

**LIBERAL PARTIES IN EUROPE AND HUMAN RIGHTS  
EMPHASIS**

by  
ŞEYMA KOÇ

Submitted to the Graduate School of Social Sciences  
in partial fulfilment of  
the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

Sabancı University  
August 2020

**LIBERAL PARTIES IN EUROPE AND HUMAN RIGHTS  
EMPHASIS**

Approved by:

Assoc. Prof. Özge Kemahlioğlu .....  
(Thesis Supervisor)

Prof. Ali Çarkoğlu .....

Asst. Prof. Mert Moral .....

Date of Approval: August 5, 2020



ŞEYMA KOÇ 2020 ©

All Rights Reserved

## ABSTRACT

### LIBERAL PARTIES IN EUROPE AND HUMAN RIGHTS EMPHASIS

ŞEYMA KOÇ

POLITICAL SCIENCE M.A. THESIS, AUGUST 2020

Thesis Supervisor: Assoc.Prof. Özge Kemahlioğlu

Keywords: Political Parties, Liberal Party Family, Human Rights Emphasis,  
Economic Conditions

Liberal parties are mostly neglected by the literature on political parties despite their central role in establishing European liberal democracies. This thesis aims to contribute to the contemporary literature on liberal parties by examining 33 European democracies and covering a time period including observations of 75 years. The empirical analysis shows that liberal parties are distinguishable from the other party families on their emphasis on human rights and freedom. Then, this thesis investigates the impact of economic conditions on liberal parties' relative emphasis on human rights and freedom. The findings illustrate that higher levels of unemployment rate decrease liberal parties' relative emphasis on human rights and freedom and increase their relative emphasis on economic issues. Its effect on the relative emphasis on human rights and freedom issue and economic issues is substantive when the distributions of the dependent variables are considered. This finding may demonstrate the liberal parties' responsiveness to changing needs of the electorate and a value change in politics too. The responsiveness of political parties to the electorate is a vital function of political parties for a well-functioning democracy. Nevertheless, a decline in the salience of human rights and freedom issue in elections may result with degradation of liberal democratic values in protracted economic crises.

## ÖZET

### LIBERAL PARTIES IN EUROPE AND HUMAN RIGHTS EMPHASIS

ŞEYMA KOÇ

SİYASET BİLİMİ YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ, AĞUSTOS 2020

Tez Danışmanı: Doç. Dr. Özge Kemahlioğlu

Anahtar Kelimeler: Siyasal Partiler, Liberal Parti Ailesi, İnsan Hakları Vurgusu,  
Ekonomik Şartlar

Avrupa liberal demokrasilerinin kurulmasındaki önemli rollerine rağmen liberal partiler siyasal partiler literatüründe genellikle ihmal edilmiş bir parti ailesi. Bu tez 33 Avrupa demokrasisini yaklaşık 70 yıllık bir zaman diliminde inceleyerek liberal partiler literatürüne katkıda bulunmayı amaçlıyor. İstatistiksel analizler liberal partilerin insan hakları ve özgürlük vurgusunun onları diğer parti ailelerinden ayırdığını gösteriyor. Bu bulgunun ardından, bu tez ekonomik koşulların liberal partilerin göreceli insan hakları ve özgürlük vurgusunu nasıl etkilediğini inceliyor. İstatistiksel analizlerin sonuçlarına göre liberal partilerin göreceli insan hakları ve özgürlük vurgusu yükselen işsizlik oranlarıyla azalırken ekonomik konulardaki göreceli vurgusu yükselen işsizlik oranlarıyla artıyor. Bağımlı değişkenlerin dağılımları göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, liberal partilerin bu konulara olan vurgusunda işsizlik oranının önemli bir etkiye sahip olduğu söylenebilir. Bulgular liberal partilerin seçmenlerin ihtiyaçlarına olan duyarlılığını ve seçimlerde bir değer değişiminin varlığını yansıttığı şeklinde yorumlanabilir. Siyasal partilerin seçmenlerin taleplerine olan duyarlılığı işleyen demokrasiler için önemli bir koşul olmasına rağmen, seçimlerdeki insan hakları ve özgürlük vurgusunun azalması uzun süren ekonomik krizlerde liberal demokratik değerlerin zarar görmesiyle sonuçlanabilir.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my supervisor Assoc. Prof. Özge Kemahhoğlu for her ceaseless support, her patience during the writing process of this thesis, and for teaching me how to think more analytically. I would also like to thank Assist. Prof. Mert Moral for his dedicated support, teaching me how to study more efficiently, his patience to my questions that may be very absurd and simple. His door has always been open to me since my first day in Sabanci University and I am deeply grateful for that. I would like to thank Prof. Ali Çarkoğlu for accepting to be a part of my thesis committee and his valuable comments that I used in the revisions of this thesis. Undoubtedly, I will benefit from his comments during my academic career.

I would like to thank my professors in Bogazici University including Prof. İlkey Sunar, Assoc. Prof. Zeynep Kadirbeyoğlu, Assist. Prof. Volkan Çıdam, and Prof. Biray Kolluoğlu who supplied me the essence of theoretical and analytical thinking and encouraged me to question more while their impressing lectures also influenced my decision to continue in academy.

I am grateful for my dear husband who has never withheld his support from me and has always been ready to help me with anything whenever I needed him. I will always be grateful for his support and love.

I would like to thank my father, my mother, my brother, and my sister for their sincere and devoted support for me during my life. Without their support, I would never be able to maintain my work and academic career. My dear father has always motivated me to strive for my further improvement and I owe so much to him for his devoted love and support.

Lastly, I would like to thank Ayşegül Ataş, Şeyma Topçu, and Zeyno Keçeçioğlu for their sincere friendship that made the intense work at Sabanci University easier and beautified my master at Sabanci University.



*To my dear husband...*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                                                                                                         |           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>LIST OF TABLES .....</b>                                                                                             | <b>ix</b> |
| <b>LIST OF FIGURES .....</b>                                                                                            | <b>x</b>  |
| <b>1. INTRODUCTION.....</b>                                                                                             | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>2. LIBERAL PARTIES IN EUROPE AND HUMAN RIGHTS EM-<br/>PHASIS .....</b>                                               | <b>4</b>  |
| 2.1. Literature Review .....                                                                                            | 5         |
| 2.1.1. Literature Review on Identification of Liberal Party Family ...                                                  | 5         |
| 2.1.2. Literature on Characteristics of the Liberal Parties.....                                                        | 7         |
| 2.2. Data and Methodology .....                                                                                         | 9         |
| 2.3. The Empirical Analysis and Discussion of Liberal Parties' Issue Pri-<br>orities .....                              | 11        |
| 2.4. Conclusion .....                                                                                                   | 17        |
| <b>3. ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND THE LIBERAL PARTIES EM-<br/>PHASIS ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOM.....</b>                   | <b>19</b> |
| 3.1. Literature Review .....                                                                                            | 20        |
| 3.1.1. Literature on Issue Ownership .....                                                                              | 20        |
| 3.1.2. Literature on Party Policy Shifts and Stability .....                                                            | 24        |
| 3.1.3. Literature on the Factors Affecting the Scope and the Salience<br>of Human Rights and Freedom in a Country ..... | 28        |
| 3.1.3.1. Literature on Post-Materialist Values and Economic<br>Development.....                                         | 31        |
| 3.1.4. The Literature on Economy and Elections .....                                                                    | 32        |
| 3.1.4.1. Literature on the Relationship between Economy<br>and Party<br>Policies .....                                  | 34        |
| 3.2. Theoretical Framework .....                                                                                        | 35        |
| 3.2.1. Control Variables.....                                                                                           | 38        |

|                                               |           |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 3.3. Research Design .....                    | 40        |
| 3.3.1. Data and Methodology .....             | 41        |
| 3.3.1.1. Operationalization of Variables..... | 42        |
| 3.4. Empirical Findings and Discussion .....  | 44        |
| 3.5. Conclusion .....                         | 52        |
| <b>4. CONCLUSION .....</b>                    | <b>56</b> |
| <b>BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</b>                      | <b>61</b> |
| <b>APPENDIX A .....</b>                       | <b>68</b> |



## LIST OF TABLES

|                                                                                                                                                                     |    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Table 2.1. Issue Emphasis of Liberal Parties in Ratio to Weighted Election<br>Mean Emphasis of Issues .....                                                         | 13 |
| Table 2.2. Analysis of the Issues Distinguishing Liberal Parties from the<br>Other Party Families .....                                                             | 15 |
| Table 3.1. Main Models on the Relative Emphasis of Liberal Parties on<br>Human Rights and Freedom .....                                                             | 45 |
| Table 3.2. Robustness Check for Main Models on the Relative Emphasis<br>of Liberal Parties on Human Rights and Freedom .....                                        | 45 |
| Table 3.4. Models on the Human Rights and Freedom Relative Emphasis<br>of Liberal Parties and Post-Materialism Hypothesis of Inglehart and<br>Welzel .....          | 48 |
| Table 3.3. Models for the Relationship between the Emphasis on Economy<br>Related Issues and Macroeconomic Variables .....                                          | 50 |
| Table 3.5. Additional Models Including <i>Being in Government</i> as a control<br>variable .....                                                                    | 55 |
| Table A.1. Descriptive Statistics for the Table 3.1, Table 3.2, Table 3.3,<br>and Table 3.4 .....                                                                   | 70 |
| Table A.2. Descriptive Statistics for Table 3.5 .....                                                                                                               | 71 |
| Table A.3. Additional Models with Fragmentation Calculated According<br>to Laakso and Taagepera (1979) .....                                                        | 71 |
| Table A.4. Main Models on the Relative Emphasis of Liberal Parties on<br>Human Rights and Freedom with Alternative Categorization of Lib-<br>eral Parties- I .....  | 73 |
| Table A.5. Main Models on the Relative Emphasis of Liberal Parties on<br>Human Rights and Freedom with Alternative Categorization of Lib-<br>eral Parties- II ..... | 74 |
| Table A.6. Additional Models for Inglehart and Welzel's Theory without<br>Taking Logarithmic Function of GDP Per Capita .....                                       | 76 |
| Table A.7. Additional Models with Trade (Economic Integration) Variable                                                                                             | 77 |

|                                                                                                                                               |    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Table A.8. Additional Models Including <i>Being in Government</i> as a Control<br>Variable without Interaction Term.....                      | 78 |
| Table A.9. Additional Models on the Relative Emphasis of Liberal Parties<br>on Human Rights and Freedom with Election Level Control Variables | 79 |
| Table A.10. Additional Analysis for the Relationship between the Emphasis<br>on Economic Issues and Macroeconomic Indicators .....            | 80 |



## LIST OF FIGURES

|                                                                                                                                                                                              |    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Figure 2.1. Comparisons of Party Families' Mean Issue Emphasis .....                                                                                                                         | 12 |
| Figure 2.2. Human Rights and Freedom Emphasis of Liberal Parties in<br>Different European Countries and Elections .....                                                                      | 17 |
| Figure 3.1. Out of Sample Predictions of Human Rights and Freedom<br>Relative Emphasis of Liberal Parties Depending on Unemployment<br>Rate within In-Sample Range Observations .....        | 47 |
| Figure 3.2. Avg. Marginal Effect of Unemployment Rate on Human Rights<br>and Freedom Relative Emphasis of Liberal Parties in Conditional on<br>Being in Government Between Elections .....   | 51 |
| Figure 3.3. Avg. Marginal Effect of Being in Government Between Elec-<br>tions on Human Rights and Freedom Relative Emphasis of Liberal<br>Parties in Conditional on Unemployment Rate ..... | 52 |

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Although liberal parties are “the first of the main familles spirituelles.” (Beyme 1985, 1985), they are mostly neglected in the political parties literature. Only a few numbers of studies empirically analyze their peculiar policies and characteristics. Firstly, this thesis aims to contribute to the literature on liberal parties and propose an approach to differentiate them from the other party families. The empirical findings of the first chapter show that liberal parties are distinguishable from all other party families by their emphasis on human rights and freedom. However, their emphasis on human rights and freedom varies within year and between countries. Thereby, the second goal of this thesis is to provide an explanation for this variation. This thesis argues that liberal parties’ emphasis on human rights and freedom decreases with economic deterioration.

Liberal parties are claimed as the most heterogeneous party family (Freire and Tsatsanis 2015; Humphreys and Steed 1988). Some scholars reach further to question whether liberal parties share a common identity (Caroline and Pascal 2015; Smith 1988). The scholars proposed to analyze liberal parties in subcategories to explain their differences. For example, Smith (1988) divided liberal parties as “liberal-radicals” and “conservative-liberals” while Von Beyme (1985) grouped liberal parties as radical liberals, conservative liberals, and agrarian liberals. On the other hand, Kirchheimer (1966) and Close (2015) offered to define liberal parties as centrist parties.

Only Hearl (1988) in *Liberal Parties in Western Europe*, conducted a detailed analysis of the liberal parties’ election programs. The study of Hearl (1988) revealed that liberal parties emphasized issues such as education, human rights and freedom, and free-market economy the most. However, this analysis was made 32 years ago and it did not include analyses to examine liberal parties’ peculiar policies differentiating them from the other party families. The second chapter analyzes the liberal parties’ emphasis on which issues distinguish them from the other party families. The findings illustrate that one of the distinguishing characteristics of liberal parties is their emphasis on human rights and freedom. This finding corroborates the link

between liberal parties and the issue of human rights and freedom.

Nevertheless, liberal parties' emphasis on human rights and freedom varies within years and across countries. This variation in liberal parties' relative emphasis on human rights and freedom brings forward the question: Which factors affect liberal parties' relative emphasis on human rights and freedom? The answer to this question is dependent on two primary kinds of literature, including political parties' literature and human rights and freedom literature. The literature on political parties illustrates that political parties frequently change their policies according to the dynamics of electoral competition, and the economy is one of the most critical issues in elections that affect election outcomes. Tavits (2007) categorizes economic issues as pragmatic issues that require a good timing in election campaigns and an ability to promptly perceive changes in the electorate's preferences to achieve success in election. Cingranelli and Filippov (2010) show that political parties adjust their policy priorities according to electoral terms to gain more votes in elections and their advocacy on the provision of human rights is affected by the electoral terms. This demonstrates that liberal parties, as pragmatic actors, may direct their attention to economic issues or another issue that would meet the demands of electorate by decreasing their emphasis on human rights and freedom according to changing economic conditions. The important role of economy in elections, the characteristics of pragmatic issues requiring rapid adjustments, and pragmatism in political parties' agendas constitute the first sources of this thesis' main theory that expects a decline in the relative emphasis of liberal parties' human rights and freedom issue.

The so-called "Silent Revolution" thesis (Inglehart 1977) and postmaterialism theory (Inglehart and Welzel 2005) argue that socioeconomic development induces value changes between generations. The two main outcomes of socioeconomic development affect this: the increase in life expectancy and the expansion of high-level education (Inglehart 1977; Inglehart and Welzel 2005). Inglehart and Welzel (2005) believe that the post-industrial stage provided an extensive development in living conditions and education standards and the provision of existential security freed individuals from material concerns. According to Inglehart and Welzel (2005), these changes in post-industrial stage transformed social life and political life with an important outcome of this process being the removal of the dominance of materialist values in politics.

The theory of Inglehart and Welzel (Inglehart and Welzel 2005) leads us to expect an increase in the liberal parties' relative emphasis on human rights and freedom in line with socioeconomic development. Inglehart and Welzel's (2005) postmaterialism theory suggests a long-term change in social life and politics. However, Inglehart

and Welzel (2005, 21) clearly state that the value changes are reversible in economic collapse, although the question of how long an economic crisis should persist in order to induce a reverse value change is left unanswered. Therefore, economic crises may cause a decline in the salience of human rights and freedom issue in liberal parties' manifestos by inducing a reverse value change in politics depending on the persistence of economic collapse. In parallel with this expectation, Singer (2011a) shows that the salience of the economy as an issue rises with economic crises. These arguments strengthen the expectations of this thesis that establish a link between liberal parties' relative emphasis on human rights and freedom and declining economic conditions.

Chapter 3 seeks an answer to the relationship between macroeconomic conditions and the liberal parties' relative emphasis on human rights and freedom. In Chapter 3, the literature review section focused on issue ownership theory, the literature on policy shifts of the political parties; the factors affecting the salience of human rights and freedom in a country; and the relationship between the economy and elections. Macroeconomic indicators constitute the main independent variables of the empirical analysis in Chapter 3 while economic development, election-level variables including election polarization, election fragmentation, and gaining an office in the government in the preceding elections act as control variables.

This thesis includes information about 115 liberal parties from 33 European democracies in the period between 1945 and 2018 in the second chapter and about 102 liberal parties from 33 European democracies in the period between 1970 and 2018 in the third chapter. For the empirical analyses, the Comparative Manifesto Project dataset (2019) is combined with the World Bank dataset, Polity 5 dataset (2020), and the dataset of Williams and Seki (2016). Firstly, this thesis shows that the relative emphasis on human rights and freedom is one of the most distinctive characteristics of liberal parties. Secondly, this thesis presents empirical support for the effect of macroeconomic conditions on the liberal parties' relative emphasis on human rights and freedom. The findings display that unemployment rate has a statistically significant negative effect on the liberal parties' relative emphasis on human rights and freedom.

This thesis follows two chapters including "Liberal Parties and Human Rights and Freedom Emphasis" and "Economic Conditions and Human Rights and Freedom Emphasis of Liberal Parties." In the end, the findings are summarized in the conclusion section and the additional models are attached to the appendix.

## 2. LIBERAL PARTIES IN EUROPE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

### EMPHASIS

The liberal party family is mostly neglected in the literature, despite their central role in establishing liberal democracy in Europe. Their defining characteristics are empirically analyzed only in Kirchner's (1988) and Close and Haute's (2015) books. There does not exist a detailed study of policy priorities of liberal parties except Hearl's analysis (1988) in *Liberal Parties in Europe* edited by Kirchner. Therefore, the main aim of this chapter is to identify the issues emphasized peculiarly by the liberal parties.

Liberal parties are the one of the first party families in the Europe. They were the central agents in the process establishing the foundations of liberal democracy in Europe. They are associated with the issues rooted in the struggles of liberals at the end of the 18th century and 19th century including constitutionalism, opposition to centralization of authority, individualism, and freedoms. However, some of the scholars found liberal parties more heterogeneous than the other party families (Ennsner 2012; Freire and Tsatsanis 2015; Humphreys and Steed 1988). Their policies are claimed as too ambiguous to identify their differentiating characteristics from the other party families. Although the literature generally agrees in the argument that the liberal parties are centrist political parties, it does not have a shared perspective regarding the distinguishing characteristics of the liberal parties.

This chapter aims to address which issues separate liberal parties from the other party families. The empirical analysis of this chapter includes observations about 115 different liberal parties from 33 European countries in the time span between 1945 and 2018. The analysis shows that the liberal parties' emphasis on human rights and freedom differentiate them from all other party families. In addition to this, governmental and administrative efficiency and education+ are other ideologically neutral issues on which liberal parties hold a distinct emphasis. This chapter will proceed with this sequence: literature review on the identification of liberal party family, literature review on liberal parties' policies and characteristics, data and methodology, empirical findings, and conclusion.

## 2.1 Literature Review

### 2.1.1 Literature Review on Identification of Liberal Party Family

Despite the ambiguities on the conceptualization of party family, party family is a useful tool to interpret party policies, differentiate them based on their distinct principles, and compare them to different kinds of political parties. In the comprehensive article of Mair and Mudde (1998), they define four bases for the classification of political parties based on the literature including name, affiliation to transnational federations, origins and sociology, and policy and ideology. The categorization of liberal parties according to these four approaches is discussed in the literature. The literature displays that all the approaches carry different problems while the least with policy and ideology approach.

One of the most straightforward way is to categorize liberal parties according to certain labels in their name (Caroline and Van 2015, 2). However, there are two problems that may emerge with this kind of classification of liberal parties. As Close and von Haute (2015, 2) state that parties might be using liberal label to mask their real ideologies and gain sympathy of a wider electorate (Caroline and Van 2015, 3). In addition, liberal parties are reluctant to use ‘liberal’ in their labels (Caroline and Van 2015, 2). Only a few parties established in the 19th and 20th centuries and those which recently established employ ‘liberal’ in their labels (Caroline and Van 2015, 4). Rather, the most of liberal parties appeal to the other concepts such as ‘civic’ and ‘citizenship’ and those which reflect core liberal values like ‘freedom’ and ‘democracy’ (Caroline and Van 2015, 4). Another problem in classifying liberal parties according to their labels would stem from varying connotations of ‘liberal’ in different languages (Kirchner 1988a, 472).

The second approach to classify political parties is to categorize them according to their affiliation to transnational party organizations. The two fundamental books on the liberal parties, the book of Kirchner (1988a, 472) and the book edited by Close and Haute (2015, 2) employ this approach in addition to policy and ideologies of political parties. While the former book considers the members of Liberal International as liberal parties, the latter book classifies European parties that have an affiliation either one of ALDE and Liberal International as liberal parties. However, Liberal International’s evaluation principles of the applications for membership are

found far from having an incremental and substantive approach (Humphreys and Steed 1988, 405). It is because party groups within European Parliament compete with each other and this raises the cost of employing incremental approach in evaluations of membership applications (Humphreys and Steed 1988, 405). Due to the lack of such a substantive selection mechanism, the classification of political parties based on the international affiliations relies on the self-identification of parties in reality. This creates one of the drawbacks of identifying liberal parties according to their affiliation to transnational party organizations. Furthermore, Steed and Humpstead (1988) noted that the members of the Liberal International did not agree to a common opinion regarding the ideological requirements for membership .

On the other hand, Steed and Humphrey's (1988, 405) study displayed that the historical, ideological, and empirical approaches produce a liberal party list very close to the list generated according to the affiliation to international organizations. The Comparative Manifesto Project uses this way of classification. While acknowledging the weak selection process in Liberal International, Gerrit (2015) notes that the affiliation to international organizations have more explanatory power than it had since the political party organizations are more institutionalized and the ideological criteria is more established than the past.

The third approach to classify political parties, which is linked to the cleavage theory (Lipset and Rokkan 1967), is to concentrate upon their originating conflicts. However, the applicability of this theory is limited to the old Western European democracies. Smith (1988) stated that the link between political parties and social cleavages changes from country to country depending on the alliances they made. Parallel to this, Brug and his friends (2009) showed that liberal parties do not receive support from any distinctive electorate. The applicability of this theory for liberal parties is difficult due to the absence of distinctive electorate and varying political alliances made by liberal parties among countries. Moreover, the classification of liberal parties based on their origins does not allow cross-cutting identities.

An alternative generic approach would be to identify political parties based on their opposition to certain policies or certain party families in the 19th and 20th centuries. Steed and Humphreys (1988, 402) argue that "A liberal party today was essentially a negative one of being neither socialist nor clerical." Yet, even if it was true for liberal parties in 1988, this may have changed with the establishment of new liberal parties or with the new strategies employed by liberal parties. Despite the drawbacks of a generic approach, it would be useful to understand the internal diversity of the liberal party family (Caroline and Van 2015, 4).

The last approach mentioned by Mair and Mudde (1998) is ideology and policy po-

sitions. This approach relates to the generic approach since it expects liberal parties to have a common societal project (Mair and Mudde 1998). In other words, it looks for the common issues that link liberal parties with each other. Constitutionalism (Caroline and Pascal 2015), a challenge to centralization of authority, the demand for the expansion of human rights, and the demand for a progress toward “more responsible parliamentary governments” are claimed as the main characteristics of liberal parties (Humphreys and Steed 1988, 398) . It is also argued that the most of liberal parties are pro-EU integration despite not being so more than Christian and social democrats (Marks, Wilson, and Ray 2002).

### **2.1.2 Literature on Characteristics of the Liberal Parties**

In the previous section, the approaches for the identification of liberal parties were discussed. The discussion shows that none of these approaches are free from drawbacks. Most of the recent literature on political parties uses the link to transnational organizations to identify liberal parties. The two books written on liberal parties in Europe analyze the characteristics of liberal parties after considering the members of the liberal party family according to this approach. In the following paragraphs, the fundamental characteristics of the liberal party family in the literature will be discussed.

To what degree do liberal parties have a coherent ideology is an important question to be answered in order to understand the distinguishing characteristics of liberal parties. Scholars claim that liberal parties form the most heterogeneous political party family (Freire and Tsatsanis 2015; Humphreys and Steed 1988). The Liberal International, the forefront international organization of liberal parties, is claimed as the most heterogeneous among the international party organizations (Humphreys and Steed 1988). Nevertheless, in the study of Camia and Caramani (2012) which measured the heterogeneity of the party families on the left-right ideological dimension, liberal parties appear as more heterogeneous than the most of political parties while they are not less homogenous than conservatives and the radical right.

Close and Delwit (2015) and Smith (1988) argue that the ideological placement of the liberal parties is ambivalent at the aggregate level. Many scholars illustrate that while liberal parties hold a right-wing position on socioeconomic issues, they own a centre-left position in cultural issues (Camia and Caramani 2012; Ennser 2012). Close and Haute (2015), analyzing how the positions of liberal parties change

within the three decades (1945-1974, 1974-1994, and 1994-2015), indicated that liberal parties are getting to further on the right on socio-cultural issues and a more leftist position on socio-economic issues. Another important implication of Close and Haute's (2015) findings is that the left-right ideological scale does not distinguish the liberal parties from Christian democrats in the most of the countries.

The question of whether the different positions in socio-cultural and socio-economic positions of liberal parties are linked to any cultural basis is raised by Feire and Tsatsanis (2015). In their empirical analysis, the liberal parties in Central Eastern European countries appeared more conservative on cultural issues and more centrist on the socio-cultural issues than the liberal parties in Western Europe (Freire and Tsatsanis 2015). In addition, the liberal parties in Continental Europe seem more conservative than the Anglo-Scandinavian ones (Kirchner 1988*a*). Due to their positions on the center of ideological competition, liberal parties are traditionally referred to as center parties.

Kirchner (1988*b*) argues that liberal parties are center parties and a classification as center-left and center-right would be the most useful way to analyze liberal parties. According to experts' coding in 2014, the liberal party family stands at the centre/centre-right of the ideological space (Caroline 2015, 335). As Close (2015, 337) show, liberal parties are more rightist than social democrats, greens, and radical left; but more leftist than the Christian democrats, conservatives, and radical right. In another study, Hearl (1988) concludes that liberal parties are representatives of "European party space" in general. Their mean position on the issues is identical with the mean emphasis of all parties on these issues (Hearl 1988). Due to their position in the center, they have been providers of the compromise in Western democracies. As the case studies section of Kirchner's book (1988*b*) where different authors analyzed liberal parties in different countries, it is reveals that liberal parties' distinct position on the center makes them the first preferred candidates in the coalitions.

Political parties differentiate themselves from their rivals by adopting specific policy agendas and a distinctive ideological stand. Which issues liberal parties frequently advocate is a vital component of defining characteristics of liberal parties. Liberal parties are generally associated with constitutionalism, the opposition to centralization of authority and clericalism, a demand for a progress towards responsible governments, and a demand for expansion of freedoms (Humphreys and Steed 1988, 398). However, not all of these generic bounds maintain their prominence in the election competition. These generic bounds are still components of the liberal ideology, for sure. Nevertheless, almost all political parties in the Europe carry these

elements of liberalism to some extent. As Von Beyme stated (1985, 31), “liberal parties are the first of the main familles spirituelles.”

When it is true that party programs concentrate upon the particular issues of elections and respond to the policy programs of their rivals, there are also “elements of a more enduring nature” (Hearl 1988, 438). Therefore, understanding which policy issues liberal parties particularly put emphasis on is important to identify the defining characteristics of the liberal party family. The study of Hearl (1988) is the only one examining the distinctive issues in the election programs of liberal parties. In this study, Hearl (1988) divides liberal parties into two groups as radical liberals and conservative liberals and presents an analysis of the most emphasized issues on average by these two groups separately and by liberal parties overall. Hearl’s study (1988, 438) reveals that on average liberal parties emphasized these 10 issues the most: social justice, social services, free enterprise, democracy, non-economic social groups, freedom and human rights, economic orthodoxy, education+, agriculture and farmers, and internationalism. While there are differences between the issue choices of conservative liberals and radical liberals due to their separate positions on left-right cultural and economic dimensions, they frequently underline the issues of social justice, democracy, non-economic social groups, governmental and administrative efficiency, and freedom and human rights in common (Hearl 1988, 443).

The scholars come to a limited agreement on the defining characteristics of liberal parties while most of them employ the ‘international affiliations’ approach to identify the members of the liberal party family. Liberal parties are argued to be the most heterogeneous party family whose members hold broad range of ideological positions and do not undertake a clear advocacy of any certain issues in common. The scholars mainly identified liberal parties as centrist parties but with an ambiguous ideology. One of the reasons behind this may be their centrist position travelling between right of the center and left of the center. Yet, the ‘center’ of the ideological space is intrinsic to the characteristics of political competition depending on election context. Therefore, the different positions of liberal parties on dominant dimensions can be interpreted by linking their policies to special characteristics of political competition given a country and specific context. Issues which liberal parties choose to emphasize more frequently are empirically analyzed only by Hearl (1988). In the literature, an important question stays unanswered: advocacy on which issues liberal parties are distinguishable from the other party families.

## 2.2 Data and Methodology

For the analysis part of this chapter, the Comparative Manifesto Project dataset (2019) is used. The Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP) provides information about the salience of 56 issues in the election manifestos of political parties which are written documents for their proposed policies. In the CMP dataset (2019), 56 issue categories are defined with an aim to cover the most of the spectrum of topics discussed in the party manifestos. It is the only dataset that includes a wide range of political parties from that degree of geographical range involving countries from European countries to Asian and Latin American countries.

The coding procedures employed to map the policies of parties from their election manifestos are described with details in the publications of the CMP, therefore they will be briefly summarized here (Volkens et al. 2017). The sentences in the election programs are sorted into various issue categories. Then, their percentage-to-total sentences is calculated, and the category values reflect how much space is left to this issue in an election program. The CMP provides an opportunity to understand the policy priorities of parties in each election. The differential emphases of parties on issues reflect the policy priorities of parties in elections. In this thesis, the differential emphases of different party families is used to define the issues distinguishing the liberal party family from the other party families. Thus, the main logic is that the political parties' policy priorities constitute an important part of their identities.

The empirical analysis of this chapter includes observations about 115 liberal parties from 33 European countries and covers the period between 1945 and 2018. The CMP uses the affiliation to Liberal International, party names, and policy and ideologies to identify liberal parties. Nevertheless, some scholars have doubts regarding whether the CMP's identification of liberal parties may be too liberal. A detailed analysis of CMP project's identification of liberal parties is made in the Appendix. In order to identify the distinguishing characteristics of liberal parties from the other party families, dummy variables are generated for each comparison between the other party families and the liberal party family where the liberal party family and each other party family are respectively coded 1 and 0. Since the dependent variable of the analyses in this chapter are dummy variables, the logistic regression estimator is employed for all regression analyses between the liberal party family and each of the other party families. The independent variables are chosen from the top 10 topics the liberal parties are found to emphasize the most as per by Hearl (1988, 438).

## 2.3 The Empirical Analysis and Discussion of Liberal Parties' Issue

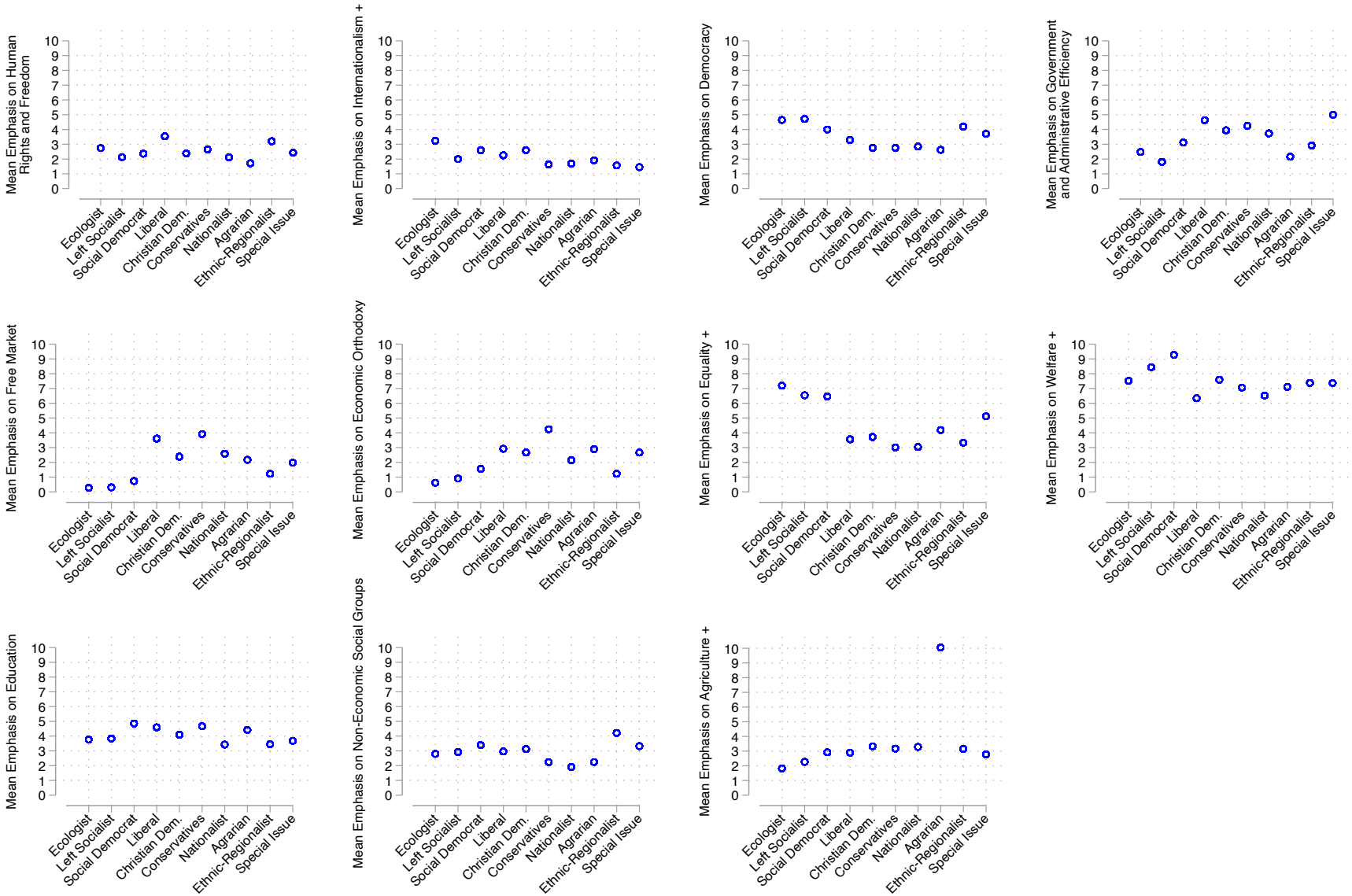
### Priorities

Many scholars claim that the liberal party family are one of the most heterogeneous party families and lacks a coherent ideology (De Winter 2000; Freire and Tsatsanis 2015; Humphreys and Steed 1988; Smith 1988). However, liberal parties in Europe are associated with certain links that comes from the ideas of 19th liberalism such as constitutionalism, challenging centralization of state authority, provision of guarantees of individual rights, and free market economy. Although some different divisions are made within the liberal party family such as radical liberals and conservative liberals (Hearl, 1988) or social liberals and liberals (2012) or classical, social and conservative liberals (Caroline 2015); liberal parties are defined as center parties which hold positions near the center on both cultural and economic left-right dimensions (Camia and Caramani 2012; Caroline 2015; Freire and Tsatsanis 2015).

Hearl (1988) identifies the issues most emphasized by liberal parties by covering 14 liberal parties in Europe. In his analysis, liberal parties appear to emphasize these 10 issues the most on average: social justice, social services, free enterprise, democracy, non-economic social groups, freedom and human rights, economic orthodoxy, education+, agriculture and farmers, and internationalism. Their high emphasis on social justice is explained with a general strategy employed by the political parties to attain the confidence of electorate (Hearl 1988). The emphasis on agriculture reflects "the ties of the liberals with the rural areas" (Rudd 1988, 206). However, the interests of liberal parties in agriculture and farmers began to decline after 1965 (Rudd 1988, 206). Therefore, when we consider the year the book where Rudd and Hearl published their analysis was written, , we may conclude that this topic is mostly left in the past. Free enterprise and economic orthodoxy are related to the economic elements of liberal ideology while the latter is emphasized mostly by conservative liberals (Hearl 1988, 443). In contrast to this, the issue of social services is highlighted mostly by radical liberals (Hearl 1988, 443). On the other hand, education+, human rights, internationalism, non-economic social groups, and governmental and administrative efficiency are the issues advocated by all liberal parties according to Hearl's analysis (1988). It is not surprising since these issues are the core elements of liberal ideology.

Figure 2.1 includes information about the mean issue emphasis scores of all party families. The issues are selected following the list of Hearl (1988, p. 443) that indicates the issues emphasized by liberal parties the most. Figure 2.1 demonstrates

Figure 2.1 Comparisons of Party Families' Mean Issue Emphasis



that party families' relative emphasis on internationalism+, education+, and agriculture+ issues are very close. Figure 2.1 also shows that liberal parties make emphasis on democracy less than left-wing parties and more than right-wing parties. Welfare+ issue is the issue on which liberal parties made the least emphasis in comparison to each other party family. On the other hand, their emphasis on governmental and administrative efficiency, free market, and economic orthodoxy issues are among the highest emphasized issues when compared to the other party families. On equality+ issue, liberal parties follow the right-wing party families. Lastly, Figure 2.1 illustrates that liberal parties have more relative emphasis on human rights and freedom than the other party families have.

In Table 2.1, the liberal parties' emphasis on the issues, which are the most emphasized by liberal parties in Hearl's analysis (1988), are given in ratio to the election means of the issues weighted with the voter shares of political parties. Table 2.1 shows that liberal parties follow the election mean of equality+ (slightly less), education+, agriculture+, and non-economic social groups issues. In addition to this, Table 2.1 indicates that liberal parties emphasized internationalism+ and democracy issues slightly more than the weighted election means of these issues. On the other hand, their relative emphasis on welfare+ is discernibly lower than the weighted election mean of this issue. Liberal parties' relative emphasis on human rights and freedom is one and half times higher than the weighted election mean of this issue and clearly differentiates them from their rivals. Lastly, they seem to advocate the free market economy overtly more than the weighted election mean of this issue.

Table 2.1 Issue Emphasis of Liberal Parties in Ratio to Weighted Election Mean Emphasis of Issues

|                                            | Mean | Std.Dev. | Min. | Max.  | N   |
|--------------------------------------------|------|----------|------|-------|-----|
| Human Rights and Freedom                   | 1.55 | 1.67     | 0.00 | 12.54 | 446 |
| Governmental and Administrative Efficiency | 1.58 | 2.64     | 0.00 | 38.87 | 446 |
| Equality+                                  | 0.93 | 1.01     | 0.00 | 12.94 | 446 |
| Welfare+                                   | 0.86 | 0.76     | 0.00 | 5.53  | 446 |
| Education+                                 | 1.10 | 0.93     | 0.00 | 6.89  | 446 |
| Democracy                                  | 1.21 | 1.41     | 0.00 | 12.86 | 446 |
| Non-Economic Social Groups                 | 1.05 | 1.62     | 0.00 | 22.08 | 446 |
| Agriculture+                               | 1.04 | 1.17     | 0.00 | 10.61 | 446 |
| Economic Orthodoxy                         | 1.49 | 2.49     | 0.00 | 27.46 | 446 |
| Internationalism+                          | 1.17 | 1.74     | 0.00 | 27.01 | 446 |
| Free Market                                | 2.16 | 3.19     | 0.00 | 38.87 | 446 |

In Table 2.2, the liberal parties' relative emphasis on issues that differentiate them from the other party families is analyzed. As it is stated in the data and methodology section, dummy variables are generated for comparisons between the liberal party family and each other party family and the logistic regression is employed in the analyses. The first column indicates the party family compared to the liberal family while the liberal party family and the other party family are always coded as 1 and 0 respectively. Since the analysis is conducted through using a maximum likelihood estimator, the values of coefficients do not allow for a direct interpretation. Moreover, the coefficient values of independent variables in different models are not comparable as they are conducted within different samples. Nevertheless, we can make inferences from the regression results about that the emphasis on which issues differentiate liberal parties from the other party families.

Table 2.2 shows that the relative emphasis on internationalism+ increases the probability of having a liberal party in the models comparing the liberal party family with left socialists, conservatives, ethnic-regionalists, and special issue parties. In contrast to this, the results indicate that Christian democrats have more relative emphasis on Internationalism+ issue in comparison to liberal parties. Economic orthodoxy appears to differentiate liberal parties from the ecologist, left-socialist, social democrats, and ethnic-regionalist parties. This finding is expected since these parties mostly take positions on the left of the economic left-right scale. In addition to this, more relative emphasis on economic orthodoxy raises the probability of having a conservative party in the sample composed of conservatives and liberals. Surprisingly, high emphasis on democracy does not increase the probability of having a liberal party, rather it decreases it in the comparisons of liberals with left-socialists, social democrats, and ethnic regionalist parties. Governmental and Administrative efficiency was another issue which was frequently emphasized by liberal parties in the analysis of Hearl (1988). Governmental and Administrative efficiency measures the mentions of "need for efficiency and economy in government and administration and/or the general appeal to make the process of government and administration cheaper and more efficient." (Volkens et al. 2017). This can be linked with a decisive stance against corruption and an emphasis on effective usage of government resources, which are inherent in liberal ideology. Table 2.2 also shows that liberal parties underline the equality+ issue less than ecologist, left- socialists, social democrats, agrarian, and special issue parties.

Table 2.2 Analysis of the Issues Distinguishing Liberal Parties from the Other Party Families

|                                | Internationalism+  | Eco.Orthodoxy     | HR &Freedom       | Democracy          | Gov.Adm. Eff.     | Equality+          | Welfare+           | Education+        | Agriculture        | Non-EcoGroups     | N   | Pseudo $R_2$ |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----|--------------|
| Ecologist(0) & Liberal(1)      | -0.10**<br>(0.05)  | 0.54***<br>(0.13) | 0.15***<br>(0.04) | -0.06<br>(0.03)    | 0.10***<br>(0.04) | -0.21***<br>(0.03) | -0.01<br>(0.02)    | 0.12***<br>(0.04) | 0.10**<br>(0.04)   | 0.04<br>(0.03)    | 572 | 0.32         |
| Left Soc.(0) & Liberal(1)      | 0.09**<br>(0.05)   | 0.24***<br>(0.05) | 0.24***<br>(0.04) | -0.12***<br>(0.03) | 0.19***<br>(0.03) | -0.14***<br>(0.02) | -0.04**<br>(0.02)  | 0.06<br>(0.04)    | 0.02<br>(0.03)     | 0.04**<br>(0.02)  | 764 | 0.31         |
| Social Dem.(0) & Liberal(1)    | -0.05<br>(0.03)    | 0.13***<br>(0.02) | 0.15***<br>(0.03) | -0.11***<br>(0.02) | 0.06***<br>(0.02) | -0.16***<br>(0.02) | -0.09***<br>(0.02) | 0.04*<br>(0.03)   | -0.02<br>(0.03)    | -0.03<br>(0.02)   | 957 | 0.20         |
| Christian Dem.(0) & Liberal(1) | -0.10***<br>(0.03) | 0.03<br>(0.02)    | 0.13***<br>(0.03) | 0.02<br>(0.03)     | 0.04**<br>(0.02)  | -0.01<br>(0.02)    | -0.05***<br>(0.02) | 0.09***<br>(0.02) | -0.02<br>(0.02)    | 0.00<br>(0.02)    | 828 | 0.06         |
| Conservative (0) & Liberal(1)  | 0.08**<br>(0.04)   | -0.03*<br>(0.02)  | 0.07**<br>(0.03)  | 0.00<br>(0.03)     | 0.04**<br>(0.02)  | 0.05**<br>(0.02)   | -0.02*<br>(0.01)   | 0.01<br>(0.02)    | 0.00<br>(0.02)     | 0.06***<br>(0.02) | 761 | 0.04         |
| Nationalist (0) & Liberal (1)  | 0.04<br>(0.05)     | 0.08*<br>(0.04)   | 0.13***<br>(0.04) | -0.00<br>(0.03)    | 0.07***<br>(0.02) | 0.05<br>(0.03)     | -0.00<br>(0.02)    | 0.12***<br>(0.03) | -0.01<br>(0.02)    | 0.10***<br>(0.03) | 667 | 0.10         |
| Agrarian(0) & Liberal(1)       | 0.05<br>(0.05)     | 0.07**<br>(0.04)  | 0.24***<br>(0.05) | 0.05<br>(0.05)     | 0.21***<br>(0.04) | -0.07**<br>(0.03)  | 0.01<br>(0.02)     | 0.02<br>(0.03)    | -0.16***<br>(0.03) | 0.09**<br>(0.03)  | 574 | 0.25         |
| Ethnic(0) & Liberal(1)         | 0.15***<br>(0.05)  | 0.26***<br>(0.04) | 0.08**<br>(0.03)  | -0.06**<br>(0.03)  | 0.11***<br>(0.02) | 0.02<br>(0.03)     | -0.04**<br>(0.02)  | 0.12***<br>(0.03) | -0.02<br>(0.02)    | -0.01<br>(0.02)   | 668 | 0.16         |
| Special Issue(0) & Liberal (1) | 0.18***<br>(0.07)  | 0.02<br>(0.04)    | 0.10**<br>(0.04)  | -0.06*<br>(0.04)   | -0.01<br>(0.03)   | -0.12***<br>(0.03) | -0.04*<br>(0.02)   | 0.11***<br>(0.04) | 0.01<br>(0.04)     | -0.00<br>(0.03)   | 530 | 0.10         |

Robust standard errors are in parentheses.

Dependent variables are generated as dummy variables for each party family and liberal party family.

Eco. Orthodoxy: Economic Orthodoxy. Gov. Adm. Eff. : Governmental and Administrative Efficiency. Non-Eco Group: Non-Socioeconomic Groups.

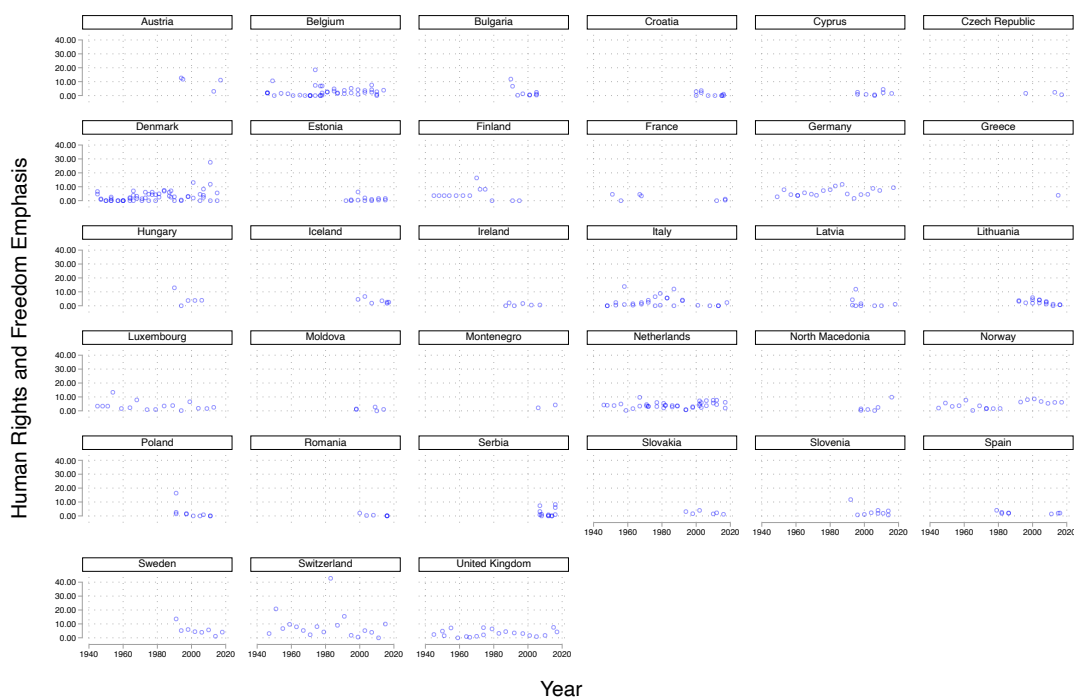
\* p<0.1, \*\* p<0.05, \*\*\* p<0.01

Hellström and Walther (2015, 318) state that liberal parties engage with government portfolios related to equality when they are in coalitions and this may provide them the opportunity to distinguish themselves from the other right-wing parties in the competition. Nevertheless, we do not have a statistically significant relationship between equality+ and liberal party identity in the comparisons made between liberal parties and the other right-wing parties besides conservatives. The statistically significant coefficients for the effect of welfare+ are negative in Table 2.2. In fact, the rise of welfare+ relative emphasis seems to decrease the probability of having a liberal party in the model comparing the Christian democrats and liberals. This means that liberals do not put a distinct emphasis from their closest rival on the welfare+ emphasis. According to the findings in Table 2.2, education+ is among the important issues to distinguish liberals from 5 other party families. It distinguishes liberals even from Christian democrats. Although agriculture+ is among the issues emphasized at most by liberal parties in the analysis of Hearl (1988), it seems that agriculture+ issue is an issue of past for liberal parties. The last issue, before the relationship between human rights emphasis and the probability of observing a liberal party, is non-economic social groups. In Table 2.2, while the relative emphasis on non-economic social groups differentiates liberals from conservatives, nationalists, and agrarian parties, they fail to put a distinct emphasis from their closest challenger does.

The expansion of individual rights and freedom and the provision of guarantees for them are the most fundamental components of liberal ideology. Regardless of having a left or right wing stand in left-right economic continuum, the liberal parties are expected to advocate individualism, civil rights, and freedoms. Moreover, one of the components of economic liberalism is individualism. To remember, Hearl (1988) points out that the advocacy of human rights and freedom is one of the most defining features of liberal parties. Steed and Humphreys (1988, 420) also make a similar argument that all liberal parties share a political space regarding issues such as human rights and education+. In the line with these expectations, the analysis in Table 2.2 indicates that higher emphasis on human rights and freedom increases the probability of observing a liberal party. In other words, the liberal parties are discernible from all other families on their advocacy of human rights and freedoms.

To restate, the empirical analysis shows that liberal parties are distinguishable from all other party families on their emphasis on human rights and freedom. Nevertheless, in Figure 2.2, it appears that the degree of emphasis on this issue varies among countries and elections. This leads us to the main question of this thesis. Which factors affect liberal parties' emphasis on human rights and freedom?

Figure 2.2 Human Rights and Freedom Emphasis of Liberal Parties in Different European Countries and Elections



## 2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, the issues separating liberal parties from the other party families are examined through descriptive statistics and logistic regression estimations. Liberal parties are the oldest party family in the Europe and associated with the liberal ideology of the 18th and 19th centuries. Although they are among the first political parties established in Europe, liberal parties are mostly neglected in the literature. There are only two books (Close and Haute (2015) and Kirchner (1988) that provide a detailed analysis of European liberal parties' characteristics. There does not exist an analysis regarding which issues liberal parties are differentiable from the other party families in terms of emphasis and own an issue ownership.

The literature does not draw a portrait of coherent party family (De Winter 2000; Freire and Tsatsanis 2015; Humphreys and Steed 1988; Smith 1988). In order to deal with the heterogeneity within the liberal party family, the scholars offer sub-

categories to classify liberal parties (Beyme 1985; Smith 1988). On the other hand, the recent study of Close (2015) shows that liberal parties can be classified as centre parties. Despite the claims that liberal parties do not hold a distinctive ideology separating them from the other party families, the statistical analysis shows that liberal parties can be identified with their advocacy of human rights and freedom. Their emphasis on human rights and freedom distinguishes liberal parties from every other party family. Governmental and administrative efficiency and education+ are the other issues on which liberal parties own a distinct emphasis. Although Close and Haute (2015) argue that liberal parties and Christian democrats are not ideologically differentiable in the most of the election systems, the findings show that education+, governmental and administrative efficiency, and human rights and freedom issues separate the liberals even from their closest opponents.

To conclude, the empirical analysis of this chapter reveals that human rights and freedom advocacy constitutes one of the core characteristics of liberal parties. Nevertheless, their emphasis on this issue varies within years and across countries as Figure 2.2 demonstrates. A discussion is made regarding the factors that may affect liberal parties' emphasis on human rights and freedom in the next chapter.

### **3. ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND THE LIBERAL PARTIES**

#### **EMPHASIS ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOM**

The first chapter of this thesis shows that one of the distinguishing characteristics of liberal parties is their relative emphasis on human rights and freedom. Nevertheless, their relative emphasis on human rights and freedom varies within years and between countries. This chapter offers an explanation for this variation and examines the impact of macroeconomic indicators on the liberal parties' relative emphasis on human rights and freedom. The main argument of this chapter is that the liberal parties' emphasis on human rights and freedom relatively decreases under bad economic conditions.

The economic voting literature shows that the economy is one of the most important issues in the elections. Economic conditions affect election outcomes and futures of incumbents since economy is one of the issues that voters consider the most when they choose among political parties running in elections. The article of Singer (2011a) indicates that the salience of economy grows with worsening economic conditions. Due to this, pressure on political parties to produce economic policies increases with worsening economic conditions. The literature shows that mainstream parties are responsive to public opinion shifts. In addition, the absence of a distinct liberal party electorate and their mainstream party identity renders them more vulnerable to the changes in median voter position. Thus, a policy change in liberal parties' agendas can be expected during changing economic conditions.

The post-materialism theory of Inglehart and Welzel (2005) suggests that socio-economic development in the post-industrial stage caused the decline of materialist values and induced a generational value change. The rise of GDP per capita, the abolition of constraints in information, and the transformation of employment to the jobs requiring social abilities are the causes of this generational value change. Inglehart and Welzel (2005) believe that that this value change happens not only in social life but political life also passes through a value transformation process. Inglehart and Welzel (2005) expect more responsible politicians in the post-industrial stage and a decline in the prominence of materialist issues in the political scene.

According to Inglehart and Welzel’s theory, economic development may have a positive impact on the human rights and freedom emphasis of liberal parties. However, they also acknowledge that the value change is reversible with economic collapse (Inglehart and Welzel 2005, 20). This may constitute a second reason to believe a decrease in the salience of human rights and freedom issue in Liberal parties’ manifestos with economic crises. This chapter also includes models to test the Inglehart and Welzel’s theory regarding a value change with socioeconomic development.

Elections are a way of keeping incumbents accountable (Christopher Joseph 1995; Powell 2000; Van der Brug, Van der Eijik, and Franklin 2007). In parallel with this, the economic voting literature illustrates that incumbents are punished for their economic performance at the end of their government terms (Berry and Howell 2007; Powell and Whitten 1993; Powell 2000). Thus, the literature implies that macroeconomic conditions may differently affect the political parties that hold a governmental position between elections. In order to test the effect of being in government between elections on the human rights and freedom emphasis of liberal parties, additional models are added. A detailed discussion of the findings of the models testing for Inglehart and Welzel’s hypothesis and the conditioning effect of being in government between elections on unemployment rate is made in the empirical analysis section.

The empirical analysis in this chapter includes information about 102 liberal parties from 33 European countries in the period between 1970 and 2018. The findings generate empirical support for the main hypothesis of this chapter. This chapter proceeds through literature review, data and methodology, empirical findings and discussion, and conclusion sections.

### **3.1 Literature Review**

#### **3.1.1 Literature on Issue Ownership**

One of the theories about party competition is issue ownership theory. The issue ownership theory suggest that parties aim to increase the salience of the issues which they feel competent to solve and gain reputations for. Petrocik (1996) is one of the first scholars who suggest the issue ownership theory arguing that political parties gain reputations over an issue by taking positions in social conflicts. Petrocik notes that with time, the positions of political parties in these conflicts are regularly tested and reinforced (Petrocik 1996, 828). Petrocik (1996) gives the 1991 Civil Rights Restoration Act as an example of one of the sources of conflict in the US. President Bush opposed the act by taking sides with business people instead of protecting the rights of blacks. However, if there were a Democrat president, the choice would be the opposite and the president would choose to protect the rights of Black people (Petrocik 1996, 828). This example illustrates how the choices of political parties on certain issues are tested and reinforced by time.

A main conclusion from Petrocik's (1996) study is that the political parties in the US elections focus more on issues associated with their identity. Besides this, Petrocik (1996) shows that as the election approaches the salience of party related issues among electorate increases and the frequency of performance related issues decreases. Petrocik (1996) also shows that the salience of particular issue types during the campaign plays a crucial role on election results. Nevertheless, the findings of Petrocik (1996) is criticized for being limited to the majoritarian systems and the issue ownership turns hard to interpret in multiparty electoral systems (Van der Brug 2017, 523).

The number of studies about the effects of issue ownership in multiparty systems gradually increased in the last ten years (Van der Brug 2017). Van der Brug (2017) suggests that this may be because the diminishing ideological differences between the mainstream parties complicate the choices of voters among parties on the basis of small differences. Another result of the ideological congruence claimed by the scholars is growing the importance of valence issues in elections and that elections become increasingly dependent on valence issues instead of positional issues (Clark 2009; Green 2007). The electorate that do not differentiate the parties on ideological grounds are compelled to determine their vote color by considering which parties have more ability to bring solutions to the issues important for them.

The conceptualization of issue ownership is an important question to understand how political parties structure the election competition by underlining selective issues and in turn, how this may affect the vote choice of electorate. How do the voters assign issue ownership to political parties? The literature shows that a party's priorities and a party's competence are the sources of issue ownership. Walgrave, Lefevere,

and Tresch (2012) suggest that there are two dimensions of issue ownership including a ‘competence dimension’ and ‘associative dimension’. In simplest terms, associative dimension is composed of links between certain issues and certain political parties and shaped by the issue priorities of political parties whereas competence dimension is related to evaluations of the past party success by voters depending on the political values of voters (Walgrave, Lefevere, and Tresch 2012). They conclude that both dimensions have separate, substantive, and statistically significant effects on vote decisions (Walgrave, Lefevere, and Tresch 2012).

According to Petrocik (1996), both competence and party priorities are effective in the association of a political party with a certain issue. On the other hand, Van der Brug (2017) claims that the conceptualization of issue ownership based on a party’s priorities is more appropriate than the other way since the perception of competence is endogenous to the party preferences. According to Van der Brug (2017), another reason for choosing to conceptualize issue ownership based on party priorities is that it can provide an explanation of vote for newly established political parties and parties with small vote shares. Although an issue is not salient, for example green issues, green parties may receive 10% vote share in elections through an electorate sensitive to green issues (Van Der Brug 2017).

To remember, the issue ownership theory suggests that political parties attempt to highlight issues that they ‘own’ and avoid the issues of ‘others’. However, the findings of scholars show that political parties may advocate the issues that they do not ‘own’ (Dahlberg and Martinsson 2015; Green and Hobolt 2008; Holian 2004; Sigelman and Buell Jr 2004; Spoon, Hobolt, and Vries 2014). The study of Sigelman and Buell (2004) displays that the candidates systematically address those issues that are most strongly associated with their competitors. Similarly, Holian (2004) shows that Bill Clinton repeatedly highlighted his commitment to decreasing crime rates and preserving law and order which are the issues mostly identified with Republican Party.

The empirical analysis of Green and Hobolt (2008), by analyzing party leader speeches, party election broadcasts and party press releases in the British elections between 1987 to 2005, illustrates that the political parties may emphasize the salient issues although they do not have reputations on. In 2005 elections, the most important issues for the voters were health, education, crime and immigration respectively (Green and Hobolt 2008). In this election, Conservatives mostly emphasized crime (25%), education (17%), health (14%), and taxation (14%) while education and health are among the issue priorities of the Labour party (Green and Hobolt 2008). Furthermore, Green and Hobolt (Green and Hobolt 2008) show that the political

parties take the advantage of the political issues on which they are found competent. The last important finding of Green and Hobolt (2008) we need to mention in this chapter is that the political parties utilize their positional advantages on issues.

The studies of Sigelman and Buell (2004), Holian (2004), and Green and Hobolt (2008) find empirical support for the argument that political parties do not totally exclude the issues associated with their rivals in their policy agendas. These studies signal the existence of a considerable degree of issue overlap. Similarly, the study of Petrocik, Benoit, and Hansen (2003) show that political parties may put even more emphasis on the issues associated with their rival parties depending on election circumstances. Petrocik, Benoit, and Hansen (2003) examine the rhetoric of TV ads and acceptance addresses of the Republican Party and Democrat Party in the US elections between 1952 and 2000. They found that the Republican issues were constituting 52% of the issues in the acceptance addresses of the Democrat Party (Petrocik et al., 2004). That is, the issues in the acceptance addresses of Democrat Party were composed mostly by the Republican issues. Another important implication of their study is that the responsiveness of Republican Party to the Democrat Party issues was lower than those of Democrat Party to the Republican issues. However, we need to note that their findings may be limited to two-party election systems.

As mentioned earlier, literature mentions two dimensions of issue ownership. The studies that conceptualize issue ownership based on competence dimension display that the voters' perceptions regarding the competence of a political party may change over time (Blanger 2003; Brasher 2009). The competence gap between Liberals and Conservatives, which are the two largest political parties of Canada, is dependent on popularity gap and particular time periods (Belanger, 2003, p.550). Nevertheless, there are limited number of cases in which the political parties lose their dominance over their 'good' issues as shown in Belanger and his associates' study (Blanger 2003). Similarly, Brasher (2009), showed that the political parties' dominance over an issue in the US was changing over time by using a data covering more than 50 years and identifying issue ownership as associated competence in certain issues. However, these issues were mostly performance related issues.

The literature presents empirical evidence both for selective emphasis of issues (Green and Hobolt 2008; Petrocik 1996) and for parties' emphasis of issues that they do not own (Holian 2004; Sigelman and Buell Jr 2004). We can conclude that while the political parties selectively emphasize the issues over which they have an advantage, they do not completely exclude the other issues, which might be important for the electorate, from their policy agendas.

### 3.1.2 Literature on Party Policy Shifts and Stability

In the previous section, we summarized the literature on issue ownership. Issue ownership theory implies a stability in party agendas, however the scholars found out empirical support both for policy stability and policy shifts in party manifestos. Some scholars argued that there is a stability in political parties' manifestos due to the organizational characteristics of political parties (Walgrave and Nuytemans, 2009; Strom, 1990; Jones and Baumgartner, 2005), the party activists' ideological beliefs resistant to changes (Muller and Strom 1999, 20), party fractions (Walgrave and Nuytemans 2009), cognitive limitations (Johnson and Baumgartner 2006; Walgrave and Nuytemans 2009), and the political parties' association with certain issues (Budge 2015). These characteristics of political parties are counted among the factors that may restrain the maneuver space of the political parties. One of the first scholars studying party manifestos, Budge (1994), claims that political parties rarely leapfrog. Budge (1994)'s idea is supported by the findings of Budge and Klingeman (2001) and Adams (2001). In the line with the arguments of these scholars, Walgrave and Nuytemans (2009) propose the idea that the political parties' programs reflect stable patterns, incremental changes, and frictions.

The arguments of the scholars advocating stability in the party manifestos are plausible when we consider the institutionalism literature and constraining aspect of ideological loyalties. However, we also know from the political parties' literature that political parties may change their policy programs. In fact, they are expected to adjust their agendas since political responsiveness is a requirement for a well-functioning democracy. When the political parties make changes in their policy programs and which party characteristics mediate the effects of exogenous factors are important questions for this thesis.

One of the factors in the literature that may induce policy shifts in party programs is past election success (Budge, Ezrow, and McDonald 2010; Meyer and Wagner 2013; Somer-Topcu 2009). Somer-Topcu (2009)'s article shows that electoral defeat leads political parties to shift their policies and its effect decreases as the time span between two following elections increases. Budge and others (2010) theorized that the political parties should reverse their movement they made in the previous

election if they face a vote loss. Another main argument of their article is that the political parties cannot make two “consecutive movements” in the same direction due to factional constraints (Budge, Ezrow, and McDonald 2010, 781). The results of empirical analysis support their arguments. Wegner and Mayer (2013) criticize the conceptualization of niche identity as a fixed identity and investigate if there is a transition from niche party identity to mainstream identity. Their article concludes that the niche parties may switch to mainstream parties in the case of electoral defeat in conditional on their age, their vote share, and government experience.

In addition to electoral defeat, the literature reveals that following the opponents’ strategies, the deterioration of valence of attributes of a political party, public opinion shift, global economic environment, and the issue dimension of electoral competition disadvantaging a political party may be sources of changes in policy programs. The movements of rivals affect the vote share of other political parties as spatial theory proposes. For this reason, the political parties may need to modify their issue positions following the same direction on which their opponents moved their policy positions at the former election (Adams, Haupt, and Stoll 2009). In addition to this, the analysis of Adams and Somer-Topcu (2009) presents that political parties are more reactive to the movements of the members of their ideological party families.

Political parties are expected to respond to public opinion shifts as a requirement of political responsiveness. Adams, Ezrow, and Glasgow (2004)’s work displays that political parties respond to the changes in public opinion. The analysis of Adams, Haupt, and Stoll (2009) produces supporting results for the relationship between public opinion shifts and changes in party policies. In another article that includes the ‘niche’ identity as a control variable, the public opinion shift appears to have an effect conditional on being a niche party identity or mainstream parties (Ezrow et al. 2011). The empirical findings of Ezrow and his colleagues’ study (2011) indicate that niche parties are responsive to the opinion shifts of their supporters rather than public opinion shifts.

Political parties may adopt a moderate or an extreme position in the electoral competition. Clark (2009) suggests that they may change their left-right position in order to compensate the image loss. Clark (2013) found that political parties adopt more moderate policies when their valence attributes degenerate. We know from spatial theory that political parties should hold positions according to vote distribution on left-right dimension. A party with small vote share may apart from the center in order to attract the voters inclined to extremist ideologies (Wagner 2012). Wagner’s analysis (2012) shows that political parties are tended to hold extremist positions if they have small vote share.

Regulating issue salience is another aspect of policy shifts of political parties as they may change their positions and portrait by increasing or decreasing the salience of specific issues in their programs. Political parties may highlight new issues if they are disadvantaged of dominating electoral competition. Hobolt and de Vries (2015) call this issue entrepreneurship. According to them, political parties suffering from past election results, holding mainstream policy positions, and lacking an office holding experience are more likely to engage in issue entrepreneurship (Hobolt and de Vries 2015). Carmines and Stimson's (Carmines and Stimson 1980, 781) findings support the main arguments of Hobolt and de Vries' study (2015).

The entrance of a niche party to the electoral system may transform the electoral competition. The political parties may alter their policy agendas in the case of entrance of a green party (Meguid 2005; Spoon, Hobolt, and Vries 2014). Meguid (2005) notes that mainstream parties can adopt three strategies in the face of entrance of niche parties; a mainstream party may ignore the issues of niche party, adopt an oppositional stand or take a similar stand with the niche party (Meguid 2005). The entrance of a niche party may change policy program of a political party. Supporting Meguid (2005), the article of Spoon, Hobolt, and de Vries (2014) indicates that political parties increases the salience of green issues if there is an electoral threat.

The political parties' policy shifts are common and many factors contribute to the policy making process of political parties. Nevertheless, the literature reveals that the political parties' responses to the factors mentioned in the previous paragraphs are dependent on their characteristics. The impacts of the competition features and other factors exogenous to political parties (for instance, global economic circumstances) are conditional on the rivalry within party organization and the type of political party such as being a niche party or mainstream party, being a leadership oriented or activist oriented party, having a left-wing or right-wing ideology.

Firstly, being a niche party or mainstream party mediates the effect of public opinion shift and electoral defeat. The niche parties are identified with certain issues and ideological positions. This enforces their bounds with their supporters and Ezrow and his colleagues' findings (2011) corroborate this. Niche parties are found more responsive to the preference shifts of their supporters while the empirical findings illustrate that mainstream parties are responsive to the changes in median voter (Ezrow et al. 2011) . The analysis of Adams, Clark, Ezrow, and Glasgow (2006) strengthens the theory of boundedness of niche parties to their supporters. While they face a punishment when they make policy changes, there does not exist empirical evidence for the punishment of mainstream parties in the case of party program

changes. In contrary to these arguments, according to the results of Wegner and Mayer's empirical analysis (2013), niche identity is not a fixed identity and they may switch to a mainstream party identity on the condition of unsatisfactory results.

Secondly, a party may be leadership dominated or activist dominated party. The parties of the former group are less restrained by their ideology and their constituency whereas high accountability of decisions of top party managers and dependency to the activists' support are main features of the parties of the latter group. Schumacher, de Vries, and Vis's article aims to bring an explanation for the reasons behind different responses of political parties to public opinion shifts. In the results of their models, an important difference between the leadership dominated and activist dominated parties emerges. The activist dominated parties are less receptive to shifts in public opinion compared to the degree the leadership dominated parties are (Schumacher Vis and De Vries 2013). Moreover, social democratic, liberal, and agrarian parties are classified among the parties that are slightly less leadership dominated parties compared to Christian democrats and conservative parties in the same study (Schumacher Vis and De Vries 2013).

Thirdly, being a policy seeking or office seeking party matters in the decisions of party programs according to Strom (1990). As Strom (1990) stated, the main objective of all political parties is to gain votes in order to attain a position in office or to implement their preferred politics despite their different policy goals. They may have concerns about losing the support of party activists and harming their reputation among voters. For example, 'policy seeking parties', as defined by Strom (1990), are less willing to make changes in their policies since they are dependent on the support of activists and the changes in agendas may damage their reputation. As Strom (1990) states, organizational properties of political parties may restrain the behaviors of party leaders. These constraints may be a cause of stability in party agendas. By following Strom (1990), we can say that the party objective (vote seeking, policy seeking or office seeking) is one of the factors affecting the cost-benefit calculation of political parties in adjusting their policy agendas.

Besides these characteristics of political parties, the rivalry within the party, lacking an office experience, the issue types with which a political party is linked condition the impact of past election results, public opinion shifts, changing economic circumstances, and other changes in the dynamics of electoral competition. The analysis of Hobolt and de Vries (2015) contributes with another factor that exerts a conditional effect on electoral defeat. They claimed that political parties that do not have office holding experience are tend more to bring new issues to the electoral competition in the case of electoral defeat since lacking government experience reduces the

risks for losing reputation for certain issues. Lastly, Wegner and Mayer (2013)'s study reveals that small parties, young parties, and parties in opposition are more likely to modify their programs when they observe a defeat in the preceding elections.

As referred earlier, Budge, Ezrow, and McDonald (2010) argued that political parties do not perform two successive movements in the same direction. For the authors, the main reason behind this is that political parties are identified with different factions having different goals and interests and two consecutive movement in the same direction may harm the power balance within party organization (Budge, Ezrow, and McDonald 2010).

The study of Tavits (2007) requires a closer look since it is one of the articles that are the most related to the topic of this thesis. In the issue ownership theory literature and the study of Adams, Clark, Ezrow, and Glasgow (2006), we observe that political parties may be punished if they make policy shifts. The main argument of Tavits (2007) is that political parties may experience a punishment according to the issues where they make a policy change. Tavits (2007) categorizes the election issues into two. The pragmatic issues including economic issues are the ones which political parties opportunistically emphasize in contingent upon the election conditions while the principled issues such as human rights and education are based on values and need a consistent advocacy. Tavits (2007) expects fluctuations in the emphasis of political parties on pragmatic issues, which is reasonable when we consider the instability in the economic circumstances and the expectations of voters who care about economic circumstances more than the principled issues. In contrary to this, parties should have consistent policies on principled issues if their supporters value them.

An inference from the findings of Tavits (2007) may be that political parties face a tradeoff between losing their competence in principled issues and gaining votes by addressing the economic hardships and offering policies. Tavits' study (2007) reveal out supporting findings for the main argument of this thesis. This thesis aims to reveal if there is a decline in the liberal parties' emphasis on human rights and freedom in times of economic hardships. Since it is a principled issue, a decrease in liberal parties' advocacy for this issue may harm their reputation. On the other hand, pragmatic issues may become more important as the elections approach depending on the conditions where elections are conducted. As Tavits (2007) states, liberal parties need to decide advocacy on which issues will be on their benefit at the end of elections. Thus, their decision in adjusting the issue emphasis on human

rights and freedom is linked to this tradeoff.

### **3.1.3 Literature on the Factors Affecting the Scope and the Salience of Human Rights and Freedom in a Country**

In this section, the factors which have an impact on the establishment of human rights and freedom in countries will be discussed. The opposite of human rights and freedom is repression. One of the meaning of provision of human rights and freedom is linked to a negative interpretation which emphasizes freedom from all forms of repression. Therefore, the factors reducing state repression can be perceived as those which strengthen human rights and freedom in a country.

Philosophers such as Montesquieu and Madison recognized democracy as the most powerful shield against state repression. It certainly reduces state repression. Yet, the literature shows that the relationship between them has a more complex nature. One of the studies which suggests a nonlinear complex relationship between democracy and life integrity violations is Fein's article (1995). Fein (1995) analyzes the impact of democracy on life integrity violations by dividing regime types into three including free states, partly-free states, and non-free states. Fein's article (1995) indicates that severe life integrity violations are more frequent in the partly-free states than non-free states.

Supporting the argument of non-linear relationship between democracy and life integrity violations, the findings of Regan and Henderson (2002) display an inverted U impact of democracy on them while Mesquita, Downs, and Smith (2005) , Davenport and Armstrog (2004), and Davenport (2007) found that democracy decreases the severe forms of violations only if the level of democracy is above a threshold. One of the main reasons for the diminishing effect of high levels of democracy on human rights violations is that the constraints in high level democracies are too powerful to disregard for authorities (Davenport and Armstrong 2004). Another reason for this relationship suggested in the literature is the incoherent cause-outcome dynamics in partly-free countries (Regan and Henderson 2002). The opportunities to initiate and join riots in these countries, yet the authorities are not restrained by powerful institutions bringing serious punishments for the authorities who employ repression (Regan and Henderson 2002).

The analysis of the relation between democracy and civil liberties with aggregate measurement of democracy may cause an overlook on the different impacts of democratic institutions on the provision of civil rights. The scholars question which components of democracy are more necessary or sufficient to protect human rights. Participation at multiparty competition and accountability are found as the most effective aspects of democracy (Davenport 2007; Mesquita 2005; Poe and Tate 1994). The analysis of Mesquita and his associates (2005) reveals that political participation at multiparty competition and accountability of authorities play the most crucial role to provide full-fledged respect for human rights and civil liberties. Similarly, Davenport (2007) shows that accountability in high level democracies by citizens protects the citizens from repression in cases of different forms of civil unrest. To note, both scholars agree in that these aspects of democracy are crucial for protection of human rights but after a significant progress achieved in other dimensions of democracy (Davenport 2007; Mesquita 2005)

However, the impact of accountability in civil wars is limited and the check and balances mechanism has a more preventive role against state-sponsored violence in civil wars according to Davenport (2007). The reason behind the low effect of accountability in civil wars brings us to another important finding of Davenport (2007): as the degree of the threat rises, the impact of all institutions to impede the state repression decreases. Davenport explains this with two hypotheses. First, the domestic realism hypothesis asserts that whenever political threatening behavior of opposition grows, the state repression intensifies. Second, the public is very likely to unite in a common measure against involvers of civil wars, which the scholar names “political integrity hypothesis”.

The role of elections promoting respect for human rights is questioned by scholars. While Davenport (2007) found that elections were effective only in non-democracies, Richards and Gellman's study (2007) showed that both legislative elections have a positive impact on government respect for human rights whereas executive elections decrease government respect for human rights in the following years. The causes of diverse effects of these elections are linked to the presidentialism vs parliamentarism debate. In simple terms, they explain the difference between these two kinds of election with the argument of low responsiveness of presidential systems to general public opinion by focusing only on their “own” people (Richards and Gellman 2007).

The most important study in the literature for this thesis is Cingranelli and Filipov's article (2010) because it stresses upon the dynamics of electoral competition. The authors bring a new independent variable to the literature on the institutional factors affecting the government respect for human rights. Their findings display

that the protection of physical integrity rights is higher in the countries with low district magnitude districts and where the voters are able to choose between individual candidates (Cingranelli and Filippov 2010). This finding can be surprising when we consider the low representation in low district magnitude districts which causes to rule out many preferences of the voters. Cingranelli and Filippov (2010) built their arguments based on electoral competition dynamics. They state that the politicians can focus only on the topic that would bring them highest returns in the single member districts (Cingranelli and Filippov 2010). On the other hand, the link between representatives and voters is weak in the high district magnitude election systems. Thus, the priorities of representatives may be far from the demands of the voters in both electoral rules. They conclude that proportional representation with districts of low magnitude gives the best outcome for the protection of physical integrity rights (Cingranelli and Filippov 2010). Their findings are crucial to show how changing political priorities of elites is contingent on election rules affect the respect for fundamental human rights.

Besides democratic regimes, the particular aspects of democracy, multiparty elections, and election rules, the scholars investigated the impact of a number of factors such as presidential system, federal system, trade openness, interstate conflict, domestic conflict, military government, population size, region, and economic development. In Mitchell and McCormick's study (1988) economic development is positively associated with respect for physical integrity rights. Cingranelli and Filippov (2010) finds a small support for Mitchell and McCormick (1988)'s findings regarding the impact of economic development. The findings of Poe, Tate, and Keith (1999) demonstrate that population size, military government, international war, and civil war have a statistically significant increasing impact on human rights abuses.

### **3.1.3.1 Literature on Post-Materialist Values and Economic Development**

As a revised form of modernization theory, Inglehart (1977) and Inglehart and Welzel (2005) propose the so-called "Silent Revolution" hypothesis and the postmaterialism theory. These two books are built on similar ideas while investigating a different scope of countries and a different time interval. According to Inglehart and

Welzel (2005), socioeconomic development was bringing predictable cultural changes that transform from one generation to another. They establish a link between the Commercial Revolution, where the economic growth started to outpace population growth in a maintained way, and the emergence of humanism and enlightenment (Inglehart and Welzel 2005, 15). That is, the increase in easiness of subsistence for individuals encouraged the enlightenment ideas that highlights rationality and individual authority.

Socioeconomic development in the post-industrial stage is assumed to strengthen the existing democracies and bring democracy to the others (Inglehart and Welzel 2005, 15). It is argued that the socioeconomic development had diminished the prevalence of materialist values and caused to the rise of post-materialist values that prioritize the individual autonomy, self-expression, and democratic values. The rise of post-materialist values is dependent on three main results of modernization including provision of existential security, the increase in education, and abolition of social constraints on human choice (Inglehart and Welzel 2005). The “silent revolution” brings changes not only in social life but also in political life. In the post-industrial age, politicians have become more responsible and the political competition has turned to be less restricted to elites only (Inglehart and Welzel 2005, 21). Nevertheless, the effect of socioeconomic development is not linear and it changes the social and political life with diminishing returns, as we might expect considering changes per se become more difficult in the advanced levels of development (Inglehart and Welzel 2005, 25). Despite establishing his theory on the idea of a long-term value change in European democracies, Inglehart (1977, 103) states that we would expect an increase in materialist values in economic crisis although the effect of economic crisis is dependent on how long it persists. However, the question regarding how long an economic crisis needs to persist in order to induce a reverse value change is not answered (Inglehart 1977, 103). Besides, Inglehart and Welzel (2005, 21) also acknowledge that the progress is not inevitable, and that the changes are reversible under economic collapse.

### **3.1.4 The Literature on Economy and Elections**

Until here, we discussed the factors that may affect the policies of political parties and respect for human rights and freedom in a country and the *postmaterialist value theory* of Inglehart and Welzel (2005). The literature examines how the public

opinion shifts, past electoral success, and the dynamics of electoral competition contributes to the agenda-making process of parties and which party characteristics have a conditioning effect on them. The relationship between economic conditions and party policies is the main question for which this study aims to bring an answer for. Therefore, a brief discussion of the literature on the role of economy in elections and the literature on economic voting be made in the initial paragraphs. Then, the literature on the relationship between economy and party policies is discussed under another heading.

The decisive role of economy in the election outcomes is emphasized by many scholars and especially, by the scholars of economic voting literature (Duch and Stevenson 2008; Lewis-Beck and Paldam 2000; Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier 2013). Vavreck (2009) and Wlezien (2005) make strong statements about the importance of economy on elections. Vavreck (2009, 31) claims that “economy is the clarifying issue. This issue is always important to voters in presidential elections” . A similar statement is made by Wlezien (2005, 556): “The economy is always an important issue to voters”. Regarding the electorate Brug, Eijik, and Franklin (2007, 136) claim that the impact of economy is “widespread, affecting all classes and conditions of voters almost equally”.

One of the main debates in economic voting literature is about whether voters make prospective or retrospective choices. Retrospective voting literature assumes that the voters look back and assess the success of the incumbent when they determine their vote choices. Kramer (1983) was the first one who argued that the voters decided the party they support based on the retrospective evaluations of the results of the incumbent’s economy policies. On the other hand, the voter of prospective voting theory goes to the ballot box by thinking about her future expectations rather than focusing on the past (Lockerbie 2006). Although these theories make different assumptions about the mindsets of the voters, a more realistic theory may combine prospective and retrospective mindsets of voters. The choice not to support incumbent may be retrospective but a retrospective voter has to make prospective decision in the ballot box (Van der Brug, Van der Eijik, and Franklin 2007, 99).

The scholars also stand with different theories about which criteria a voter assesses the economic conditions through. A voter who cares the most about the economy may identify her vote based on the information from her pocket or national economic indicators of her country. The first case is expected by egocentric theory while sociotropic voter theory asserts the other case. The literature presents empirical evidence for both cases. This implies that the information criteria used by voters may be dependent on the political and economic contexts. The differential reactions

of the voters are shown as an evidence for egocentric voting (Johnston et al. 2005). On the other hand, the prediction power of national economic conditions may be perceived as a support for sociotropic voting (Van der Brug, Van der Eijik, and Franklin 2007, 181).

Economic voting literature establishes an insoluble link between the incumbent's reelection and its economic performance. One of the most important policy areas the incumbents are held responsible for is undoubtedly economy. Many scholars, viewing retrospective economic voting as a way of holding the incumbents accountable, argue that the incumbents will be punished when the macroeconomic indicators signal their bad economic performance at the end of their term (Berry and Howell 2007; Lewis-Beck 1988; Powell and Whitten 1993). However, it is observed that the impact of macroeconomic conditions is varying in different political contexts (Anderson 2000; Van der Brug, Van der Eijik, and Franklin 2007).

Anderson (2000) and Brug and his colleagues (2007) emphasize the conditioning impact of the degree of clarity of responsibility on the macroeconomic factors. The incumbents are more likely punished in the political contexts with high degree of clarity of responsibility than those with low clarity of responsibility (Anderson 2000; Powell 2000; Van der Brug, Van der Eijik, and Franklin 2007). Another factor mediating the impact of macroeconomic conditions mentioned in the literature is the type of incumbent party. Brug and his colleagues (2007, 82) argue that left-wing parties are held responsible for higher unemployment rates whereas right-wing parties for higher inflation rates.

For sure, economy is one of the most important issues in all elections. It has a large impact in the election competition (Budge and Fairlie 1983, 50). Nevertheless, salience of economy varies substantially across countries and within electorates (Singer 2011b). This can be grasped when we consider different contexts where the elections are conducted. For example, the most important issues to British electorate were health, education, and crime in the 2005 elections. The evolution of the US election in 2008 from the war on terror to economy illustrates the dependency of election competition on changing political context (Singer 2011b). Due to high number of casualties in Iraq, the prominence of the Iraq War on terrorism raised at the end of 2006. During 2008 election, the Iraq War was still an important issue, yet the economy was much more salient than the war was. Singer (2011b) explained this with the idea that the salience of economy grows during economic crisis. According to Singer (2011b), the salience of economy may grow depending on two reasons at the aggregate level: economic recessions or periods of volatility and bad government performance in other areas. Besides, the research of Singer (2011b) displays that

the salience of economy increases with unemployment and economic vulnerability at the individual level.

#### **3.1.4.1 Literature on the Relationship between Economy and Party**

##### **Policies**

Vavreck (2009) proposes two kinds of election campaigns including clarifying campaigns and insurgent campaigns. Political parties such as incumbent parties with successful economic policy record and opposition parties in the times of bad economic performance prefer to stress upon economy and makes clarifying campaigns (Vavreck 2009, 26-43). On the other hand, incumbents who do not have a successful performance on economy and the political parties which do not have a successful image for economic policies try to distract the attention of voters from economy and adapt an insurgent campaign that highlights another issue (insurgent campaigns). Thus, they give their decision to underline economic conditions or not, based on whether emphasizing economic conditions is on their advantage or disadvantage.

The decision to ignore or deal with economy depends on a rational choice in Vavreck's theory (2009). However, ignorance of economy may be costly for all political parties in contingent upon their type and political and economic environment. Budge and Fairlie (1983, 50) estimate the importance of issues by employing the Comparative Manifesto Project dataset. In their analysis, socioeconomic redistribution is among the issues having the largest impact on elections while they classified 'initiative and freedom' into the issues having small effect on elections (Budge and Fairlie 1983, 50). It is for certain that economy is one of the most important issues and even, may be the most important issue in the election as the economic voting literature also displays. Combining with the study of Tavit (2007), we may say that political parties that have supporters who value pragmatic issues should care more about the economy and continuously adjust their programs according to fluctuations in the economy.

There are a limited number of studies that empirically analyze the relationship between economy and party policy shifts. One of these studies is the study of Spoon, Hobolt, and de Vries (2014). They analyze, by using the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP), when the mainstream political parties may respond to, rather than ignore, the green issues although these issues are niches of green parties (Spoon,

Hobolt, and Vries 2014). They suggest that the political parties respond to the green issues if a green party poses a significant electoral threat and the political and economic context allow to raise the issue (Spoon, Hobolt, and Vries 2014). The rationality behind their theory is very simple: in the times of economic hardships or in the case of an existing political crisis, the political parties choose to ignore green issues since there are a high number of voters expecting them to solve these issues. Their models do not produce empirical support for the effect of GDP growth rate on the emphasis on green issues (Spoon, Hobolt, and Vries 2014).

The article of Adams, Haupt, and Stoll (2009), another study examining the role of economy in party policies, looks for how the global economic conditions play a role in the party policies. The independent variables related to economy of the article are foreign direct investment, economic integration (trade), and capital flows. The results of their article display that the right-wing parties and center parties move toward left as globalization expands (Adams, Haupt, and Stoll 2009). One of the reasons for this is that globalization produces adverse outcomes for low-waged workers and small entrepreneurship and this forces the governments to take actions in order to reduce the adverse impacts of globalization. Thus, domestic discomfort about economic conditions may lead politicians to make policy shifts which would reduce uneasiness among the citizens.

### **3.2 Theoretical Framework**

In the literature review section of this chapter, I focused on four literatures including the issue ownership theory, party policy shifts, the factors influencing human rights and freedom in a country, the relationship between economy and elections, and the relationship between party policies and economy. The main conclusions from the literature can be summarized into three statements. Firstly, the political parties selectively emphasize issues according to their cost-benefit calculations and, on the other hand, they cannot totally exclude the issues salient in the elections. Secondly, policy shifts in left-right ideological dimension and issue emphasis are common in election programs of parties and they are affected both by exogenous and endogenous factors to political parties despite the stability in the policies reflecting their fundamental identities. Lastly, the economic context is a crucial component of economic conditions. How do the political parties adjust their policy offerings and ideological stand according to economic conditions? Do they pay attention more on economy

related topics in times of economic hardships by shifting their focus from the topics which they acquire a reputation for even though these issues are “principled issues” as Tavits (2007) calls? These questions are important to proceed in understanding electoral competition and political parties’ rationality.

Political parties are associated with certain issues. For example, the topics including crime, traditional values, and low-level taxes are generally called with the US Republican Party whereas civil liberties, social and welfare spending, and middle class are some of the issues the Liberals have an ‘issue ownership’ (Petrocik, Benoit, and Hansen 2003). Or the members of liberal party family are seen as proponents of constitutionalism (Caroline and Pascal 2015), decentralization, human rights, and a progress toward ‘more responsible parliamentary governments’ (Humphreys and Steed 1988, 398). The discussion in the literature on issue ownership implies a stable policy in the positional issues and salience of valence issues (green issues by green parties) in election campaigns and shifts in the policy programs and altering focus on the issues on the other hand.

Economy is one of the most important topics that affects the faith of elections. Bad economic conditions may stimulate the probability of turnover and increase the chances of opposition to gain more vote shares in the elections (Anderson 2000; Powell and Whitten 1993; Van der Brug, Van der Eijik, and Franklin 2007). If the economic conditions can be utilized to point out the incapability of the incumbent, a self-confident opposition party may engage in a clarifying campaign (Vavreck 2009). On the other hand, an incumbent may run a campaign praising its achievements in the economy (Vavreck 2009). There is no doubt that political parties build their policy programs while taking account of how they draw a credible portrait on the eyes of electorate and on which issues they can gain trust of the necessary number of voters for their goals. A political party’s strategy in the elections where the salience of economy is high should be formulated following these questions. Nevertheless, ignoring a salient issue of election may also harm the credibility of political parties. Thus, a critical question emerges here: Can the political parties ignore the economy when the economy goes bad?

The responsiveness to the electorate is one of the most important functions of political parties since they are intermediary agents between the decision-making mechanism of the state and voters and represents the interests of the electorate (Powell 2000). The concept of dynamic representation supports the responsiveness of political parties to the electorate by showing a party shifts its policy positions in response to changes in public opinion (Carmines and Stimson 1980; Ezrow et al. 2011). The high emphasis of Republican issues such as crime by Bill Clinton in the 1992 elec-

tions Holian (2004) or the emphasis of British parties on the salient issues of elections even though they do not maintain a discourse on them (Green and Hobolt 2008) are evidences of the electoral responsiveness of political parties. To link this discussion with the question of this chapter, there is a need to talk about if we can expect a policy shift in bad economic conditions. The concept of dynamic representation and the electoral responsiveness as a main function of political parties endorse the expectation that political parties may increase their attention to economy related issues which leads to a relative deemphasis on their core issues.

However, economic conditions do not affect all the electorate equally and not all voters care about the economy at the same level. A huge part of the voters in the US expressed that the most important issue was the war on terror despite the ongoing economic crisis (Singer 2011b). Similarly, not all political parties appeal to median voter and they may have different goals. The difference between the niche parties and the mainstream parties is grounded on their different agendas and their appeal to different electorate. Policy seeking parties moderate their policies less likely than the office seeking parties do (Strom 1990). The lack of responsiveness of niche parties to the median voter changes may be also a proof for responsiveness of political parties to different kind of voters (Ezrow et al. 2011). These observations demonstrate that political parties may not broaden the place for economic issues even when the economy is the most salient issue in the elections.

Liberal parties are one of the first party families in the Europe and the agents of mainstream politics for more than two centuries. In the first chapter, the empirical analyses indicate that the liberal parties are distinguishable from all other party families on their emphasis on HR and freedom emphasis. They are mostly centrist parties and own a key position in the electoral competition. Therefore, it would be expected that liberal parties' emphasis on economic issues may increase in the case of deterioration of economic conditions. In addition to this, the human rights emphasis of liberal parties might be depending on the economic conditions. As the economic conditions are worsening, the liberal parties as office-seeking mainstream parties may reduce their emphasis on the human rights and freedom. That is, an emphasis on economy may lead to a relative decrease in the emphasis on human rights.

*H<sub>1</sub>: The emphasis on human rights and freedom of liberal parties decreases as the economic conditions deteriorate.*

*H<sub>2</sub>: The liberal parties' emphasis on economy increases as the economic conditions worsen.*

### 3.2.1 Control Variables

Election-level characteristics may also have an impact on issue policies of political parties. The opportunities to hold extremist or divergent policies are higher for the political parties who run in a large party system. This was first proposed by Downs (1957, 126), who argued that the political parties will seek to distinguish themselves ideologically from other political parties in the multiparty elections. It is often argued that larger party systems promote divergent policies while a system with small number of parties leads the political parties to adopt convergent policies (Dow 2011, 111). This can be explained by the fact that the ideal policy to maximize votes is holding a stand closer to the centre when the number of competitors in the system is fewer (Wagner 2012, 71). In other words, the election system fragmentation grows the incentives for “product differentiation” (Kitschelt 1999, 118). Therefore, it is reasonable to anticipate a positive relationship between election system fragmentation and the human rights emphasis of liberal parties.

*H<sub>3</sub>: Higher levels of fragmentation in elections leads to a higher emphasis on human rights and freedom by liberal parties.*

Election polarization can be understood basically as ideological differentiation among political parties (Dalton 2008). Dalton (2008) argues that the attributes made to multiparty systems by Downs (1957) are mostly related to the party polarization. Election polarization causes the intensification of centrifugal forces in the ideological competition and leads dispersed party positions. Another result of party polarization is intensification of ideological debates (Dalton 2008). Due to these effects of election polarization, an increase in the human rights and freedom emphasis of the liberal parties can be expected with high levels of party polarization. Infact, the human rights and freedom emphasis is one of the issues calculated in the rile index on the side of right with ideology. In the first section, it is observed that the liberal parties particularly emphasize human rights and freedom. In the polarized election environments, they may highlight issues on which they have a clear power in compliance with the main arguments of issue ownership theory. Thus, the fourth hypothesis is:

*H<sub>4</sub>: The liberal parties’ emphasis on human rights and freedom is increasing with higher levels of polarization.*

Inglehart and Welzel's (2005) the post-materialist theory expects a transformation both in social and political life. According to their theory, the economic development helps diminish the feelings of existential insecurity by providing sufficient materials to maintain livelihood and increasing the life expectancy (Inglehart and Welzel 2005). The social development comes with the economic development, which is the main theme of modernization theory. As the income of an individual increases and the jobs becomes more qualified in terms of enhancing social capital, the education level grows and the constraints on information disappear (Inglehart and Welzel 2005). Due to this chain of developments, the economic developments give rise to post-materialist values that prioritize individualism, rationality, and liberal democratic values. Inglehart and Welzel (2005) point out that the developments similar with those in social life should emerge in the political life. The demand side certainly changes if the assumptions of post-materialism theory is true. On the other hand, a shift from emphasis on materialist values to post-materialist values by liberal parties can be expected since the economic structure does not necessitate a high amount of focus due to the sustainable economic growth in post-industrial economies. Thus, there is a fair reason to anticipate that liberal parties' emphasis on human rights and freedom is increasing in GDP per capita. However, Inglehart and Welzel argued that the relationship between economic development and the increase in post-materialist values is not linear (Inglehart and Welzel 2005, 25).

*H<sub>5</sub>: The liberal parties' emphasis on human rights and freedom rises nonlinearly with GDP per capita growth.*

The last control variable of this chapter is being in government in the previous elections.<sup>1</sup> The literature on economic voting displays that the elections are a way of keeping the incumbents accountable (Berry and Howell 2007; Lewis-Beck 1988; Powell and Whitten 1993). The voters who prioritize economy to all other issues may decision the party to support based on past economic evaluations of the incumbent (retrospective voting) and the capabilities of the opposition parties (prospective voting). Thus, the parties keeping a government position in the previous elections should give more attention economic issues in the elections since economic issues may determine their faith in participating government. The impact of having a governmental position can come in two ways. First, the parties which gained a government position in the previous elections ( $t - 1$ ) may make less

---

<sup>1</sup>The results of analyses with additional election-level control variables are given in Table A.8

emphasis on human rights and freedom since human rights and freedom have a low impact on election results (Budge and Fairlie 1983, 50) and they fear from losing their seats in the current elections ( $t$ ). Second, the parties holding a governmental position may respond to changing economic conditions more than the other parties which did not participate in the government after the previous elections.

*H<sub>6</sub>: The liberal parties' emphasis on human rights and freedom decreases in the elections ( $t$ ) if they gained a position in the government in the previous elections ( $t - 1$ ).*

*H<sub>7</sub>: The impact of economic conditions on party policies in the elections ( $t$ ) is higher for the liberal parties which participated the previous government ( $t - 1$ ).*

### 3.3 Research Design

The analysis part of this chapter uses a time series cross sectional dataset involving political parties from 33 European democracies and covering the period between 1970 and 2018. Observations from the years where the countries are not categorized as democracies (Polity < 6) in Polity 5 (2020) dataset are not included in the sample of the empirical analysis section of this chapter since non-democracies may have volatile electoral institutions and non-democratic practices may occur in the elections in non-democracies. To note, in the period covered by the empirical analysis of this chapter, none of the democracies backslides to a non-democracy once it is categorized as a democracy. Thus, all observations from a country is included in the empirical analysis of this chapter beginning from the year where a country begin to be categorized as a democracy.<sup>2</sup>

#### 3.3.1 Data and Methodology

---

<sup>2</sup>The list of the countries and liberal parties from which the empirical analysis of this chapter involve observations are given in Appendix. The empirical analysis of this chapter does not include observations from Bosnia and Herzegovina since it is not categorized as a democracy in V-dem dataset and Polity 5 dataset. In addition, there does not exist an observation from a liberal party in Portugal in CMP dataset.

For the analyses of the second chapter, I employed the Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP) dataset, World Bank dataset, Polity 5 (2020), and the dataset created by Williams and Seki (2016). Since the information regarding the coding procedures of CMP dataset (2019) exist in the data section of the first chapter, an extra information about the CMP dataset (2019) is not given in this section. The dataset of Williams and Seki (2016) is an updated version of Waldrop, Keman, and Budge's *Party Government in 48 Democracies* dataset. The dataset of Williams and Seki (2016) presents enormous information about government formation such as cabinet composition, birth and end of government, and government ideology. In this chapter, this dataset is used to generate the "being in government" control variable.

The second chapter of this thesis aims to understand the relationship between macroeconomic variables and the human rights and freedom emphasis of liberal parties. The information regarding party level and election level variables except those indicating a partnership in governments is provided from the Comparative Manifesto Project. The World Bank dataset is employed for the variables related to the macroeconomic conditions of the countries where the elections are held. The information regarding unemployment rate, inflation rate, GDP growth rate, and GDP per capita of a country is provided from the World Bank dataset.

To note, in all models, OLS regression estimator is employed. OLS estimator is the most appropriate estimator for the analyses of this chapter since the dependent variable is a continuous variable and OLS estimator gives accurate results even in the samples with low number of observations.

### **3.3.1.1 Operationalization of Variables**

The dependent variable of this chapter is human rights and freedom emphasis of the parties belonging to liberal party family. As it is stated earlier, the CMP dataset (2019)'s party family variable is followed for party family identification of political parties. The CMP dataset (2019) categorizes political parties according to their affiliation to international organizations. The human rights and freedom variable, which is the dependent variable of this chapter, is created to measure the relative share of "favorable mentions of the importance of personal freedom and civil rights" (Volkens et al. 2017) in proportional to all statements in the manifesto. The statements related with the right to freedom of speech, press, assembly etc., freedom

from state coercion in the political and economic spheres, freedom from bureaucratic control, and the idea of individualism are counted within the human rights and freedom emphasis of parties in their manifestos. That is, the human rights and freedom variable involves only positive statements about the fundamental human rights and freedoms.

The independent variables of the main models are total unemployment rate, inflation rate, GDP growth rate, Cold War, lagged election fragmentation, and lagged election polarization. Unemployment rate, inflation rate, and GDP growth rate variables are directly get from the World Bank dataset. Unemployment rate is calculated according to the unemployed population in proportional to the total labor force. Inflation rate is the annual GDP deflator as a percentage. GDP growth rate as a ratio shows how much a country's Gross Domestic product changes from previous year to following year. Cold War variable is a dummy variable which is generated to indicate if the end of Cold War makes a difference in the human rights and freedom emphasis of liberal parties.<sup>3</sup>

The election level variables are created by following the literature. Therefore, there would be a need for discussion for operationalization of these variables. Sartori (Sartori 2005, 119) measures election fragmentation by counting the number of parties having seats in the parliament. This way of measurement does not take into account the relative size of the seats held by different parties. Later on, Laakso and Taagepera's (1979) offered a measurement of election fragmentation that take into consideration the relative size of the parties. The formula offered by Laakso and Taagepera (1979) is:

$$N_{LT} = \frac{1}{\sum_{i=1}^n s_i^2}$$

where  $s_i$  represents the seat share of  $i^{th}$  political party. Linhart and Raabe (2018) noted that the fragmentation measurement of Laakso and Taagepera does not properly identify the cases in which a large amount of the seats is held by a single party and none of the parties have a seat share close to its. An alternative measurement of election fragmentation that take account of the seat shares of political parties relative to the seat share of the largest party is suggested by Golosov (2010):

$$N_G = \sum_{i=1}^n \frac{s_i}{s_i + s_1^2 - s_i^2}$$

In this model, while  $s_i$  denotes the seat share of  $i^{th}$  political party,  $s_1$  identifies the seat share of the largest party in the parliament.

---

<sup>3</sup>The findings of Richards, Gelleny, and Sacko (2001) show that economic integration would have statistically significant impact on the respect for human rights and freedom in a country although its effect seems small. In order to test their argument, alternative models including trade variable to measure economic integration are given in the Appendix.

The election fragmentation variable is generated for both models by using CMP dataset (2019). A comparison of these two models is made through a correlation analysis. The correlation analysis shows that these two measurements of fragmentation are highly correlated and produce very similar values. Nevertheless, as Linhart and Raabe (2018) state, the model of Laakso and Taagepera (1979) may produce improper results in the case of a single large political party in the parliament. Therefore, the measurement model of Golosov (2010) is followed to generate the election fragmentation variables in the main models. For any doubts, the models with Laakso and Taagepera's (1979) formula for effective number of parties are also added to Appendix and the estimates of the main models and the models following Laakso and Taagepera (1979) give very similar results. The polarization variable is created, using the party positions on the rile index, as the average weighted ideological distance accounting for the vote shares of political parties. In the regression models, the election level variables are lagged since political parties learn the competition dynamics from the previous elections.

For robustness check models, three period variables are generated. The Cold War variable is a dummy variable where the period between 1991 and 2020 is coded as 1 and the period between 1970 and 1990 is represented with 0. In addition to the Cold War dummy variable measuring the time effect on the dependent variable, a decade variable is generated as a categorical variable which is composed of five decades in the period between 1970 and 2020. The base level of this variable in the models is the decade including the years between 1970 and 1980.

The tests for two alternative hypotheses are included in the empirical part of this chapter. The first hypothesis ( $H_5$ ) is the postmaterialist values argument of Inglehart and Welzel (2005), which we mentioned before. A variable indicating the logarithmic function of GDP per capita is created since the theory of Inglehart and Welzel expects a non-linear relationship between economic development and post-materialist values due to diminishing returns (Inglehart and Welzel 2005, 25-42).<sup>4</sup> The other hypothesis ( $H_6$  and  $H_7$ ) suggests that government experience may condition the effects of exogenous factors. Therefore, the last control variable, *being in government*, is added in the models controlling for the alternative hypotheses. This variable is generated as a dummy variable where a party which is a partner in the government or establishes a single-party government is coded as 1. Likewise with other election-level variables, the *being in government* variable is lagged in the empirical analysis.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup>The models for testing  $H_5$  without taking the logarithmic function of GDP per capita are added in the Appendix.

<sup>5</sup>The models in Table 3.5 include an interaction between *being in government* and unemployment rate. A

### 3.4 Empirical Findings and Discussion

The empirical analyses in this section aims to understand the impact of economic conditions on the liberal parties' human rights and freedom emphasis. All models are estimated by using the extended dataset including the CMP dataset (2019), the World Bank dataset, Polity 5 dataset(2020), and the dataset of Williams and Seki (2016). In most of the models, variables accounting for country-level and time-level characteristics are added since they may cause biased findings by imposing spurious effects to the estimation results. The empirical analyses in this section mainly examine the impact of macroeconomic factors on liberal parties' human rights and freedom emphasis. Besides, additional models are given to test the relationship between the liberal parties' emphasis on economic issues and macroeconomic factors, the impact of socioeconomic development and of having a seat in the government between elections on liberal parties' human rights and freedom emphasis.

The main hypothesis of this thesis (*hypothesis 1*) expects a decline in the liberal parties' relative emphasis on human rights and freedom with deteriorating economic conditions. The models in Table 3.1 include macroeconomic independent variables with country and year dummies. Both models in Table 3.1 reveal statistically significant empirical support for the hypothesis 1. The coefficient values of unemployment rate are negative and statistically significant at 99% confidence level in both models while the election-level control variables do not have an impact in Model 2. Substantively speaking, Figure 3.1 shows that four percent increase in unemployment rate causes approximately 1 percent decrease in the liberal parties' relative emphasis on human rights and freedom. As a robustness check, alternative models are added in Table 3.2. They also produce statistically significant results for the impact of unemployment rate on the liberal parties' relative emphasis on human rights and freedom. Although the coefficient values of inflation rate and GDP growth are statistically significant in Model 1, the results are not robust to the other model specifications in Table 3.1 and Table 3.2. Lastly, the models in Table 3.2 indicate that the liberal parties' relative emphasis on human rights and freedom changes depending on year and different decades. Model 3 in Table 3.2 illustrates that the liberal parties' relative emphasis on human rights and freedom increased in the period between 1981 and 1990 in comparison to the period between 1970 and 1980. In addition to this, the year variable appears to have a statistically significant negative effect on liberal parties' relative human rights and

---

version of the models without interaction variable is added to the appendix.

Table 3.1 Main Models on the Relative Emphasis of Liberal Parties on Human Rights and Freedom

|                              | Model1               | Model2               |
|------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Inflation Rate               | -0.005<br>(0.003)    | -0.005<br>(0.003)    |
| GDP Growth Rate              | -0.090<br>(0.111)    | -0.094<br>(0.111)    |
| Unemployment Rate            | -0.260***<br>(0.088) | -0.247***<br>(0.085) |
| Lag. Election Fragmentation* |                      | -0.090<br>(0.223)    |
| Lag. Party Polarization      |                      | -0.009<br>(0.014)    |
| Constant                     | 21.193***<br>(2.343) | 21.961***<br>(2.650) |
| N                            | 315                  | 315                  |
| R <sup>2</sup>               | 0.432                | 0.435                |
| Country Dummies              | Yes                  | Yes                  |
| Year Dummies                 | Yes                  | Yes                  |

Robust standard errors are in parentheses.

Lag. Election Fragmentation\* is calculated according to Golosov (2010).

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

freedom emphasis. Although the effect of year seems not substantive considering the distribution of human rights and freedom emphasis of liberal parties, it implies a substantive decrease in the liberal parties' relative emphasis of human rights and freedom in the time period between 1970 and 2018.

Table 3.2 Robustness Check for Main Models on the Relative Emphasis of Liberal Parties on Human Rights and Freedom

|                              | Model1               | Model2               | Model3               |
|------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Inflation Rate               | -0.006***<br>(0.002) | -0.002<br>(0.002)    | -0.001<br>(0.002)    |
| GDP Growth Rate              | -0.245***<br>(0.071) | -0.094<br>(0.069)    | -0.068<br>(0.069)    |
| Unemployment Rate            | -0.146***<br>(0.036) | -0.188***<br>(0.063) | -0.265***<br>(0.075) |
| Lag. Election Fragmentation* | 0.055<br>(0.093)     | 0.084<br>(0.167)     | 0.047<br>(0.170)     |
| Lag. Party Polarization      | 0.009<br>(0.006)     | -0.008<br>(0.010)    | -0.010<br>(0.011)    |

|                  |          |          |          |
|------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Year             | -0.033*  |          |          |
|                  | (0.020)  |          |          |
| Cold War         |          | -1.164   |          |
|                  |          | (0.867)  |          |
| Decade 1981-1990 |          |          | 2.451*   |
|                  |          |          | (1.434)  |
| 1991-2000        |          |          | 0.238    |
|                  |          |          | (0.818)  |
| 2001-2010        |          |          | 0.064    |
|                  |          |          | (0.789)  |
| 2011-2020        |          |          | 0.398    |
|                  |          |          | (1.051)  |
| Constant         | 5.817*** | 8.385*** | 7.733*** |
|                  | (1.171)  | (1.852)  | (1.687)  |
| N                | 315      | 315      | 315      |
| $R^2$            | 0.115    | 0.267    | 0.285    |

Robust standard errors are in parentheses.

Lag. Election Fragmentation\* is calculated according to Golosov (2010).

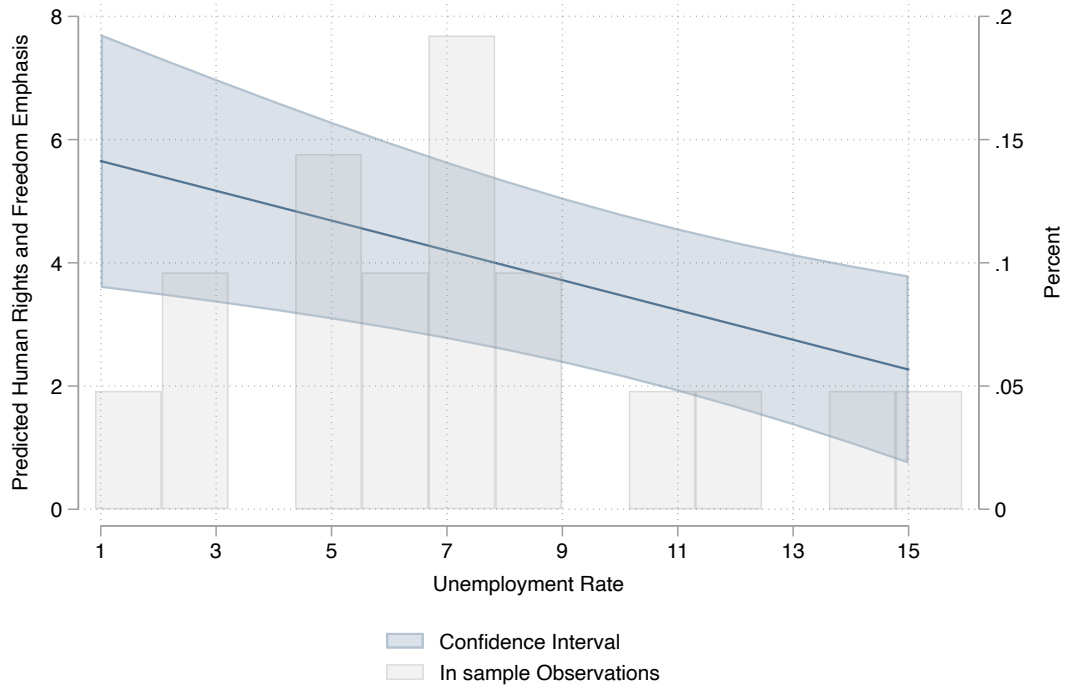
Base level of Decade variable is 1970-1980

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

The Comparative Manifesto Project categorizes liberal parties according to their transnational affiliations, their policies and ideologies, their names and their origins. Nevertheless, some scholars have doubts about whether the Comparative Manifesto Project's liberal party family codification approach can be too liberal. As a robustness check, additional analyses are conducted while employing alternative categorizations of liberal parties and the findings of these analyses are given in Table A.4 and Table A.5 in Appendix. Supporting the main hypothesis of this chapter, the results of all models in these tables do not produce statistically significant support for the impact of unemployment rate on human rights and freedom emphasis of liberal parties. A detailed explanation for liberal parties' identification is given in the Appendix.

The results of the models in Table 3.1 illustrate that the liberal parties' relative emphasis on human rights and freedom decreases with higher levels of unemployment rate. This is first aspect of the effect of unemployment rate on liberal parties' election agendas and brings a further question of to what issues the emphasis in liberal parties' manifestos goes. To remember, the hypothesis 2 states that the liberal

Figure 3.1 Out of Sample Predictions of Human Rights and Freedom Relative Emphasis of Liberal Parties Depending on Unemployment Rate within In-Sample Range Observations



parties' relative emphasis on economy related issues will increase with bad economic conditions. Table 3.3 includes models to test this hypothesis and reveals empirical support for the increasing effect of unemployment rate on the liberal parties' relative emphasis on incentives+ and economic goals.<sup>6</sup> Table 3.3 reveals that inflation rate has diverse effects on the relative emphasis on incentives+ and economic goals issues. While inflation rate has a statistically significant and negative impact on incentives+ emphasis, its effect is statistically significant and positive in economic goals emphasis. Lastly, unemployment rate has an increasing impact on both issues.

Model 1 in Table 3.3 also reflects that party polarization increases the relative incentives + emphasis. This can be expected since the incentives + is a right-wing issue and a component of the rile index on the right side of the equation calculating the rile score of a political party in a given election year. On the other hand, the emphasis

<sup>6</sup>Empirical analyses for all economic issues existing in CMP dataset (2019) are conducted. All issues related to economy and controlled for a relationship between economic indicators and the liberal parties' relative emphasis on these issues are free market economy, incentives+, market regulation, economic planning, corporatism/mixed economy, protectionism+, protectionism-, economic goals, Keynesian demand economy, economic growth+, technology and infrastructure, controlled economy, nationalization, economic orthodoxy, and welfare+. Among these issues the models with economic planning, corporatism/mixed economy, and Keynesian demand economy issues also produce statistically significant results for the effect of unemployment rate. However, the coefficients of unemployment rate are not substantive when we consider the distributions of these variables. Moreover, the results are not robust to model specifications in Table A.10. For these reasons, the results of these models are not given within the text and added to the Appendix.

on incentives+ increases the ideological distance between right-wing and left-wing political parties (party polarization), therefore an endogeneity bias in the models having incentives+ as the dependent variable could emerge. Nevertheless, lagging party polarization to previous election solves a possible endogeneity bias problem. The time effect on the relative emphasis on economic goals is not discussed here since it is not among the main concerns of this thesis. Table 3.4 involves models for the

Table 3.3 Models for the Relationship between the Emphasis on Economy Related Issues and Macroeconomic Variables

|                              | Incentives+           |                     | Economic Goals      |                      |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
|                              | Model1                | Model2              | Model1              | Model2               |
| Inflation Rate               | -0.008**<br>(0.004)   | -0.006**<br>(0.003) | 0.015***<br>(0.003) | 0.017***<br>(0.002)  |
| GDP Growth Rate              | -0.236*<br>(0.133)    | -0.167<br>(0.104)   | -0.070<br>(0.077)   | 0.102<br>(0.072)     |
| Unemployment Rate            | 0.088<br>(0.081)      | 0.137*<br>(0.071)   | 0.204***<br>(0.067) | 0.170***<br>(0.061)  |
| Lag. Election Fragmentation* | 0.854*<br>(0.492)     | 0.723*<br>(0.415)   | -0.044<br>(0.157)   | -0.095<br>(0.140)    |
| Lag. Party Polarization      | 0.015<br>(0.010)      | 0.015<br>(0.010)    | -0.010<br>(0.007)   | -0.009<br>(0.006)    |
| Decade 1981-1990             |                       | -1.280<br>(0.892)   |                     | -1.491<br>(1.019)    |
| 1991-2000                    |                       | -0.457<br>(0.869)   |                     | -1.925**<br>(0.846)  |
| 2001-2010                    |                       | -1.091<br>(0.798)   |                     | -1.886**<br>(0.844)  |
| 2011-2020                    |                       | -0.248<br>(0.836)   |                     | -2.915***<br>(0.831) |
| Constant                     | -11.266***<br>(3.594) | 0.835<br>(1.854)    | 3.631*<br>(1.938)   | 2.960***<br>(1.089)  |
| N                            | 315                   | 315                 | 315                 | 315                  |
| R <sup>2</sup>               | 0.416                 | 0.286               | 0.525               | 0.256                |
| Country Dummies              | Yes                   | Yes                 | Yes                 | Yes                  |
| Year Dummies                 | Yes                   | No                  | Yes                 | No                   |

Robust standard errors are in parentheses.

Lag. Election Fragmentation\* is calculated according to Golosov (2010).

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

test of Inglehart and Welzel's (2005) hypothesis. To restate, Inglehart and Welzel (2005) expect a value change both in social and political life with socioeconomic development. Socioeconomic development is measured with logarithmic function of GDP per capita in the models in Table 3.4 since their theory hypothesize a non-linear relationship between socioeconomic development and post-materialist values. Model 1 in in Table 3.4 produces empirical support for Inglehart and Welzel (2005)'s

hypothesis. Yet, the results are not robust to the changes in model specifications in Table 3.4. As a robustness check, additional models are added in the appendix without taking logarithmic function of GDP per capita. The coefficient values of GDP per capita are statistically significant in all of the models in Table A.6. Yet, the coefficient values are very small due to the nature of GDP per capita which takes values between 1148.50 and 113625.1 in the effective sample of the models in Table A.6. The interpretation of to what degree the coefficients of GDP per capita in these models are substantive is difficult. On the other hand, the statistically significant results for the effect of GDP per capita in the models in Table A.6 can point to the long-term characteristic of the change in the values of politics as Inglehart and Welzel (2005) also emphasized. Lastly, the coefficient values of unemployment rate are statistically significant in all of the models in Table 3.4 while supporting the main hypothesis of this thesis.

Table 3.4 Models on the Human Rights and Freedom Relative Emphasis of Liberal Parties and Post-Materialism Hypothesis of Inglehart and Welzel

|                              | Model1               | Model2               | Model3               | Model4               |
|------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Inflation Rate               | -0.006*<br>(0.003)   | -0.004**<br>(0.002)  | -0.004*<br>(0.002)   | -0.004**<br>(0.002)  |
| GDP Growth Rate              | -0.263***<br>(0.101) | -0.223***<br>(0.071) | -0.218***<br>(0.068) | -0.216***<br>(0.065) |
| Log. GDP Per Capita          | 0.546*<br>(0.291)    | 0.448<br>(0.283)     | 0.336<br>(0.271)     | 0.248<br>(0.285)     |
| Unemployment Rate            | -0.098**<br>(0.047)  | -0.109***<br>(0.040) | -0.122***<br>(0.041) | -0.140**<br>(0.055)  |
| Lag. Election Fragmentation* | 0.034<br>(0.127)     | 0.031<br>(0.098)     | 0.041<br>(0.098)     | 0.049<br>(0.098)     |
| Lag. Party Polarization      | 0.002<br>(0.010)     | 0.007<br>(0.007)     | 0.006<br>(0.007)     | 0.006<br>(0.007)     |
| Year                         |                      | -0.051**<br>(0.020)  |                      |                      |
| Cold War                     |                      |                      | -1.462**<br>(0.681)  |                      |
| Decade 1981-1990             |                      |                      |                      | 1.345<br>(1.425)     |
| 1991-2000                    |                      |                      |                      | -0.428<br>(0.808)    |
| 2001-2010                    |                      |                      |                      | -0.727<br>(0.754)    |

|                 |                      |                  |                  |                   |
|-----------------|----------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
|                 | 2011-2020            |                  |                  | -0.879<br>(0.835) |
| Constant        | 13.269***<br>(2.490) | 1.810<br>(2.694) | 2.554<br>(2.608) | 2.814<br>(2.823)  |
| N               | 315                  | 315              | 315              | 315               |
| $R^2$           | 0.278                | 0.120            | 0.121            | 0.129             |
| Country Dummies | No                   | No               | No               | No                |
| Year Dummies    | Yes                  | No               | No               | No                |

Robust standard errors are in parentheses.

Lag. Election Fragmentation\* is calculated according to Golosov (2010).

Base level of Decade variable is 1970-1980

\*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Another control variable of the empirical analyses of the factors affecting the liberal parties' relative emphasis on human rights and freedom is *Being in Government*. The literature mentions that economic conditions can affect the parties in government differently than the parties in opposition (Berry and Howell 2007; Lewis-Beck 1988; Powell and Whitten 1993). According to one view, they may adopt insurgent campaigns to distract the attention of voters from worsening economic conditions (Vavreck 2009). In contrary to this, economic voting literature implies that worsening economic conditions threaten the positions of parties in government and, therefore, they may pay more attention to economic issues to prevent losing their seats. Nevertheless, none of the models in Table 3.5 generates statistically significant result for the effect of holding a governmental position between elections on liberal parties' relative emphasis on human rights and freedom and the coefficients both of the interaction term and the *being in government* variable are statistically insignificant. Besides, the coefficients of unemployment rate are not statistically significant in two of the models in Table 3.5. However, the interpretation of the models requires average marginal effect analysis since they include interaction variables.

Figure 3.2 shows that the average marginal effect of unemployment rate alters in the models in Table 3.5. The average marginal effect of unemployment rate in conditional on being in government is statistically significant according to only Model 1 in Table 3.5 and it is higher for the liberal parties holding a seat in government between elections. The average marginal effect of unemployment rate is not statistically significant in the other models regardless of whether or not a liberal party holds a governmental position between elections. Figure 3.3 displays the average marginal effect of being in government in conditional on unemployment rate according to the

models in Table 3.5. The average marginal effect of being in government is statistically significant and increasing with higher levels of unemployment rate according to Model 1 in Figure 3.3. On the other hand, its effect is statistically significant at between 5% and 11% unemployment rate in Model 2 and at 9% unemployment rate in Model 3 (Figure 3.3). That is, the models in Figure 3.3 indicate changing findings for the impact of being in government on the liberal parties' relative emphasis on human rights and freedom as being in government appears to have statistically significant impact in these models in conditional on varying levels of unemployment rate.

Table 3.5 Additional Models Including *Being in Government* as a control variable

|                                                | Model1               | Model2             | Model3             |
|------------------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Inflation Rate                                 | -0.004<br>(0.048)    | 0.085<br>(0.073)   | 0.045<br>(0.082)   |
| GDP Growth Rate                                | -0.236***<br>(0.088) | -0.020<br>(0.107)  | -0.038<br>(0.106)  |
| Unemployment Rate                              | -0.124***<br>(0.042) | -0.255<br>(0.165)  | -0.114<br>(0.115)  |
| Lag. Being in Government $\times$ Unemployment | -0.248<br>(0.187)    | 0.035<br>(0.135)   | -0.007<br>(0.145)  |
| Lag. Being in Government                       | 1.515<br>(1.793)     | -1.293<br>(1.261)  | -0.748<br>(1.364)  |
| Lag. Election Fragmentation*                   | 0.034<br>(0.146)     | 0.175<br>(0.128)   | 0.222<br>(0.143)   |
| Lag. Party Polarization                        | 0.012<br>(0.008)     | -0.009<br>(0.016)  | -0.003<br>(0.014)  |
| Decade 1981-1990                               |                      | 2.832<br>(1.832)   |                    |
| 1991-2000                                      |                      | -0.042<br>(0.974)  |                    |
| 2001-2010                                      |                      | 0.474<br>(0.954)   |                    |
| 2011-2020                                      |                      | 1.165<br>(1.102)   |                    |
| Year                                           |                      |                    | -0.020<br>(0.039)  |
| Constant                                       | 4.863***<br>(1.081)  | 6.293**<br>(2.491) | 5.837**<br>(2.519) |
| N                                              | 205                  | 205                | 205                |
| $R^2$                                          | 0.122                | 0.313              | 0.272              |
| Country Dummies                                | No                   | Yes                | Yes                |
| Year Dummies                                   | No                   | No                 | No                 |

Robust standard errors are in parentheses.

Lag. Election Fragmentation\* is calculated according to Golosov (2010).

\*  $p < 0.1$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

Figure 3.2 Avg. Marginal Effect of Unemployment Rate on Human Rights and Freedom Relative Emphasis of Liberal Parties in Conditional on Being in Government Between Elections

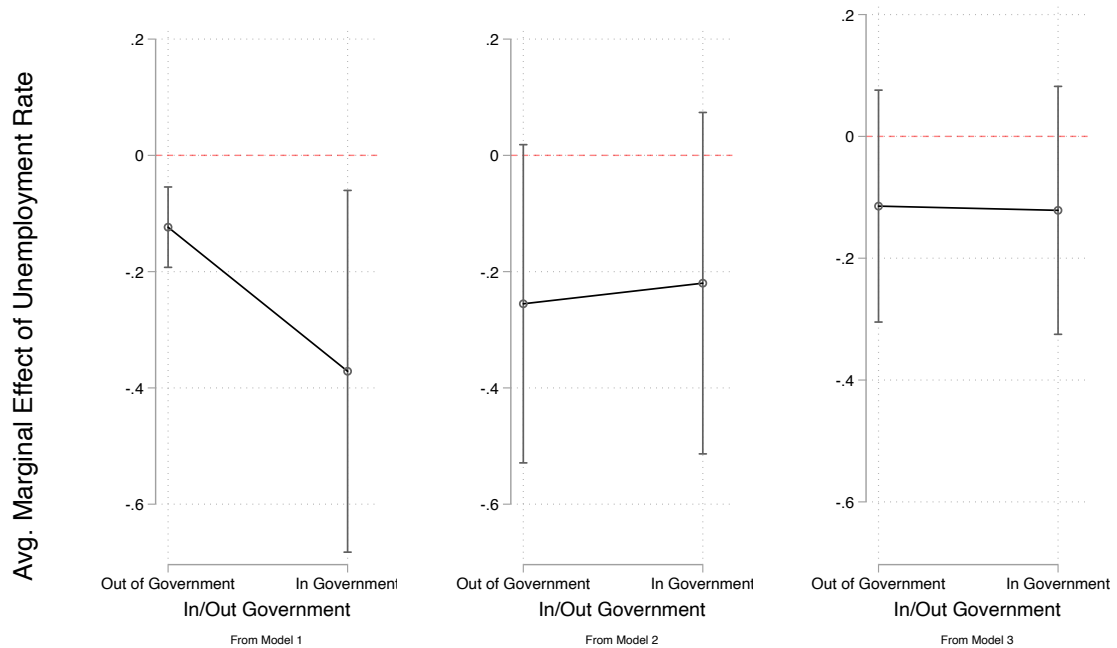
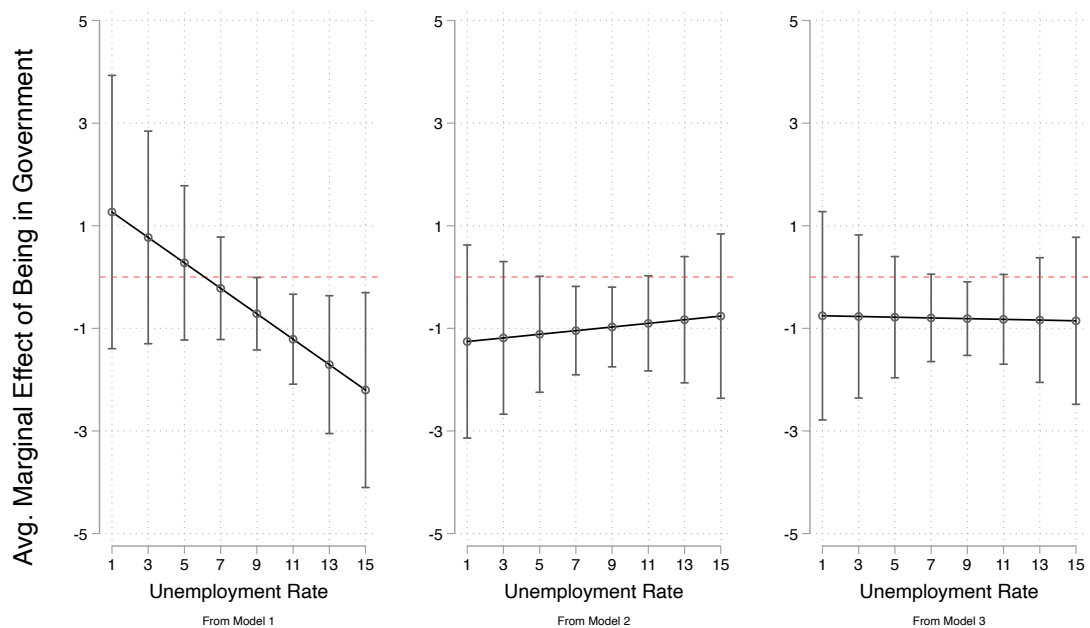


Figure 3.3 Avg. Marginal Effect of Being in Government Between Elections on Human Rights and Freedom Relative Emphasis of Liberal Parties in Conditional on Unemployment Rate



### 3.5 Conclusion

This chapter examined the factors affecting the liberal parties' relative emphasis on human rights and freedom. When we conceptualize issue ownership based on the association dimension as described in the literature review section on issue ownership theory, liberal parties can be regarded as "owners" of human rights and freedom issue. Issue ownership theory expects a stability in party programs where political parties selectively and frequently emphasize the issues on which they have an advantage. In contrary to this, the literature on policy shifts of political parties displays that political parties adjust their ideological position and the salience of issues in their campaigns according to the dynamics of electoral competition. Although issue ownership theory expects a stability in political parties' election programs, the empirical findings of this chapter show that economic conditions can cause a decline in the salience of human rights and freedom in the election programs of liberal parties.

This chapter focuses on the effects of economic conditions on the salience human rights and freedom issue in the election campaigns of liberal parties. One of the reasons for this is that the economy is one of the most important issues shaping election outcomes as the economic voting literature and Budge and Fairlie (1983) illustrate. Moreover, the salience of economy rises with worsening economic conditions (Singer 2011). Thus, political parties should respond to changing economic conditions to be successful in their election goals. Another reason for concentrating on the impact of economic conditions on the salience of human rights and freedom issue in liberal parties' election programs is linked with Inglehart and Welzel (2005). Although they emphasize the long term characteristics of value change, Inglehart and Welzel (2005) acknowledge that the postmaterialist value change in socioeconomically developed countries is reversible with economic collapse meaning that worsening economic conditions may cause a decrease in the salience of human rights and freedom issue in liberal party manifestos, which would be a symptom of deterioration of postmaterialist values.

This chapter reveals statistically significant support for the negative effect of unemployment rate on the human rights and freedom relative emphasis of liberal parties in almost all model specifications. That is, liberal parties decrease their relative emphasis on human rights and freedom as unemployment rate increases. The question of which issues come to focus once the emphasis leaves human right and freedom issue emerges here, since CMP dataset (2019) measures the salience of issues in election manifestos as a ratio to all meaningful sentences. Another finding of this

chapter, which supports hypothesis 2, is that liberal parties' relative emphasis on incentives+ and economic goals issues are increasing with unemployment rate. That is, as economic conditions worsen, liberal parties give more place to economy related issues in their election agendas in comparison to human rights and freedom issue.

A question may remain about the implications of the main hypotheses ( $H_1$  and  $H_2$ ) for the arguments of Tavits (2007). Tavits (2007) categorizes the issues in elections into two including principled issues and pragmatic issues. Tavits (2007) rightly argues that political parties can more hardly moderate principled issues which they are associated with rather than pragmatic issues. On the other hand, Tavits (2007) highlights that even if political parties are associated with principled issues, they may moderate their policies on these issues without facing a punishment depending on the priorities of their constituencies. Reducing the relative salience of human rights and freedom issue in election campaigns may be harmful for liberal parties as human rights and freedom is a principled issue. However, the cost-benefit calculations for decreasing salience of this issue is dependent on the characteristics of their electorate which are not under an examination in this thesis. As another interpretation of the findings of the empirical analysis in this chapter, the decrease in the liberal parties' relative emphasis on human rights and freedom may reflect the responsiveness of liberal parties to the needs of electorate, which is one of the primary functions of political parties (Powell 2000). That is, liberal parties may face a dilemma between showing responsiveness to the needs of electorate which would cause a punishment for their changing priorities in conditional on the characteristics of their electorate and maintaining the consistency in their policy priorities which may result with losing the trust of electorate.

The empirical analysis part of this chapter includes election level control variables and models to test the postmaterialism hypothesis of Inglehart and Welzel (2005) and the impact of holding a governmental position between elections while following the economic voting literature (Berry and Howell 2007; Lewis-Beck and Paldam 2000; Powell and Whitten 1993; Van der Brug, Van der Eijik, and Franklin 2007). The results of the models analyzing the relationship between socioeconomic development and liberal parties' relative emphasis on human rights and freedom are given in Table 3.3. The models in Table 3.3 measure socioeconomic development with the logarithmic function of GDP per capita since postmaterialism hypothesis assumes a non-linear relationship between socioeconomic development and the rise of prominence of postmaterialist values. Only one of the three models in Table 3.3 generates empirical support for this relationship. On the other hand, the models measuring socioeconomic development without taking logarithmic function of GDP per capita produce empirical support for postmaterialism hypothesis (Table A.6). Considering

the value range of GDP per capita, this may display the long-term characteristic of the value change in political and social life as Inglehart and Welzel (2005) point out. Lastly, there is a weak empirical support for the conditioning effect of having a governmental position between elections on the effect of unemployment rate (Table 3.5).



#### 4. CONCLUSION

Despite their central role in establishing democratic governments in Europe, the literature on political parties neglects liberal parties with only a limited number of studies analyzing the characteristics of the latter. Moreover, most of them are country-level analyses of liberal parties or compared liberal parties within the liberal party family. It is essential to examine their difference within the liberal party family in order to identify the common characteristics of liberal parties, however, to grasp their role in politics, it is necessary to conduct an analysis of their particular policies that differentiate them from the other party families .

Liberal parties are argued to be one of the most heterogeneous political party families (Ennser 2012; Freire and Tsatsanis 2015; Humphreys and Steed 1988). In fact, scholars go as far as to question if they have a coherent ideology to constitute a separate party family per se (De Winter 2000; Freire and Tsatsanis 2015). In the second chapter, the analyses show that education, governmental and administrative efficiency, and human rights and freedom are the issues distinctively emphasized by liberal parties. Their emphasis on these issues separates them even from Christian democrats which are their closest opponents. The findings show that an increase in the focus on education raises the probability of observing a liberal party in the five comparisons made between the liberal party family and each other party family. They also indicate that human rights and freedom, and governmental and administrative efficiency issues distinguish liberal parties from all other party families. This thesis leaves the investigation of the causes behind their distinctive emphasis on governmental and administrative efficiency and the factors affecting their emphasis of this issue to future studies.

Nevertheless, liberal parties' human rights and freedom emphasis varies within different countries and years. This variation leads us to the second question of this thesis: Which factors affect liberal parties' relative emphasis on human rights and freedom? The answer to this question is dependent on two primary kinds of literature that on political parties and the one focusing on human rights and freedom. The issue of human rights and freedom is undoubtedly a principled issue and it is linked to postmaterialist values. Inglehart and Welzel's (2005) postmaterialism the-

ory expects an increase in postmaterialist values at the post-industrial age. Their arguments are not new to political theory, but they were the first ones to support this argument empirically. Marx also believes that wealth would bring progress in the culture of a classless society by increasing the sources of information and leisure time for individuals. Inglehart and Welzel (2005) suggest a non-linear relationship between socioeconomic development and postmaterialist values that come through the industrial stage that was very painful for many individuals. They (2005) expect a value change not only in social life but also in political life. In this vein, first, the socioeconomic development will enhance human development by increasing people's material, cognitive, and social resources and this will change the demands of individuals by increasing self-expression values and secondly, individuals with more self-expression capabilities will force politicians to respond to their demands (Inglehart and Welzel 2005). These developments will result with the replacement of materialist values by postmaterialist values in politics, as illustrated with the emergence of green parties in the 1970s (Inglehart and Welzel 2005).

The postmaterialist theory of Inglehart and Welzel (2005) imply a relationship between the salience of human rights and freedom issue in politics and socioeconomic development of a country. This means that the political actors' emphasis on human rights and freedom rises in tangent with socioeconomic development. Nevertheless, Inglehart and Welzel (2005, 20-46) acknowledge that postmaterialist values is reversible in the case of economic collapse. Even if a country is developed economically and according to the human development index, the economic decline may cause a reverse change in the postmaterialist values of individuals depending on how long the economic decline persists and induces a value change in political life. This may suggest a decrease in the salience of human rights and freedom issue in liberal parties' policy programs under worsening economic conditions.

Liberal parties' relative emphasis on human rights and freedom is also linked to electoral competition conditions that are also affected by the values of individuals. As the economic voting literature displays, the economy is one of the most critical issues for the voters and plays a decisive role in the election outcomes. Besides, the economy is a pragmatic issue according to Tavits' (2007) categorization, and pragmatic issues require good timing in the election campaigns and high responsiveness to changing conditions. Therefore, we can expect high salience of the issues related to economy in the party programs, especially in the case of economic deterioration. In parallel to this expectation, the findings of Singer (2011b) illustrate that the salience of economic issues increases with economic crises. These reasons strengthen the expectation of a decline in liberal parties' relative emphasis on human rights and freedom.

On the other hand, responsiveness to changing social and economic contexts is one of the responsibilities of political parties in representative democracies. All the advanced democracies are representative democracies in Europe, and due to this fact, political parties are the most important institutions which reflect the citizens' preferences into politics. As Powell (2000) emphasizes, the electeds' responsiveness to the electors is a fundamental principle of democracy. Thus, we can say that adjustments in political parties' policies are necessary for a well-functioning democracy. However, we need to note that political parties are representatives of many groups with various interests, and especially in fragmented election systems. Therefore, political parties are not supposed to respond to public preferences but to the individuals represented by these parties.

Policy shifts are also dependent on the characteristics of political parties and party competition in a country. Two important sources for the main argument of this thesis are the literature on issue ownership theory and party policy shifts. Issue ownership theory assumes that political parties selectively emphasize the issues that they "own" and depending on this they implement stable policy programs. However, the literature on policy shifts of political parties reveals that political parties may emphasize the issues they do not "own" to respond to the salient issues of elections and adjust their programs according to the conditions of electoral competition. The literature proposes two opposing arguments regarding the stability of party policy programs. The first group of scholars argues that political parties' policy programs are stable, and incremental and punctuated changes characterize political parties' policies. On the other hand, the second group of scholars argue that policy shifts are frequent and among the requirements of election competition too. The arguments of both groups of scholars are well-established and supported with empirical findings. The overall conclusion of the literature review section of this thesis indicates that political parties do not leapfrog. However, they, as pragmatic actors, make changes in their policies to adjust their programs to changing election conditions.

Literature indicates that electoral defeat, following opponent strategies, public opinion shifts, and global economic conditions may lead to policy shifts in the election programs in conditional on party characteristics. Niche parties and policy seeking parties are perceived as the political parties least likely to make policy shifts since they are reluctant to policy concessions. Tavits' study (2007) brings another explanation for the expected stability in niche parties' and policy seeking parties' policies. These parties are associated with principled issues that require stability to achieve successful outcomes on elections. In contrast, pragmatic issues can bring election victories only through focused observation of the electorate's preferences and good timing in election campaigns. Indeed, political parties whose constituencies value

pragmatic issues more than the principled issues should adjust their policies according to election conditions to avoid an electoral defeat.

This analytic chain reveals convincing reasons to establish a reliable relationship between economic conditions and liberal parties' relative emphasis on human rights and freedom. The hypotheses 1 and 2 in Chapter 3 are grounded on this theoretical framework. Hypothesis 1 suggests that the liberal parties' relative emphasis on human rights and freedom diminishes with adverse economic conditions. The empirical analysis presents substantive and significant empirical support for the negative effect of unemployment rate on the liberal parties' relative emphasis on human rights and freedom. The findings of Chapter 3 also reflect an increase in liberal parties relative emphasis on incentives+ and economic goals with higher values of unemployment rate (hypothesis 2). The results support Singer's (2011b) thesis that economic crises raise the salience of the economy in elections. Singer (2011b) also notes that the politicians' attention to the economy grows in higher unemployment rates since rising unemployment rate is an essential indicator of adverse economic conditions in the elections.

Chapter 3 includes models to test the postmaterialism theory of Inglehart and Welzel (2005). The models estimate some degree of support for the effect of economic development on the liberal parties' human rights and freedom emphasis. However, the findings are not robust to as needed to model specifications. The models in Table A.6 that measure GDP per capita without taking its' logarithmic function produce statistically significant support for the impact of socioeconomic development on liberal parties' relative emphasis on human rights and freedom. Despite the difficulty in interpreting substantivity of these findings, the findings in Table A.6 may point out the long-term characteristic of value change in politics as Inglehart and Welzel (2005) argue about, when we consider the value range of GDP per capita. Election-level variables are added to all models in the empirical analysis of Chapter 3 as control variables. We observe that election polarization increases the salience of incentives+ issue in the liberal party manifestos. The increasing effect of polarization on incentives+ issue can be anticipated since incentives+ is a right-wing issue. The economic voting literature shows that economic conditions affect incumbents and opponents separately, which causes them to adopt different election strategies. The models testing the impact of having a seat in government between elections produces changing results. In Table 3.5, holding a seat in government conditions the effect of unemployment rate only in one of the models. On the other hand, the average marginal effect of having a governmental position between elections is statistically significant only in specific value ranges of unemployment rate.

To summarize, the findings of this thesis, which analyzes 33 European countries through observations from approximately 75 years in the second chapter and approximately 50 years in the third chapter, demonstrate that one of the characteristics distinguishing liberal parties from the other party families is their emphasis on human rights and freedom. This corroborates the association between liberal parties and human rights and freedoms. Nevertheless, their emphasis is decreasing with higher levels of unemployment rate. The results regarding the relationship between liberal parties' relative emphasis on human rights and freedom and unemployment rate bear important implications for the functioning of contemporary democracies and how political parties determine salience of issues in their programs. The first implication for party competition, as Cingranelli and Filippov (2010) observe in their analysis of the relationship between the provision of human rights and freedom and election terms, is that political parties formulate their policies according to the electoral competition terms in order to receive the highest returns for their election goals. In other words, election rules and the context where elections are conducted alter political parties' priorities. Second, even though liberal parties possess issue ownership on human rights and freedom according to the associative dimension of issue ownership, they respond to economic circumstances by relatively decreasing their emphasis on human rights and freedom.

As stated earlier, the responsiveness of political parties to the electorate is one of the main functions of political parties required for the involvement of the choices of citizens into policymaking mechanisms of democracies. Therefore, the change in the salience of human rights and freedom in liberal parties' election programs reflects their responsiveness to voters' needs. To remember, Inglehart and Welzel (2005) have concerns about the probability of a decline in the postmaterialist values of individuals with an economic collapse even in advanced democracies. Thus, the decrease in the liberal parties' relative emphasis on human rights and freedom may purport to a value change in politics. For the sustainability of liberal democracy in the post-modern and globalized world, there is a need for continuous protection and advocacy for liberal democratic values. Therefore, protracted economic crises may cause the degradation of liberal democratic values. Lastly, to note, this thesis does not investigate how the issue positions of liberal parties change with economic conditions. Rather, this thesis analyzes the impact of macroeconomic conditions on the salience of human rights and freedom issue in the election programs of liberal parties. This constitutes a limitation of this thesis in explaining policy changes of liberal parties in contingent on economic conditions. A study regarding how their issue positions change depending on macroeconomic conditions can be made in future.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adams, James. 2001. *Party Competition and Responsible Party Government: A Theory of Spatial Competition Based upon Insights from Behavioral Voting Research*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Adams, James, and Zeynep Somer-Topcu. 2009. "Policy Adjustment by Parties in Response to Rivalry Shifts: Spatial Theory and the Dynamics of Party Competition in Twenty-Five Post-War Democracies." *British Journal of Political Science* 39(4): 825–846.
- Adams, James, Andrea B. Haupt, and Heather Stoll. 2009. "What Moves Parties? The Role of Public Opinion and Global Economic Conditions in Western Europe." *Comparative Political Studies* 42(5): 611–639.
- Adams, James, Michael Clark, Lawrence Ezrow, and Garrett Glasgow. 2004. "Understanding Change and Stability in Party Ideologies: Do Parties Respond to Public Opinion or to Past Election Results?" *British Journal of Political Science* 34(4): 589–610.
- Adams, James, Michael Clark, Lawrence Ezrow, and Garrett Glasgow. 2006. "Are Niche Parties Fundamentally Different from Mainstream Parties? The Causes and the Electoral Consequences of Western European Parties' Policy Shifts, 1976–1998." *American Journal of Political Science* 50(3): 513–529.
- Anderson, Christopher J. 2000. "Economic Voting and Political Context: A Comparative Perspective." *Electoral Studies* 19(2-3): 151–170.
- Berry, Christopher R., and William G. Howell. 2007. "Accountability and Local Elections: Rethinking Retrospective Voting." *The Journal of Politics* 69(3): 844–858.
- Beyme, Von. 1985. *Political Parties in Western Democracies*. New York: St Martin's Press.
- Blanger, Eric. 2003. "Issue Ownership by Canadian Political Parties 1953–2001." *Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue canadienne de science politique* 36(3): 539–558.
- Brasher, Holly. 2009. "The Dynamic Character of Political Party Evaluations." *Party Politics* 15(1): 69–92.
- Budge, Ian. 1994. "A New Spatial Theory of Party Competition: Uncertainty, Ideology and Policy Equilibria Viewed Comparatively and Temporally." *British Journal of Political Science* 24(4): 443–467.
- Budge, Ian. 2015. "Issue Emphases, Saliency Theory and Issue Ownership: A Historical and Conceptual Analysis." *West European Politics* 38(4): 761–777.

- Budge, Ian, and Dennies J. Fairlie. 1983. *Explaining and Predicting Elections: Issue Effects and Party Strategies in Twenty-Three Democracies*. Winchester, MA: Allen and Unwin.
- Budge, Ian, Hans Dieter Klingeman, Andrea Volkens, Judith Bara, and Eric Tanenbaum. 2001. *Mapping Policy Preferences: Estimates for Parties, Electors, and Governments, 1945-1998*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Budge, Ian, Lawrence Ezrow, and Michael D. McDonald. 2010. "Ideology, Party Factionalism and Policy Change: An Integrated Dynamic Theory." *British Journal of Political Science* 40(4): 781–804.
- Camia, Valeria, and Daniele Caramani. 2012. "Family Meetings: Ideological Convergence within Party Families Across Europe, 1945–2009." *Comparative European Politics* 10(1): 48–85.
- Carmines, Edward G., and James A. Stimson. 1980. "The Two Faces of Issue Voting." *The American Political Science Review* 74(1): 78–91.
- Caroline, Close. 2015. "The Liberal Party Family Ideology: Distinct, But Diverse." In *Liberal Parties in Europe*, ed. Emilie Van Haute, and Caroline, 326–348 Close. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Caroline, Close, and Delwit Pascal. 2015. "Liberal Parties and Elections: Electoral Performances." In *Liberal Parties in Europe*, ed. Emilie van Haute, and Close, 281–310 Caroline. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Caroline, Close, and Haute Emilie Van. 2015. "Introduction." In *Liberal Parties in Europe*, ed. Emilie van Haute, and Close Caroline. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Christopher Joseph, Anderson. 1995. *Blaming the government: Citizens and the Economy in Five European Democracies*. Sharpe.
- Cingranelli, David, and Mikhail Filippov. 2010. "Electoral Rules and Incentives to Protect Human Rights." *The Journal of Politics* 72(1): 243–257.
- Clark, Michael. 2009. "Valence and Electoral Outcomes in Western Europe, 1976–1998." *Electoral Studies* 28(1): 111–122.
- Dahlberg, Stefan, and Johan Martinsson. 2015. "Changing Issue Ownership Through Policy Communication." *West European Politics* 38(4): 817–838.
- Dalton, Russell J. 2008. "The Quantity and the Quality of Party Systems: Party System Polarization, Its Measurement, and Its Consequences." *Comparative Political Studies* 41(7): 899.
- Davenport, Christian. 2007. *State Repression and the Domestic Democratic Peace*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Davenport, Christian, and David A. Armstrong. 2004. "Democracy and the Violation of Human Rights: A Statistical Analysis from 1976 to 1996." *American Journal of Political Science* 48(3): 538–554.

- De Winter, L. 2000. *Liberalism and Liberal Parties in the European Union*. Barcelona, Spain: Institut de Ciències Polítiques i Socials.
- Dow, Jay K. 2011. "Party-System Extremism in Majoritarian and Proportional Electoral Systems." *British Journal of Political Science* 41(2): 341–361.
- Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper.
- Duch, Raymond M, and Randolph T Stevenson. 2008. *The Economic Vote: How Political and Economic Institutions Condition Election Results*. Cambridge University Press.
- Enns, Lauren. 2012. "The Homogeneity of West European Party Families: The Radical Right in Comparative Perspective." *Party Politics* 18(2): 151–171.
- Ezrow, Lawrence, Catherine De Vries, Marco Steenbergen, and Erica Edwards. 2011. "Mean Voter Representation and Partisan Constituency Representation: Do Parties Respond to the Mean Voter Position or to Their Supporters?" *Party Politics* 17(3): 275–301.
- Fein, Helen. 1995. "More Murder in the Middle: Life-Integrity Violations and Democracy in the World, 1987." *Human Rights Quarterly* 17(1): 170–191.
- Freire, André, and Emmanouil Tsatsanis. 2015. Party Families, Ideological Distinctiveness and Cohesion: A Strong Test of the Heuristics of the Concept of "Familles Spirituelles". In *ECPR General Conference, Montreal*.
- Golosov, Grigori V. 2010. "The Effective Number of Parties: A New Approach." *Party Politics* 16(2): 171–192.
- Green, Jane. 2007. "When Voters and Parties Agree: Valence Issues and Party Competition." *Political Studies* 55(3): 629–655.
- Green, Jane, and Sara B Hobolt. 2008. "Owning the Issue Agenda: Party Strategies and Vote Choices in British Elections." *Electoral Studies* 27(3): 460–476.
- Hearl, Derek. 1988. "Ambivalence Revisited: An Analysis of Liberal Party Manifestos Since 1945." In *Liberal Parties in Western Europe*, ed. Emilie Joseph Kirchner, 356–376. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hobolt, Sara B., and Catherine E. de Vries. 2015. "Issue Entrepreneurship and Multiparty Competition." 48(9): 1159–1185.
- Holman, David. 2004. "He's Stealing My Issues! Clinton's Crime Rhetoric and the Dynamics of Issue Ownership." *Political Behavior* 26(2): 95–124.
- Humphreys, Peter, and Michael Steed. 1988. "Identifying Liberal Parties." In *Liberal Parties in Western Europe*, ed. Emilie Joseph Kirchner, 396–436. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Inglehart, Ronald. 1977. *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles Among Western Publics*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

- Inglehart, Ronald, and Christian Welzel. 2005. *Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence*. New York NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Johan, Helstrom, and Walthier Daniel. 2015. "Governmental Participation and Alliances of Liberal Parties in Europe." In *Liberal Parties in Europe*, ed. Emilie van Haute, and Close Caroline, 310-326. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Johnson, Paul E., and Frank Baumgartner. 2006. "The Politics of Attention: How Government Prioritizes Problems." *Perspectives on Politics* 4(3): 598-599.
- Johnston, Ron, Rebecca Sarker, Kelvyn Jones, Anne Bolster, Carol Propper, and Simon Burgess. 2005. "Egocentric Economic Voting and Changes in Party Choice: Great Britain 1992-2001." *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion & Parties* 15(1): 129-144.
- Kirchheimer, Otto. 1966. "The Transformations of West European Party Systems." In *Political Parties and Political Development*, ed. J. LaPalombara, and M., 177-200 Weiner. Princeton, NJ: Cambridge University Press.
- Kirchner, Emilie Joseph. 1988a. "Western European Liberal Parties: Developments Since 1945 and Prospects for the Future." In *Liberal Parties in Western Europe*, ed. Emilie Joseph Kirchner, 470-497. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kirchner, Emilie Joseph. 1988b. "Western European Liberal Parties: Developments Since 1945 and Prospects for the Future." In *Liberal Parties in Western Europe*, ed. Emilie Joseph Kirchner, 1-16. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kitschelt, H. 1999. *The Transformation of European Social Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kramer, Gerald H. 1983. "The Ecological Fallacy Revisited: Aggregate- versus Individual-level Findings on Economics and Elections, and Sociotropic Voting." *The American Political Science Review* 77(1): 92-111.
- Laakso, M, and R Taagepera. 1979. "Effective Number Of Parties - Measure With Application To West Europe." *Comparative Political Studies* (12-1): 3-27.
- Lacewell, Onawa Promise. 2017. "Beyond Policy Positions: How Party Type Conditions Programmatic Responses to Globalization Pressures." *Party Politics* 23(4): 448-460.
- Lewis-Beck, Michael. 1988. "Economics and the American voter: Past, Present, Future." *Political Behavior* 10(1): 5-21.
- Lewis-Beck, Michael S., and Martin Paldam. 2000. "Economic Voting: An Introduction." *Electoral Studies* 19(2): 113-121.
- Lewis-Beck, Michael S., and Mary Stegmaier. 2013. "The VP-Function Revisited: A Survey of the Literature on Vote and Popularity Functions After over 40 Years." *Public Choice* 157(3-4): 367.

- Linhart, Eric, and Johannes Raabe. 2018. "Measuring Party System Concentration Including the Cabinet Level." *Historical Social Research/Historische Sozialforschung* 43(2 (164): 253–276.
- Lipset, Seymour Martin, and Stein Rokkan. 1967. "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments: An Introduction." In *Party Systems and Voter Alignment*, ed. Seymour Martin Lipset, and Stein Rokkan, 1-64. New York: Free Press.
- Lockerbie, Brad. 2006. "Economies and Politics: Egocentric or Sociotropic?" *American Review of Politics* 27: 191–208.
- Mair, Peter, and Cas Mudde. 1998. "The Party Family and Its Study." *Annual Review of Political Science* 1(1): 211–229.
- Marks, Gary, Carole J Wilson, and Leonard Ray. 2002. "National Political Parties and European Integration." *American Journal of Political Science* pp. 585–594.
- Marshall, Monty G., and Ted Robert Gurr. 2020. "Polity 5: Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800-2018."
- Meguid, Bonnie M. 2005. "Competition Between Unequals: The Role of Mainstream Party Strategy in Niche Party Success." *American Political Science Review* 99(3): 347–359.
- Mesquita, de Bueno Bruce. 2005. "Thinking Inside the Box: A Closer Look at Democracy and Human Rights." *International Studies Quarterly* 49(3): 439–458.
- Meyer, Thomas M, and Markus Wagner. 2013. "Mainstream or Niche? Vote-Seeking Incentives and the Programmatic Strategies of Political Parties." *Comparative Political Studies* 46(10): 1246–1272.
- Mitchell, Neil J., and James M. McCormick. 1988. "Economic and Political Explanations of Human Rights Violations." *World Politics* 40(4): 476.
- Muller, Wolfgang, and Kaare Strom. 1999. *Policy, Office, or Votes?: How Political Parties in Western Europe Make Hard Decisions*. Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Petrocik, John R. 1996. "Issue Ownership in Presidential Elections, with a 1980 Case Study." *American Journal of Political Science* 40(3): 825–850.
- Petrocik, John R., William L. Benoit, and Glenn J. Hansen. 2003. "Issue Ownership and Presidential Campaigning, 1952 - 2000." *Political Science Quarterly* 118(4): 599–626.
- Poe, Steven C., and C. Neal Tate. 1994. "Repression of Human Rights to Personal Integrity in the 1980s: A Global Analysis." *The American Political Science Review* 88(4): 853–872.
- Powell, Bingham G., and Guy D. Whitten. 1993. "A Cross-National Analysis of Economic Voting: Taking Account of the Political Context." *American Journal of Political Science* 37(2): 391–414.

- Powell, G.Bingham. 2000. *Elections as Instruments of Democracy: Majoritarian and Proportional Visions*. Yale University Press.
- Regan, Patrick M, and Errol A Henderson. 2002. "Democracy, Threats and Political Repression in Developing Countries: Are Democracies Internally Less Violent?" *Third World Quarterly* 23(1): 119–136.
- Richards, David L., and Ronald D. Gelleny. 2007. "Good Things to Those Who Wait? National Elections and Government Respect for Human Rights.(Special Issue on Protecting Human Rights)." *Journal of Peace Research* 44(4): 505.
- Richards, David L., Ronald D. Gelleny, and David H. Sacko. 2001. "Money with a Mean Streak? Foreign Economic Penetration and Government Respect for Human Rights in Developing Countries." *International Studies Quarterly* 45(2): 219–239.
- Rudd, Christopher. 1988. "The Belgian Liberal Parties: Economic Radicals and Social Conservatives." In *Liberal Parties in Western Europe*, ed. Emilie Joseph Kirchner, 178–213. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sartori, Giovanni. 2005. *Parties and Party Systems. A Framework for Analysis*. ECPR Classics Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schumacher, Gijs, Catherine De Vries, and Barbara Vis. 2013. "Why Do Parties Change Position? Party Organization and Environmental Incentives." *The Journal of Politics* 25(2): 443–467.
- Sigelman, Lee, and Emmett H. Buell Jr. 2004. "Avoidance or Engagement? Issue Convergence in US Presidential Campaigns, 1960–2000." *American Journal of Political Science* 48(4): 650–661.
- Singer, Matthew. 2011a. "When Do Voters Actually Think It's the Economy Evidence from 2008 Presidential Campaign." *Electoral Studies* 30(2): 621–632.
- Singer, Matthew M. 2011b. "Who Says "It's the Economy"? Cross-National and Cross-Individual Variation in the Salience of Economic Performance." *Comparative Political Studies* 44(3): 284–312.
- Smith, Gordon. 1988. "Between Left and Right: The Ambivalence of European Liberalism." In *Liberal Parties in Western Europe*, ed. Emilie Joseph Kirchner, 16–29. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Somer-Topcu, Zeynep. 2009. "Timely Decisions: The Effects of Past National Elections on Party Policy Change." *The Journal of Politics* 71(1): 238–248.
- Spoon, Jaenet, Sara B. Hobolt, and Catherine E. Vries. 2014. "Going Green: Explaining Issue Competition on the Environment." 53(2): 363–380.
- Strom, Kaare. 1990. "A Behavioral Theory of Competitive Political Parties." *American Journal of Political Science* 34(2): 565–598.
- Tavits, Margit. 2007. "Principle vs. Pragmatism: Policy Shifts and Political Competition." *American Journal of Political Science* 51(1): 151–165.

- Van Der Brug, Wouter. 2017. "Issue Ownership: An Ambiguous Concept." In *The SAGE Handbook of Electoral Behaviour*, ed. Kai Arzheimer, 521-538. New York: Sage.
- Van der Brug, Wouter, Cees Van der Eijk, and Mark Franklin. 2007. *The Economy and the Vote: Economic Conditions and Elections in Fifteen Countries*. Cambridge University Press.
- Vavreck, Lynn. 2009. *The Message Matters: The Economy and Presidential Campaigns*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Voerman, Gerrit. 2015. "Liberalism in the Netherlands: The VVD and D66." In *Liberal Parties in Europe*, ed. Emilie van Haute, and Close, 326-348 Caroline. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Volgens, Andrea, Pola Lehmann, Theres Matthieb, Nicolas Merz, Sven Regel, and Bernhard Webels. 2017. "The Manifesto Project Dataset - Codebook."
- Volgens, Andrea, Pola Lehmann, Theres Matthieb, Nicolas Merz, Sven Regel, and Bernhard Werels. 2019. "The Manifesto Data Collection. Manifesto Project (MRG/CMP/MARPOR). Version 2019b."
- Wagner, Markus. 2012. "When Do Parties Emphasise Extreme Positions? How Strategic Incentives for Policy Differentiation Influence Issue Importance." *European Journal of Political Research* 51(1): 64-88.
- Walgrave, Stefaan, and Michiel Nuytemans. 2009. "Friction and Party Manifesto Change in 25 Countries, 1945-98." *American Journal of Political Science* 53(1): 190-206.
- Walgrave, Stefaan, Jonas Lefevere, and Anke Tresch. 2012. "The Associative Dimension of Issue Ownership." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 76(4): 771.
- Williams, Laron, and Katsunori Seki. 2016. "Seki-Williams Government and Ministers Data."
- Wlezien, Christopher. 2005. "On the Salience of Political Issues: The Problem with 'Most Important Problem'" *Electoral Studies* 24(4): 555-579.

## APPENDIX A

### **Countries in the Empirical Analysis of the Second and Third Chapters**

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom. The effective samples do not involve observations from Bosnia and Herzegovina since it is not categorized as a democracy by Polity 5 and V-dem datasets in the time period covered by the empirical analyses of this thesis.

### **Parties in the Empirical Analysis of the Second Chapter (115 Different Liberal Party)**

ANO 2011; Alliance of Alenka Bratusek; Alliance of Free Democrats; Alliance of Liberals and Democrats; Alliance of the New Citizen; Bright Future; Brussels Liberal Party; Centre Movement of Lithuania; Choice For a Better Life - Boris Tadić; Citizens; Civic Choice; Civic Democratic Alliance; Civic Platform; Coalition Labour Party and Youth; Croatian People's Party; Croatian People's Party - Liberal Democrats; Daisy - Democracy is Freedom; Danish Social-Liberal Party; Democratic Alternative; Democratic Centre; Democratic Centre Party; Democratic Group; Democratic Montenegro; Democratic Party (Cyprus); Democratic Party (Luxembourg); Democratic Party 'Saimnieks' (Latvia); Democratic Union of Slovakia; Democrats for a Strong Bulgaria; Democrats 66; Development/For!; Electoral Union- 'Popular Front'; Estonian Center Party; Estonian Reform Party; European Party; FDP-The Liberals; Finnish People's Party; Flemish Liberals and Democrats; For Real; For a European Serbia Alliance; For a Good Latvia; Free Democratic Party; Free Democrats Movement; Freedom Party; Freedom Union; Freedom and Solidarity; G17+; Gregor Virant's Civic List; Independent List of Ivan Grubišić; Independents' Party; Italian Liberal Party; Italian Republican Party; Justice and Truth Alliance; Labour Party; Latvian Way Union; Liberal Alliance; Liberal Centre; Liberal Democracy of Slovenia; Liberal Democratic Party; Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova; Liberal Democratic and Pluralist Party; Liberal Democrats; Liberal Forum; Liberal Movement; Liberal Party; Liberal Party of Macedonia; Liberal Party of Montenegro; Liberal People's Party; Liberal

Reformation Party; Liberal and Centre Union; Liberal-Democratic Congress; Liberals; List Dedecker; List Di Pietro - Italy of Values; Lithuanian Centre Union; Lithuanian Liberal Union; Livable Netherlands; More Europe; Movement for the Reconstruction of Poland; National Liberal Party; National Movement Simeon the Second; National Progressive Party; New Alliance; New Party; New People's Party; New Union (Social Liberals); Now It's Enough -Sasa Radulovic; Open Flemish Liberals and Democrats; Palikot's Movement; Party of Civic Understanding; Party of Democratic Forces; Party of Liberty and Progress; Party of Miro Cerar; Party of Walloon Reform and Liberty; Patriotic and Democratic Group; People's Party - Reformists; People's Party for Freedom and Democracy; Polish Beer-Lovers' Party; Popular Democratic Party; Progressive Democrats; Radical Democratic Party; Radical Party; Reform Movement; Reform Party; Republic Onwards!; Save Romania Union; The New Austria; The New Austria and Liberal Forum; Union of Centrists; Union of Democratic Forces; Union of Democrats and Independents; Union of the Democratic Centre/Centrist Bloc; Progress and Democracy; United Democratic Forces; United Regions of Serbia - Mladan Dinkic; Young Finnish Party.

### **Parties in the Empirical Analysis of the Third Chapter (102 Different Liberal Party)**

ANO 2011; Alliance of Alenka Bratusek; Alliance of Free Democrats; Alliance of Liberals and Democrats; Alliance of the New Citizen; Bright Future; Brussels Liberal Party; Choice For a Better Life - Boris Tadić; Citizens; Civic Choice; Civic Democratic Alliance; Civic Platform; Coalition of Rolandas Paksas 'For Order and Justice; Coalition Labour Party and Youth; Croatian People's Party; Croatian People's Party - Liberal Democrats; Daisy - Democracy is Freedom; Danish Social-Liberal Party; Democratic Alternative; Democratic Centre; Democratic Montenegro; Democratic Party; Democratic Union of Slovakia; Democrats for a Strong Bulgaria; Democrats 66; Development/For!; Estonian Center Party; Estonian Reform Party; European Party; FDP-The Liberals; Flemish Liberals and Democrats; For Real; For a European Serbia Alliance; For a Good Latvia; Free Democratic Party; Free Democrats Movement; Freedom Union; Freedom and Solidarity; G17plus; Gregor Virant's Civic List; Independent List of Ivan Grubišić; Italian Liberal Party; Italian Republican Party; Justice and Truth Alliance; Labour Party; Latvian Way Union; Liberal Alliance; Liberal Democracy of Slovenia; Liberal Democratic Party; Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova; Liberal Democratic and Pluralist Party; Liberal Democrats; Liberal Forum; Liberal Movement; Liberal Party; Liberal Party of Macedonia; Liberal People's Party;

Liberal Reformation Party; Liberal and Centre Union; Liberals; List Dedecker; List Di Pietro - Italy of Values; Lithuanian Centre Union; Lithuanian Liberal Union; Livable Netherlands; More Europe; Movement for the Reconstruction of Poland; National Liberal Party; National Movement Simeon the Second; New Alliance; New Party; New People's Party; New Union (Social Liberals); Now it's enough -Sasa Radulovic; Open Flemish Liberals and Democrats; Palikot's Movement; Party of Civic Understanding; Party of Liberty and Progress; Party of Miro Cerar; Party of Walloon Reform and Liberty; People's Party - Reformists; People's Party for Freedom and Democracy; Popular Democratic Party; Progressive Democrats; Radical Democratic Party; Radical Party; Reform Movement; Reform Party; Republic Onwards!; Save Romania Union; The New Austria; The New Austria and Liberal Forum; Turnover - Čedomir Jovanović; Union of Centrists; Union of Democratic Forces; Union of Democrats and Independents; Union of the Democratic Centre/Centrist Bloc; Union; Progress and Democracy; United Democratic Forces; United Regions of Serbia - Mladan Dinkic; Young Finnish Party.

## Descriptive Statistics for Models

Table A.1 illustrates the distribution of variables in the effective samples of Table 3.1, Table 3.2, Table 3.3, and Table 3.4. Table A.2 illustrates the distribution of variables in the effective sample of Table 3.5.

Table A.1 Descriptive Statistics for the Table 3.1, Table 3.2, Table 3.3, and Table 3.4

|                                       | Mean  | Std.Dev. | Min.   | Max.   | N   |
|---------------------------------------|-------|----------|--------|--------|-----|
| HR and Freedom Emphasis of Liberal P. | 3.39  | 4.15     | 0.00   | 42.79  | 315 |
| Incentives Emphasis of Liberal P.     | 3.62  | 4.20     | 0.00   | 50.00  | 315 |
| Economic Goals Emphasis of Liberal P. | 2.71  | 3.52     | 0.00   | 27.44  | 315 |
| Inflation                             | 8.76  | 53.10    | -5.21  | 914.13 | 315 |
| GDP Growth                            | 2.79  | 3.02     | -14.19 | 11.89  | 315 |
| Unemployment                          | 8.79  | 5.95     | 0.30   | 36.03  | 315 |
| Lag. Election Fragmentation*          | 3.92  | 1.62     | 1.34   | 11.80  | 315 |
| Lag. Party Polarization               | 37.45 | 34.15    | 1.45   | 200.63 | 315 |
| Log. GDP Per Capita                   | 9.57  | 0.98     | 7.05   | 11.64  | 315 |
| Trade                                 | 95.12 | 40.68    | 27.84  | 349.24 | 315 |

Lag. Election Fragmentation\* is calculated according to Golosov (2010)

Table A.2 Descriptive Statistics for Table 3.5

|                                       | Mean  | Std.Dev. | Min.  | Max.   | N   |
|---------------------------------------|-------|----------|-------|--------|-----|
| HR and Freedom Emphasis of Liberal P. | 3.78  | 4.30     | 0.00  | 42.79  | 205 |
| Inflation                             | 4.86  | 5.07     | -5.21 | 43.18  | 205 |
| GDP Growth                            | 2.87  | 2.72     | -7.28 | 10.90  | 205 |
| Unemployment                          | 7.29  | 4.89     | 0.30  | 36.03  | 205 |
| Lag. Being in Government              | 0.47  | 0.50     | 0.00  | 1.00   | 205 |
| Lag. Election Fragmentation*          | 3.92  | 1.57     | 1.34  | 11.80  | 205 |
| Lag. Party Polarization               | 40.52 | 36.77    | 1.45  | 200.63 | 205 |

Lag. Election Fragmentation\* is calculated according to Golosov (2010).

### Main Models with Fragmentation Measured According to Laakso and Taagepera (1979)

As we discussed in the Operationalisation section, there are two ways to measure election fragmentation. The models in Table A.3 measures election fragmentation according to Laakso and Taagepera(1979)'s formula. The models below produces very similar results.

Table A.3 Additional Models with Fragmentation Calculated According to Laakso and Taagepera (1979)

|                         | Model1               | Model2               |
|-------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Inflation               | -0.005<br>(0.003)    | -0.005<br>(0.003)    |
| GDP Growth              | -0.090<br>(0.111)    | -0.086<br>(0.105)    |
| Unemployment            | -0.260***<br>(0.088) | -0.267***<br>(0.083) |
| Lag. Fragmentation**    |                      | 0.299*<br>(0.167)    |
| Lag. Party Polarization |                      | -0.008<br>(0.013)    |
| Constant                | 21.193***<br>(2.343) | 20.041***<br>(2.596) |
| N                       | 315                  | 315                  |
| R <sup>2</sup>          | 0.432                | 0.441                |
| Country Dummies         | Yes                  | Yes                  |
| Year Dummies            | Yes                  | Yes                  |

Robust standard errors are in parentheses.

Lag. Election Fragmentation\*\* is calculated according to Laakso Taagepera (2010).

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

## Models with Alternative Categorizations of Liberal Parties

Some scholars have doubts about whether CMP's categorization criteria for liberal parties is too nonrestrictive. Only reference in literature about CMP's categorization approach of political parties is made by Lacewell (2017, 454). Lacewell (2017, 454) argues that CMP categorizes political parties according to international party family membership. However, there are parties that are not member of either Liberal International or ALDE in the liberal parties list of CMP dataset (2019). For example, Liberal Democratic and Pluralist Party in Belgium or Young Finnish Party in Finland are not members of any liberal party international organization although they are identified as liberal parties by CMP.

Since CMP's identification approach can cause biased results, how CMP categorize liberal parties is important for the robustness of the results. Every liberal party in the CMP dataset (2019) is evaluated for its affiliation to Liberal International or ALDE and whether it is among the liberal parties listed in *Liberal Parties in Europe* (Close and Haute 2015). *Liberal Parties in Europe* (Close and Haute 2015) includes analysis for liberal parties in 29 European countries. Therefore, it provides a useful list for liberal parties. The evaluation of the liberal parties in CMP dataset (2019) reveals that 29 of 102 liberal parties in the effective sample of the models in Table 3.1, Table 3.2, Table 3.3, and Table 3.4 are not either member of international liberal party organizations or mentioned as a liberal party in *Liberal Parties in Europe* (Close and Haute 2015). The list of these parties are given below:

Liberal Democratic and Pluralist Party; Civic Democratic Alliance; Young Finnish Party; Radical Party; Union of Centrists; Democratic Centre (Italy); Coalition of Rolandas Paksas 'For Order and Justice'; Livable Netherlands; Movement for the Reconstruction of Poland; Party of Civic Understanding; For Real; Democrats for a Strong Bulgaria; Union of Democratic Forces; United Democratic Forces; Independent List of Ivan Grubišić; People's Party - Reformists; Democratic Party (Cyprus); European Party; Liberal Party (Cyprus); Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova; Democratic Montenegro; Justice and Truth Alliance; Choice For a Better Life - Boris Tadić; Democratic Party (Serbia); Democratic Opposition of Serbia; G17plus; Liberal Democratic Party; Now it's enough - Sasa Radulovic; United Regions of Serbia - Mladan Dinkic.

These parties constitute 55 observations of the effective sample of the models in Table 3.1, Table 3.2, Table 3.3, and Table 3.4 that includes 315 observations from

33 European countries. 48 of these observations are from post-communist European countries. The most of the liberal parties in post-communist countries in CMP dataset (2019) is not member of international liberal party family organizations. For example, none of the 8 liberal parties in Serbia have an affiliation to either Liberal International or ALDE. One of the explanations for this may be that the liberal parties in these countries do not choose to establish ties with the liberal parties in the other countries. Or they may advocate different policies than the parties in ALDE or Liberal International. A future research may investigate why liberal parties in post-communist countries less likely built links with international liberal party organizations than the liberal parties in the other European countries do. Furthermore, *Liberal Parties in Europe* (Close and Haute 2015) does not include any analysis for the liberal parties in Moldova, Serbia, and Macedonia. Therefore, it was not possible to verify the liberal parties in these countries in CMP dataset (2019) by using the liberal party list in Close and Haute (2015).

In the models in Table A.4, the liberal parties in CMP dataset (2019) are excluded if they are not members of either Liberal International or ALDE and not among the liberal parties listed in *Liberal Parties in Europe* (Close and Haute 2015). Three of the models in Table A.4 produces statistically significant results for the impact of unemployment rate on the liberal parties' relative emphasis on human rights and freedom.

Table A.4 Main Models on the Relative Emphasis of Liberal Parties on Human Rights and Freedom with Alternative Categorization of Liberal Parties- I

|                              | Model1             | Model2             | Model3             | Model4               | Model5             |
|------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Inflation                    | 0.019<br>(0.067)   | 0.027<br>(0.072)   | 0.026<br>(0.048)   | -0.088**<br>(0.043)  | -0.008<br>(0.044)  |
| GDP Growth                   | -0.029<br>(0.155)  | -0.021<br>(0.154)  | -0.040<br>(0.094)  | -0.261***<br>(0.082) | -0.067<br>(0.092)  |
| Unemployment                 | -0.225*<br>(0.129) | -0.193*<br>(0.116) | -0.214*<br>(0.116) | -0.153***<br>(0.045) | -0.138*<br>(0.083) |
| Lag. Election Fragmentation* |                    | -0.204<br>(0.270)  | -0.048<br>(0.210)  | -0.041<br>(0.107)    | -0.024<br>(0.198)  |
| Lag. Party Polarization      |                    | -0.009<br>(0.016)  | -0.011<br>(0.012)  | 0.006<br>(0.008)     | -0.009<br>(0.011)  |
| Decade 1981-1990             |                    |                    | 2.288<br>(1.566)   |                      |                    |
| 1991-2000                    |                    |                    | 0.351<br>(0.887)   |                      |                    |
| 2001-2010                    |                    |                    | 0.338              |                      |                    |

|                 |           |           |          |          |          |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|
|                 |           |           |          | (0.901)  |          |
|                 | 2011-2020 |           |          | 0.830    |          |
|                 |           |           |          | (1.342)  |          |
| Year            |           |           |          | -0.046*  |          |
|                 |           |           |          | (0.027)  |          |
| Cold War        |           |           |          |          | -1.003   |
|                 |           |           |          |          | (1.075)  |
| Constant        | 20.533*** | 21.381*** | 7.350*** | 7.324*** | 8.265*** |
|                 | (2.892)   | (3.135)   | (2.005)  | (1.705)  | (2.216)  |
| N               | 263       | 263       | 263      | 263      | 263      |
| R <sup>2</sup>  | 0.417     | 0.421     | 0.265    | 0.116    | 0.249    |
| Country Dummies | Yes       | Yes       | Yes      | No       | Yes      |
| Year Dummies    | Yes       | Yes       | No       | No       | No       |

Robust standard errors are in parentheses.

Lag. Election Fragmentation\* is calculated according to Golosov (2010).

Base level of Decade variable is 1970-1980.

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

Analyses in Table A.5 are made based on another alternative categorization of liberal parties. In addition to the procedure applied in the models in Table A.4, the political parties that have an affiliation to any one of Liberal International and ALDE or are identified within the liberal party family in Close and Haute (2015) but not categorized within the liberal party family in CMP dataset (2019) are added to the liberal parties in Table A.5. From the liberal parties in Close and Haute (2015), these parties are added to the liberal parties in the models in Table A.5: Istrian Democratic Assembly in Croatia, Movement for Rights and Freedoms in Bulgaria, Liberal Party of Moldova, Democratic Liberal Party in Romania. From Liberal International and ALDE member list, these parties are added to the liberal parties in the models in Table A.5: Sweden Centre Party, Centre Party in Finland, and Swedish People's Party in Finland. All of the models in Table A.5 supports the main hypothesis of this thesis.

Table A.5 Main Models on the Relative Emphasis of Liberal Parties on Human Rights and Freedom with Alternative Categorization of Liberal Parties- II

|           | Model1  | Model2  | Model3   | Model4 | Model5   |
|-----------|---------|---------|----------|--------|----------|
| Inflation | 0.030** | 0.030** | 0.038*** | 0.011  | 0.034*** |

|                              |           |           |          |           |          |
|------------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|
|                              | (0.013)   | (0.013)   | (0.008)  | (0.010)   | (0.007)  |
| GDP Growth                   | -0.132    | -0.121    | -0.043   | -0.280*** | -0.074   |
|                              | (0.124)   | (0.126)   | (0.064)  | (0.068)   | (0.065)  |
| Unemployment                 | -0.146*   | -0.146*   | -0.192** | -0.148*** | -0.138** |
|                              | (0.088)   | (0.088)   | (0.081)  | (0.043)   | (0.063)  |
| Lag. Election Fragmentation* |           | -0.092    | 0.016    | -0.085    | 0.039    |
|                              |           | (0.230)   | (0.190)  | (0.096)   | (0.182)  |
| Lag. Party Polarization      |           | -0.008    | -0.011   | 0.001     | -0.010   |
|                              |           | (0.012)   | (0.010)  | (0.007)   | (0.009)  |
| Decade 1981-1990             |           |           | 1.581    |           |          |
|                              |           |           | (1.335)  |           |          |
| 1991-2000                    |           |           | -0.151   |           |          |
|                              |           |           | (0.777)  |           |          |
| 2001-2010                    |           |           | -0.206   |           |          |
|                              |           |           | (0.756)  |           |          |
| 2011-2020                    |           |           | 0.113    |           |          |
|                              |           |           | (1.020)  |           |          |
| Year                         |           |           |          | -0.024    |          |
|                              |           |           |          | (0.021)   |          |
| Cold War                     |           |           |          |           | -1.025   |
|                              |           |           |          |           | (0.861)  |
| Constant                     | 12.669*** | 13.544*** | 6.369*** | 6.390***  | 6.858*** |
|                              | (4.577)   | (4.808)   | (1.565)  | (1.353)   | (1.722)  |
| N                            | 313       | 313       | 313      | 313       | 313      |
| R <sup>2</sup>               | 0.368     | 0.371     | 0.268    | 0.102     | 0.260    |
| Country Dummies              | Yes       | Yes       | Yes      | No        | Yes      |
| Year Dummies                 | Yes       | Yes       | No       | No        | No       |

Robust standard errors are in parentheses.

Lag. Election Fragmentation\* is calculated according to Golosov (2010).

Base level of Decade variable is 1970-1980.

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

### Models Including GDP per Capita(without Logarithmic Function)

The models in the Table A.5 involves GDP per capita without a logarithmic function. When GDP per capita directly added to the model, it does not produce any support for Inglehart and Welzel's theory (2005). On the other hand, three of the models

given in the Appendix generates statistically significant results for unemployment rate's effect on liberal parties' emphasis on human rights and freedom.

Table A.6 Additional Models for Inglehart and Welzel's Theory without Taking Logarithmic Function of GDP Per Capita

|                              | Model1               | Model2               | Model3               | Model4               |
|------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Inflation                    | -0.007**<br>(0.003)  | -0.005**<br>(0.002)  | -0.004**<br>(0.002)  | -0.004**<br>(0.002)  |
| GDP Growth                   | -0.257***<br>(0.097) | -0.215***<br>(0.073) | -0.208***<br>(0.070) | -0.204***<br>(0.066) |
| GDP Per Capita               | 0.000**<br>(0.000)   | 0.000*<br>(0.000)    | 0.000*<br>(0.000)    | 0.000<br>(0.000)     |
| Unemployment                 | -0.087*<br>(0.045)   | -0.100**<br>(0.041)  | -0.112***<br>(0.042) | -0.123**<br>(0.053)  |
| Lag. Election Fragmentation* | 0.012<br>(0.132)     | 0.028<br>(0.098)     | 0.037<br>(0.097)     | 0.040<br>(0.097)     |
| Lag. Party Polarization      | 0.000<br>(0.010)     | 0.007<br>(0.006)     | 0.006<br>(0.007)     | 0.005<br>(0.007)     |
| Year                         |                      | -0.058***<br>(0.018) |                      |                      |
| Cold War                     |                      |                      | -1.673**<br>(0.659)  |                      |
| Decade 1981-1990             |                      |                      |                      | 1.280<br>(1.412)     |
| 1991-2000                    |                      |                      |                      | -0.653<br>(0.845)    |
| 2001-2010                    |                      |                      |                      | -1.067<br>(0.801)    |
| 2011-2020                    |                      |                      |                      | -1.276<br>(0.824)    |
| Constant                     | 17.596***<br>(1.206) | 5.581***<br>(1.189)  | 5.305***<br>(1.171)  | 4.775***<br>(0.922)  |
| N                            | 315                  | 315                  | 315                  | 315                  |
| $R^2$                        | 0.287                | 0.125                | 0.126                | 0.135                |
| Country Dummies              | No                   | No                   | No                   | No                   |
| Year Dummies                 | Yes                  | No                   | No                   | No                   |

Robust standard errors are in parentheses.

Lag. Election Fragmentation\* is calculated according to Golosov (2010).

Base level of Decade variable is 1970-1980.

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

## Models with Additional Election Level Control Variables

Table A.7 Additional Models with Trade (Economic Integration) Variable

|                         | Model1               | Model2               |
|-------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Inflation               | -0.005<br>(0.003)    | -0.005<br>(0.003)    |
| GDP Growth              | -0.090<br>(0.111)    | -0.094<br>(0.111)    |
| Unemployment            | -0.260***<br>(0.088) | -0.247***<br>(0.085) |
| Trade                   | -0.000<br>(0.012)    | 0.001<br>(0.012)     |
| Lag. Fragmentation*     |                      | -0.090<br>(0.224)    |
| Lag. Party Polarization |                      | -0.009<br>(0.014)    |
| Constant                | 21.196***<br>(2.472) | 21.921***<br>(2.758) |
| N                       | 315                  | 315                  |
| R <sup>2</sup>          | 0.432                | 0.435                |
| Country Dummies         | Yes                  | Yes                  |
| Year Dummies            | Yes                  | Yes                  |

Robust standard errors are in parentheses.

Lag. Election Fragmentation\* is calculated according to Golosov (2010).

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

## Models with Additional Election Level Control Variables

In the models in the Table A.4, additional control variables are included. One of the sources of policy shift in literature is election defeat (Budge, Ezrow, and McDonald 2010; Meyer and Wagner 2013; Somer-Topcu 2009). Therefore, unemployment rate may have an impact on human rights and freedom emphasis of liberal parties in conditional on the vote change between two consecutive elections. In addition to this, opponents' policies may affect liberal parties emphasis. Weighted previous election mean emphasis of opponents of liberal parties is also added as a control variable to the models below. As the election variables in the main models are lagged, these variables are lagged. The results of the models in the Table A.4 do not indicate statistically significant coefficients for the impacts of vote change, weighted

previous election mean emphasis of opponents of liberal parties ,and the interaction term on the dependent variable.

Table A.8 Additional Models Including *Being in Government* as a Control Variable without Interaction Term

|                              | Model1               | Model2             | Model3              |
|------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Inflation                    | -0.004<br>(0.047)    | 0.045<br>(0.079)   | 0.085<br>(0.071)    |
| GDP Growth                   | -0.248***<br>(0.094) | -0.038<br>(0.105)  | -0.021<br>(0.106)   |
| Unemployment                 | -0.191***<br>(0.069) | -0.117<br>(0.094)  | -0.240<br>(0.157)   |
| Lag. Being in Government     | -0.274<br>(0.576)    | -0.799<br>(0.485)  | -1.030**<br>(0.499) |
| Lag. Election Fragmentation* | 0.058<br>(0.136)     | 0.222<br>(0.141)   | 0.171<br>(0.129)    |
| Lag. Party Polarization      | 0.013*<br>(0.008)    | -0.003<br>(0.014)  | -0.009<br>(0.016)   |
| Year                         |                      | -0.020<br>(0.038)  |                     |
| Decade 1981-1990             |                      |                    | 2.813<br>(1.835)    |
| 1991-2000                    |                      |                    | -0.052<br>(0.965)   |
| 2001-2010                    |                      |                    | 0.457<br>(0.934)    |
| 2011-2020                    |                      |                    | 1.159<br>(1.096)    |
| Constant                     | 5.285***<br>(1.335)  | 5.847**<br>(2.574) | 6.227**<br>(2.508)  |
| N                            | 205                  | 205                | 205                 |
| $R^2$                        | 0.106                | 0.272              | 0.313               |
| Country Dummies              | No                   | Yes                | Yes                 |
| Year Dummies                 | No                   | No                 | No                  |

Robust standard errors are in parentheses.

Lag. Election Fragmentation\* is calculated according to Golosov (2010).

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

Table A.9 Additional Models on the Relative Emphasis of Liberal Parties on Human Rights and Freedom with Election Level Control Variables

|                                                         | Model1              | Model2              | Model3              | Model4              | Model5              | Model6              |
|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Inflation                                               | -0.004<br>(0.005)   | -0.002<br>(0.005)   | -0.000<br>(0.003)   | -0.003<br>(0.005)   | -0.002<br>(0.005)   | 0.000<br>(0.003)    |
| GDP Growth                                              | 0.092<br>(0.176)    | 0.048<br>(0.174)    | -0.049<br>(0.085)   | 0.067<br>(0.177)    | 0.035<br>(0.174)    | -0.037<br>(0.083)   |
| Unemployment                                            | -0.301**<br>(0.133) | -0.305**<br>(0.128) | -0.357**<br>(0.142) | -0.318**<br>(0.129) | -0.319**<br>(0.125) | -0.357**<br>(0.138) |
| Lag. Election Fragmentation*                            | -0.065<br>(0.363)   | -0.095<br>(0.358)   | 0.036<br>(0.251)    |                     |                     |                     |
| Lag. Party Polarization                                 | -0.016<br>(0.021)   | -0.016<br>(0.020)   | -0.014<br>(0.014)   | -0.012<br>(0.020)   | -0.013<br>(0.020)   | -0.010<br>(0.014)   |
| Lag. Vote Change                                        | -0.155<br>(0.125)   | -0.168<br>(0.126)   | 0.009<br>(0.103)    | -0.121<br>(0.126)   | -0.139<br>(0.127)   | 0.027<br>(0.100)    |
| Lag. Vote Change $\times$ Unemployment                  | 0.019<br>(0.012)    | 0.019*<br>(0.011)   | -0.005<br>(0.009)   | 0.016<br>(0.011)    | 0.016<br>(0.011)    | -0.006<br>(0.009)   |
| Lag. Election HR and Freedom Emphasis Mean of Opponents |                     | 0.800**<br>(0.371)  | 0.810**<br>(0.380)  |                     | 0.736**<br>(0.365)  | 0.775**<br>(0.382)  |
| Decade 1981-1990                                        |                     |                     | 2.610<br>(1.633)    |                     |                     | 2.471<br>(1.628)    |
| 1991-2000                                               |                     |                     | 0.379<br>(0.910)    |                     |                     | 0.371<br>(0.886)    |
| 2001-2010                                               |                     |                     | 0.557<br>(0.930)    |                     |                     | 0.453<br>(0.890)    |
| 2011-2020                                               |                     |                     | 1.103<br>(1.497)    |                     |                     | 1.265<br>(1.358)    |
| Lag. Election Fragmentation**                           |                     |                     |                     | 0.517*<br>(0.266)   | 0.437*<br>(0.255)   | 0.514**<br>(0.205)  |
| Constant                                                | 3.283<br>(3.176)    | 1.727<br>(3.187)    | 5.826***<br>(2.209) | 1.706<br>(2.966)    | 0.437<br>(3.008)    | 3.680*<br>(2.127)   |
| N                                                       | 221                 | 221                 | 221                 | 221                 | 221                 | 221                 |
| R <sup>2</sup>                                          | 0.414               | 0.437               | 0.292               | 0.426               | 0.446               | 0.309               |
| Country Dummies                                         | Yes                 | Yes                 | Yes                 | Yes                 | Yes                 | Yes                 |
| Year Dummies                                            | Yes                 | Yes                 | No                  | Yes                 | Yes                 | No                  |

Robust standard errors are in parentheses.

Lag. Election Fragmentation\* is calculated according to Golosov (2010).

Lag. Election Fragmentation\*\* is calculated according to Laakso and Taagepera (1979).

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

Table A.10 Additional Analysis for the Relationship between the Emphasis on Economic Issues and Macroeconomic Indicators

|                              | Eco. Planning     |                      | Corporatism/Mixed Eco. |                     | Keynesian Demand Eco. |                   |
|------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
|                              | Model1            | Model2               | Model1                 | Model2              | Model1                | Model2            |
| Inflation                    | -0.000<br>(0.001) | 0.001<br>(0.001)     | 0.000<br>(0.001)       | -0.000<br>(0.000)   | -0.000<br>(0.000)     | 0.000<br>(0.000)  |
| GDP Growth                   | -0.010<br>(0.032) | -0.006<br>(0.022)    | 0.028<br>(0.026)       | 0.008<br>(0.014)    | -0.003<br>(0.015)     | 0.015<br>(0.019)  |
| Unemployment                 | 0.041*<br>(0.023) | 0.012<br>(0.016)     | 0.046<br>(0.028)       | 0.026**<br>(0.010)  | 0.039**<br>(0.018)    | 0.017<br>(0.013)  |
| Lag. Election Fragmentation* | 0.026<br>(0.052)  | 0.001<br>(0.038)     | 0.003<br>(0.035)       | 0.048<br>(0.031)    | -0.005<br>(0.020)     | 0.027<br>(0.017)  |
| Lag. Party Polarization      | 0.001<br>(0.002)  | 0.001<br>(0.002)     | 0.000<br>(0.002)       | -0.001<br>(0.002)   | -0.002<br>(0.002)     | -0.001<br>(0.002) |
| Decade 1981-1990             |                   | -0.351<br>(0.242)    |                        | -0.293<br>(0.303)   |                       | 0.052<br>(0.332)  |
| 1991-2000                    |                   | -0.855***<br>(0.232) |                        | -0.467**<br>(0.225) |                       | -0.275<br>(0.195) |
| 2001-2010                    |                   | -0.477*<br>(0.242)   |                        | -0.542**<br>(0.215) |                       | -0.275<br>(0.189) |
| 2011-2020                    |                   | -0.601**<br>(0.248)  |                        | -0.494**<br>(0.238) |                       | -0.105<br>(0.221) |
| Constant                     | 0.362<br>(0.485)  | 0.600*<br>(0.347)    | 0.563<br>(0.458)       | 0.188<br>(0.234)    | 0.367<br>(0.268)      | 0.091<br>(0.204)  |
| N                            | 315               | 315                  | 315                    | 315                 | 315                   | 315               |
| R <sup>2</sup>               | 0.464             | 0.289                | 0.340                  | 0.109               | 0.376                 | 0.145             |

Robust standard errors are in parentheses.

Lag. Election Fragmentation\* is calculated according to Golosov (2010).

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