

Political Demands, Political Opportunities: Explaining the Differential Success of Left-Libertarian Parties*

KENT REDDING, *Indiana University*
JOCELYN S. VITERNA, *Indiana University*

Abstract

Using qualitative comparative analysis, we examine why left-libertarian parties, associated with environmental and other “new social movements,” have been relatively successful in some western democracies but not others. We conceptualize the parties as products of new citizen demands on the one hand, and of political opportunity structures, which govern party supply, on the other. We show that supply-side factors, such as a strong left and the existence of proportional representation, tend to work together to facilitate party innovation. A strong left appears more likely to downplay left-libertarian issues and push new-left activists to form separate parties, while proportional representation eases entry into the party system. Demand-side factors play a significant but lesser role. The theoretical and methodological strategies employed here have the potential to help political sociologists explain the variable success of other types of party innovators.

Historically, waves or cycles of protest movements have led to the incorporation of various groups into democratizing regimes and generated changes in the notion of democracy itself (Markoff 1996). A number of scholars have suggested that we are at the beginning of a new redefinition of democracy and of another transformation, or at least realignment, of party systems in modern industrialized democracies (Dalton 1988; Inglehart 1990; Kitschelt 1993; Offe 1985).

* *Direct correspondence to Kent Redding, Department of Sociology, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN 47405; e-mail: kredding@indiana.edu. An earlier version of this article was presented at the 1998 Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, San Francisco, Calif. We thank Art Alderson, David Frank, and Brian Powell for helpful comments.*

New social movements or, more broadly “left-libertarian” groups (Kitschelt 1988), originated in the 1960s and early 1970s and have spawned parties that have upset heretofore stable political cleavages and party systems by garnering support that cuts across traditional lines of cleavage associated with class, religion, and ethnicity. Political uncertainty has only increased with the advent of new rightist parties, such as the National Front in France, which are also attempting to gain a foothold in western electoral systems. In the wake of these political upheavals, scholars are examining the extent of new political realignments and dealignments occurring within western party systems (Dalton & Wattenberg 1993; Franklin et al. 1992).

Our interest lies in the considerable cross-national variation in the capacity of new movements to form successful parties and have a significant impact upon their respective political systems. In spite of the fact that “new” social movements and left-libertarian parties have now been a part of the western political scene for as much as thirty years, explanations of these variations in success remain rather impressionistic, especially concerning new parties. The problems in the literature have been twofold. First, there has been a lack of theoretical development and clarity concerning the conditions behind the variable success of new parties in established democracies. Second, the literature has lacked adequate methodological strategies for comparative analysis.

As a preliminary effort to address these problems, we review and reconceptualize previous theoretical arguments to examine the most important and recent set of party innovators in eighteen established democracies, what Kitschelt (1988) has referred to as left-libertarian parties (hereafter LLPs), and others as new left or new politics parties (Poguntke 1992). At the core of the new challenges of LLPs to political systems is a critique of the statist and bureaucratic tendencies of modern welfare states on the one hand (the “libertarian” component), and of the inequality and environmental degradation produced by capitalist market economies on the other (the “left” component). These critiques have animated a wide variety of social movement and party actions within western industrialized democracies over the last twenty-five years.

To examine the variable success of LLPs, we use qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) (Ragin 1987). This technique overcomes some of the difficulties of prior analyses. We analyze models for both the 1980s and the 1990s to determine whether the trends in LLP development evident a decade ago still hold true today. In what follows, we discuss the theoretical arguments on successful new party formation and the problems of prior analytic strategies and then present our models.

Theoretical Accounts of Party Innovation

Previous attempts to make sense of party formation and the variable success of new parties have used different theoretical schemes. In the classic conception of Lipset and Rokkan (1967), parties were seen as generally reflecting the basic social cleavages of a given society along class, ethnic, and religious lines. More recent work (Harmel & Robertson 1984; Hauss & Rayside 1978) has focused on three factors: cleavages or strains; institutional factors, such as characteristics of the electoral system and centralization of the government; and more directly political factors, such as the position of trade unions and the configuration of existing party competition. By contrast, Kitschelt (1988) has drawn insights from the social movement literature, which has focused much more on the question of emergence than the party literature, to develop his conceptualization. He considers breakdown theories (which suggest that new but transitory grievances give rise to new parties), structural change theories, and resource mobilization theories as vehicles for explaining the innovation of LLPs.

We argue that these various schemes can be fruitfully reconceptualized into two basic categories. The first focuses on how citizen demands directly give rise to new parties. In such accounts, new issues, cleavages, or grievances produce new political organizations. The second line of argument emphasizes institutional and political structures that govern the supply of new organizations, regardless of the demands of the citizenry (see Oberschall 1993, who applied this distinction to analyze social movements).

Demand-side accounts of LLPs suggest that social, economic, and cultural changes in advanced capitalism have produced shifts in preferences among the voting-age population. In studies of new social movements and LLPs in particular, scholars have argued that increases in material wealth, significant changes in the occupational structure, changes in lifestyles, and the rise of "postmaterialist values" produce new demands in the population. Because established parties often fail to meet these demands, new movements and parties form to respond to the shifts (Inglehart 1990; Johnston, Larana, Gusfield 1994; Offe 1985).

Other arguments have focused on the factors associated with organizational and institutional changes influencing the supply of new political organizations. From this point of view, party innovation and success will depend less on alterations in voter preferences than upon the absence of institutional constraints on, and the presence of political opportunities available for, new political actors. Thus, political-opportunity-structure theories focus on factors such as the relative openness of political institutions and the configuration of power among existing organized political actors.

Though sometimes posed this way, demand- and supply-side arguments are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, a compelling argument of "new" or "historical" institutionalism (Steinmo, Thelen & Longstreth 1992) and recent social movement theory (McAdam, McCarthy & Zald 1996; Tarrow 1994) is that political opportunity

structures or institutional factors are less ultimate causes of political change than mediators between broader structural, demand-side changes on the one hand and political outcomes on the other. The key to understanding successful party formation, then, may lie in understanding how societal-based demands “fit” (Skocpol 1992) with the opportunities and constraints on organizational innovation.

Previous work, however, has not provided mechanisms to analyze how such interactions might produce successful parties in some nations but not in others. The problems are familiar to comparative researchers: small *N*s and high collinearity among too many independent variables rule out the use of standard or logistic regression analysis to assess the significance of causal factors associated with LLP success. The attempted solutions are also familiar: reliance upon case studies, comparison of just a few cases or, in larger comparisons, use of various gauges of bivariate relationships, such as Pearson correlations or 2*2 tables (Hauss & Rayside 1978; Jahn 1993; Kitschelt 1988; Muller-Rommel 1989; Rudig & Lowe 1986).

Kitschelt’s (1988) analysis, for example, used three bivariate strategies, all of which involved comparisons of the dependent variable (a dichotomous indicator of party success) and one independent variable. Cumulatively, these strategies provide useful insights. Because the focus was on variables and bivariate relationships, however, the analysis neither tests the joint impact of the variables together in one model, gauges the relationships among the causal indicators, nor considers the possibility that LLPs may have arisen from a more diverse set of causal configurations. Kitschelt’s analysis, then, is used here as a point of departure.

Data and Methods

Our data come from eighteen advanced capitalist democracies. This set of cases is similar to that used in previous analyses of party formation (Harmel & Robertson 1984) and variation in LLP success (Kitschelt 1988). In accord with Kitschelt’s analysis, we have excluded some cases as being too small (e.g., Luxembourg and Iceland) or as being only recent democracies in either the 1980s (e.g., Spain and Portugal) or the 1990s (the new democracies of eastern Europe).

Following Kitschelt (1988), we set three criteria for a party to be considered an LLP: common ideological programs, similar composition of electoral constituencies, and a minimum level of voter support. In ideology, the party should conform to both the “left” and the “libertarian” sides of the label. That is, the party should have an ideology that is hostile to market forces and in favor of solidarity and equality on the one hand, and rejecting of centralized bureaucracies in favor of strong participatory democracy and individual and communal autonomy on the other. As for constituencies, a party must be heavily composed of younger, well-

educated, middle-class voters who are employed in human services and subscribe to “postmaterialist” values to be classified as an LLP.

Once we generated our list of LLPs, we established a minimum threshold of voter support to distinguish between successful and unsuccessful party formations. There is no universal criterion that establishes a “successful” party, but there are good reasons for setting the threshold relatively low. Even receipt of a small percentage of the vote may give the LLP representation in the national parliament and participation in a coalition government. We chose 4% of the national legislative vote as a relatively conservative dividing line between significant and insignificant parties, following the standard adopted by Kitschelt (1988). A party that crosses that threshold at least once during the 1980s or the 1990s is counted as a significant party for that decade.¹ If there are multiple LLPs or alliances among LLPs, we add them together to count toward the 4% threshold. Table 1 lists the successful LLPs for the 1980s and 1990s from our eighteen advanced western democracies.

In our models, the independent variables are composed of both demand-side and supply-side indicators. On the demand side, Inglehart (1977, 1990; see also Kitschelt 1988) has argued that more-affluent nations produce postmaterialist values and should give rise to movements and parties that cater to postmaterialist demands. In addition, the achievement of a comprehensive welfare state should also produce postmaterialist values that, in turn, produce LLPs. The logic of both of these measures is the same. Greater material wealth and economic security should free citizens from a singular focus on economic factors, as well as strengthen their capacities to pursue higher-level human needs — social identity, quality of life, greater democratization, a healthy environment, peace, women’s rights, etc. — that have been the central concerns of LLPs. Moreover, the most advanced economies and welfare states produce the more regulated and less democratic civil societies. Such regimes, in turn, tend to rely on bureaucratic and expert control and introduce higher risks to humans and the environment. Relative affluence and economic security, then, help create not only postmaterialist demands, but grievances as well. Following this argument, as well as previous research (Kitschelt 1988), we expect that nations with (1) higher GDP per capita and (2) greater degrees of social security expenditure should thus be associated with successful LLPs.²

Whatever the significance of structural factors in changing the demands of individuals, other more organizational or institutional factors may play a role in determining whether those demands are actually met by a significant LLP presence. We include three supply-side factors to gauge opportunities for significant political party innovation: (1) degree of labor corporatism; (2) extent to which conventional left parties have formed national governments; and (3) whether the national electoral system is characterized by proportional representation.

Higher rankings on any of these factors should increase the likelihood of a viable LLP developing in the following ways. Both labor corporatism and prolonged participation by left parties in governing coalitions will “increase the rigidity and

TABLE 1: Significant Left-Libertarian Parties in Western Democracies, 1980-1997

		Percent (Year)
Austria	The Greens	4.6 (1986)
	Green Alternative	7.3 (1994)
Belgium	Ecologists/Live Differently	6.2 (1985); 10.0 (1991)
Denmark	Socialist Peoples' party	11.5 (1984); 7.3 (1994)
	Left Socialist party	2.7 (1984)
Finland	Green Union	4.0 (1987); 6.8 (1991)
France	The Greens	6.8 (1997)
Netherlands	Green Progressive Accord	5.7 (1982)
	Green Left	4.1 (1991)
New Zealand	Green party of Aotearoa	6.8 (1990)
Norway	Socialist People's party	5.4 (1985); 7.9 (1993)
Sweden	Left Communist party	5.4 (1985)
	Center party	12.4 (1985)
	Green party	5.5 (1988); 5.0 (1994)
Switzerland	Greens	2.9 (1983)
	Progressive Organizations	6.1 (1991); 2.7 (1983)
West Germany†	The Greens	5.6 (1983); 7.3 (1994)

Source: Kitschelt (1988) and *Chronicle of Parliamentary Elections and Developments* (1980-1997).

†Includes the former East Germany after reunification in October 1990.

unresponsiveness of political systems to left-libertarian policy demands, and thereby speed the formation of new parties" (Kitschelt 1988:213). When labor is heavily engaged in corporatist bargaining or left parties are actively engaged in governance, traditional organizational vehicles for left mobilization against the status quo are unavailable for the mobilization of new kinds of demands. This is because where the traditional left party is in power and the labor movement has considerable organizational strength to pursue its own demands, neither will have much incentive to reach out to and incorporate new demands and supporters. Rather, weak left parties or labor movements would be more likely than strong ones to coopt burgeoning LLP demands by attempting to draw potential supporters into existing left organizations and ideologies.³ Such efforts are likely to frustrate attempts at successful party innovation.

Finally, whereas a long line of political research has argued that proportional representation systems favor the development of multiple parties and party innovation (Duverger [1951] 1963; Kim & Ohn 1992; Rudig & Lowe 1986), other research casts strong doubt on this claim, pointing to many exceptions to the rule and arguing that other factors are more important (Hauss & Rayside 1978; Kitschelt 1988, 1993). We reexamine these conflicting arguments here.⁴

Combined, this makes for a total of five causal variables for our analysis. GDP per capita and social security expenditures as a percentage of GDP are measured at the beginning of each decade for the two analyses (ILO 1978-1989; OECD 1960-1990). The indicators of left participation in government and degree of corporatism are measured in the decade prior to the indicators of party success in order to indicate conditions prior to left-libertarian mobilization.⁵ The proportional representation variable is more time-invariant (Banks, Day & Muller 1997; Blais & Massicotte 1996).

Qualitative comparative analysis was designed to bring greater analytical rigor to small-*N* studies and to bridge quantitative and qualitative analyses. It allows for the systematic analysis of the significant causal variables within one model in a small-*N* study. Moreover, QCA offers the distinct advantage of considering causal configurations or interactions among the variables. Our review of the literature has already suggested that we believe such interactions are central to explaining the origins and the variable success of LLPs. Moreover, QCA allows for the possibility that there may be more than one configuration resulting in successful LLP formation.

QCA requires five steps: (1) We have already identified the positive and negative cases associated with a particular dependent variable, in this case LLP success or failure. (2) We also have identified the factors we believe influence the outcome of the dependent variable. (3) The next step involves coding the variables dichotomously, as either “present” or “absent,” or “high” or “low.” That step allows us to (4) construct a “truth table” consisting of all the possible combinations of variables and outcomes, including those not present in the data; nations with the same configuration of independent variables are considered the same case. (5) The fifth step requires the use of Boolean algorithms to find the simplest patterns in the configuration of independent variables that lead to a positive result in the outcome variable.

The five steps produce five variables, of which four are continuous, quantitative measures that must be assigned dichotomous (0, 1) values for use in QCA. To do this, we use a clustering technique first adapted by Ragin (1994). We first defined a cluster center for every possible combination of causal outcomes.⁶ In our case, there are 32 possible combinations of 0s and 1s resulting from our five causal variables, each representing one possible causal configuration. These 32 combinations can be thought of as the 32 corners in a five-dimensional space. The scores for each of the four interval variables and the one dichotomous variable represent the point coordinates for each case within that five-dimensional space. The clustering algorithm is used to measure the distance between these point coordinates and the preestablished cluster corners. The nation is then assigned to the closest cluster corner (see Ragin 1994 for a detailed discussion). This approach does make the assumption that the variables hang together in a pattern that can be uncovered by the cluster algorithms; uncovering that pattern involves the loss of

TABLE 2: Causal Indicators (Raw Data)

	1980s					
	GDP	Social		Left in	Proportional	Party
	per Capita	Security	Corpor.	Gover.	Represen.	Formation
	1980 \$	Percent		Months	Presence (= 1)	Success (= 1)
Australia	10,129	11.6	1.0	35	0	0
Austria	10,251	21.4	1.8	132	1	1
Belgium	11,816	24.5	1.3	90	1	1
Canada	10,582	14.8	0.8	0	0	0
Denmark	12,952	26.2	1.7	97	1	0
Finland	10,440	18.0	1.8	112	1	0
France	12,136	25.5	0.7	0	0	0
Ireland	5,193	20.6	1.3	51	1	0
Italy	6,906	16.3	0.8	0	1	0
Japan	8,873	9.8	0.4	0	0	0
Netherlands	11,851	27.6	1.4	52	1	1
New Zealand	7,441	14.1	0.9	36	0	0
Norway	14,019	19.8	1.8	85	1	1
Sweden	14,761	31.2	1.8	82	1	1
Switzerland	15,922	12.8	1.4	132	1	1
United Kingdom	9,335	16.9	1.0	62	0	0
United States	11,364	12.2	0.9	0	0	0
West Germany	13,305	23.0	1.4	132	1	1

some information as we move from continuous to dichotomous measures. Nonetheless, using cluster analysis to assign each case to a particular causal configuration (or row in the truth table) is a considerable improvement over strategies that rely on the median or some “natural” breaks in the data to establish what counts as a 0 or a 1 for each variable. Cases are assigned their dichotomous values through precise, replicable calculations of the relative fit of individual case values to a particular row of the truth table.

Table 2 lists the raw value of each variable by nation. The results of the cluster analyses are the truth tables (or configurations of 0 and 1 scores on each variable for each country) for the 1980s and 1990s shown in Table 3.⁷ Note that if multiple countries have the same configuration of 0s and 1s, they are treated as one case. Because the cluster analyses reflect different data from the 1980s to the 1990s, the assignments of nations to 0 or 1 scores in the truth tables are sometimes different from one decade to the next. In the 1980s analyses, then, Denmark is rated a 1 on

TABLE 2: Causal Indicators (Raw Data) Continued

	1990s					
	GDP	Social		Left in	Proportional	Party
	per Capita	Security	Corpor.	Gover.	Represen.	Formation
	1990 \$	Percent		Months	Presence (= 1)	Success (= 1)
Australia	17,282	7.8	1.2	94	0	0
Austria	20,391	24.8	1.8	120	1	1
Belgium	19,303	26.4	1.3	42	1	1
Canada	21,418	18.0	0.8	0	0	0
Denmark	25,150	28.4	1.5	20	1	1
Finland	27,527	21.4	1.8	120	1	1
France	21,105	27.1	0.5	91	0	1
Germany	23,536	22.7	1.4	21	1	1
Ireland	12,131	18.9	1.0	58	1	0
Italy	18,921	23.4	0.7	117	1	0
Japan	23,822	11.8	0.4	0	0	0
Netherlands	18,676	28.5	1.4	22	1	1
New Zealand	13,020	20.1	1.0	75	0	1
Norway	24,953	21.2	1.8	53	1	1
Sweden	26,652	35.9	1.6	99	1	1
Switzerland	33,085	14.4	1.4	120	1	1
United Kingdom	16,985	17.3	0.9	0	0	0
United States	21,449	12.2	0.8	0	0	0

the left government measure, but this changes to 0 for the 1990 analyses. The 1980s truth table in Table 3 reveals that the nine cases of significant party development in the 1980s reduce to six observed causal configurations.

In the 1990s, eleven successes arose from six causal configurations associated with significant LLPs. We ran QCA on the truth tables for the 1980s and 1990s. Again, QCA uses Boolean algorithms to attempt to reduce the six causal configurations of the two models into the simplest logical combinations of variables associated with the outcome of significant party formation. Unobserved combinations of variables were set to 0 in our analyses, a conservative approach adopted in other work using QCA (Brown & Boswell 1995; Hicks, Misra & Ng 1995).

TABLE 3: Truth Tables for QCA Analyses of Left-Libertarian Party Success

	1980s					
	GDP per Capita	Social Security Expenditures	Corpor.	Left in Gov.	Proportional Represen.	Party Formation
Japan, New Zealand,						
Australia	0	0	0	0	0	0
Canada, United States	1	0	0	0	0	0
United Kingdom	0	0	0	1	0	0
Italy	0	0	0	0	1	0
France	1	1	0	0	0	0
Ireland	0	1	0	0	1	0
Finland	0	0	1	1	1	1
Switzerland	1	0	1	1	1	1
Austria	0	1	1	1	1	1
Belgium	1	1	0	1	1	1
Denmark, West						
Germany, Sweden	1	1	1	1	1	1
Netherlands	1	1	1	0	1	1

Results

As reported in Table 4, QCA reduced the six causal configurations for the 1980s into three conjunctural conditions for significant LLPs, with the nations covered by the set of factors listed in parentheses. Uppercase letters indicate the presence or high degree of a condition; lowercase indicates absence or low degree of the condition.

The first configuration in the 1980s is composed of nations that combine a high degree of corporatism with lengthy participation of left parties in governing coalitions, and proportional representation. It covers Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland. Of the nine nations with successful LLPs, only Belgium and the Netherlands are not covered by this configuration. Belgium is covered by a second configuration, where high GDP per capita is combined with high social security expenditures, strong participation by the left in power, and proportional representation. Like the first path, this second configuration covers Denmark, Germany, Norway, and Sweden. The final configuration, which also covers both these latter four nations as well as the Netherlands, combines high per capita GDP and social security expenditures with a high degree of corporatism and proportional representation.

TABLE 3: Truth Tables for QCA Analyses of Left-Libertarian Party Success (Continued)

	1990s					
	GDP per Capita	Social Security Expenditures	Corpor. Corpor.	Left in Gover.	Proportional Represen.	Party Formation
United Kingdom	0	0	0	0	0	0
Australia	0	0	0	1	0	0
Canada, Japan, U.S.	1	0	0	0	0	0
Ireland	0	0	1	0	1	0
Italy	0	1	0	1	1	0
Austria	0	1	1	1	1	1
Belgium, Netherlands	0	1	1	0	1	1
Denmark, Germany, Norway	1	1	1	0	1	1
Finland, Sweden	1	1	1	1	1	1
France	0	1	0	1	0	1
New Zealand	0	*	0	1	0	1
Switzerland	1	0	1	1	1	1

Note. 1 = high on presence; 0 = low on absence

*See note 7.

A closer look at the data reveals that Belgium and the Netherlands are kept out of the first configuration by lower scores on corporatism and left government participation, respectively. In the quantitative data, Belgium's score on corporatism is right on the borderline between being coded a 0 or a 1 by the cluster analysis. Moreover, the Netherlands' score on the left government measure is also on the border between being classified as a 0 or 1. If each of the variables is recoded to 1 for the respective nations, the QCA results are much simpler. In this scenario, the simple combination of high participation by the left in governing, high degree of corporatism, and the presence of proportional representation is enough to produce a successful party innovation by an LLP, and this one configuration covers all cases of successful LLPs in the 1980s.

The results from the 1990s analysis are also reported in Table 4. All nine nations with successful LLPs in the 1980s also produced similarly successful LLPs in the 1990s. From 1990 to 1997, two additional nations, New Zealand and France, developed significant LLPs. That brings the total number of successful LLPs in the 1990s to eleven. In the 1990 minimizations, QCA simplifies the initial six causal conditions to three configurations. The first configuration consists of the combination of high social security expenditures and corporatism and the presence of proportional representation and covers eight of the nine nations that had successful LLPs in the 1980s (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden). Switzerland (along with Finland and Sweden)

TABLE 4: QCA Minimization Results for the 1980 and 1990 Analyses of Left-Libertarian Party Success

Successful party formation in 1980s (4% or greater vote) =

1. *CORPORATISM, LEFT IN GOVERNMENT, PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION+*
(Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland)
2. *GDP PER CAPITA, SOCIAL SECURITY EXPENDITURES, LEFTIST GOVERNMENT, PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION+*
(Belgium)†
3. *GDP PER CAPITA, SOCIAL SECURITY EXPENDITURES, CORPORATISM, PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION*
(Netherlands)†

Successful party formation in the 1990s (4% or greater vote) =

1. *SOCIAL-SECURITY EXPENDITURES, CORPORATISM, PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION+*
(Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden)
2. *GDP PER CAPITA, CORPORATISM, LEFT IN GOVERNMENT, PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION+*
(Switzerland)‡
3. *GDP per Capita, SOCIAL SECURITY EXPENDITURES, Corporatism, LEFT IN GOVERNMENT, Proportional Representation*
(France, New Zealand)

Note: Uppercased variables indicate presence or high degree of a condition; roman indicates absence or low degree of the condition. The “+” indicates the logical Boolean “and” condition.

†This configuration also covers Denmark, Germany, Norway, and Sweden.

‡This configuration also covers Finland and Sweden.

is covered by a second configuration where high per capita GDP is combined with high corporatism, high participation of the left in governing, and proportional representation. Finally, the two newcomers to LLP success in the 1990s, New Zealand and France, are covered by the configuration that combines low per capita GDP in the presence of high social security expenditures, low corporatism, high left government participation, and a plurality, rather than proportional, electoral system.

Discussion

It is clear from these results that the factors that govern both the demand for and supply of LLPs are important for successful party innovation. Overall, however, supply-side factors appear to be more important. In none of the six configurations from the two analyses do demand-side factors alone account for the success of LLPs; supply-side factors alone, however, account for the major configuration in

the 1980s (configuration 1 for 1980 in Table 4), where the supply-side combination of corporatism, left government, and proportional representation account for seven of the nine party successes during that decade.

Across the two decades, a proportional representation electoral system comes closest to being a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for successful LLP formation. In the 1980s all nine successes involved nations with proportional representation. In the 1990s, France and New Zealand are the exceptions. Some specific information about the two nations, however, may provide some explanation. France did experiment with proportional representation for one election, in 1986. Though that election did produce a breakthrough for the rightist National Front, the French LLPs remained well below 4% of the vote. Plurality rules have governed national assembly and presidential elections before and since 1986, but it may be important that proportional representation governs regional and European Parliament elections (Szarka 1994). This may gain small Green LLPs (as well as the National Front, perhaps) some measure of power in regional assemblies, providing tangible victories essential for ensuring the long-term success and maintenance of new parties but unavailable in strict plurality systems.

In New Zealand, the Green party achieved its breakthrough in the 1990 elections. Shortly thereafter, however, the nation shifted to a proportional representation electoral system for all subsequent elections. It is impossible to say, then, whether the New Zealand Green party would have been able to sustain strong support in subsequent elections. The history of plurality systems, after all, is littered with dead third-party organizations that may have been able to break the barrier of 4% of the vote we have set here, but quickly withered in the face of attempts to win a plurality or majority in enough districts to become a sustained force in national politics.

Our analysis shows that plurality systems mount high, though not insurmountable, barriers to the supply of successful LLPs. All nine nations that had both proportional representation and successful LLPs in the 1980s continue to have significant LLPs in the 1990s. These findings run counter to arguments that proportional representation is not an important factor for explaining party formation and success (Haus & Rayside 1978; Kitschelt 1988, 1993). Kitschelt (1993), for example, has argued that since nations with proportional representation such as Ireland and Italy have not produced successful LLPs, then proportional representation must not be an important factor in producing LLPs. But this variable-oriented, all or nothing, approach is seriously misleading. Certainly, our analyses show that proportional representation is never sufficient in itself to generate an LLP. Ireland and Italy, for example, had proportional representation during the 1980s and 1990s but lacked the other combination of conditions to generate a successful LLP. QCA helps us see these cases not as an aggregate of independent variables, but as clusters of causal configurations that may combine in different ways to create conditions for party innovation.

For the 1980s, our results show that the two key factors that combine with proportional representation to foster successful LLPs are the presence of strong labor corporatism and left parties holding the reins of power. These findings stand in contrast to claims that corporatism tends to mitigate political discontent and alternative forms of political action (Nollert 1994; Schmitter 1981). And they confirm the claims that strong labor movements and left parties tend to be more exclusive of new groups and thus foster influential innovative political mobilization outside traditional left organizations (Kitschelt 1988), in this case especially in proportional representation electoral systems.

In the 1980s, both corporatism and left in power appear to be important factors in the success of most LLPs. In contrast to the arguments of Wilson (1990; see also Kitschelt 1993), corporatism is an important factor even where left parties have participated in ruling in previous years. This becomes clearer in the 1990 analyses (configuration 1 for 1990 in Table 4), where corporatism is an essential component of the causal configuration that explains the success of LLPs in eight of the nine nations that had successful LLPs in the previous decade. As we suggested earlier, labor corporatism, because it provides no incentives for labor to seek coalitions with other political groups to obtain its largely economic ends, appears to encourage LLPs to form and succeed (Kitschelt 1988, Kriesi 1994). While corporatism is important in all nine of these cases, having the left in power does not appear to be associated with the continued success of parties that had already achieved a breakthrough in the 1980s (Switzerland is the exception here). As in the 1980s, however, having the left in power does appear to be virtually essential to generating a newly successful LLP, as is shown in the configuration that covers France and New Zealand, the only newcomers to successful LLP innovation in the 1990s. Thus, the conditions that foster the initial success of these parties appear to be somewhat different from those that sustained them in the 1990s.

Once in power, left parties have proven themselves to be much more willing to ignore the demands of environmentalists and other new social movements, as has been most obvious in the French and German cases (Poguntke 1992; Szarka 1994). In abandoning those demands, they have provided the impetus for such groups to build successful parties of their own. And although Rohrschneider (1993) has argued that once out of power, the traditional left should be able to make significant inroads into LLP support, the findings here and elsewhere (Kitschelt 1993; Muller-Rommel 1989) suggest there may be a limit to such efforts. Instead, as predicted by Przeworski and Sprague (1986), the traditional left may attempt to incorporate the demands of LLP supporters only at the risk of losing some of its own core supporters.

The demand-side variables, GDP per capita and social security expenditures, play a relatively small role in the 1980s, when they are clearly associated only with

the exceptional cases of Belgium and the Netherlands. Here, strong demand-side indicators appear to compensate for either weak corporatism (in the case of Belgium) or lower participation by left parties in government (in the case of the Netherlands). Recall, however, that these two nations are borderline cases on each of those respective variables and recoding them as 1s induces the two to conform to the first configuration of strong corporatism, left in power, and proportional representation.

In the 1990s, however, the demand-side factors, especially high social security expenditures, appear to play a more important role. Here, high social security expenditures are a necessary component on the two configurations (1 and 3) that cover ten of the eleven cases of successful LLPs. In the first configuration, high social security expenditures along with corporatism and proportional representation are the essential components of the continued success of LLPs that had experienced successful innovation in the previous decade. In the third configuration, high social security expenditures help explain the special cases of France and New Zealand in the presence of the left holding power and the absence of high GDP per capita, corporatism, and proportional representation.

The demand-side variable, high GDP per capita, comes into play in the 1990s, but only in the case of Switzerland. The lack of a strong presence of this variable in these configurations may be misleading, however. It may be that there is some threshold effect such that the real impact of GDP per capita is not between relatively advanced nations (as in our set of nations) but between developed and developing nations such that once a nation has passed a certain level, the variable is no longer a good distinguisher between successful and unsuccessful LLPs. And this suggests the need in future analyses for a measure that does a better job of gauging variations in demand among advanced industrial nations.

Conclusion

Our identification of the different causal configurations of successful left-libertarian party formation is a significant advance over previous efforts to make sense of the origins and success of LLPs in particular and of new parties in general. Moreover, our discussion of the conjunctural nature of demand and supply factors offers a new way to conceptualize and gauge the wave of party innovation that has hit many western democracies over the past two decades. In addition, our comparison of the 1980s with the 1990s yields insights into the ways in which initial successes are both different from and similar to the conditions under which LLPs sustain themselves in the face of cooptive and competitive pressures from other parties, particularly those on the left that are no longer part of a governing coalition. Finally, though we have not been able to fully specify the path-dependent processes by which LLPs have developed in these models, the Boolean analysis has provided the

comparative basis to indicate the important factors in successful LLP formation. Moreover, it has specified the contexts under which those factors are operative.

The increasing strength of these parties, evidenced by the continued success of LLPs in the original success stories of the 1980s and the addition of New Zealand and France in the 1990s, suggests that they are more than short-term, "flash" parties, as some have argued (Alber 1989; Burklin 1987). The continued LLP success with the left out of power in several nations during the 1990s (as shown in configuration 1 for 1990 in Table 4), indicates that LLPs are no longer mere creatures of supply-side factors associated with political opportunity but may now be strong enough to affect such structures, perhaps by becoming a viable alliance partner. Alber (1989, building on Sartori 1969), for example, has argued that once parties reach a certain measure of success and organizational development, they may be able to shape their environment; this is in line with what we know from organizational sociology. And that appears to be the case even though LLP supporters have been found to be the most strategic of voters and the least committed to any one party organization (Franklin 1995; Muller-Rommel 1985). This suggests that LLPs will play a significant role in western democracies for some time to come.

LLPs are not, however, the only vehicles for challenging the stability of western party systems. In France, Austria, and elsewhere, far right parties are also gaining electoral strength and undermining the traditional left-right conflict dimension of postwar western politics. With appropriate modifications, the theoretical and methodological approach developed here could be fruitfully applied and tested on this strand of party innovators as well.

In any case, it appears that the western democracies are experiencing a wave of party innovation over the last two decades that is only beginning to have a significant impact on party systems. If this wave is anywhere near the surge of 1960s-era protest movements that so stimulated the development of social movement analysis, the challenge for political sociologists will be to develop new and better tools to account for the rise and differential success of new political parties in the post-Cold War era.

Notes

1. The 4% threshold is also the minimum amount required for parties to obtain parliamentary seats in nations such as Austria and Sweden and public party financing in Australia. We also tried a higher threshold of 5% of the vote, the minimum required for a German party to enter the Bundestag or for a U.S. party to receive federal public subsidies. The results do not differ significantly from those reported in Table 4. We use national parliamentary or presidential election results as our indicator.
2. We have not included in our analysis measures of breakdown theories that some have suggested explain the emergence and growth of LLPs. Breakdown theories have been widely discredited, especially within the social movements literature, as a mechanism for explaining the emergence of new political movements (Kitschelt 1988; Tilly, Tilly & Tilly 1975). Further, a number of LLPs have now existed for nearly two decades, well beyond the putative crisis that produced them.
3. Our focus on the left parties results from the fact that the bulk of support for LLPs appears to come from disenchanted leftists, though a significant proportion comes from younger voters without established party commitments. In spite of the fact that in some nations, and Germany in particular, there has been some historical relationship between the right and concerns about nature, there has been little effort or success there or elsewhere by right-of-center parties to coopt environmentally sensitive voters.
4. The variable strengths of the social movement precursors to the LLPs may also play an important role in the parties' subsequent success. Unfortunately, there are no systematic indicators of new social movement strengths across the eighteen nations of which we are aware, making it difficult to gauge the movement-party connection at the national level in our analysis.
5. Corporatism is measured as a combined score on scaled measures of national "organizational unity of labor" and "scope of collective bargaining" (Cameron 1984). Left government participation is measured by total months of government participation by major socialist, communist, and left-libertarian parties from 1970-80 and 1981-90 (Keesing 1970-1990; Kitschelt 1988).
6. Establishing the cluster centers requires three steps. First, the causal variables must be standardized to achieve a common metric among them. Second, the standardized scores are "winsorized" (see Ragin 1994) to eliminate the influence of extreme scores. Here, the extreme values are recoded to values that are less extreme, in this case to the 80th and 20th percentiles of the variable. Finally, the cluster centers are defined as the endpoints (minimum and maximum values) of the winsorized, standardized measures. In contrast to Ragin (1994), we do not include a cluster center, defined by the mean values of the five variables, in our analysis. Ragin argues that cases that are closer to this center than to one of the corners should be excluded from the subsequent QCA analysis because they do not conform well to any of the 32 cluster centers (or corners). We allow the clustering analysis to use the entire five-dimensional space to assign the case to a corner, which ensures the inclusion of all cases for subsequent analyses and fully gauges the relationships between the cases and the assigned cluster centers (corners). As a practical matter, this change affects only one case in the 1980s and none in the 1990s. The affected

case is the Netherlands, which we discuss later in the article. The raw data used for the cluster analysis is available from the authors upon request.

7. Australia and New Zealand had the same configuration of 0s and 1s on the independent variables, but New Zealand had a successful party and Australia did not. QCA does not permit such “contradictions,” forcing the analyst to reexamine the coding. In this case, we found that New Zealand is a borderline case with respect to social security expenditures. To deal with this contradiction, we recoded this variable for this case to “don’t care,” allowing QCA to assign a 0 or 1 to the case in accord with the most minimal solution possible.

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