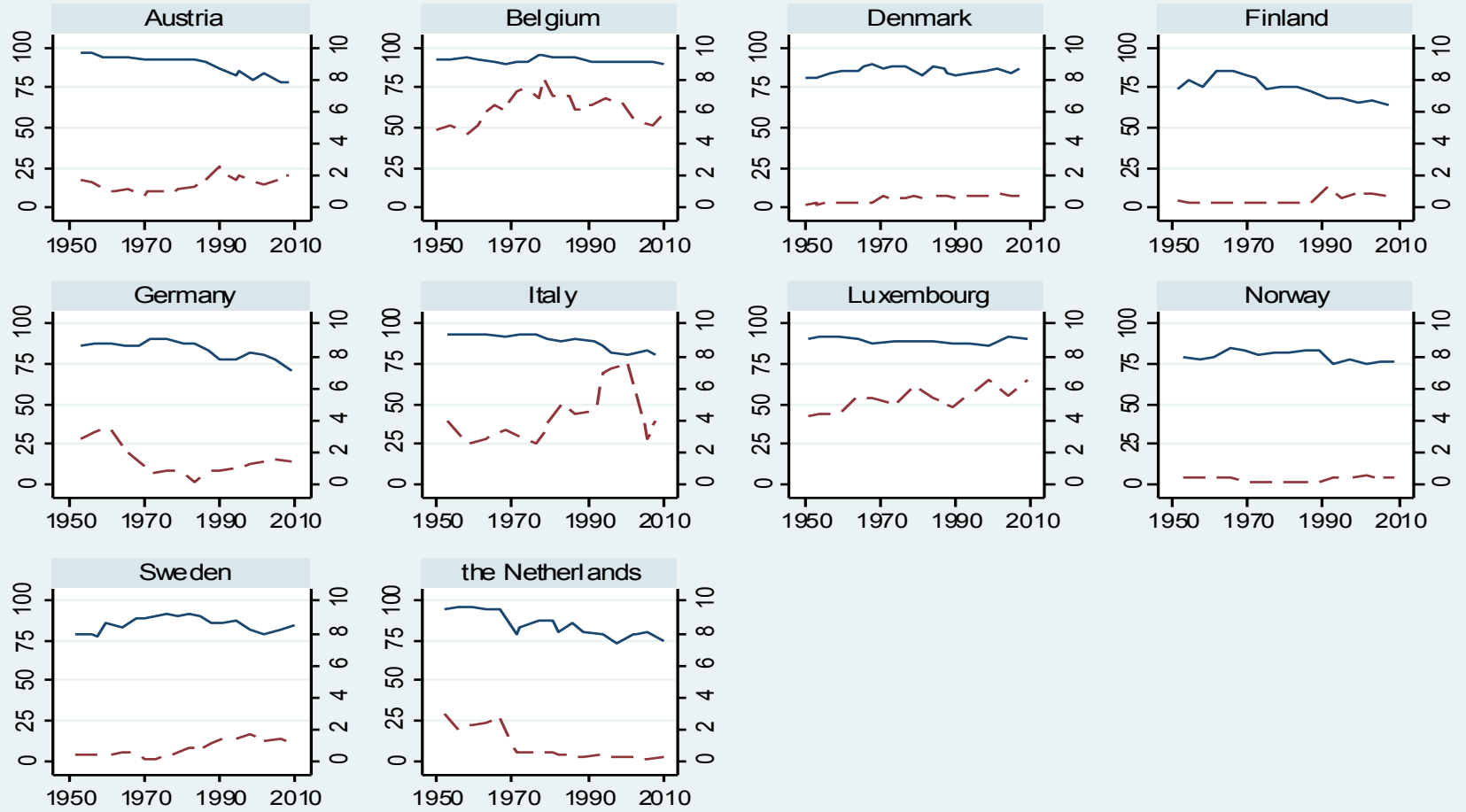
Durable party support is usually contrasted with the unstable or volatile voting behavior of so-called 'apartisans' (voters who are involved in politics, but remain unattached to a political party) (Dalton, 1996:213-6; 2006:195-6).

[3] This is true not only for multi-party systems, but also for two-party systems, as the U.S.A (Schmitt, 2009; Weisberg, 1999).

In the electorate, however, we can find two additional patterns of electoral behavior related to those not participating in elections, and those voting but casting a blank or invalid vote. These two patterns of electoral behaviour, which are considered as indicators of a dealignment, are examined separately by most scholars, e.g. by measuring turnout rates.

Taking into account these two groups within the electorate is crucial, and studying the electorate as a whole should (in my view) be the leading paradigm for examining patterns of party support. By neglecting to consider these two groups, we are likely to get an incomplete (or even misleading) picture of what happens in the entire electorate. This is even more important as scholars who study political participation (and more specifically electoral behaviour) have already found that the level of participation in elections has decreased over the years (Franklin, 2004; IDEA, 2002). As is depicted in Figure 5.1 while in some countries (Denmark, Belgium with the exception of 2010 election, Luxembourg and Sweden), the turnout level has been stable (or even increased) over the whole period, in other countries it has been decreased. In the Netherlands lower turnout levels were identified already in early 1970s and in Finland since mid 1970s; in Austria, Germany, Italy and Norway, on the other hand, only since early 1990s onwards.

Figure 5.1: Turnout and Invalid votes per country 1950-2010



That being said, the fraction of invalid votes (not including invalid votes due to technical problems) is another pattern of electoral behaviour especially important in my research. Scholars have showed that in countries with compulsory voting, not only the turnout is higher by between 6 and 20 per cent, than in countries in which voting is not compulsory (Birch, 2009a) (for an opposite argument, see for example (Blais, 2009), but also that the proportion of invalid or spoiled votes is large (Birch, 2009b; Mackerras & McAllister, 1999).

Several polities under investigation here have compulsory voting. These include Belgium and Luxembourg. In two other polities there was compulsory voting until recently: Austria until 1992 (when it was abolished in all regions except for Tyrol and Vorarlberg) and in Italy until 1993 (when it was removed during reform of the electoral system). In addition, the Dutch electorate was obliged to vote until the 1967 election.[4] On top of this, the levels of invalid votes have increased over time, especially since 1990, in all ten countries under investigation here, as Figure 5.1 demonstrates.

Therefore, I return to my proposal that the study of stable party support should examine the electorate as whole, combining those who do not vote, or who cast invalid or blank ballots. I suggest studying stable party support based on two indicators.

The first indicator is the proportion of those who reported voting for the same party in two successive elections from *the whole electorate*, including those who cast invalid ballots and those who did not participate in one of these elections, based on individual-level data (i.e. national election surveys).

As I specified in Chapter Four, my survey dataset is based on recall questions concerning patterns of electoral behaviour. It includes Denmark (between 1971 and 2005), Flanders and Wallonia (1991-2003), Finland (1991-2007), Germany (1961-2009), Italy (1994-2008), Norway (1965-2005), Sweden (1960-2006) and the Netherlands (1967-2006).

[4] For more on this topic, see IDEA's report (2009)

The study of electoral behaviour based on surveys and especially the validity of electoral behaviour for each election is questionable, as it is well known that surveys experience difficulty in tracing the non-voting electorate. Since this group within the electorate is an important factor in my study, I corrected the representation of those who did not vote and those who cast spoiled ballots by employing a political probability weight variable, computed according to the official election results (for more on this procedure, see Chapter Four).

The second indicator I included in my analysis is an equivalent estimation to the indicator of stable party support but that measures these patterns based on aggregate data. A well-known index for measuring a change of party support or volatility based on aggregate data is Pedersen's Total Volatility index (TV) (Pedersen, 1979). It measures the total changes of party support between two sequential elections (for index calculation, see Appendix A). This index mathematically represents "the minimal proportion of the electorate that must have shifted their vote given the observed aggregate change" (Przeworski, 1975); see also (Bartolini & Mair, 1990). Therefore, I argue the index's complementary number can give us an estimation of the *maximum* electors who voted for the same party between two consecutive elections. The calculation of this number is straightforward: as the highest number of the TV index's range is 100, it can easily be calculated as 100-TV.

In addition, the TV index calculates the aggregate volatility based on the percentages of valid votes that each party receives in the two elections. However by doing so, it does not take into account two other important metrics: level of turnout and proportion of invalid votes.

In order to be able to measure patterns of stable party support and to consider these metrics, I changed the TV index and introduced an advanced index – the Electoral Total Partisans (ETP). This index gives an estimation of stable party supporters from the *whole electorate* in two consecutive elections. The TV index was modified in two ways. Firstly, it measures changes in the level of those who change their party support – total volatility – and is not based on the number of valid votes, but rather on reference to the electorate in the current election. To put it differently, the TV index

calculates the party support share against the total number of people who are franchised.[5] The electorate in each election is regarded as 100 percent, regardless of changes in the number of people who can cast their vote, i.e. enfranchisement of certain group due to electoral system reforms. Secondly, I calculated the index's complementary number by subtracting the index level from the percentages of the valid votes in the current election. This share is the maximum estimation of electors who voted for the same party in the present and the previous election.

As the electorate is the reference framework, all the values are comparable over time. In addition, the ETP index, as with the TV index, can range between 0 (no stable party supporters) to 100 (maximum stable party supporters). The formula below captures the ETP index:

* Change in the electoral strength of party 'I' (as measured by its proportion of valid votes from the whole electorate in the current election) since the previous election (ΔEPi,t) is calculated as: EPi,t – EPi, t-1.
* This is divided by two, in order to account for the fact that when one party "wins", the other party "loses".
* Subtracting the index score from the fraction of valid votes in the current election (VVi,t).

The estimation of stable party supporters is calculated as:

$$\mathrm{VVi,t} - \sum_{i=1}^{n} \frac{\Delta EP\mathrm{i,t} - \Delta EP\mathrm{i,t\text{-}1}}{2}$$

The indicators co-vary to a certain extent. The Pearson correlation between the two indicators of stable party supporters is 0.74 and is statistically significant (at the 0.01 level, 2-tailed, N=65).

[5] The measurement is based on the respective number of votes. In two cases – Luxembourg and the second Italian Republic – I calculated the component of parties support based on their respective electoral support in percentages, as the exact number of votes was not available. In Luxembourg this lack is due to the electoral system: because the number of votes for each elector varies with the number of deputies in a constituency, it is not possible to measure a national party vote by combining the four constituency-level votes (Mackie & Rose, 1991).

There are three scenarios of stability and change in partisanship – alignment, realignment and dealignment. A period of partisan alignment is identified when the electorate is aligned with its party and changes in party support are low. Partisan realignment is identified when the electorate changes its political allegiance. Partisan dealignment is identified when the long-term party support disappears.

Patterns of party allegiance or partisanship are evaluated by the two stated indicators for each election year. While high levels of stable party supporters can be an indicator for partisanship, low levels point to a shift. As I suggested in the previous chapters, most scholars agree that the postwar period was stable and the change occurred at some point between the mid 1960s and the 1970s; therefore I assume that from the 1950s to the mid 1960s, the polities were still in a situation of partisan alignment.

These three rival scenarios can be translated into three hypotheses:

H1 During the period between the mid 1960s to the 2000s, no change occurred and the electorate remains aligned with the political parties.
A partisan alignment is identified when the electorate is aligned with its party and changes of party support are low. This is found when the level of stable party supporters is high in general.

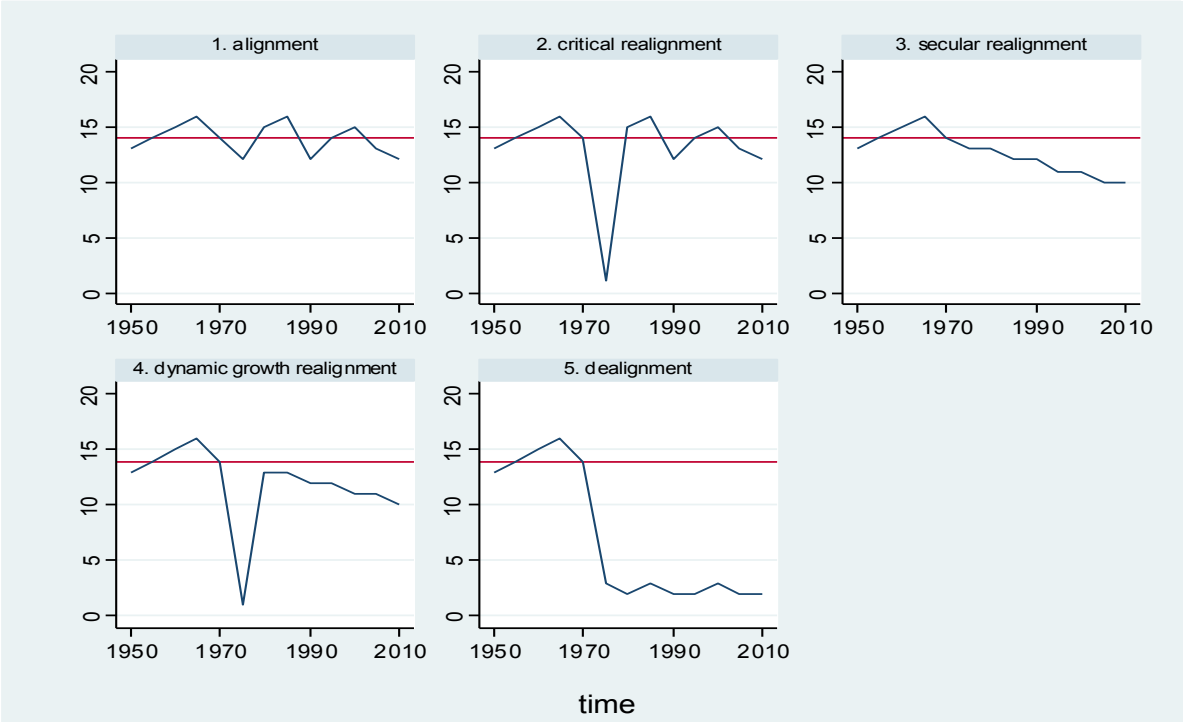
H2 During the period between the mid 1960s to the 2000s, an electoral change occurred: the electorate realigned itself with the political parties.
A partisan realignment occurs when the electorate changes its political allegiance and moves to support another party over long-term period, indicating that a new partisan alignment has been created. As I discussed in the third chapter, the literature on realignment presents three types of realignment. Firstly, a *critical realignment*: a quick change, which occurs in the course of one election. The second is a *secular realignment*. This is a gradual, incremental shift and therefore occurs over a long period. Another model of realignment was later proposed by Carmines and Stimson (1984) – the *'dynamic growth model'* or *'issue evolution'*, which is a combination of these two types of realignment: an electoral shock followed by incremental change. Thus, I expect to identify a critical realignment when a very short period with a low

level of stable party support is followed by a long-term period of high level of party support elections. The continuity of the new patterns over a long-term period is identified when the new patterns are sustained for at least ten years and in at least three successive elections. A secular realignment is identified when the level of stable party supporters is slightly lower than in the partisan alignment period, and this persists over a long-term period (for at least ten years and in at least three successive elections). A dynamic growth model of realignment is identified when a short period with a very low level of stable party supporters is followed by a long-term period with somewhat higher level of stable party supporters.

H3 During the period between the mid 1960s and the 2000s, an electoral change occurred: the electorate dealigned itself from the political parties.
A period of partisan dealignment is identified when the indicators demonstrate that the level of stable party supporters went down and remained lower over the given period when compared to the partisan alignment period, persisting for more than ten years and in at least three successive elections.

Figure 5.2 demonstrates the different five hypothetical scenarios nested in these three hypotheses.

Figure 5.2: The different hypothetical scenarios



5.5 The empirical results of the indicators of the level of partisanship

My aim is to test if any change in partisanship measured by the two indicators of stable party supporters has occurred. Therefore, I ran a regression test on the data to see whether a statistically significant trend exists from 1950 onwards.

Table 5.2 shows the regression coefficients for each of the indicators over time (the dependent variable is the party support indicator for each election year and the independent variable is the time, i.e. election year as a continuous variable) [6].

For all of the cases under investigation here, I ran an OLS regression model:

$$indicator(stable\ party\ supporters) = \alpha + \beta 1 \cdot T + \epsilon$$

If a change has occurred and voters are no longer committed to the political parties, I expect to find a decrease of the indicator level over the years, thus the regression coefficient should be negative and statistically significant.

For Austria, since this case is missing the individual-level dataset, I decided to examine the data presented in Plasser and Ulram's (2008:7) report. This is aggregate data from the sub-national election results[7] and includes estimation of Party Volatility (PV) rather than voting. Based on this index I could calculate the level of Gross Volatility (GV).[8] Therefore, if a decreasing level of partisanship is manifested in Austria, I expect the level of party switchers and those not participating in the election to increase over the years, and the GV regression coefficient should be positive and statistically significant.

[6] For ETP: time was set to 0 for 1950, going up by increments of 1 for each additional year, and by a fraction for each additional month. For the proportion of stable party supporters: time was set to 0 for 1950, going up by increments of 1 for each additional year.

[7] These are election results of municipalities, communities, wards, etc. For more information on the data calculation, see Chapter Four.

[8] The Gross Volatility (GV) index measures at individual level those who change their party support – in Ersson and Lane's words (1998:25) 'party switching' (PS) – and also "takes into account all the eligible voters over the two elections and defining those changing between voting and non-voting as volatile voters."

I excluded Finland, the second Italian Republic, Flanders and Wallonia from the regression model for the indicator of proportion of stable party support, and the second Italian Republic for ETP, because these datasets include only a small number of cases (only 4 or 5 time-points).

Table 5.2 reveals that in all the cases apart from Denmark, Flanders and Luxembourg, the regression coefficients of the proportion of stable party supporters (where regression tests for this indicator were feasible) and the ETP coefficients are negative and statistically significant. In Austria, the coefficient of the GV is positive and statistically significant.

Table 5.2: OLS regression coefficients for proportions of stable party supporters (or GV) and Electorate Total Partisans (ETP), 1950 – 2010

	Dependent variable:	proportions of stable party supporters	*ETP*
Denmark	%	77.51	78.33
	change per annum	-.13 (.12)	-.05 (.05)
	period (time-points)	1971-2005 (14)	1953-2007 (22)
	R^2	.09	.05
	Durbin-Watson	1.89	1.59
Finland	%		75.73
	change per annum		-.38 (.07)***
	period (time-points)		1954-2007 (15)
	R^2		.72
	Durbin-Watson		2.22
Flanders	%		80.91
	change per annum		-.08 (.05)
	period (time-points)		1954-2010 (18)
	R^2		.14
	Durbin-Watson		1.16
Germany	%	74.85	72.27
	change per annum	-.51 (.26)*	-.30 (.11)**
	period (time-points)	1965-2009 (13)	1961-2009 (14)
	R^2	.26	.38
	Durbin-Watson	1.44	0.74
Italy (1st republic)	%		82.85
	change per annum		-.40 (.09)**
	period (time-points)		1958-1992 (9)
	R^2		.74
	Durbin-Watson		2.02
Italy (1st & 2nd Republics)	%		82.85
	change per annum		-.50 (.14)**
	period (time-points)		1958-2008 (14)
	R^2		.47
	Durbin-Watson		1.65
Luxembourg	%		73.74
	change per annum		.09 (.12)
	period (time-points)		1954-2009 (12)
	R^2		.06
	Durbin-Watson		0.96

the Netherlands	%	62.91	89.52
	change per annum	-.33 (.16)*	-.54 (.09)***
	period (time-points)	1971-2006 (12)	1956-2010 (17)
	R^2	.28	.73
	Durbin-Watson	2.59	1.54
Norway	%	78.13	74.65
	change per annum	-.67 (.09)***	-.21 (.09)**
	period (time-points)	1965-2005 (10)	1957-2009 (14)
	R^2	.87	.32
	Durbin-Watson	2.01	2.00
Sweden	%	76.60	76.57
	change per annum	-.59 (.09)***	-.18 (.09)**
	period (time-points)	1960-2006 (15)	1956-2010 (18)
	R^2	.77	.22
	Durbin-Watson	0.68	0.87
Wallonia	%		84.11
	change per annum		-.16 (.06)**
	period (time-points)		1954-2010 (18)
	R^2		.32
	Durbin-Watson		1.21

	Dependent variable:	*GV*	*ETP*
Austria	%	3	88.94
	Change per annum	.70 (.06)***	-.60 (.08)***
	period (time-points)	1975-2008 (11)	1956-2008 (17)
	R^2	.93	.78
	Durbin-Watson	2.08	1.16

*p≤0.1, ** p≤0.05, *** p≤0.01 (in two-tailed)

Note: The % stable party supporters (or GV) or ETP in the first line for each case is the measurement level in the first year in each series. The per annum change is the unstandardized regression coefficient (s.e.).
The GV is based on the sum of shares of non-voters and party volatility as are reported in Plasser and Ulram (2008:7).

In Denmark, Flanders and Luxembourg, on the other hand, the ETP coefficients are approaching zero and are therefore statistically insignificant. The OLS coefficient for the proportion of party supporters in Denmark was slightly higher and negative, but was not statistically significant, thus signaling the absence of a trend.

Overall, the OLS regression test results demonstrate that in most of the party systems, the figures of stable party support have decreased since 1950, as the coefficients are negative and statistically significant.

Yet the Durbin-Watson values for some of the OLS models indicate a problem of first-order autocorrelation (a "correlation between values of the same time series" (Makridakis, et al., 1998) for the ETP time series for Austria, Flanders, Germany,

Luxembourg, Sweden and Wallonia and the same problem for the Swedish time series of proportions of stable party supporters.

Therefore for those cases with a problem of autocorrelation I fitted a Regression model with Autocorrelated Errors (autoregressive error model) for each of these cases, specified in Table 5.3. The autoregressive error model solves the problem of aurocorrealtion by augmenting the regression model with an autoregressive model for the random error, thereby accounting for the autocorrelation of the errors (SAS).

Table 5.3: Autoregressive error model coefficients for proportions of stable party supporters and Electorate Total Partisans (ETP), 1950 – 2010

INDICATOR: ETP		
Austria	Intercept	99.39 (5.00)***
	Time	-0.61 (0.14)***
	Lagged 1 time	-0.40 (0.32)
	Lagged 2 time	-0.09 (0.33)
	Period (N)	1956-2008 (17)
	R-Square	0.80
	Root MSE	5.66
	AIC	110.81
	MAE	4.23
	Durbin-Watson	1.74
Flanders	Intercept	83.34 (1.98)***
	Time	-0.12 (0.06)*
	Lagged 1 time	-0.13 (0.30)
	Lagged 2 time	0.12 (0.31)
	Period (N)	1954-2010 (18)
	R-Square	0.29
	Root MSE	3.71
	AIC	101.78
	MAE	2.70
	Durbin-Watson	1.80
Germany	Intercept	87.97 (4.94)***
	Time	-0.36 (0.14)**
	Lagged 1 time	-1.04 (0.29)***
	Lagged 2 time	0.67 (0.26)**
	Period (N)	1961-2009 (14)
	R-Square	0.71
	Root MSE	4.31
	AIC	91.41
	MAE	3.23
	Durbin-Watson	1.65
Luxembourg	Intercept	68.68 (7.82)***
	Time	0.09 (0.23)
	Lagged 1 time	-0.43 (0.37)
	Lagged 2 time	-0.15 (0.41)
	Period (N)	1954-2009 (12)
	R-Square	0.28

	Root MSE	6.75
	AIC	83.36
	MAE	4.91
	Durbin-Watson	1.74
Sweden	Intercept	80.22 (95.58)***
	Time	-0.10 (0.15)
	Lagged 1 time	-0.47 (0.29)
	Lagged 2 time	-0.16 (0.29)
	Period (N)	1956-2010 (18)
	R-Square	0.47
	Root MSE	5.56
	AIC	114.05
	MAE	3.60
	Durbin-Watson	1.70
Wallonia	Intercept	81.31 (2.90)***
	Time	-0.17 (0.08)**
	Lagged 1 time	-0.41 (0.27)
	Lagged 2 time	0.10 (0.28)
	Period (N)	1954-2010 (18)
	R-Square	0.42
	Root MSE	4.09
	AIC	105.40
	MAE	2.51
	Durbin-Watson	1.94
INDICATOR: PROPORTIONS OF PARTY SUPPORTERS		
Sweden	Intercept	86.87 (5.97)***
	Time	-0.56 (0.17)***
	Lagged 1 time	-0.62 (0.30)*
	Lagged 2 time	-0.04 (0.34)
	Period (N)	1960-2006 (15)
	R-Square	0.86
	Root MSE	4.00
	AIC	88.05
	MAE	2.66
	Durbin-Watson	1.88
*p≤0.1, ** p≤0.05, *** p≤0.01 (in two-tailed)		

The autoregressive error models confirm the OLS regression analysis, the ETP coefficients are negative and statistically significant in Austria, Germany, Sweden (for the indicator of proportion of party supporters) and Wallonia and approaching zero and not significant in Luxembourg and Sweden (for the indicator of ETP). In addition, contrary to the OLS analysis, the autoregressive error model suggests on significant decreasing ETP trend in Flanders.

The OLS regression and the autoregressive error models provides an indication of a linear shift of the indices' values from one year to another, but is not capable of rendering the exact point in time when the change began. Furthermore, these models does not have the ability to detect cases of temporary increase or small changes of

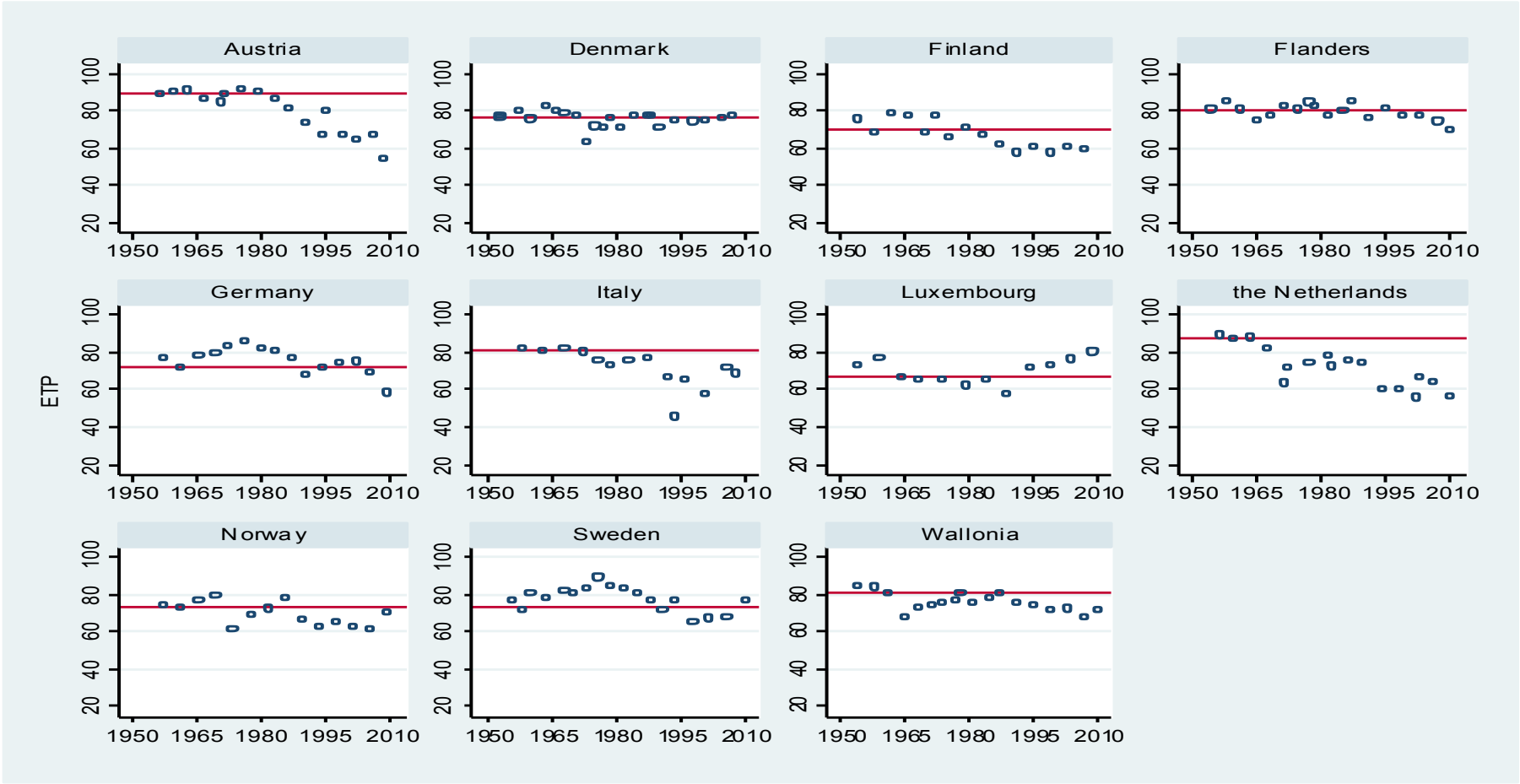
index level that are idiosyncratic of critical realignment; instead, the coefficients in these cases allude to no change.

Therefore, I turned to examine the trends of stable party support since 1965, by comparing them to the alignment period (i.e. 1950-4) using two methods.

I compared the level of ETP for each election year to the level of the ETP over the partisan alignment period, employing a comparison test. For Sweden, I ran an additional comparison test on the data about the proportion of stable party supporters, due to the unavailability of data for the 1950-60s period for the other cases. The reference line was the indicator average level minus one standard deviation over the 1950-64 period. I classify those elections in which the indicator level is equal or higher than the reference line as having high level of partisans. Likewise, elections with indicator levels lower than the reference line are labeled as having low levels of partisanship.

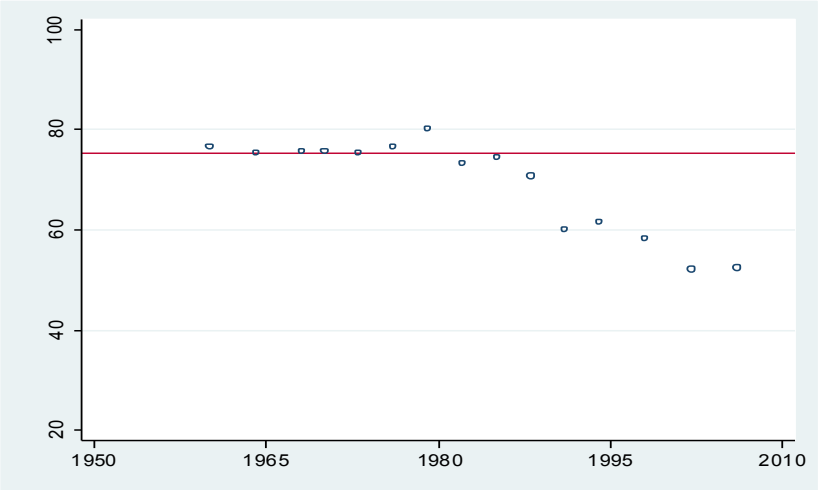
Figures 5.3-5.4 present the results of this comparison for the post-1965 period. If the electorate moves away from the parties and partisan dealignment occurs, the values of partisans' indicators should be located below the reference line. In a critical realignment, one or some of the indicators' values are much lower than the reference line, with subsequent values rising above the reference line. When the indicators' values are scattered around the line, this points to secular realignment. Dynamic growth realignment is a combination of the two previous scenarios.

Figure 5.3: Electoral Total Partisans (ETP) between 1950-2010 per case, in comparison to the reference line



Note: the reference line is the average level of the ETP between 1950 and 1964 minus one standard deviation

Figure 5.4: Proportion of party supporters in Sweden between 1950-2010, in comparison to the reference line



Note: the reference line is the average proportion level between 1950 and 1964 minus one standard deviation

The second method incorporates an analysis of variance (ANOVA) for each case, in which the ETP (or in the case of Sweden, the proportions of stable party supporters) are the dependent variable and the independent categorical variable is a dummy variable of two periods of 'stability' and 'change'. For each election year from 1965 onwards, the time variable scored 0 for all values up to this election, 1 for that and all subsequent elections, (model of moving time frames or a moving *t*-test, which is commonly employed in disciplines with repeated measurement over time such as meteorology or geology). Since the observations are not independent from each other, I used an ANOVA model, which assumes repeated measurements and does not assume that all the treatment populations have the same variance (homogeneity of variance).

A decreasing indicator level during the post-1965 period points to a significant smaller index average than the average index scores over earlier period. Along with this, a significant smaller average score in at least two consecutive elections typically shows low values for the indicator over a long period and signifies a period of partisan dealignment. Table 5.4 displays the ANOVA results, where they are significant in at least one election year.

Table 5.4: ANOVA models for indicators of partisanship: Electorate Total Partisans (ETP) and proportions of stable party supporters, in periods of 'stability' and 'change'

	Indicator			
Austria	ETP	election year	*1966*	*1970*
		stability period Mean (s.d.)	90.10 (1.12)	89.31 (1.80)
		change period Mean (s.d.)	77.71 (11.56)	77.00 (11.71)
		ANOVA	F(1,14)=15.40**	F(1,13.6)= 13.38**
		AIC	114.4	113.1
		BIC	116.1	114.8
		period (time-points)	1956-2008 (17)	
Denmark	ETP	election year	*1966*	*1968*
		stability period Mean (s.d.)	78.73 (2.75)	79.06 (2.59)
		change period Mean (s.d.)	75.08 (4.11)	74.73 (3.97)
		ANOVA	F(1,18.5)=53.62***	F(1,19)=51.66***
		AIC	159.3	157.5
		BIC	161.5	159.7
		period (time-points)	1953-2007 (22)	
Finland	ETP	election year	*1966*	*1970*
		stability period Mean (s.d.)	74.59 (5.03)	75.46 (4.46)
		change period Mean (s.d.)	65.80 (7.12)	64.68 (6.28)
		ANOVA	F(1 ,4.31)=6.11*	F(1,7.69)=13.58**
		AIC	94.1	90.4
		BIC	95.5	91.8
		period (time-points)	1954-2007 (15)	
Flanders	ETP	election year	*1991*	*1995*
		stability period Mean (s.d.)	81.17 (3.14)	80.80 (3.28)
		change period Mean (s.d.)	76.44 (3.85)	76.44 (4.30)
		ANOVA	F(1,8.45)=6.79**	F(1,5.89)=4.20
		AIC	92.3	93.8
		BIC	94.1	95.5
		period (time-points)	1954-2010 (18)	
Germany	ETP	election year	*1980*	*1983*
		stability period Mean (s.d.)	79.59 (4.96)	80.10 (4.73)
		change period Mean (s.d.)	73.29 (7.36)	72.06 (6.80)
		ANOVA	F(1,13)= 3.91*	F(1,12.4)= 7.19**
		AIC	92.8	90.4
		BIC	94.3	91.8
		period (time-points)	1961-2009 (14)	
Italy (1st & 2nd Republics)	ETP	election year	*1968*	*1972*
		stability period Mean (s.d.)	82.27 (.81)	82.39 (.61)
		change period Mean (s.d.)	70.31 (10.24)	69.19 (9.95)
		ANOVA	F(1,11.7)=15.78**	F(1,10.3)=19.09**
		AIC	92.0	85.5
		BIC	93.3	86.8
		period (time-points)	1958-2008 (14)	

the Netherlands	ETP	election year	*1967*	*1971*
		stability period Mean (s.d.)	88.46 (.95)	89.92 (3.18)
		change period Mean (s.d.)	68.93 (8.38)	67.65 (7.71)
		ANOVA	F(1,14.3)=73.56***	F(1,13)=52.28***
		AIC	105.3	106.5
		BIC	107.0	108.2
		period (time-points)	1956-2010 (17)	
Norway	ETP	election year	*1965*	*1969*
		stability period Mean (s.d.)	73.94 (1.00)	75.08 (2.10)
		change period Mean (s.d.)	69.01 (6.59)	68.25 (6.34)
		ANOVA	F(1,11.8)=5.89**	F(,10.9)=9.10
		AIC	82.7	81.5
		BIC	84.0	82.7
		period (time-points)	1957-2009 (14)	
Sweden	ETP	election year	*1979*	*1982*
		stability period Mean (s.d.)	80.34 (5.02)	80.80 (4.89)
		change period Mean (s.d.)	75.22 (6.77)	74.19 (6.30)
		ANOVA	F(1, 15.9)=3.40*	
		AIC	108.7	
		BIC	110.4	
		period (time-points)	1956-2010 (18)	
	Partisans	election year	*1968*	*1970*
		stability period Mean (s.d.)	76.05 (.78)	75.93 (.59)
		change period Mean (s.d.)	68.26 (9.85)	76.64 (10.02)
		ANOVA	F(1,12.7)=7.82**	F(1,11.3)=8.10**
		AIC	98.5	93.0
		BIC	99.9	94.5
		period (time-points)	1960-2006 (15)	
Wallonia	ETP	election year	*1965*	*1968*
		stability period Mean (s.d.)	82.79 (2.15)	78.96 (7.84)
		change period Mean (s.d.)	74.49 (4.01)	74.98 (3.64)
		ANOVA	F(1,1.74)=13.31*	F(1,2.15)=0.20
		AIC	90.7	92.5
		BIC	92.4	94.2
		period (time-points)	1954-2010 (18)	

*p≤0.1, ** p≤0.05, *** p≤0.01

Note: The time variable was scored 0 for all time points up to this election, 1 for that election and for all time points afterward. This table presents only the results for the first two elections, which are statistically significant in each case.

I began by analysing those cases in which the OLS regression and autoregressive error models of the partisanship indicators signify decreasing trends: that is, all the cases except Denmark and Luxembourg.

In all of these cases, the comparison test and the ANOVA test (on periods of 'stability' and 'change') showed trends of decreasing stable party supporters

compared to the period of alignment. Interestingly, although the two methods measure the trends differently, for half of the cases these declining trends commenced almost at the same points in time.

In Finland, the comparison test indicates that from 1970 onwards, the ETP values are much lower than the reference line, with the exception of the 1972 and 1979 election. The difference ranges between 0.44 (in the 1970 election) and 11.97 (in the 1999 election) below the reference line. The ANOVA model confirms these lower values of ETP in comparison to the previous elections, as in the 1966 and 1970 elections the average score for the period of 'change' is lower than the average score for the period of 'stability' and the ANOVA coefficient in both election years is statistically significant.

Similarly, in Flanders the ANOVA model suggests that the mean score of ETP for the period since the 1991 election onwards is significantly lower than the mean ETP score for the earlier period. The comparison test also shows that until the 1987 election, the ETP values in most of the election years had been above the reference line (although there are three exceptions: the 1965 and 1968 elections (in which the ETP is 4.59 and 1.57 points respectively below the line), and the 1981 election (in which it was 2.58 points lower than the reference line). Since the 1991 election, in all the election years (apart from the 1995 election) the ETP scores are below the reference line. The values range between 1.66 (in the 1999 election) and 9.51 (in the 2010 election) points below the line. The results for the 1995 deviant election can be attributed to institutional change: this was the first general election under a revised constitution's new federal structure, the voters supported the coalition's parties (Downs, 1995), and the level of TV decreased from 13.27 in 1991 election to 5.41 in 1995 (my calculations).

For Italy I discovered that from 1972 onwards, all ETP-values assume below-reference-line-levels. The distance-to-the reference line is between 0.99 (in the 1972 election) and 35.56 (in the 1994 election). The ANOVA test complies with these results, as the average score for the period of 'change' is significantly lower than the average score for the period of 'stability' in the 1968 and 1972 elections.

In the Netherlands too both tests have the same outcome, and mark the 1967 election as the kick-off for declining ETP values. The average ETP score for the period of

'change' is lower than the average score for the period of 'stability' in the 1967 and 1971 elections, and the ANOVA coefficient in both elections is statistically significant. Further, Figure 5.3 reveals that in the Netherlands from the 1967 election onwards, the ETP levels are below the reference line. Not only is the level of volatility quite high, I also found that the distance-to-base-line of the ETP scores ranges between 5.22 (in the 1967 election) and 31.29 (in the 2002 election).

In Wallonia the comparison test suggests that from 1965 onwards, the ETP values in almost all election years are lower than the reference line: between 2.37 (in the 1985 election) and 13.14 (in the 1965 election). However, there are a few exceptions: the ETP values for the 1978 and 1987 elections (with only 0.43 and 0.52 points above the line). The ETP mean score for the period of 'change' is lower than the mean for the previous period (i.e. the period of 'stability') in the elections of 1965 and 1968 but is statistically significant only for the first election. A possible explanation for the non-significant results for the later election is the very low ETP value in the 1965 election.

As far as differences in timing of trend shifts between the two statistical tests, in Austria, Germany, Norway and Sweden these differences are substantial.

In Austria, statistically significant coefficients for the ANOVA model in the 1966 and 1970 elections indicate that the average score of the ETP values for the period since 1966 election onwards is significantly lower than the average score for the earlier period. The comparison test showed that between 1966 and 1970 are lower than the reference line, by 1.98, 4.06 points respectively. Yet in the following elections (between 1975 and 1979), the ETP values are a bit higher than the reference line (2.52 and 1.08 points respectively). However, from the 1983 election onwards the ETP values are again much lower than the reference line, ranging between 2.03 points of difference (in the 1983 election) and 33.90 points (in the 2008 election).

Similarly in Germany, the average ETP score for the period of 'change' is lower than the average score for the period of 'stability' already in 1980 and 1983 elections and the ANOVA coefficient for both elections is significant. However, the comparison test indicates that only in the 1990-1994 and 2005-2009 elections are ETP levels lower than the reference line (!).

Also for Norway the two methods indicate different starting point. The ANOVA models point out that the average ETP scores for the period since the 1965 election onwards is significantly lower than the average score for the earlier period. The comparison test shows ETP values that are much lower than the reference line only since 1973, with the distance to the reference line ranging between 0.57 (in the 1981 election) and 11.75 (in the 1973 election).

In Sweden, the two methods were employed for the two indicators, producing differences in timing of trend shifts between the two indicators and the two statistical tests. The ANOVA model coefficient for the ETP in the 1979 is significant, suggesting on significantly lower average indicator than those in the earlier elections. The comparison test for values of proportion of stable party supporters confirms this, as the indicator values since 1982 are lower than the reference line, ranging between 0.88 (in 1985) and 23.31 (in 2004) points of difference. However, the ANOVA model for this indicator suggests earlier shifts when it produces significant results for the 1968 and 1970 elections. A bigger difference is found for the comparison test of the ETP values. It shows that ETP levels are lower than the reference line only in the 1991 election and again between 1998 and 2006 elections.

I will now turn to examine those cases in which the OLS regression and autoregressive error models (presented at Tables 5.2-5.3) suggest on no-tend – Denmark and Luxembourg. Two different scenarios are found: while for the Danish case, both methods indicate on a temporary shift and for the case of Luxembourg, the two methods indicate no change.

The absence of a trend in the ETP values over the years in Luxembourg, as presented in Tables 5.2-5.3, is confirmed by both methods. Only two out of nine ETP values are much lower than the reference line, with distances of 4.80 points difference (in the 1979 election) and 9.44 points difference (in the 1989 election). Nevertheless, none of the ANOVA models indicates on significant difference in mean ETP between the two periods. All in all, both methods demonstrate that the level of ETP did not change much over the entire period.

Likewise, the first OLS regressions (presented in Table 5.2) suggest the absence of a trend for the last case, Denmark. In the 1966 and 1968 elections the average score for

the period of 'change' is lower than the average score for the period of 'stability' and the ANOVA coefficient in both election years is statistically significant. Yet, the comparison test draws a different picture. According to this test, the ETP values in the first three elections – 1966, 1968 and 1971 – are above the reference line, with 4.71, 2.55 and 2.19 points difference respectively. On top of this, the test demonstrates that in the following election – the 1973 election – the ETP value is lower than the reference line by 12.59 points (!), and then in the successive election years the ETP values fluctuate around the reference line. In almost half of these elections – seven elections – the ETP score is below this line, with a maximum of 4.64 points difference (in the 1990 election). In the other six elections the ETP is above the reference line, with maximum of 1.92 points difference (in the 1988 election). In order to validate the 1973 election as a critical election, I compared the indicators' scores for the successive election years and found that all are lower than the respective indicator level in the 1973 election.

5.6 Partisan Alignment, Realignment and Dealignment: Discussion

This chapter examines the argument of partisan dealignment. It began by examining trends of party identification over the years.

Evidence in favour of partisan dealignment, as is measured by trends of Party Identification, is not very strong: only in four countries – Austria, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands – did the levels of people with party identification and those with strong party identifiers erode significantly over time. Due to these findings and, more importantly, due to a major critique of the application of the phenomenon of 'party identification' to a multi-party system, I also examined the phenomenon of 'partisanship' based on patterns of electoral behaviour, and argued that partisans are those who support the same party for a long-term period.

I studied this by examining patterns of electoral behaviour within the entire electorate (comprising of party supporters, voters casting an invalid vote and people not participating in elections) by employing two indicators: the proportion of those who reported voting for the same party in two succeeding elections, and its equivalent estimation – the ETP index – based on aggregate data.

Table 5.5 summarises the empirical periods of partisan alignment, realignment and dealignment as found within the differing definitions of partisanship: trends of Party Identification (PI) (and having a strong party identification), ETP and proportion of durable party supporters. These last two are also measured by the comparison test (the distance-to-reference-line of) per election year and an ANOVA analysis of different splits between periods of 'stability' and 'change', in order to identify an abrupt change (in case of no trend) and to render the exact point in time when the change began (in case of a trend is identified). These two methods – the comparison test and the ANOVA– measure the trends differently, and in case the methods demonstrate that these declining trends commence at different time-points, I accept the latest time point.

Evidence of change into a partisan dealignment is found when party identification (or those who have strong party identification), ETP and proportion of durable party supporters lowers over the years (as when the models coefficients were significantly negative), and when the ETP, along with the proportion of durable party support (when this is available) indicate that the level of partisans is fairly low over long-term periods (based on the comparison test and the ANOVA models of the different periods).

Critical realignment is identified when there is no evidence of a lessening of party identification or ETP, and with accordant trend of ETP: a critical moment (a critical election in which the ETP was very low and is followed by a long-term period of high level of party support).

In five cases, the (OLS and autoregressive error) coefficients of PI, ETP and proportion of party supporters together with the comparison test and the ANOVA analysis indicate that a partisan dealignment is occurring. This occurred in Austria (in 1983), Italy (1972), the Netherlands (1967), Norway (1973), and Sweden (1982).

(Separate) PI trends for the two Belgian regions are not available; the OLS and autoregressive error models point out on declining trend and the comparison tests and the ANOVA models of the ETP values suggest that since 1965 in Wallonia and from 1991 in Flanders, the level of party allegiance has been in decline. Based on this evidence, I conclude that both regions are in a state of partisan dealignment.

Likewise, in Finland the regression coefficients of both PI measurements are not significant, while ETP regression coefficient and both tests demonstrate that the ETP values decline as of 1970, indicating the beginnings of a partisan dealignment period.

Table 5.5: Evidence of partisan alignment, realignment or dealignment, per case over mid 1960s-2000s, based on trends of partisanship indicators

Evidence of partisan dealignment							
	PI	Strong PI	OLS model for ETP or proportion of durable party supporters	Autoregressive error model for ETP or proportion of durable party supporters	Comparison test for ETP or proportion of durable party supporters	ANOVA model for ETP or proportion of durable party supporters, in periods of stability and change	Partisan dealignment since
Austria	negative (sig.)	negative (sig.)	ETP negative (sig.)	ETP negative (sig.)	ETP low	ETP negative (sig.)	1983
Finland	negative	negative	ETP negative (sig.)		ETP low	ETP negative (sig.)	1970
Flanders				ETP negative (sig.)	ETP low	ETP negative (sig.)	1991
Germany	negative (sig.)	negative (sig.)	ETP negative (sig.) Party supporters negative (sig.)	ETP negative (sig.)		ETP negative (sig.)	1990
Italy (1st & 2nd republics)	negative (sig.)	negative (sig.)	ETP negative (sig.)		ETP low	ETP negative (sig.)	1972
the Netherlands	negative (sig.)	negative (sig.)	ETP negative (sig.) Party supporters negative (sig.)		ETP low	ETP negative (sig.)	1967
Norway	negative (sig.)	negative	ETP negative (sig.) Party supporters negative (sig.)		ETP low	ETP positive (sig.)	1973
Sweden	negative	negative (sig.)	ETP negative (sig.) Party supporters negative (sig.)	Party supporters negative (sig.)	ETP low; Party supporters low	ETP positive (sig.) Party supporters negative (sig.)	1982
Wallonia			ETP negative (sig.)	ETP negative (sig.)	ETP low	ETP negative (sig.)	1965

Evidence of partisan critical realignment and an alignment							
	PI	Strong PI	OLS model for ETP or proportion of durable party supporters		Comparison test for ETP		Partisan realignment in
Denmark	positive	negative	-		ETP low in 1973 follows with higher ETP values		1973
Evidence of continues partisan alignment							
	PI	Strong PI	OLS model for ETP or proportion of durable party supporters	Autoregressive error model for ETP or proportion of durable party supporters	Comparison test for ETP	ANOVA model for ETP in periods of stability and change	
Luxembourg	negative	negative (sig.)	-	-	ETP high	-	

Index: (sig.) stands for statically significant results; 'low' stands for long period of lower levels of indicator in comparison to the reference line (the indicator mean between 1950 and 1964 minus one standard deviation); 'high' stands for long period of higher levels of indicator in comparison to the reference line (the indicator mean between 1950 and 1964 minus one standard deviation).

For Germany, the comparison analysis of ETP showed no clear trend, with fairly low ETP values in some of the elections since 1990. However, the OLS regression analysis of the both PI measurements, ETP and proportion of party supporters, as well as the autoregressive error model for ETP indicated that partisanship dropped over time. The ANOVA models of the two periods also indicate that the ETP values from the 1990 election onwards are lower than those in the previous years. Therefore, I follow the comparison test and contend that since 1990 a partisan dealignment has been occurring in Germany.

Only in Luxembourg were the ETP values at the same level over the whole period, as is suggested by both methods and no trend of ETP over time is identified by the OLS or autoregressive error models. Although significant declining trends of strong PI are found, I conclude that Luxembourg is still in a situation of partisan alignment.

In Denmark the PI regression coefficients for both analyses show no significant and contrasting trends. No significant declining trend of ETP is found by the OLS model. In addition, the comparative analysis elicits a peak or critical moment (the 1973 election) followed by high levels of partisanship, as measured by ETP.

Up to this point, I have examined the trends of partisanship in its two definitions parallel to each other. To strengthen my empirical conclusions, I now examine whether the same results emerge when I analyse the combined definitions of partisanship at the individual-level. Put differently, I wish to test the trends in partisanship as articulated by respondents who admitted party identification and reported voting for the same party in two successive elections.

Since my dataset only covers the period from 1973, I am not able to analyse the level of partisanship prior to the election in this year (the critical election, as captured by the ETP index). I can only examine the levels of partisanship in comparison to the 1973 election. To this end, I ran a binary logistic regression test with partisanship as the dependent variable (partisanship coded 0=respondents who do not have party identification and/or changed their party support in two succeeding elections and 1= respondents who have party identification and voted for the same party in two successive elections). The independent variable is again time, but in this model each

election year after the 1973 election was coded as a dummy variable, and the 1973 election year is the reference group.

Table 5.6 shows the logistic regression model for Denmark. The model suggests that between 1975 and 2005, the odds of being a partisan are higher than those for 1973 election. Only for the 2001 election is this trend not statistically significant, with the confidence interval ranges between minus and plus alluding to the absence of a clear trend. This indicates that apart from the 2001 election, from 1973 onwards the odds of being a partisan have been higher than they were for the 1973 election. This cements support for the trends found by both indicators: the 1973 election has the lowest level of partisans and in the subsequent period, the level of partisans increased again. In addition, the logistical model also gives us a good illustration of the process of critical realignment and a new alignment. In the elections until 1984, immediately after the critical 1973 realignment election, the odds of being a partisan are much smaller than the odds between 1990 and 1998.[9] The logistical model confirms the identification of critical realignment with its idiosyncratic peak in 1973, the election with the lowest odds of partisanship. The odds went up slightly in the following years (until 1984), and in 1990 rose again.

Table 5.6: Binary Logistic Regression Analysis: prediction of party identifiers and stable party supporters in Denmark, 1973-2005

Predictor Variable	B (S.E.)	Exp(B)	95% Confidence Interval for Exp(B)	
Constant	-.42 (.09)***	.66		
1975 election	.45 (.11)***	1.572	1.27	1.95
1977 election	.74 (.11)***	2.09	1.69	2.60
1984 election	.49 (.12)***	1.63	1.30	2.05
1990 election	2.28 (.16)***	9.78	7.09	13.48
1994 election	2.61 (.15)***	13.63	10.25	18.13
1998 election	1.30 (.12)***	3.68	2.92	4.63
2001 election	.15 (.10)	1.16	.95	1.43
2005 election	.24 (.10)**	1.27	1.04	1.55
Chi-squared 1047.645 (p=0.00)				
Nagelkerke R Square .14				
Log Liklihood 11984.06				
N 9500				

*p<=0.05, ** p<=0.01, *** p<=0.001

Note: The dependent variable is coded 0 if voters who do not have party identification and/or changed their party support in two succeeding elections and 1 if the respondent has party identification and voted for the same party in two succeeding elections.

[9] The logistical model does not include the 1987 and 1988 elections as data about party identification in these election years are missing.

Put differently, the logit model confirms that 1973 election is a critical election in the Danish political system.

All in all, Tables 5.5-5.6 demonstrate that only in one case – Luxembourg – are the voters still aligned with the political parties. A partisan critical realignment is found only in Denmark, which occurred in the 1973 election and since then a new alignment has been created. All other cases imply a state of partisan dealignment.

5.7 Conclusions

This chapter deals with change and stability in the relationship between parties and voters as partisans. More specifically, it studies whether we can identify signs of partisan dealignment as partisanship has shrunk over time. Due to major criticism of the party identification model, this chapter has suggested studying this topic based on two aspects – party identification and durable party support. Moreover, it suggests doing so using three indicators. The first is the well-studied PI, and the other two indicators measure stable party support in two consecutive elections.

This study of electoral behaviour includes not only those who support a political party (i.e. valid votes), but also takes into account all of those who are franchised, i.e. the whole electorate. For the individual-level data, I measured the proportion of voters who reported voting for the same party in two succeeding elections. An equivalent estimation was calculated based on the ETP index (after modifying the TV index), based on aggregate data.

Unifying the results of these three indicators (PI, proportion of stable party supporters, and ETP) provides a much more reliable and comprehensive understanding of the patterns underlying partisan alignment.

The combined results of PI, ETP and the proportion of stable party supporters uncover a period of partisan dealignment in most of the party systems studied. On top of this, I prove that the shifts to partisan dealignment occurred in two waves. One wave happened between the mid 1960s and the early 1970s and includes Finland,

Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and Wallonia. The second wave stretches between the early 1980s to the early 1990s in Austria, Flanders, Germany and Sweden.

Only in two cases were no signs of partisan dealignment found. In Luxembourg, the low ETP scores together with the absence of a trend in the ETP suggest ongoing partisan alignment. Denmark is the only case for which the three indicators confirm signs of partisan critical realignment and the creation of a new alignment.