

Class, Religion, and Generations: Cleavage Voting and the Mediating Role of Party Identification in the Czech Republic, 1990–2013

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Abstract:

The paper focuses on the changing effects of three key cleavages in the Czech politics (social class, religion and generation) between 1990 and 2013. Since early 90's, these cleavages have structured party choice in the democratized Czech Republic. The paper utilizes postelection surveys to estimate whether the effect of those cleavages on party choice has changed. In addition to that, the paper uses party identification as a vehicle to overcome the problem of heterogeneity of the electorate. The three above mentioned cleavages structure the vote mainly among those who claim to identify with a party, whereas those without any psychological partisanship vote according to cleavages only in limited number. The paper raises important methodological questions about how to (properly) analyse cleavage voting.

Although cleavage research in the post-communist region was established shortly after the regime change, there is only a limited number of findings on which the academic community agrees. This is primarily because different authors prefer different conceptualizations of cleavages and few studies analyse electoral behaviour systematically (Deegan-Krause 2007). A negligible number of studies focus on the effects of cleavages in the longer term. The present text aims to fill the gap and analyse systematically the effects of cleavages on electoral choice in the Czech Republic from 1990 to present time. It is only through such an analysis that one can find out when the cleavages were formed and whether their effects on electoral choice have been strengthening, weakening or stagnating over time.

From the beginning of the cleavage research, one of its fundamental weaknesses has been the assumption of homogeneous effects of socio-structural characteristics. This assumption is held not only by studies of the effects of cleavages on party choice but also, generally speaking, by all major models of party choice. These models assume that voters “place the same weight on considerations and think about the vote in the same way or arrive at their decision by the same ‘route’”. As a result, voters with equal characteristics should vote for the same parties. Thus, the research was often reduced into a horse race between the models concerning their explanatory power; instead of exploring the way variables influence the vote (Bartle 2005: 653).

Although there are good reasons for the homogeneity assumption in terms of explanatory power, the assumption may mislead the effort to explain electoral behaviour and conceal important differences in the ways different groups of voters decide. Indeed, one can reasonably expect that only a segment of voters will decide according to cleavages, while another segment will follow different criteria such as evaluations of government performance, evaluations of party leaders, or issue voting. Therefore, the second goal of this paper is to demonstrate how we can conceptualize the relationship between voter heterogeneity and party choice, and to apply that conceptualization in the analysis of the effects of cleavages on voting. Better understanding of voter heterogeneity can help us solve the puzzle in the literature on post-communist region; that between high volatility and success of new parties, on one hand,

and a relatively structured system of political parties and party attachments in the electorate.

The structure of the paper reflects the above goals. In the first part, I will present a conceptualization of cleavages used in this study, describe the sources and nature of cleavages in Czech politics, and present the expectations concerning the effects of cleavages on voting over time. In the second part, I will explain how contemporary electoral behaviour research is limited by the assumption of voter homogeneity, account for existing approaches to reflecting voter heterogeneity (especially in terms of political knowledge), and argue why it is best to use party identification to define voter heterogeneity. In the following part, I will present my analytical strategy, data and operationalization of the different concepts. Then I will use data from Czech post-election studies to demonstrate how the effects of cleavages on voting evolved over time since 1990 and subsequently to argue why the proposed approach to representing voter heterogeneity is preferable to the standard approach based on political knowledge.

1. Cleavages in Czech politics

Political cleavages refer to political conflicts between diverse social groups. In the traditional definition, a cleavage has a structural, normative and organizational dimension. The cleavage can only occur if a conflict between members of relatively closed social groups with particular sets of values and identities becomes politically mobilized through relatively stable organizational structures (Mair 2006: 373; see also Lipset, Rokkan 1967a; Bartolini, Mair 1990; Knutsen, Scarbrough 1995). In other words, cleavages reflect politicized conflicts that arise out of people's stable structural characteristics such as social class, religion, ethnicity, language or regional identity. In this context, Franklin (2010) defined the following conditions for a cleavage to occur: different social groups realize the existence of political differences between them, and therefore vote for different parties because those parties represent their particular interests and norms. Thus, cleavages reflect conflicts people find important enough to go to vote.

Although a number of cleavages can theoretically exist in a polity, international surveys inform us that there are typically just one or two cleavages coexisting

at the same time, and a higher number is rather exceptional (Knutsen, Scarborough 1995; Lipset, Rokkan 1967b; Lijphart 1999; Stoll 2010; Whitefield, Rohrschneider 2009; Rohrschneider, Whitefield 2009). Cleavages have different weight: some are relevant to all political parties, others for just one or a few. Moreover, the issues underlying cleavages may vary from country to country, there may be different relationships between them, and their structure in a given country may change over time. Irrespective of these differences, there is a relatively high level of consensus that cleavages based on social class, religion, ethnicity and language occur in most European countries. Existing research in the Czech Republic (Matějů et al. 1999; Smith, Matějů 2011, Kitschelt et al. 1999) identifies two cleavages, one based on social class (the line is drawn between socioeconomic groups, and the central issues include redistribution of wealth and regulation of the economy), and the other one based on religion (the line is drawn between social-liberal and social-conservative attitudes on the role of religion and moral values in politics). Some studies (Casal Bertoa 2014; Linek, Lyons 2013) noted the existence of a third cleavage between communism and anticommunism, where the line divides generations and the central issue concerns people's views and evaluations of the old communist regime and the new democratic regime. The effects of social class on electoral choice in the Czech Republic have been documented since the mid-1990s (Matějů, Řeháková 1997; Řeháková 1999). The recent research suggests that class effects on voting are either stable in time or slightly increasing (Smith, Matějů 2011; Linek, Lyons 2013).¹ Social class is considered to be the primary cleavage and a symmetrical one, distinguishing between left-wing parties (the communist KSČM and the social democratic ČSSD) and right-wing parties of both liberal and conservative orientations (ODS, ODA, US, TOP09). The central issues include redistribution of wealth, state regulation of the economy, and the extent of public social service provision. Some authors (Evans, Whitefield 1998) add the issue of

¹ Smith and Matějů (2011) take only economically active voters into consideration and economically inactive individuals were excluded from the analyses. However, Linek and Lyons (2013) covered them as they use categories that include retired and unemployed people. Here I include only retired people as a separate category, even though in 2006, 2010 and 2013 surveys pensioners reported their prior occupation. Other categories had too few cases to form a special category for statistical modelling.

foreign policy orientation (on Russia in the east, or on the US and NATO in the west).

The religious cleavage² in the Czech Republic is less important than in a number of other post-communist countries (Casal Bertoa 2014). Moreover, there has been no systematic research into the religious determinants of electoral behaviour, except for a study by Linek and Lyons (2013). Some studies note the relationship between party choice and religious affiliation and church attendance (e.g., Vlachová 2009; Lebeda et al. 2007: 16–18; Linek 2012: 24–27), concluding that religion determines support only for the Christian Democrats (KDU-ČSL) , with their stronghold among practicing Catholics. This cleavage is an asymmetrical one, with relevance for a single party. Territorial studies of electoral support have also noted the relationship between religion and party choice, demonstrating systematically higher electoral support for KDU-ČSL in areas with stronger Catholic populations (e.g., Kostelecký 2009; Kouba 2007). The central issue of this cleavage evolves around the role of religious/Catholic values in the education, family and reproduction policies and the relationship between church and state.

Existing research suggests that the communist cleavage is based on generational membership (Linek, Lyons 2013; Linek 2013). In contrast to social class and religion, the role of generational membership in electoral choice is more difficult to interpret in terms of cleavages. The traditional definition requires the existence of relatively closed social groups (Lipset, Rokkan 1967; Bartolini, Mair 1990; Knutsen, Scarbrough 1995). Distinct and closed groups apparently exist in the cases of class, religion, ethnicity or regional identity, while generations may not be considered closed groups. However, since generational membership is associated with a specific time period of political socialization and first experience of politics, the political values and behaviour of each generation are formed by different and differently important political events (Alwin 1993; Alwin, McCammon 2006;

² Instead of a religious cleavage, some authors refer to a cultural divide between moral values, on one hand, and libertarian values, on the other hand (Kitschelt 1994, 1995; Hooghe, Marks, Wilson 2002; or, e.g., Vlachová 2002 in the Czech language).

Mannheim 1952; Weil 1987). For these reasons, generations can be treated as closed social groups.³

Few studies have demonstrated the effects of generational membership on party choice. Nevertheless, there is a sizable body of research on the positive effects of the Great Depression on electoral support for left-wing parties in the generation that reached the age of majority in the 1930s (for the US, see Campbell et al. 1960; Elder 1974; for Sweden, see Knutsen 2003; for the UK, see Butler, Stokes 1974; for opposing findings, see Goerres 2008). In addition, there is evidence of higher electoral support in the generation socialized in the 1960s for “new politics” parties such as the Green Party in Germany (Goerres 2008; similarly Knutsen 2003 for Scandinavian countries).

In the post-communist region, there have been almost no studies of generational effects on party choice thus far (but see, Evans, Whitefield 1998; Rohrschneider, Whitefield 2009; Whitefield, Rohrschneider 2009; Whitefield 2002). Some attention has been devoted to the effects of age, mostly with regard to voting for reformed vs. communist/successor parties (Szelenyi, Szelenyi, Poster 1996: 473; Matějů, Vlachová et al. 2000: 319–326). Moreover, as noted by Schatz, post-communist countries that underwent swift political and economic transformation saw the immediate emergence of a relationship between party choice and age, with older voters supporting parties defending the old regime and status quo. In contrast, no such relationship emerged in countries where the pace of transformation was more sober. The only study of generational effects on party choice in post-communist countries thus far involves the case of KSČM (see Linek 2008b; 2013; Linek, Lyons 2013). The generational cleavage is asymmetrical, is centred upon evaluations of the communist past and the democratic present, and distinguishes between KSČM and other parties.

The first goal of the present study is to identify any change in the effects of these cleavages over time. Empirical evidence from Western Europe indicates a

³ Some electoral behaviour studies demonstrate a relationship between age and party choice. Young people tend to vote for right-wing parties in some countries and left-wing parties in others, while elderly people prefer the left wing in the former countries and the right wing in the latter. Most of these age differences in party choice depend on the ways different parties represent different age groups' political interests; some of them are also shaped by class or religious differences between age groups. Based on a lifecycle perspective and a chronology of ageing, this approach to studying age as a determinant of electoral choice is distinct from the generational membership approach.

declining importance of cleavages such as class and religion. At the same time, post-communist countries are characterised by weaker effects of cleavages on party choice. Therefore, the effects of cleavages in the Czech Republic are expected to decrease in time. Moreover, the parliamentary elections of 2010 and 2013 were marked by high levels of net and overall volatility (Linek 2014) and electoral success of new populist parties without specific social groups as their constituencies. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect decreasing effects of cleavages on voting, especially during those two elections.

H1: The effects of cleavages on voting in the Czech Republic decrease over time. The decrease will be steeper in the years 2010 and 2013.

2. Tackling the assumption of homogeneity in voting behaviour research

Standard explanations of party choice focus, to put it simply, on social groups and cleavages (Lazarsfeld et al. 1944; Lipset, Rokkan 1967; Bartolini, Mair 1990), party attachment (Campbell et al. 1960), issue voting (Merill, Grofman 1999) and valence voting (Clarke et al. 2004, 2009). These theories are characterized by the assumption that all voters reach their decisions in the same ways – they work with the assumption of homogeneity in voter decision making. The standard approach to analysing electoral behaviour uses binary or multinomial regression models where each explanatory variable has an additive effect, i.e. it does not moderate the effects of other variables and has the same effect on all cases analysed. The findings of such studies can be interpreted in terms of “average effects on the average voter” (Bartle 2005).

Nevertheless, in-depth reading of the major monographs presenting the different theories of party choice suggests that their authors did not fully support the homogeneity assumption. The Columbia School talked about reinforcing and cross-cutting cleavages. The Michigan School talked about different levels of ideological abstraction and political knowledge (informed vs. uninformed party supporter) and Converse (1964) argued that the public should not be conceived as a uniformly measurable ideological whole. Issue and valence voting theories informed us that different issues may have different weights in a party choice model.

Although there are mentions of voter heterogeneity in these theories, they mostly work with the assumption of homogeneity and strive to make universal claims. However, the homogeneity assumption is wrong. This is not the way the world works—because this is not the way people function. My main argument is that people do the same things for different reasons (Dowding 2005). Presume two voters who each have different policy preferences and evaluate party leaders in different ways. In spite of that, both may vote for the same party – as long as voter A decides according to his policy preferences and voter B according to the ways he evaluates the party leaders. In spite of their differences in terms of policy priorities and leader evaluations, these two voters may vote for the same party, simply because their decision-making relies on different criteria.

Voter heterogeneity in terms of decision making means that a simple theory of electoral behaviour is impossible. Voter heterogeneity is a fundamental assumption which must be tackled not only by theory but also by the methodology of electoral research. Contemporary studies take heterogeneity into consideration in extremely limited ways. An overwhelming majority of theories and related models of electoral behaviour imply that all voters place the same weight on the same characteristics that influence electoral choice, and that all reach their decisions in the same ways. This homogeneity assumption relies on a more general maxim, namely that more simple and more general theories are better than complicated ones. However, generalization comes with a price: one disregards a range of specifics and particulars. Nevertheless, as we are taught by what's today a classic handbook of social research methods, "any theory should be just as complicated as all our evidence suggest" (King et al. 1994: 20).

Thus far, no one has formulated a general theory of voting behaviour heterogeneity which would identify the sources of such heterogeneity, integrate the assumption in existing models of electoral behaviour, and formulate a conceptual framework. Moreover, only few studies have touched upon the topic. At a more general level, explanations of electoral behaviour that work with the heterogeneity assumption inform us about different groups of voters

with different logics of choice and who assign different weights to the same considerations.⁴ How do these studies conceptualize such “different weights”? Electoral behaviour scholarship has taken two different approaches to conceptualizing voter heterogeneity. The choice between the two approaches depends on whether one seeks to explain voter turnout or party choice. Those studying heterogeneity with regard to electoral participation tend to prefer value orientations such as perceived duty to vote or partisanship (Aldrich et al. 2011; Blais 2000). In contrast, those studying voter heterogeneity with regard to party choice prefer political knowledge as a source of that heterogeneity (Bartle 2005). What are the reasons for using those sources of heterogeneity and what are the underlying decision making mechanisms?

In his study of voter turnout, Blais (2000: 92–114) demonstrated that people’s reasons to go vote depend on the strength of perceived duty to vote. Those who feel little duty to vote place more weight on the costs and benefits of voting and on whether casting one’s ballot makes a difference in election results. Those with a duty to vote do so irrespective of the costs, benefits and probability of making a difference, driven merely by their sense of civic duty. Other studies made a more mechanical distinction. Aldrich et al. (2011) demonstrated that habitual voters place little weight on party identification, internal and external political efficacy or candidates’ mobilization campaigns, while non-habitual voters don’t.⁵ Similarly, Kosmidis (2014) found different decision-making mechanisms among voters who were certain about their party choice and those who were uncertain. The latter placed more weight on perceived duty to vote.

Explanations of party choice place much more emphasis on political knowledge (Bartle 2005; Singh, Roy 2014). Political knowledge refers primarily to the quality of being informed about politics, political processes, actors, ideologies and public policies. Research has shown a relationship between political knowledge and the ways voters process information, how

⁴ Bartle (2005: 654–656) talks about two types of heterogeneity: different weights on different considerations vs. different ways of thinking about politics. However, this is in fact a single type: different ways of thinking always imply placing different weights on different considerations. If a voter puts zero weight on certain considerations that comprise a specific account, then his/her thinking about politics is actually different than that of a voter who assigns a weight to all considerations in that account.

⁵ Aldrich et al. (2011) did not include duty to vote in their regression models although data for that variable was available and, moreover, the variable best differentiated between habitual and non-habitual voters.

stable their attitudes are, or on the level of attitudinal constraints (Converse 1964; Zaller 1992; Fiske, Kinder 1981; Fazio, Williams 1986). Political knowledge helps voters organize information into schemes or mental models and thus increase its accessibility, since structured information is more easily recalled from memory. In turn, accessibility strengthens links between related attitudes and between attitudes and behaviour (Krosnick 1991). Therefore, the electoral behaviour of politically knowledgeable voters is influenced much more by issues and interests, and much less by cues such as perceived personality and ability of party leaders (Bartle 2005). In contrast, voters with less knowledge of political actors and their programmes have to make their decisions under the circumstances of bounded rationality and rely much more on cues such as emotions, personal sympathy or friends' recommendations.

Political knowledge is most frequently used in the studies of economic and issue voting. Since both these explanations of party choice imply some level of knowledge (of politics, programmes, actors, economic situation), more knowledgeable voters should be in a better position to vote with regard to those considerations. Existing studies have demonstrated relatively limited effects of political knowledge on electoral behaviour (Bartle 2005). There are certainly a number of reasons why there is so little support for the effect of political knowledge. The main reason is that high levels of political knowledge can be found among two distinct types of voters: those who are fairly certain about their party choice and frame their choice clearly in the discourse of political conflict in their country, on one hand, and those who are highly educated, feel alienated from and restrained by party politics, do not exhibit any party attachment, and are quite proud of it. Russell Dalton refers to the latter type as informed non-partisans (Dalton 2013). For these reasons, political knowledge cannot provide a sufficient explanation of voter heterogeneity.

There are better instruments how to respect heterogeneity in party choice. The assumption of voter heterogeneity implies that different voters employ different logics of party choice. I want to argue that party identification, or a sense of psychological closeness to a specific party, is the principal source of such heterogeneity. Individuals with a strong party attachment can reasonably be expected to approve of its programme, the way it is implemented, and the

behaviour of the party and its leaders in general. The choices such individuals made at the polling station are not difficult – they most likely, almost certainly, vote for their favourite party. In contrast, someone who does not identify with any party must decide who to vote for. In sum, the decision-making processes of these two groups tend to be based on different criteria.

There is one more important characteristic of party identification, namely its effect on perceptions and evaluations of politics, political attitudes and values (Goren 2005). Party identification comes with a cognitive frame that shapes the ways voters view the world and organize their thinking about politics into a coherent whole. Therefore, party attachment reinforces in voters such interpretations of politics and political conflict that are consistent with the frames and dimensions presented by their party of choice. Parties use partisanship as a means of communicating their opinions to the world, and especially to their supporters.

If party identification mediates political communication, then electoral choice among individuals with a party identification should be much more likely shaped by factors that define the fundamental political conflicts re-produced by their party. Some of these conflicts are based on cleavages. Therefore, we should observe stronger effects of cleavage voting among individuals with party identification. And since party identification is a better means of representing heterogeneity than political knowledge, political knowledge should influence the level of cleavage voting much less.

H2: Cleavage voting is stronger among individuals with party identification, compared to those without one.

H3: The level of cleavage voting is the same (or slightly higher) among individuals with high levels of political knowledge, compared to those with low levels.

3. Analytical strategy, data and operationalisation

The above stated hypothesis will be analysed using merged data from post-election surveys in the Czech Republic since 1990 (for details, see Appendix 1). These data contain enough information on party choice and membership in various social groups which define cleavages in the Czech politics; however, there is limited information on party identification and political knowledge. In

this section, I will present the research strategy and the operationalization of variables.

The analysis of the cleavage voting in time requires to separate two different sources of the change in the level of cleavage voting. On one hand, we have a structural change in the size of various social groups (structural dealignment), and on the other, there is a change in the level of association between social groups and party choice (behavioural dealignment). Both these processes produce the weakening of salience of cleavages, and they remain independent processes; Lachat 2007: 68; see also Flanagan (1984) who called it ecological and sectoral realignment, and Zelle 1998).

I will use absolute index lambda to analyse cleavage voting in time (Lachat 2007). It is a general version of much better known index kappa (Hout, Brooks, Manza 1995). Kappa can be used for multi-party systems and multi-category classification of social groups. It is computed as a standard deviation of log odds for all social groups' differences in vote choice in a given election (Hout, Brooks, Manza 1995: 813). It measures the association between social groups and party choice with no care about the size of the social groups. Thus, in the longitudinal perspective, it is not able to detect the structural change. On the other hand, index lambda is just the index kappa which takes care about the size of the groups. In short, it is the version of kappa index which weights the log odds by the size of the groups (see Lachat 2007: 86–89).

It is possible to calculate these indices based either on logistic coefficients (the relative version) or on predicted probabilities (the absolute version). The advantage of absolute version is that it can be calculated even in the situation of quasi-complete separation where there are no cases for some combinations of a social group and a party (Albert, Anderson 1984; Zorn 2005; Lachat 2007: 89). In addition to that, the absolute version offers a relatively easy interpretation of the index which varies between 0 and 0.5.⁶ As it is based on the probability measurement, the index is calculated as the standard deviation in the level of support for different parties across different social groups. Thus, I will analyse the development of cleavage voting with absolute index lambda which captures both structural and behavioural change. Moreover, it is

⁶ The value 0.5 is a result of a specific case with two parties and two social groups of the same size where each group votes for different party.

possible to set the size of various groups as constant in time when calculation the lambda index. This allows checking for structural change.⁷

These indices are based on multinomial logistic regression model with party choice as the dependent variable and cleavages as independent ones. Party choice is operationalized in two different ways. In the first case, it has only five categories (choice of ČSSD, KDU-ČSL, KSČM, ODS, and other parties). These four parties whose support was based on cleavages have constituted the main electoral alternatives since the early 90's. These parties gained between 70 to 90 per cent. In last two elections, there was a huge drop in the level of support for them as their combined gain was less than sixty per cent in 2010 and even lower at around 50 per cent in 2013. As the residual party choice category represented more than half of the cases in 2013, there is a possibility that cleavage voting for the different parties within the "other" category cancels each other out and won't be detected. Thus, the second operationalization uses different number of parties for election based on the criteria of 5 per cent threshold (in 2010 I include also KDU-ČSL which didn't cross the threshold as it is the party of religious cleavage).

Cleavage voting is operationalized as the relationship between particular social group and party choice. This is what Knutsen and Scarborough (1995) call pure structural voting (see also the concept of census divide by Deegan-Krause (2007)). This shortcut is allowed as there is enough evidence for the value and attitudinal differences of various social classes, religious and atheist groups, and generations (Matějů Vlachová 1998, 2000; Linek 2010). Social class is measured by adjusted EGP scheme where five groups are differentiated: upper and lower professionals, routine non-manuals, qualified and un-qualified manual workers, entrepreneurs, and retired. Other residual categories (unemployed, parental/maternity leave, students, disabled) are not included in the analysis. Religion is measured by the combination of church attendance and denomination: practising Catholics and Protestants (at least once a month), weakly practising Catholics and Protestants (at least once a year, but less than once a month), and others (non-practising Catholics, other religions, atheists). Membership in generations is based on the following division: before

⁷ There is still the possibility to compare the absolute indices lambda and kappa as the latter measures only the strength of the cleavage voting without any care about the size of the groups.

1934, 1934–1943, 1944–1953, 1954–1973, 1974–1983, and after 1983 (Appendix 2 presents the class, religion and generational structure of the Czech voters for each election between 1990 and 2013).

Party identification is measured using CSES project questions which are used to construct the so called absolute version of the party identification (Sinnott 1998; Linek 2009). For the purposes of the analysis, I differentiate only between two groups: those with and without party identification. I use political quiz questions to construct political knowledge variable (see Delli Carpini, Keeter 1996; Zaller 1992). The correct answers are summated and those with above average number of correct answers are considered to have high level of political knowledge; the rest are voters with low level of political knowledge.

4. Results

We can see relatively strong and consistent relationship between social groups and party choice during the whole analysed period. Starting with class cleavage, ODS received high support among entrepreneurs (almost 50 per cent on average) and higher and lower professionals, whereas it gained lower support among manuals and retired (less than 20 per cent). Social democrats support was the strongest among manual workers (above 35 per cent) and together with Communist, both parties have dominant position among retired. Religious cleavage differentiates between Christian Democrats (KDU-ČSL) and the rest parties. Among the practising Catholics, the average support for the party was almost 45 per cent across the whole period. Non-practising Catholics, other religion and atheists supported the party at low 3 per cent. The support for other parties is spread relatively evenly among various religion-based groups, except among practising Catholics where their support is much weaker due to high support of KDU-ČSL.

Generational effects on party choice concern mainly of the Communist party whose support mounts to 23 percent among those born before 1934 and drops to less than 1.5 percent among those born after 1983. We can see generational effects with regard of KDU-ČSL support, as its support is concentrated among older generations and reflects generational structure of practising Catholics. However, the generational effects in case of KDU-ČSL are much weaker. ODS

and ČSSD have almost equal support across generations and the support for other parties is stronger among those born after 1973.

Figures 1A and 1B show the development of the cleavage voting between 1990 and 2013. These graphs utilize the absolute index lambda. The difference between the figures is based on different number of categories of dependent variable. In the first case, there are five categories (four main parties and others), whereas in the latter the number of categories varies based on the number of parties which crossed the five percent electoral threshold in given election. With these figures, we can see whether the hypothesised expectations about the development of cleavage voting hold true or not. The expectation is based on the general decline in cleavage voting in the Western European countries, weaker role of cleavages in post-Communist countries and increasing electoral volatility, especially in the last two Czech elections. Thus, the hypothesis states that cleavage voting declines in time, and especially in the last two elections (hypothesis 1).

Insert Figures 1A and 1B

The impact of social class on party choice is increasing in time. This applies not only to the 90's during which period we could see crystallization of class cleavage, but also in the following years. However, if the dependent variable in the multinomial logistic models takes into account all parties which received more than five per cent in election, we can see decline in cleavage voting. Even though the level of cleavage voting in last two elections declined, it was still higher than during the whole period of 90's.

Generational cleavage is relatively stable in time. In the early 90's, this cleavage was quite strong (lambda index at 0.19 and 0.14), however, since 1996 the effect is stable. In the Figure 1A (the dependent variable is based only on 4 main parties), we can see increase in the generational effect on party choice. This is caused mainly by the fact that the support for other parties comes from new generations. Newly emerged populist parties like Public Affairs, ANO 2011 and Dawn of direct democracy drew their support from younger voters. These parties are merged into one category of other parties and gain greater weight in the calculation of index lambda for the Figure 1A.

Religion based voting is relatively stable as well, even though we can see a spike in the role of religion for party choice in 2002. However, in these elections, KDU-ČSL ran together with other party (liberal Union of Freedom) and together they received more than 14 per cent, almost the double of the typical KDU-ČSL support, mainly due to increase in the support among weakly practising Catholics. Thus, the effect of religion on the party choice increased in that election.

Cleavage voting in the Czech Republic is relatively stable and contrary to the hypothesis, there are even signs of strengthening of cleavage effects. These results are surprising in the context of the electoral success of new populist parties without any clear social structural anchor (Public Affairs, ANO 2011, and Dawn of Direct Democracy). The stability of cleavage voting in time may be the result of two different logics of voting decisions: that among partisan and non-partisans. Party identifiers approach and understand political conflicts in the dimensions and frames of “their” party. Thus, they interpret the conflicts in term of cleavages that shape the support of their party. Therefore, in the next part, I will analyse two other hypothesis. The first one states that cleavage voting is more common among party identifiers (H2). The second one says that party identification is much better tool for dealing with voter heterogeneity than typically used political knowledge (H3).

Figure 2 presents absolute index lambda for cleavage voting among voters with and without party identification and among voters with low and high political knowledge. For the purposes of clear presentation, the indices are calculated using the merged data from surveys between 1996 and 2013 for which party identification and political knowledge are available (1998 survey is excluded as it doesn't contain those two measures). In the merged file, there are 48 per cent of voters with party identification and 52 per cent without any; there are 64 per cent of voters with higher level of political knowledge and 36 percent with lower one.⁸

Insert Figure 2

⁸ If the political knowledge variable is constructed differently with less people having higher level of political knowledge, the results are the same.

The figure shows that among the voters with party identification the cleavage voting is more common than among the voters without any party identification. If the voter identifies with any of the parties, the probability that she will vote according to cleavage is much higher than if she didn't identified with party. The figure presents strong evidence for the hypothesis 2. In addition to that, the logic of voting and the role of cleavages is almost the same among the voters with low and high political knowledge. This is in line with the expectation of the hypothesis 3.

To get a sense of how much party identification fosters cleavage voting, I present five figures of predicted probabilities of party choice. They are based on logistic regression models where dependent variable is party choice and independent variables are cleavage of that party, party identification (political knowledge) and the interaction between them. The aim of this strategy is to find out whether the effect of cleavages is stronger among party identifiers or political knowledgeable. The interaction effects were significant only in case of party identification, but not in case of political knowledge. Thus, we can see that the bars with predicted probabilities for voters with high and low political knowledge are almost same for all four parties. However, the same bars for people with and without party identification show much more variation.

Insert Figure 3

Let's start with KDU-ČSL. If a voter identifies with any party and goes to church at least once a month, he votes KDU-ČSL in more than half of the cases; if the same church-goer doesn't identify with any party, the support for KDU-ČSL drops to one third. For the voters with high and low political knowledge, the probabilities are almost the same. The very same pattern clearly emerges in case of KSČM. If a voter was born before 1943 and identifies with any party, he votes for Communists in around a third of cases; however, if the voter doesn't identify with any party, the support for KSČM drops to less than 20 per cent.

Last three cases concern class cleavage and the vote for ODS, ČSSD, and KSČM. In case of ODS and KSČM we see the clear pattern of stronger cleavage voting among party identifiers and non-identifiers; political knowledge has

again no role on the strength of cleavage voting. ČSSD case is different as neither party identification nor political knowledge interact with class cleavage voting for this party. One of the main reasons is that social democratic voters don't have high level of party identification as voters of KSČM, KDU-ČSL and ODS do.

5. Conclusion

The aims of this study were (1.) to analyse development of the cleavage voting (social class, religion, and generations) in the Czech Republic from 1990 till now; (2.) to find out whether party identification strengthens the effect of cleavage voting and whether it works better for tackling the heterogeneity of voters than political knowledge. The analyses of cleavage voting showed that there is no decline in cleavage voting. Contrary to expectations, the class cleavage is gaining more effect and religion and generations stay at the same level. These results are surprising in the context of high electoral volatility of Czech voters in last two elections and unstructured support of newly established populist parties.

Further analysis proved that party identification works better for taking care of the heterogeneity of voters concerning the criteria used for decision making. Those voters who identify with any party base their votes more often on cleavages than voters with no party identification. However, we need more analysis to prove that party identification is better tool for defining heterogeneity of voters than political knowledge. First, we need to prove that it is possible to see similar differences between voters with and without party identification also for other explanations of party choice. Analysis of issue/ideological voting using left-right self-positioning of voters yields similar results (not presented in this paper). Second, we need to show the same effects in other political systems.

Findings concerning the heterogeneity of voters are important for various reasons, but one seems most important. Politicized social determinants of party choice still seem important for various groups of voters, even though we have read a lot about the end of class voting and cleavage voting in general. Moreover, it is possible to speculate that these groups of voter are important for the long-term reproduction of the cleavages and for the structuration of the

political conflict. Without these voters, the electoral support of the parties would be even more volatile and the parties could lose all their support during one electoral cycle. The case of Czech Christian Democrats who didn't succeed to get to the parliament in 2010, but made it three years later suggest that parties whose support is based on cleavage are less vulnerable to the volatile electoral markets. On the other side, there is a group of voters who doesn't orient their party choice around cleavages. This group is the most important source of electoral volatility and these voters base their decision making on evaluation of leaders, short-term issues, political dissatisfaction, or some other factors.

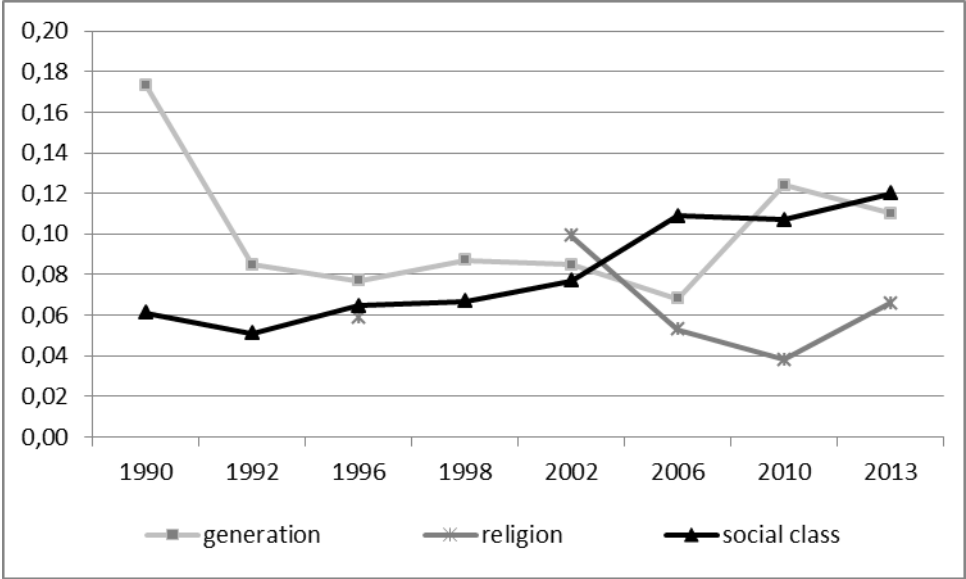
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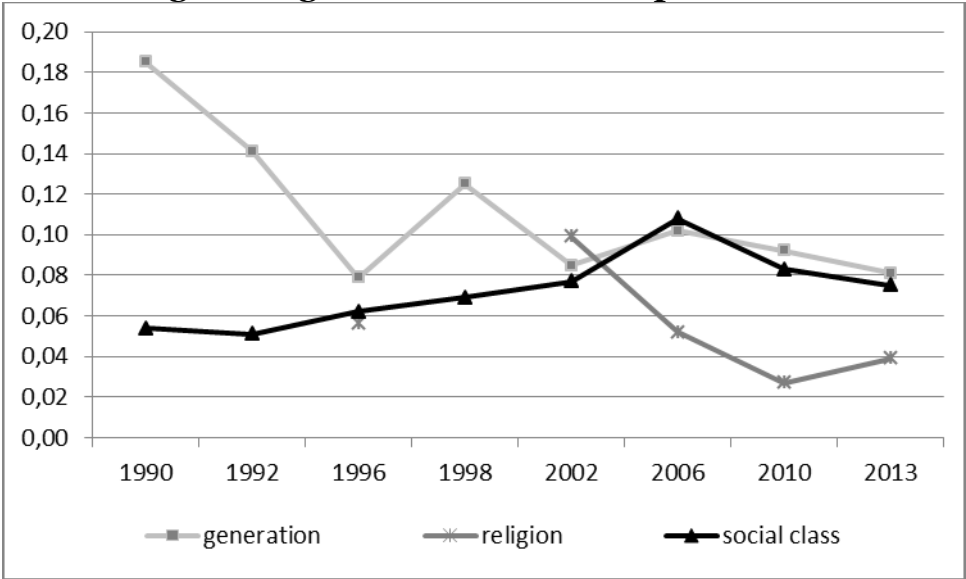
Figure 1. Cleavage voting (absolute index lambda)

1A. Cleavage voting – Five main parties



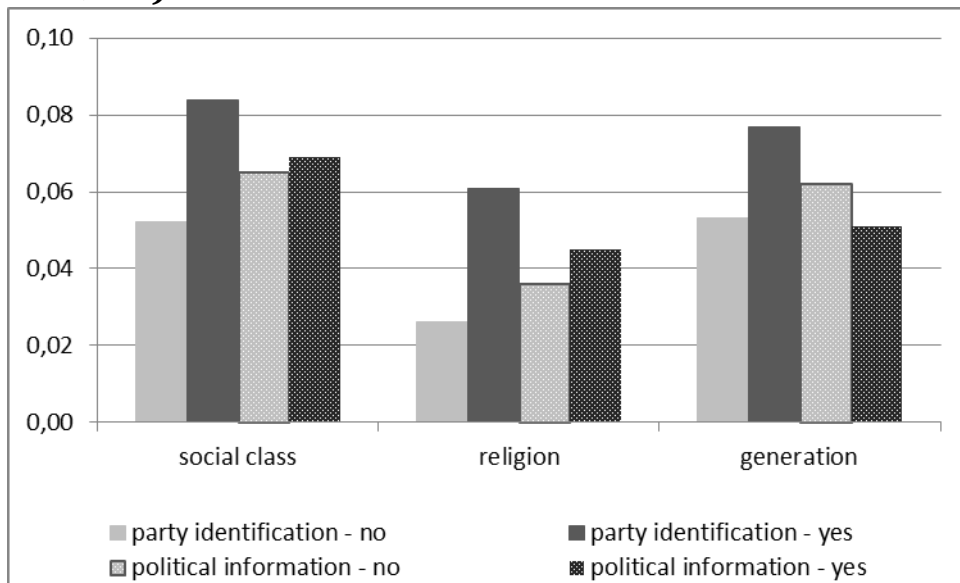
Source: Czech election study I. and II.

1B. Cleavage voting – Parties above five percent threshold



Source: Czech election study I. and II.

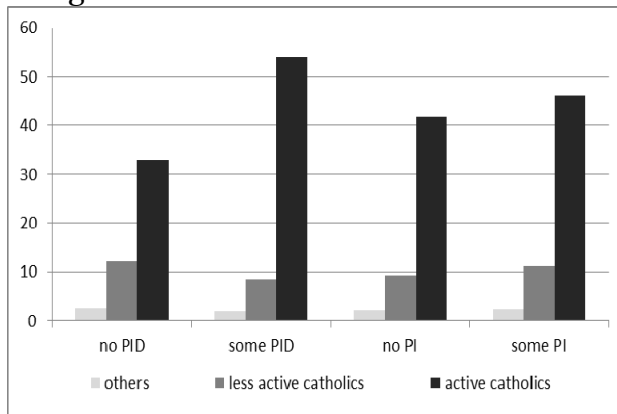
Figure 2. Cleavage voting between 1996 and 2013 according to party identification and political knowledge (absolute index lambda)



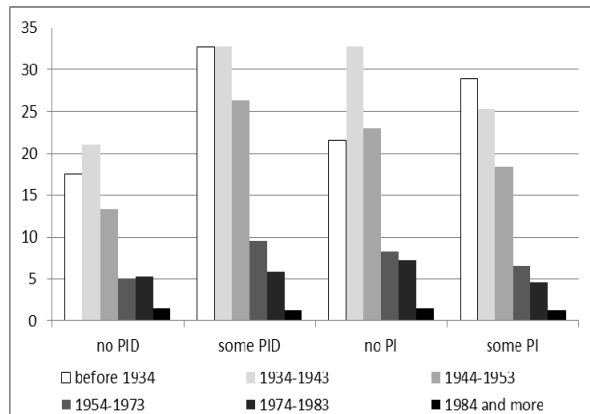
Source: Czech election study I.

Figure 3. Cleavage voting between 1996 and 2013 according to party identification and political knowledge (predicted probabilities)

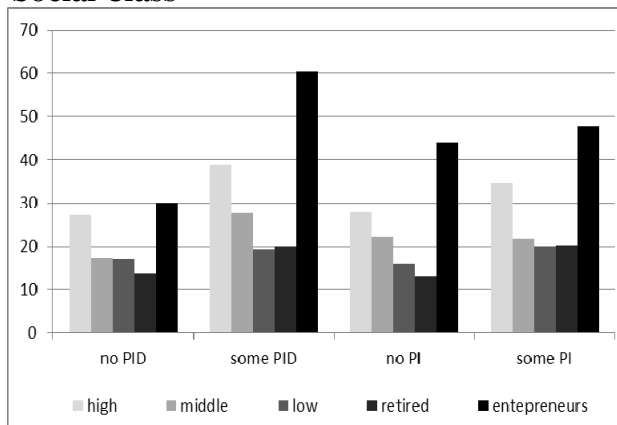
Vote for KDU-ČSL – Christian Democrats
Religion



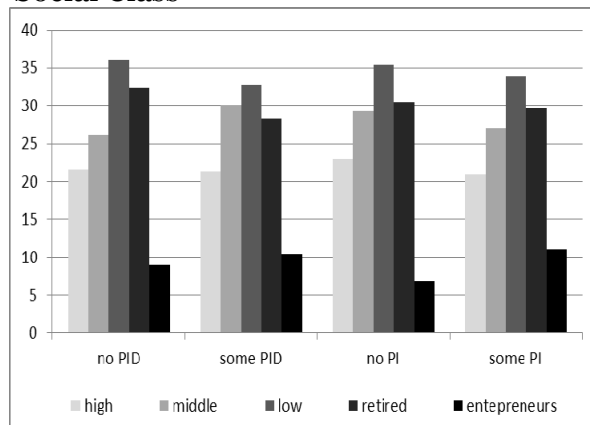
Vote for KSCM – Communist
Generations



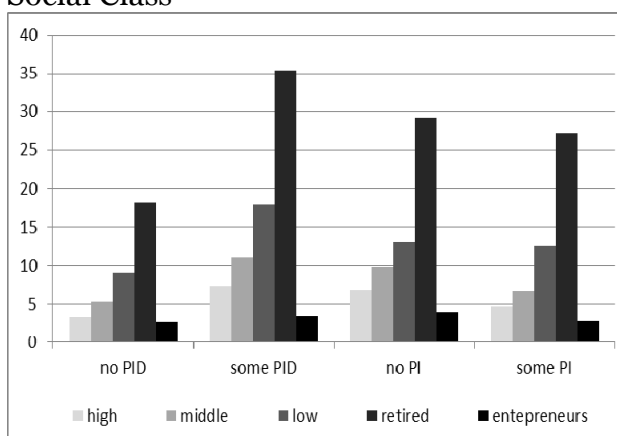
Vote for ODS – Liberals, Conservatives
Social Class



Vote for ČSSD – Social democrats
Social Class



Vote for KSCM – Communist
Social Class



Source: Czech election study I.

Appendix 1. Information about the data

Table 1a. Czech election study I. (1990–2013)

rok	agentura / název šetření	sampling	N
1990	IVVM / June 1990 - V9015	quota	664
1992	IVVM / June 1992 - V9207	quota	805
1996	STEM / post-election survey for CSES	quota	1229
1998	CVVM / June 1998 - V9821	quota	2035
2002	CVVM / June 2002	quota	944
2006	CVVM / Czech election study 2006	quota	2002
2010	CVVM / Czech election study 2010	quota	1857
2013	CVVM / Czech election study 2013	quota	1653
1990– 2010	Czech election study I. (1990–2013)	–	11189

Table 1b. Czech election study II. (1990–2013)

rok	agentura / název šetření	sampling	N
1990	AISA / post-election survey (co-op with WZB)	quota	1695
1992	STEM / Economic expectations and attitudes	quota	1100
1996	CVVM / June and July 1996	quota	1840
1998	CVVM / June 1998 - V9821	quota	2035
2002	STEM / European Social Survey 2002	random	1328
2006	CVVM / Czech election study 2006	quota	2002
2010	CVVM / Czech election study 2010	quota	1857
2013	CVVM / Czech election study 2013	quota	1653
1990– 2013	Czech election study II. (1990–2013)	–	13510

The second merged file was used only for calculations of cleavage voting between 1990 and 2013 for Figures 1A and 1B.

Appendix 2. The Class, religion and generational structure of the Czech society, 1990–2013.

Because of rounding, the sum of row percentages doesn't have to match 100 per cent. Data are not weighted, as they are mainly based on quota sampling. Thus, from definition, they are representative for the whole population concerning key socio-demographic variables like sex, age, education and region.

Table A1: Social class (row percentages)

<i>Election year</i>	<i>Higher professionals</i>	<i>Lower professionals</i>	<i>Routine non-manuals</i>	<i>Entrepreneurs</i>	<i>Qualified workers</i>	<i>Un-Qualified workers</i>	<i>Retired</i>	<i>Students</i>	<i>Others</i>	<i>N</i>
1990	11	11	18	2	19	19	17	2	2	1695
1992	14	11	17	5	14	12	22	3	3	1100
1996	6	14	15	8	14	10	28	3	3	1840
1998	7	15	11	9	13	7	30	5	4	2035
2002	7	10	12	8	10	11	39	2	2	1328
2006	7	10	16	9	8	11	25	9	5	2002
2010	7	10	15	8	7	12	26	8	8	1857
2013	10	8	19	7	8	12	22	7	7	1653
Average (1990–2013)	8	11	15	7	12	11	27	5	4	11 857

Source: Czech election study II.

Table A2: Religion (row percentages)

<i>Election year</i>	<i>Atheists and non-Catholics</i>	<i>Non-practising Catholics</i>	<i>Weakly practising Catholics</i>	<i>Practising Catholics</i>	<i>N</i>
1990	59	41			664
1996	58	20	16	7	1229
2002	61	8	19	12	944
2006	56	18	19	8	2002
2010	73	8	11	8	1857
2013	67	13	13	6	1653
Average (1990–2013)	63	16	14	7	8349

Source: Czech election study I.

Table A3: Generations (row percentages)

<i>Election year</i>	<i>Before 1934</i>	<i>1934– 1943</i>	<i>1944– 1953</i>	<i>1954– 1973</i>	<i>1974– 1983</i>	<i>After 1983</i>	<i>N</i>
1990	27	14	22	36	–	–	664
1992	24	12	23	39	2	–	805
1996	17	14	22	37	11	–	1229
1998	13	17	19	40	12	–	2035
2002	8	18	17	38	17	2	944
2006	5	14	19	34	16	12	2002
2010	2	9	20	33	19	17	1857
2013	1	7	18	34	20	19	1620
<i>Average (1990-2013)</i>	10	13	19	36	14	8	11146

Source: Czech election study I.