
Original Article

At the water's edge: The decline of partisan liberal internationalism?

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Abstract In this paper we examine the decline in the 'liberal consensus hypothesis' or the proposition that there has been a move away in the West from a partisan consensus that favors commitment to international engagement and multilateralism towards a greater scepticism about international engagement. Using data from the Comparative Manifesto Project, we examine whether changes in consensus were the result of shifts in the international environment or a function of domestic political changes (such as party systems changes and economic performance). We test these hypotheses using data from 131 parties in 23 Organization for Economic Development countries across 365 elections from 1945 to 2010 and find that mixed support for the decline hypothesis. We find that positive partisan consensus in support of internationalism was *higher* after 1991 (that is, after the Cold War) than before (contrary to the decline in liberal consensus argument), but was *lower* after 2001 than before (in support of the hypothesis). We offer an explanation for these seemingly disparate findings.

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Introduction

Recently, several scholars have argued that a general decline has occurred in the 'liberal consensus' in the foreign policies of many Western countries, a decline that accelerated after 11 September 2001. Scholars have noted a decline in the partisan consensus in favor of international engagement (or what some have called 'liberal internationalism') over the past few decades. This consensus involved a willingness among the political leaders of Western powers to engage in international activism to promote liberal goals, such as multilateral rules and global institutions, open markets and development, democracy and regional partnerships (Busby and Monten, 2008). From this perspective, politics essentially 'stopped at the water's edge' – however,

this consensus, or so it is argued, has declined over time. Do politics continue to ‘stop at the water’s edge’? Or has there been a breakdown in partisan consensus on foreign policy in the West, with less consensus and more partisan bickering over fundamental aspects of foreign policy? Or has the notion of a ‘liberal consensus’ on foreign policy among Western countries in the post-World War II period been largely overstated?

A central part of the ‘liberal consensus’ argument is that there has existed a *partisan consensus* on foreign policy, particularly international engagement and multilateralism, in the post-World War II era. However, as Bow and Black (2009) note, the proposition that there has been a partisan consensus concerning foreign policy issues has rarely been empirically tested, especially in cases outside of the United States.

These questions are not simply academic in nature – they are of practical importance as well. From a scholarly point of view, explaining variations in partisan consensus and changes over time will help to better understand foreign policy change. As Trubowitz (2011) argues, the foreign policy behavior of political leaders is partly dependent upon domestic politics, especially party politics. Whether leaders boldly confront foreign threats or are less assertive is a function of both the distribution of power around the world and the leader’s ability to govern at home. In particular, Trubowitz contends that variations in domestic party politics and international power have led US presidents to pursue different foreign policy strategies over time.¹ From this perspective, foreign policy behavior should vary with changes in partisan consensus at home – thus understanding what influences partisan consensus on foreign policy will help to explain the ensuing foreign policy behavior of governments.

More practically, if there has indeed been a decline in partisan consensus in the West over foreign policy, particularly the commitment to multilateralism, it will be increasingly difficult for the West to confront foreign policy challenges such as terrorism, civil conflicts in the Middle East, or the rising power of China and a revitalized Russia. On the other hand, if such a consensus never existed and partisan consensus ebbs and flows depending upon domestic circumstances (as with any other political issue), then it is likely that too much has been made of an emphasis on partisan consensus on foreign policy issues and that a lack of partisan consensus on foreign policy issues is more the norm than has been thought previously.

One way to examine whether a decline in the partisan consensus on internationalism has occurred in the West is to analyze changes in the level of consensus among political parties on foreign policy issues. These stances are most clearly portrayed in the parties’ foreign policy goals via their electoral manifestos. The analysis of political party manifestos has long been a focus of political scientists, but has received little attention from foreign policy scholars. Although there has been a considerable amount of literature on how parties present themselves to the electorate via party manifestos and how this presentation changes, referred to



as ‘party identity change’ (Budge and Laver, 1986; Budge *et al*, 1987; Harmel and Janda, 1994; Janda *et al*, 1995; Ishiyama and Shafqat, 2000), this literature has generally ignored how parties present themselves in terms of foreign policy issues. In particular, how parties present their foreign policy positions regarding issues such as foreign aid and international human rights performance (indices of ‘internationalism’) has been generally overlooked. This is rather surprising, given the importance of political parties in policy formation and in governance, particularly in Western European countries. Further, how parties portray themselves to the electorate, including how they present themselves to the electorate on foreign policy issues, provides insights into how they will behave once in office. Indeed, how parties portray themselves on key foreign policy issues and why they change their positions on these issues provides important insights into not only political parties but also regarding the linkage between domestic politics and foreign policy.

In this paper, we focus on changes in partisan consensus, or whether there has been less consensus among parties regarding international engagement following major changes in the international system since 1945, particularly the collapse of the Soviet Union and the attack on the World Trade Center on 11 September 2001. Using data from the Comparative Manifesto Project, we examine whether changes in commitment were the result of shifts in the international environment, or a function of domestic political changes (such as changes in party systems and economic performance). We test our hypotheses using data from 131 parties in 23 Organization for Economic Development (OECD) countries across 365 elections from 1945 to 2010.

Background

Liberal internationalism generally (or what Busby and Montan, 2008 call ‘establishment internationalism’) refers to the foreign policy consensus that emerged in the United States after the Second World War. This consensus evolved around the idea that the United States, and the West more broadly (unlike after the First World War), should remain engaged in international politics to actively shape the international order. This development was very different than the previous dominance of unilateralism (or the avoidance of entangling alliances) and a focus on maintaining hegemony over the Western Hemisphere. However, after World War II ‘the United States took the lead in fashioning a world of multilateral rules, institutions, open markets, democratic community, and regional partnerships – and it put itself at the center of it all’ (Ikenberry, 2003, p. 1). As Kupchan and Trubowitz (2007, p. 10) write, ‘it was the dual commitment to power projection *and* international cooperation that distinguished liberal internationalism from the alternatives that came before ... FDR’s approach to statecraft drew on Teddy Roosevelt’s *realpolitik* as much as on Wilson’s idealism’.

Further, liberal internationalism is generally an activist foreign policy doctrine that contends that the Western liberal states should ‘intervene’ in other sovereign states in order to pursue liberal objectives. Intervention does not necessarily mean military intervention – it also involves the provision of humanitarian aid. This view is in contrast to isolationist or realist foreign policy doctrines, which tend to oppose interventions in pursuit of liberal objectives. Historically, the primary goal of liberal internationalism was to build an international system that promoted a liberal world order, with global free trade, liberal economics and liberal political systems. Thus, the liberal internationalism perspective advocates for engagement and activism in world affairs, a commitment to multilateral organizations, and a commitment to such policies as the provision of development aid and promotion of democracy (for a discussion see Ikenberry, 2009). In short, liberal internationalism involves a strong commitment to international trade, democracy promotion and multilateral institutions.²

A key element of the liberal international consensus, particularly in the United States, was the high degree of bipartisanship in US politics regarding foreign policy, where both Democratic and Republican leaders largely rallied around a consensus that the national interest required consistent international engagement, and that politics would ‘stop at the water’s edge’ (Busby and Monten, 2008). However, as many scholars have argued (Kupchan and Trubowitz, 2007, 2010; Ikenberry, 2009), there has been a decline in this partisan consensus on foreign policy in the United States. This is because there have been structural shifts in the international environment (such as the end of the Cold War) and generational, demographic and cultural changes within the United States. The consensus further declined as a result of the onset of the War on Terror, as a greater cynicism about international engagement took hold, particularly on the political right.

Although interventionism became a feature of the neoconservative turn of the Bush administration, this was not indicative of the political right embracing liberal internationalism or implementing associated policies. As Kupchan and Trubowitz (2007) note, the Bush administration’s embrace of interventionism actually represented a turn away from liberal internationalism and multilateralism. In fact, the only commonality between the neoconservative approach and liberal internationalism was that neoconservatives employed *rhetoric* similar to that of liberal internationalist thought. However, they did this with far different goals and with an emphasis on military methods of foreign policy intervention (Kupchan and Trubowitz, 2010).

However, as Busby and Monten (2008, p. 449) note, ‘despite the frequent assertion that this change has taken place, very few studies have analyzed the extent to which establishment internationalism is in fact in decline’. Indeed, several empirical studies that have sought to examine the decline of the liberal international consensus have found little evidence in support of this notion. Chaudoin *et al* (2010) and Busby and Monten (2008) find little support when examining congressional



roll call voting and public opinion surveys. New evidence about partisan divisions in Congress using policy gridlock and co-sponsorship data from other studies of American politics similarly fail to demonstrate the decline in bipartisanship in foreign policy that conventional wisdom suggests. To this point, Busby and Monten (2008, p. 452) find that there is little empirical support for the argument that US internationalism 'is undergoing a secular and long-term decline'.

Although this debate over the decline in the liberal consensus has focused largely on US foreign policy, there is reason to believe that it has also occurred elsewhere. Indeed, although the United States led the way in developing the international order that emerged after World War II, there were certainly adherents to the liberal ideas of international engagement and particularly development cooperation among European countries (Breuning, 1995). This commitment was of course stronger in some countries than others, but most saw their primary international role as promoting development and democracy. Thus, a domestic consensus came into existence in many countries regarding these foreign policy goals (Breuning, 1995; Moses, 2010). This partisan consensus in favor of international engagement emerged by the 1980s and 1990s in many countries in the West, such as Spain (Gillespie, 2000, 2007), Canada (Bow and Black, 2009) and Germany (Karp, 2005). Some have argued that, as with the United States, there has also been a decline in the European commitment to multilateralism and international engagement, particularly after the beginning of the 'War on Terror' (Haine, 2009).

This proposition, however, has not been empirically tested beyond the confines of the United States. Thus, has there been a decline in liberal internationalism among political parties in Europe, for instance. Several scholars have argued that the liberal internationalist doctrine that had guided the United States for more than half a century had disappeared owing to change in the geopolitical and domestic conditions that gave rise to liberal internationalism in the first place. Indeed, much of the literature on the rise and fall of liberal internationalism has focused on US foreign policy rather than on those of European countries. However, as several scholars have noted, a focus on international engagement and activism and a commitment to liberal internationalism have long been a part of the foreign policy of many European states (Sick, 2003). Yet, in Europe as well, there has been some suggestion that this commitment to internationalism has declined, particularly in the twenty-first century.

What Explains the Decline in the Partisan Consensus in Foreign Policy?

There are two theoretical sources for changes in partisan consensus in foreign policy – 'external shocks', or changes in international power configurations and changes in domestic politics (Trubowitz, 2011). Some scholars suggest that structural changes in the international environment had an important impact on the liberal

consensus (coupled with a generational shift to a post-World War II leadership generation in the 1990s) (Legro, 2005; Busby and Monten, 2008).

Regarding external sources of foreign policy change, scholars have long argued that 'external shocks' can alter a government's foreign policy direction (Hermann, 1990). Hermann (1990, p. 12) defined external shocks as 'sources of foreign policy change that result from dramatic international events'. Some of the literature on the decline of the liberal consensus in the United States suggests that external 'shocks' also played a role in reducing partisan consensus on foreign policy over time. Although the result, in part, of 'secular changes in American politics' the decline of the liberal consensus on foreign policy was also affected by major international 'watershed' or 'epochal' moments (Busby and Monten, 2008). For instance, with regards to the United States, one such major watershed event was the end of the Cold War, which removed the immediate security threat of the Soviet Union that had bound the parties together in common cause in support of containment. Once that threat had been removed, there were few obstacles to the emergence of greater partisan conflict over foreign policy. Further, the new international system of unipolarity (with the collapse of the Soviet Union) made unilateral action more appealing as there was no longer an external check on acting unilaterally, further fueling partisan debate over foreign policy (Kupchan and Trubowitz, 2007).

On the other hand, some scholars have argued that the effects of external shocks have been significantly overstated and that there has been little in the way of a decline in partisan consensus of foreign policy as the result of external changes in the international system. In particular, for some, the realignment of power configurations after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War led to a new hope that international cooperation and collective intervention would structure the 'new world order' (Legro, 2005). Other scholars have argued that there is little evidence to suggest that the removal of a common enemy led to less partisan consensus, particularly in the United States. Chaudoin *et al* (2010) found that Congressional voting patterns actually became more bipartisan in the post-Cold War period. Further, in terms of co-sponsored bills, the authors also found that the the end of the Cold War did not result in an increase in partisanship, thus questioning the assertion that these events led to a decline in partisan consensus on foreign policy.

Another major event that is often cited as negatively impacting the level of partisan consensus is the attack on the World Trade Center on 11 September 2001. Indeed, according to Trubowitz and Mellow (2005), there has been significantly less bipartisanship on US foreign policy in the wake of the attack. This may be because of fundamental disagreements over military intervention in Iraq, which laid bare the debate between unilateralism and multilateralism in US foreign policy. Furthermore, policy differences between the major parties over the Iraqi conflict is a more influential causal driver for the decline in bipartisanship in the United States than the lack of a 'rally around the flag' effect after 9/11. Indeed, the terrorist attack on the Twin Towers in 2001 marked an era of greater cynicism about the positive effects of



liberal intervention and international cooperation and a decline in consensus over foreign policy objectives (Legro, 2005).

Beyond major external shocks, scholars have also argued that discrete foreign policy crises can affect party identities, and hence, presumably, party systems consensus (see, for example, Podliska, 2005). Smith (1998), Prins and Sprecher (1999) and Fearon (1994) examine the impact of international crises on foreign policy change, particularly how crises alter the behavior of political leaders. In a similar way, the literature on political parties (Harmel and Janda, 1994; Muller, 1997) also contend that such external 'international shocks' may be the catalyst for change, particularly in party identities.

This literature above thus suggests that major watershed events and foreign policy crises will affect party positions on foreign policy issues. This is because party leaders will seek to adjust their positions in order to appeal to an electorate. During times of crisis and insecurity, voters will support parties that take positions that emphasize defense (Podliska, 2005). Hence, parties adjust their positions in reaction to this expectation. Indeed, Podliska (2005) finds that international shocks, especially militarized interstate disputes, do have an impact on European political parties. His most significant finding is that following 'international shocks', European parties generally increase their positive emphases on military intervention and strength and put less emphasis on international cooperation and engagement. This varies by parties, with left parties less likely to adjust than right parties (thus suggesting a decline in foreign policy consensus as a result).

Another external factor that can impact the changes in the level of partisan consensus has to do with the unique role that the United States played in the post-war international order. In particular, US involvement in large-scale or major military operations has had important effects within many countries, particularly allied ones. In many ways, the political left in European countries (as well as in Japan) historically has reacted negatively to major instances of US military interventionism, which presumably engenders a greater degree of dissent between parties on foreign policy issues in these countries.

On the other hand, there are a number of internal political factors that have an impact on partisan foreign policy consensus. For instance, a key to understanding what affects changes in the liberal consensus is to understand that parties use programs to present their positions to a public, and that they want to win elections. As a result, party identity change occurs as the result of parties reacting to changes in the environment, changes that impact their likelihood of performing well in elections (Janda, 1990; Harmel and Janda, 1994; Janda *et al*, 1995). From this perspective, parties are assumed to be conservative organizations that are unlikely to change unless compelled (Harmel and Janda, 1994). Thus, party identity change is viewed as a rational and purposeful move by the party in response to external stimuli.

One factor that affects when a party would change its identity is electoral performance. Indeed, one of the most important influences that necessitates party

change is when a party performs poorly in the polls. Simply put, when parties perform poorly, they change their identities. Janda *et al* (1995) tested the hypothesis that parties will change only if they do poorly in elections, and defined five different kinds of elections as perceived by the party's activists: calamitous, disappointing, tolerable, gratifying and triumphal (Janda *et al*, 1995). They found that calamitous or disappointing elections were associated with the greatest degree of party identity change, indicating that parties only try to change their identities when voters reject the policy face they had presented in the previous election. Thus, changes in the liberal consensus may be more attributable to changes in party electoral performance than to a general decline in an emphasis on international engagement.

At the system level this would suggest that changes in electoral performance by many parties would result in less consensus on key policy issues, particularly as parties seek to change their identities to deal with electoral losses. Thus, electoral volatility in party systems should be associated with lesser degrees of consensus. This is because party systems' electoral volatility involves changes in the electoral performance of parties from election to election. When there are significant changes (as when one party loses a great deal of support or when a new party enters the system), there should be greater pressure on parties to deflect from the consensus on foreign policy. On the other hand, if party politics indeed 'stops at the water's edge', then the extent to which a party system is volatile should have little impact upon party consensus on liberal international engagement.

Finally, commitment to international engagement should also be affected by the economic performance of the country. For instance, support for foreign aid and development aid is often a function of domestic economic performance (Easterly, 2006). During times of economic recession there is generally less support for activities such as distributing foreign aid. Thus, for parties that seek to win election during times of economic stagnation, there may be less commitment to international engagement.

Questions and Hypotheses

On the basis of the above discussion, we posit and address the following question – can variance in the level of commitment to international engagement be attributed to major international systemic changes or watershed events, party system volatility or international events? Five hypotheses suggested by the literature regarding party identity change are incorporated here to help identify the determinants of party support for international engagement. The first set, which focuses on the level of party systems, suggests that over time there is less (or more) consensus (or greater or less disparity) between parties regarding the commitment to engage internationally. In particular, important structural changes in the international system should



impact the level of consensus on international engagement and suggest the following competing hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: The end of the Cold War should be followed by a period of less positive partisan consensus on international engagement.

Hypothesis 1a: The end of the Cold War should be followed by either a period of greater positive partisan consensus or should have no effect.

Hypothesis 2: Following the advent of the 'War on Terror' in 2001, there should be a period of less positive partisan consensus on international engagement.

Second, as suggested by the literature on party change, the extent to which a party changes its commitment to international engagement is a function of party performance. In particular, we would expect that at the party system level, consensus in favor of international engagement would decline when the party system becomes electorally volatile, that is, some parties lose significant voter support (and others gain) or when new parties enter the system. This should result in a decline in partisan consensus both generally and with foreign policy in particular.

Hypothesis 3: There should be less positive partisan consensus on international engagement following periods of electoral volatility in party systems than otherwise.

Third, we test the impact of foreign policy shocks, particularly the effects of militarized interstate disputes on partisan consensus on international engagement.

Hypothesis 4: A state's engagement in a major militarized interstate dispute will reduce positive partisan consensus on international engagement.

Finally, we test whether major US-led military operations affected the extent to which a partisan consensus existed on international engagement.

Hypothesis 5: During years in which the United States was involved in a major military action, there will be less positive partisan consensus on international engagement than in those years without military action.

Design and Methodology

We collected data on 131 parties across 365 elections in 23 countries (Table 1). The 23 countries were the countries listed in OECD countries that provided data for Development Assistance Committee and because countries they are the countries with the largest amount of democratic aid that had parties represented in the Comparative Manifestos project.

Table 1: List of countries included in the analysis

Australia	Italy
Austria	Japan
Belgium	Luxembourg
Canada	The Netherlands
Denmark	New Zealand
Finland	Norway
France	Portugal
Germany	Spain
Great Britain	Sweden
Greece	Switzerland
Iceland	United States
Ireland	

To measure the dependent variable in this study (positive partisan consensus on international engagement) we used data from the Comparative Manifestos Dataset (available at manifestoproject.wzb.eu/). In particular, we use the *internationalism* score for each party. This figure was derived from a combination of parties' values on 'positive need for international cooperation' as coded by the CMP (PER 107) and 'negative need for international cooperation' (PER 109) scores. Positive need for international cooperation incorporates mentions in a party's electoral manifesto of cooperation with specific countries other than those that were former colonies; and positive mentions of the following: the need for aid to developing countries, the need for world planning of resources, the need for international courts, support for any international goal or world state and support for United Nations. Negative references to internationalism include favorable mentions of national independence and sovereignty as opposed to internationalism; and negative mentions of the following: the need for aid to developing countries, the need for world planning of resources, the need for international courts, support for any international goal or world state and support for United Nations.

To take into account the positive references to internationalism relative to the negative references to internationalism, we subtract negative references from positive references. Given that different manifestos are of significantly different word lengths, we standardize the scores by dividing this value by the total number of words in the party manifesto. The resultant value thus can be positive or negative.

To measure the extent to which there is a *partisan consensus* on international engagement in a given election year, we calculate the standard deviation of the parties' internationalism scores. Then we subtract the standard deviation score from 1 ($1-SD$) and multiply this score by the average internationalism score. The result is a partisan consensus score for each country for each election, with higher positive values indicating greater positive consensus and lower values indicating less positive consensus.

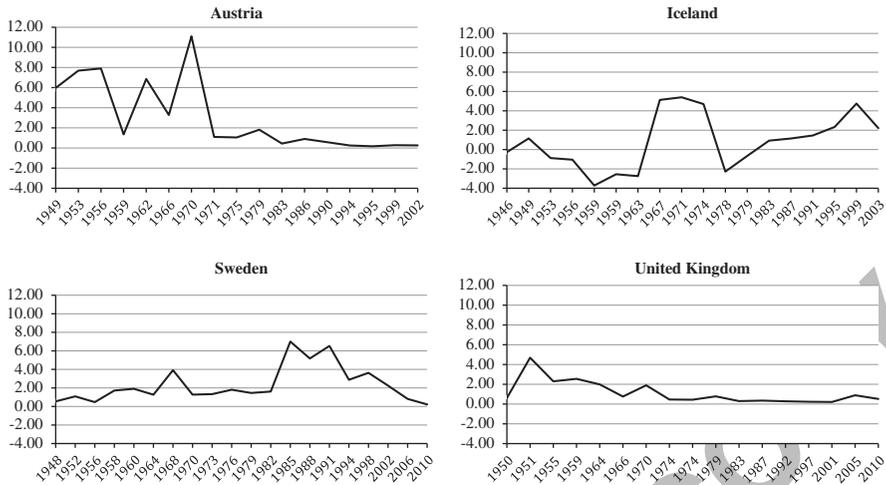


Figure 1: Partisan consensus on internationalism in four sample countries, 1945–2010.

The score demonstrates considerable variation: across the 365 elections in our sample, it ranges from a minimum value of -3.72 (for the election held in Iceland in 1959) to a maximum value of 13.25 (for the election held in Japan in 1990).³ The average partisan consensus score is 1.23 , with a standard deviation of 1.87 . More nuanced evidence of this variation is presented in Figure 1, which includes graphs of partisan consensus scores for four randomly selected countries in our sample for all elections held between 1945 and 2010. Comparable graphs for all countries in our analysis are included in Appendix.

To test Hypotheses 1 and 2, we simply coded as dummies elections that occurred after 1991 (or post-Cold War elections) and post-2001 elections (or elections that were held after the ‘War on Terror’ had begun). To test Hypothesis 3, we calculated the well-known Pedersen index (1979) for electoral volatility for the prior election for each party system. This method is incorporated because we expect that parties adjust their positions in their manifestos after major shifts in voter support in previous elections. Thus, if volatility in a previous election is higher, less consensus should be exhibited in the following election as parties change their positions on key policy issues (including foreign policy). The Pedersen index is calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{Volatility} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n |p_{it} - p_{i(t+1)}|}{2}$$

where n represents the number of parties and p_i the vote share percentage for each party in time periods t and $t+1$ (in this case from year to year). The higher the value

the greater the shift in voter support from one party to another, and therefore the greater the volatility in the party system.

For Hypothesis 4, we use European region levels 4 and 5 disputes from the Correlates of War (COW) Militarized Interstate Dispute (MID) data set for the years 1945–2001. Like Podilska, we use only the MID scores 4 (use of force) and 5 (war) as these represent situations that are likely to most approximate foreign policy crises and thus can be expected to have the greatest impact on domestic politics. We code ‘1’ for all elections that took place within 3 years of the date of a dispute in a nation that participated in a COW MID levels 4 or 5 dispute. For example, France and the United Kingdom were involved in an MID level 5 dispute (the Suez Canal crisis) in 1956. We code ‘1’ for all of the French and British elections that occurred within 3 years of this dispute. Similarly, for MID level 4 disputes, we code ‘1’ for all elections within 3 years of the date of the COW MID level 4 (use of force) dispute. For example, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union were involved in an MID level 4 dispute, beginning on 14 May 1952. We code ‘1’ for all British elections that occurred within 3 years subsequent to that dispute.

For Hypothesis 5, we code the years in which a major US MID (or MID 5) occurred and the 3 years immediately following the dispute (these years coded as 1 and 0 as otherwise) that involved a major military intervention. These included the periods 1950–1956 (the Korean War, 1950–1953 and 3 years after), 1964–1976 (or the Vietnam War, 1964–1973 and 3 years after), 1990–1994 (the Gulf War, 1990–1991 and 3 years after), and the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars (2001–present).

Finally, as additional control variables, we include gross domestic product per capita growth rates in the year of the election (as reported by the World Bank) and whether the country was one of the top 10 donor states in the world (on average) from 1960 to 2010 in terms of the absolute volume of development aid. We use the top 10 aid donors as a measure of convenience as this criteria roughly bifurcates the sample, but also because there is a natural break between Norway (#10) and Switzerland (#11) – that is, a large gap in terms of the amount of aid. The latter is intended to control for differences between countries that are heavily involved in maintaining the liberal international order (such as the United States, Germany, France, Japan and the United Kingdom) and those who are less invested (like Spain and Portugal). Finally, we also include in the analysis a control variable for North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) membership, with the presumption that countries that have a commitment to collective security also maintain a commitment to maintain the US-led liberal international order.

Analysis

Turning to the multivariate analysis, we determined via a White’s test that no problems with heteroscedasticity were present and that multicollinearity was similarly

unproblematic (using the variance inflation factor (VIF) where all VIF scores were under '2'). Given that we are working with panel data, before conducting the analysis, we assessed whether a fixed effects or random effects model was most appropriate for the analysis. Using a Hausman test, we determined that the most appropriate model for this analysis is a generalized least squares (GLS) random-effects model (with probability $>\chi^2=0.4484$).

Table 2 reports the results of regressing the dependent variable, positive *partisan consensus* on international engagement, against the nine independent variables.

In model 1 we report the results for the full model, which includes all 387 elections. As indicated, both the post-1991 and post-2001 dummy variables are statistically significant and in the predicted direction, which generally supports the liberal decline hypotheses. After 1991, there were generally higher levels of positive partisan consensus on internationalism. This finding is in opposition to Hypothesis 1 but provides support for Hypothesis 1a, perhaps reflecting the new cooperative

Table 2: Random-effects GLS regression results (full model and split sample results)

Variable	Coefficient (standard error)				
	Model 1 (full model)	Model 2 (top 10 development aid donors)	Model 3 (bottom 13 development aid donors)	Model 4 (NATO member)	Model 5 (Non NATO)
Post-1991 dummy	0.62* (0.41)	1.56* (0.87)	0.08 (0.36)	-0.09 (0.28)	1.38 (1.01)
Post-2001 dummy	-1.23** (0.55)	-3.07*** (1.18)	-0.08 (0.46)	-0.01 (0.27)	-2.51** (1.33)
Electoral volatility from previous election	-2.39** (1.20)	-3.03* (1.90)	-0.96 (1.19)	-0.32 (0.75)	-5.61* (3.00)
MID4 dummy	-0.48 (0.44)	-1.21* (0.69)	-0.02 (0.42)	0.01 (0.26)	-1.83 (1.21)
MID5 dummy	-0.21 (0.69)	-0.52 (1.09)	0.07 (0.72)	-0.37 (0.46)	-0.10 (1.54)
GDP per capita annual growth rate	-0.09 (0.07)	-0.24* (0.14)	0.04 (0.05)	0.06 (0.04)	-0.15 (0.17)
US MID5 dummy	-0.27 (0.33)	-0.93* (0.60)	0.15 (0.30)	-0.24 (0.21)	-0.88 (0.86)
NATO member	-1.44** (0.70)	-2.91**** (0.74)	-0.33 (0.55)	—	—
Top 10 development aid donor dummy	1.50** (0.70)	—	—	0.26 (0.49)	3.70**** (0.88)
<i>N</i>	387	168	219	164	105
<i>R</i> ²	0.12	0.07	0.01	0.03	0.20

* $P \leq 0.10$; ** $P \leq 0.05$; *** $p \leq 0.01$; **** $P \leq 0.001$.

spirit following the end of the Cold War and a renewed focus on international engagement. This result calls into question those who have argued that a decline in partisan consensus on foreign policy occurred following the removal of the common enemy, the Soviet Union, after the end of the Cold War. On the other hand, and consistent with the liberal decline literature, the partisan consensus was significantly weaker after 2001 than before (thus supporting Hypothesis 2). This may indicate the collapse of the partisan liberal consensus in foreign policy following the onset of the War on Terror.

Thus, the results are somewhat mixed – they indicate that partisan consensus was higher generally in the post-1991 period than before, but lower in the post-2001 era than before. This might suggest that the period after 2001 exhibited a decline in the partisan consensus that favored international engagement. In short, the evidence indicates support for the decline in consensus hypothesis as the result of events following 9/11.

Also supported was Hypothesis 3, which proposed that the level of electoral volatility in the previous election should affect the partisan consensus on liberal engagement. Changes in vote shares by parties and or the entrance of new parties into the system led to less partisan consensus on liberal engagement in subsequent elections. This is consistent with the literature that suggests that parties alter their appeals based on electoral performance, and indicates that this causal relationship applies to issues related to foreign engagement (that is, that politics did not stop at the water's edge).

Although neither Hypothesis 4 (foreign policy shock) nor Hypothesis 5 (occurrence of US MID level 5) were supported by the results in model 1, the control variables of whether the country was a top 10 foreign aid donor and whether the country was a member of NATO were statistically significant. The findings for these controls suggests that there was a difference in terms of partisan consensus on liberal internationalism between countries that were heavily engaged in foreign development aid and others, and that there were differences in consensus between countries that had committed to the post-war US-led international collective security system (as members of NATO) and those that had not.

Taking these results as cues, we split the sample into two. This was done, first, by conducting analyses with a sample including countries that were top 10 aid donors (model 2) and another including those that were not (model 3); and then differentiating NATO members (model 4) from non-NATO members (model 5). As indicated in Table 2, the results are strikingly different when comparing top aid donors against other countries. Indeed, for top aid donors, the post-1991 dummy, the post-2001 dummy and the electoral volatility variables were all statistically significant and in the predicted direction. Furthermore, among the top aid donors, the findings regarding partisan consensus on international engagement were surprisingly counter to theoretical expectations. During periods of economic expansion, consensus on international engagement unexpectedly declined. This may occur due to the idea that during times of economic expansion issues of foreign policy become more relevant,



although times of economic contraction involve a turning within on the part of policy makers rather than a focus on foreign policy. Though a range of other explanations may account for this decline, this issue is beyond the current scope of this paper. In stark contrast, non-top 10 aid donors exhibited no statistically significant relationships with the partisan consensus on liberal internationalism.

For NATO and non-NATO countries the dynamic is quite different. Among NATO members there was little in the way of a change after both 1991 and 2001 in terms of the partisan consensus on international engagement. Indeed, none of the relationships hypothesized were statistically significant for NATO members. However, for non-NATO members, although the post-1991 dummy was not significant, it was generally in the posited direction (that is, that there was greater partisan consensus after 1991). The post-2001 dummy and the electoral volatility variables were significant and in the predicted direction. Combined with the results above, it would appear that countries that were outside of NATO and top foreign aid donors (such as Japan, Sweden, Australia, etc.) were likely to experience less positive partisan consensus concerning international engagement after 2001 and that consensus on international engagement for these states was more likely to fluctuate depending on electoral performance.

These results suggest that among countries that contribute most to development aid, or are not NATO members, international engagement *is* a political issue. It is intuitive that countries that are most engaged (but not bound to the collective security community via NATO) would be more sensitive to structural changes in the international system (such as the end of the Cold War and the onset of the 'War on Terror'). Further, in countries where international engagement involves a substantial commitment of resources, the partisan consensus in favor of international engagement is also a function of the economic performance of a country. During difficult economic times, the partisan consensus breaks down. Finally, in countries that are the most engaged in the distribution of international development aid *and* are outside of NATO, parties do change their appeals regarding internationalism following elections that lead to volatility in party systems, in contrast to those countries that provide a lesser degree of development aid. This is owing to the fact that in the former countries, international engagement is an important political issue (involving *real* resources), and these states are not constrained by commitments to NATO collective action; whereas in the latter countries, these issues are not as important. In short, politics may have never stopped 'at the water's edge' as has been suggested in much of the liberal consensus literature.

Conclusion

Our overall results support Hypotheses 1a (higher partisan consensus post-Cold War period), Hypothesis 2 (lower partisan consensus post-2001) and Hypothesis 3

(lower partisan consensus with higher electoral volatility) but not Hypothesis 1 (lower partisan consensus post-Cold War period). Hypotheses 4 and 5 were not supported (our coefficients were in the expected direction, but not statistically significant). The above results thus provide some support for the literature that posited that a decline in liberal consensus occurred, particularly after 2001. However, as indicated by the above analyses, the positive partisan consensus in support of internationalism was *higher* after 1991 than before (contrary to the decline in liberal consensus argument), especially for top aid donors, but was *lower* after 2001 than before (again particularly for top aid donors, and in support of the decline in liberal consensus literature).

These results indicate that the end of the Cold War and the removal of the Soviet threat did not lead to less partisan consensus as anticipated by the end of liberal consensus literature. However, after 11 September 2001 a decline in partisan consensus did take place. This might suggest that structural changes in the international system, coupled with perhaps generational changes in political leadership, have led to changes in the partisan consensus on international engagement, particularly after 2001. However, a very important factor accounting for changes in the partisan consensus was the level of electoral volatility in the prior election, especially for elections in top 10 aid donor countries. This would suggest that for such countries, international engagement is a political issue, and that parties alter their appeals (and hence exhibit less consensus) in reaction to performance at the polls. In essence, politics may never have ‘stopped at the water’s edge’ for most Western countries regarding international engagement, as has been suggested by the prevailing literature regarding the decline in the liberal consensus in the West.

About the Authors

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Notes

- 1 As with most studies that have examined the impact of the domestic 'liberal consensus' Trubowitz focuses on the US experience. However, he also suggests that similar dynamics involving international power dynamics and domestic politics occur in other countries, even authoritarian or semi-authoritarian ones, such as China and Russia.
- 2 For a discussion of the development of liberal internationalism in the United States after the Second World War see Gaddis (1982), Isaacson and Thomas (1986), Leffler (1992) and Ruggie (1996).
- 3 There is one outlier: partisan consensus in Japan in 1993 is 38.15. Our results are robust to excluding this case from our analysis.

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Appendix

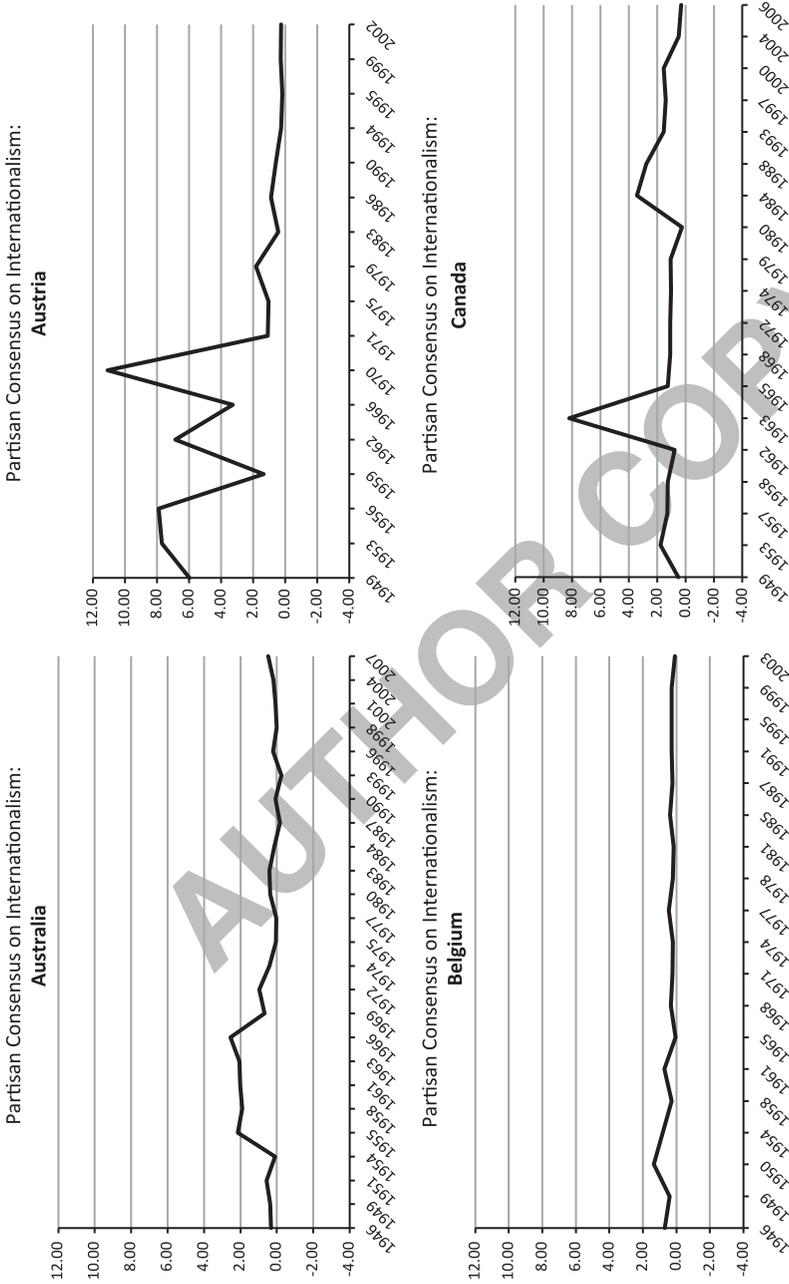


Figure A.1: Partisan consensus on internationalism over space and time.

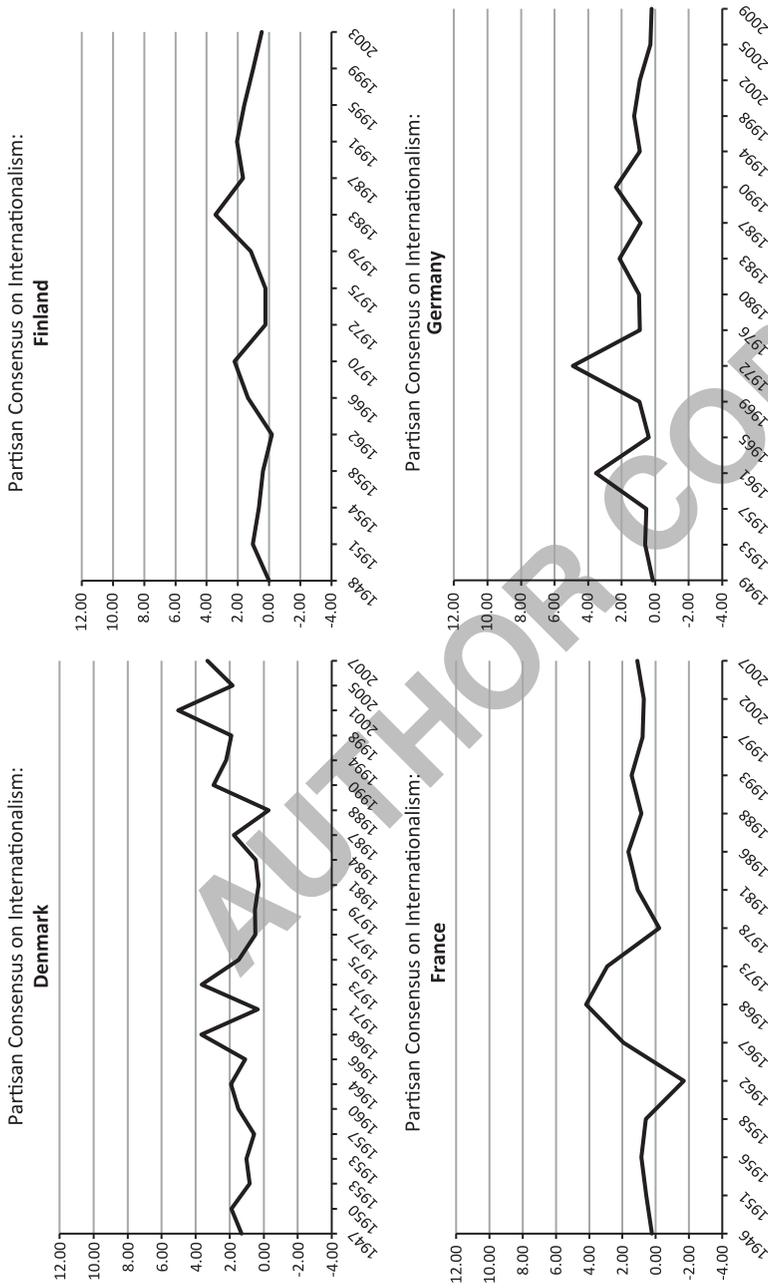


Figure A1: Continued

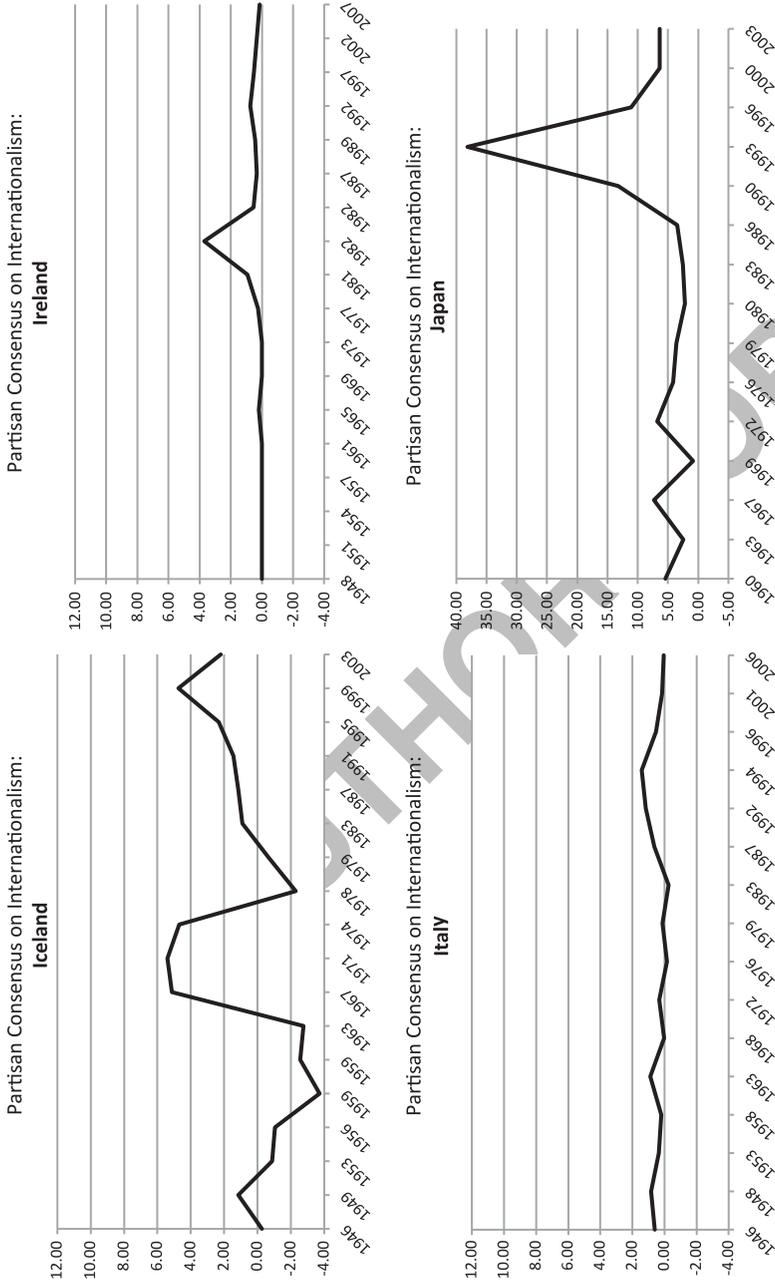


Figure A1: Continued

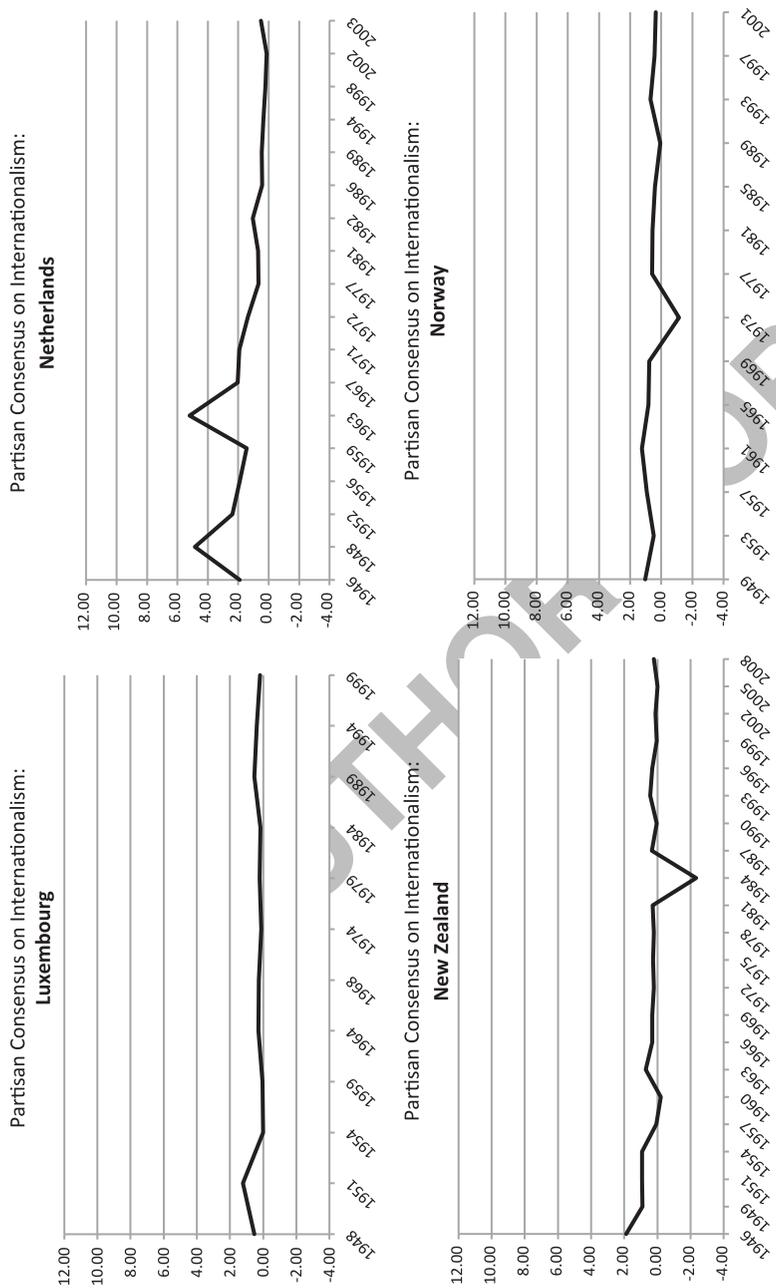


Figure A1: Continued

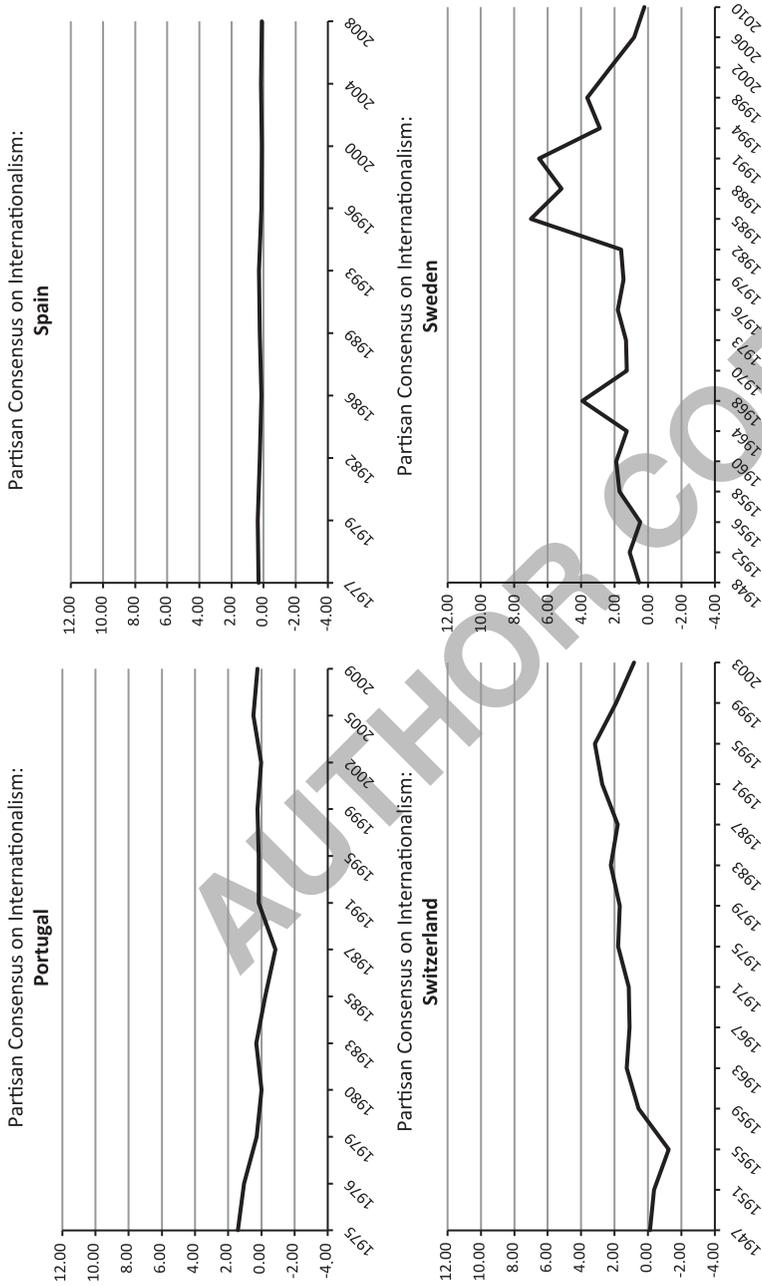


Figure A1: Continued

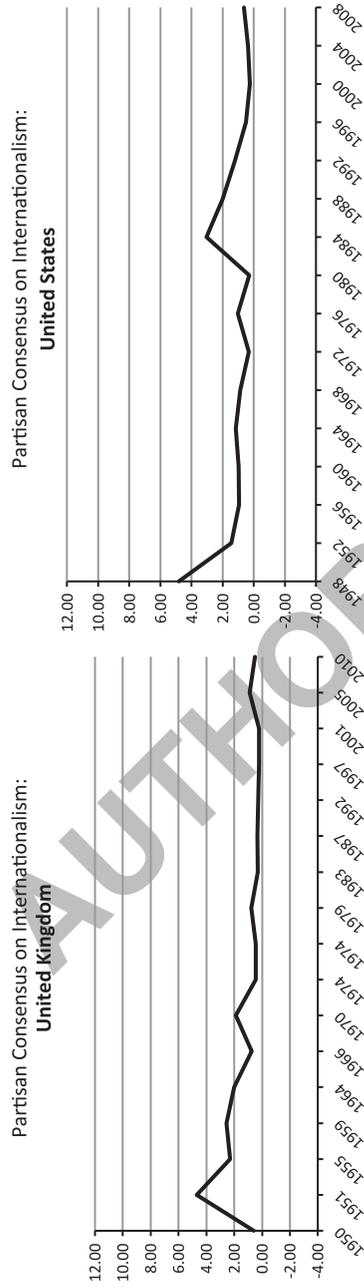


Figure A1: Continued