

Deegan-Krause, K. 2006. New Dimensions of Political Cleavage. *Oxford Handbook of Political Science*, eds. R. Dalton and H.-D. Klingemann. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Final pre-publication draft. Please do not cite without permission of the author. Contact: kdk@wayne.edu

NEW DIMENSIONS OF POLITICAL CLEAVAGE



Kevin Deegan-Krause

A newcomer to studies of political cleavage may be forgiven for thinking that the only common denominator of contemporary scholarship is an obligatory reference to Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan's 1967 "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments." As in many fields of study related to democratic politics, research on cleavage faces a recent surplus of novelty:

- New cases in Latin America, Central and Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia;
- New data and new methods;
- New conceptual understandings of the term "cleavage."

With this explosion of possibilities, a general theory of cleavage seems even less likely today than in 1967, but a survey of scholarship on new cleavages—and new thinking on old cleavages—can outline broad patterns

2 *New Dimensions of Political Cleavage*

and point to areas for further research. Such a survey must ask what scholars now mean when they talk about cleavages and what recent studies reveal about the contours of new cleavages, their origins, and their consequences.

New Words for Cleavage?

A baffling array of inconsistently-used terms plagues contemporary scholarship on cleavage. Precise definition was not Lipset and Rokkan's main goal and their article's provocative ambiguity may explain its endurance. Subsequent researchers have attempted introduce more precision, most prominently Bartolini and Mair who specify that cleavage entails

an empirical element, which identifies the empirical referent of the concept, and which we can define in social-structural terms; a normative element, that is the set of values and beliefs which provides a sense of identity and role to the empirical element, and which reflect the self-consciousness of the social group(s) involved; and an organizational/behavioral element, that is the set of individual interactions, institutions, and organizations, such as political parties, which develop as part of the cleavage (1990, 215).

For Bartolini and Mair a cleavage involves *all* of these differences at the same time. They emphasize that “cleavages cannot be reduced simply to the outgrowths of social stratification; rather, social distinctions become cleavages when they are organized as such.... A cleavage has therefore to be considered primarily as *a form of closure of social relationships*” (216). While many authors take issue with particular aspects of this definition, it is remarkable the degree to which the major works in the field accept the three elements. Research on cleavage most often entails the search for self-conscious demographic groups sharing a common mindset and distinct political organization.

The scholarly quest to identify cleavages with all three elements yields fruitful results for some cases in some eras but not for others, and analysis of those cases that lack one or more of the three elements has been hampered by the lack of common vocabulary for “something less” than Bartolini and Mair's cleavage definition. It is helpful, therefore, before talking about new cleavages to establish a common basis for

“something less” than cleavage. The conceptual model presented in Figure 1. offers a suggestion for simplifying the current conceptual mess down to seven key relationships across three levels, accepting or adapting current usage wherever possible.

One Cleavage Element: A Difference

“Difference” nicely captures the notion of a lone cleavage element. This chapter uses the general term “structure” to include to the “empirical,” “ascriptive,” or “demographic” categories found in cleavage research. The heading “attitude” here refers to “normative” or “value” categories. The heading “institution” refers to activity elsewhere labeled as “political,” “organizational” or “behavioral.”

- Two Cleavage Elements: A Divide

The term “divide” which is already in relatively common use effectively captures the notion of distinct sides but without the sheer quality of a cleavage. Three such pairs are possible:

- *Structure plus Attitudes*. The term “position divide” offers an alternative to various teleological notions such as “non-politicized cleavage” used to describe the alignment of structural and attitudinal difference without an accompanying political alignment. “Position” carries connotations both of structural location and of individual attitude.
- *Structure plus Institutions*. Knutsen and Scarborough’s “pure structural voting” (1995) accurately captures the notion, but does not lend itself to easy use. The phrase “census divide,” echoing Horowitz’s “census elections” (1985), captures the alignment of group identity and political choice without attitudinal trappings.
- *Attitudes plus Institutions*. This relationship has spawned the greatest variety of alternatives and stands in greatest need of clarity. The word “issues” emerges regularly in scholarship in this area and refers to the interplay between attitude and partisanship.

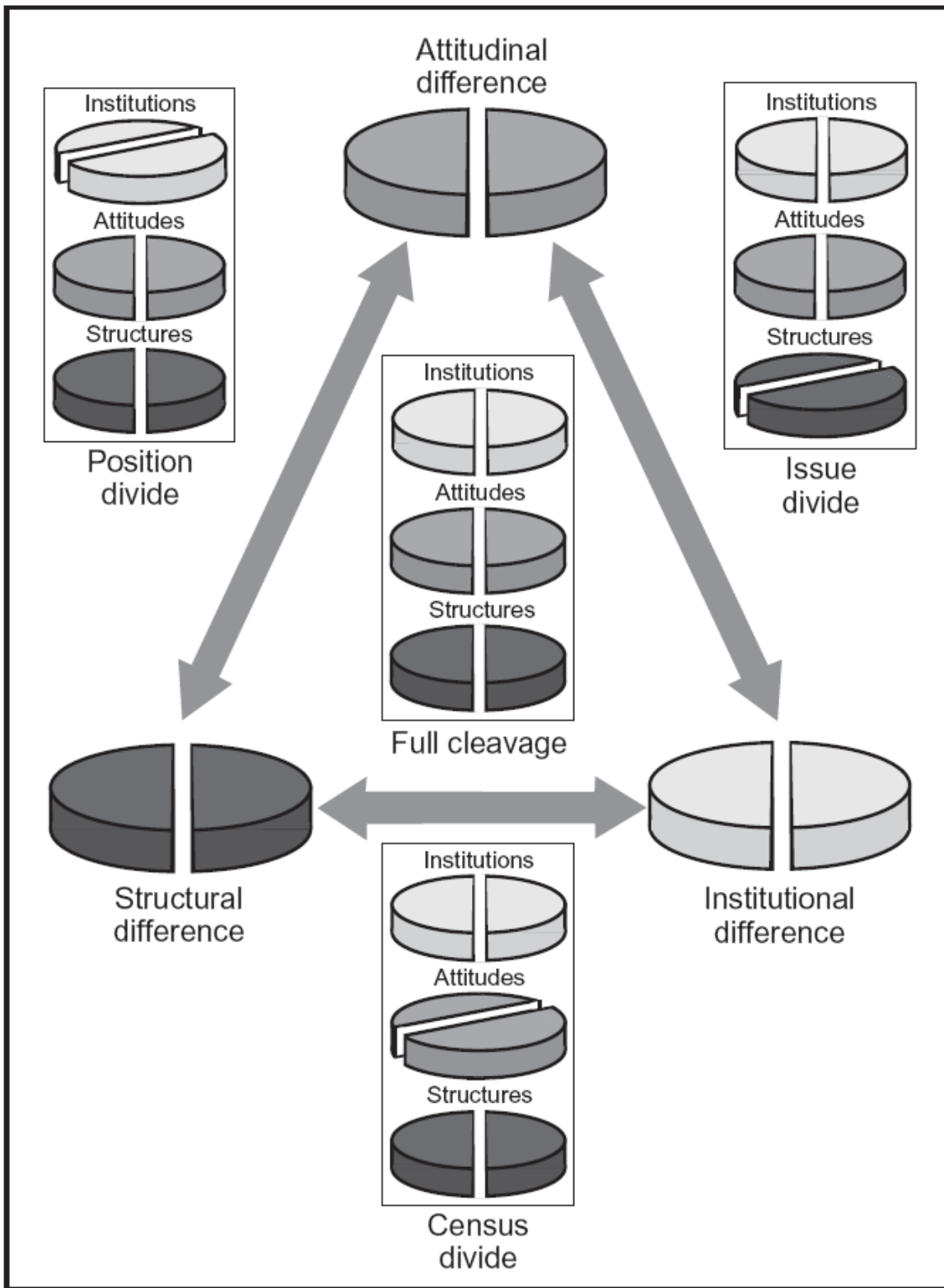


FIGURE 1.1. Model of difference, divide, and cleavage.

- Three Cleavage Elements: Full Cleavage

The word “cleavage” has been used in so many ways that it can serve here only as a generic term for division. The phrase “full cleavage” is necessary to specify Bartolini and Mair’s three-fold concept.

New Typologies of Cleavage?

In a handbook on “political behavior” it is appropriate to begin with *political* differences and assess the degree to which these overlap with attitudinal differences to form issue divides or with structural differences to form census divides or with both to form full cleavages.

Much scholarship on “cleavage” focuses on how institutional and attitudinal differences interact to form issue divides. A profusion of new surveys has made such studies easier in recent years, but there are other good reasons for starting with issue divides. Issue divides appear to have increased in importance, accompanying or perhaps supplanting structurally-based divides. A sign of the importance of issue divides is the number of attempts to create comprehensive schemas of issue divides. Sartori (1976) begins with the primacy of programmatic left and right emphasizing questions of market and state distribution of economic resources, but his preliminary four-dimensional schema also recognizes other potentially programmatic conflicts including secularism against denominations, ethnicity against integration, and democracy against authoritarianism. Others have proposed additional categories including material v. post-material values (Inglehart 1977), foreign policy questions (Lijphart 1984), and domestic protectionism against processes such as international integration, immigration and globalization (Stubager 2003; Cole 2005; Kriesi 1998).

Of course structure retains an important role. Lipset and Rokkan’s definition of key structural elements has survived the test of time not only because its labels elegantly captured key structural differences but also because they have proven highly adaptable:

- “urban-rural” cleavage now represents geographic difference;
- “owner-worker” cleavage represents socio-economic status;

6 *New Dimensions of Political Cleavage*

- “center-periphery” cleavage represents cultural difference, particularly ethnicity;
- “church-state” cleavage represents differences in cultural values and religiosity.

Thus adapted, Lipset and Rokkan’s list leaves little room for additional categories. Tóka notes that “The requirement of social closure implies that only a few quasi-demographic differences (class, ethno-religious or regional identity, urban-rural residence) can serve as the bases of cleavages” (Tóka 1998, 596). The few serious rival claimants include generational difference and education level (Inglehart 1997), economic sector (Kriesi 1998) and gender (Brooks 2006).

New Contours of Cleavage?

On the basis of these lists it is possible to begin to explore the contours of divides and cleavages questions. This involves several fairly obvious questions built around the above-mentioned conceptual framework: 1) the importance of various issue divides, 2) the interaction among various issue divides, and 3) the structural roots of issue divides and of those institutional differences without attitudinal components. Many accepted categories remain useful, even though they were derived from a limited number of mid-20th century democracies. In other respects, however, early 21st century politics challenges the boundaries and pushes the old metaphors to the breaking point in every region, even in long-standing democracies.

Advanced Industrial Democracies

The divides and cleavages of Western Europe have received constant attention from scholars for the past half-century and their efforts document considerable areas of stability coupled with certain specific changes. Attitudes on economic questions have continued to shape partisan choice as have, to a lesser extent, questions about religion and religion-related cultural values choice. Furthermore, both social class and religiosity have continued to exhibit a significant relationship to partisanship and in some countries so have regional, ethnic, or linguistic differences. Yet much has changed. New institutional differences have emerged with the rise of

Green and extreme right parties (and in some countries the collapse of major parties). Established democracies have also experienced the rise of issue divides based on questions such as political participation, environmental protection, sex- and reproduction-related issues, and immigration.

Scholars continue to debate the independence of these “new” attitudinal differences from differences on more established socio-economic and religious issue questions. In his survey of industrial democracies Moreno finds a wide variation in the degree to which respondents’ positions on “new” questions reflected their positions on socioeconomic questions, but in most countries exhibited a relatively high degree of independence between the two issue dimensions (1999). Moreno also finds considerable diversity in the degree to which these attitudinal differences align with party preference. In some countries he finds party systems arrayed across two dimensions, while in other countries parties lay close to a single line on a redistribution v. market dimension or a postmodern v. fundamentalist dimension or a combined postmodern/redistribution v. fundamentalist/market dimension. Kitschelt and Rehm (2005) find considerably less variation. Although they array parties in a two-dimensional space defined by support for redistribution of income and support for “superior goods” (environment, culture and education), average party supporters in each of their nine cases line up close to a diagonal line defined by extremes that the authors label as left-libertarian and right-authoritarian, though the clustering and the steepness of the slope differ from case to case.

It is noteworthy that these disagreements tend to fall within fairly narrow bounds. These authors agree about the basic issue dimensions on which parties compete, and they find that postmodern attitudes sometimes align with anti-market attitudes but almost never with *pro*-market attitudes. Researchers disagree more strongly about the degree to which institutional differences and issue divides depend on structural elements. Three decades of prominent studies have demonstrated the weakening of party loyalty and in particular the weakening of working class support for left-wing parties (Nieuwbeerta 1999). Brooks, Nieuwbeerta and Manza (2006) also report a decline in the relationship between religiosity and voting the

8 New Dimensions of Political Cleavage

Netherlands, a country noted for its strong church v. state cleavage. Many who emphasizes the progress of structural dealignment also note “an increased effect of issues on the vote” which “compensated more or less precisely for the decline in cleavage politics” (Dalton 1996, 335). Much of the increase in issue effects came precisely from the emergence of independent postmaterialist or libertarian issues that exhibited weak relationships to class, religion or other social structures. In 1988 Knutsen argued that even economic-related attitudes had lost their structural roots: “the Left-Right dimension has altered from a structural class or status cleavage to an independent ideological cleavage” (349). In 1995 Knutsen and Scarbrough found a major rise in the significance of issue dimensions: between 1973 and 1990 attitudes alone came to explain partisan choice better than either structures alone or structures plus attitudes.

Other research, however, suggests merely a shift in the type of structures that underpin issue divides. According to Kriesi (1998) and Kitschelt and Rehm (2004) the redistributionist-libertarian v. market-authoritarian issue divide rests upon strong, cleavage-like roots in non-class structures such as age and gender and of newly-disaggregated class categories such as “socio-cultural professional” and “routine office worker.” A growing number of studies based on the ever-widening range of data sources and analytical methods suggest a degree of consensus on the emergence of such cleavage patterns in much of Western Europe. It appears, however, that quite different patterns have emerged in cases such as Belgium, Spain, Canada, the United States and Ireland in which geography and ethnicity play a larger role. Other emerging issue divides may also have the potential to disrupt existing patterns, but despite the enormous economic and cultural role of the European Union, a distinct “integration-independence” issue divide has yet to emerge (Hix 2002).

Postcommunist Europe

Postcommunist Europe offers a remarkable laboratory for political development. Although its cleavages bear some similarity to those of industrial democracies, they differ in ways that have important theoretical implications. The first challenge is to establish whether any form of cleavage exists in the region. Innes

(2002) challenges the notion that postcommunist attitudes and party voting coincide by pointing to large “instant catch-all” parties. She argues that “When party labels become this meaningless, it raises the question of how stable partisanship and consequently system stabilization can be established” (2002, 100). Yet in spite of this programmatic “flexibility,” studies demonstrate a measurable degree of regularity and consistency among most Eastern European parties’ electorates. Gijssbeerts and Nieuwbeerta’s (2000) analysis of economic attitudes shows a narrower distribution of partisan attitudes in postcommunist Europe than in Western Europe but similar overall patterns. Economic issues, furthermore, are not necessarily the best way to compare the strength of issue divides in East and West. Although economy-related divides emerged throughout postcommunist Europe, non-economic issue also aligned closely with party preference. Evans and Whitefield’s (2000) analysis of cross-national data from the mid-1990s identifies a large set of countries in which issues other than economic liberalism formed the primary ideological basis of party competition.

Defining the specific contours of these other issue dimensions requires some departure from frameworks created for Western Europe. Issue divides on cultural questions vaguely resembled Western counterparts, but with significant differences. In Western Europe, Moreno contrasts cultural “fundamentalism” with “postmodernism,” but in postcommunist Europe he finds few characteristically postmodern elements such as “environmental politics” or “sexual preference” (1999, 22) and instead contrasts fundamentalism with cultural “liberalism.” Postcommunist cultural issue divides primarily involve such questions as the role of the church, abortion, pornography, and consumerism, all filtered through a lens of decades of Communist restrictions.

Even more unusual (from a Western European perspective) are postcommunism’s nation-related issue divides. Questions of minority rights form one subset of this category, and these resemble questions about ethnic rights in Spain, Belgium and Northern Ireland. What differentiates national-related issue divides in the East, however, is the degree to which conflicts over minority rights occur *within* as well as across ethnic lines. These intra-national debates over minorities often form part of a larger issue divide related to national

10 New Dimensions of Political Cleavage

sovereignty and the magnitude of threats to national security (Deegan-Krause 2006). This nationalism issue divide, present in many of the region's new states, has few direct parallels in contemporary industrial democracies except perhaps mid-20th-century Ireland, whose divides may be less "exceptional" than scholars have assumed.

A significant share of the postcommunist European cases also experienced deep divides over democracy itself. Slovakia, Croatia, Serbia, Belarus and Ukraine show evidence of divide "between parties of authoritarian and democratic orientation" (Todosijević 2003, 79). Surveys suggest that this authoritarianism-democracy divide emerged in Slovakia, Croatia, Serbia, Belarus, Ukraine and some other former Soviet republics. These divides differed from Western Europe's authoritarian-libertarian divides to the extent that postcommunist authoritarianism had less to do with the democracy's quality than with its very existence.

Postcommunist Europe demonstrated not only a wider range of active issue divides than Western Europe, but also a far greater diversity of combinations. In some countries, for example national and economic divides ran parallel while in others the two divides were perpendicular. In the parallel cases, furthermore, some countries' nationalists tended to support market reforms while nationalists elsewhere opposed reforms. The relationship between economic and cultural divides also varied, though cultural and market divides usually formed two independent dimensions. The most consistent combination involved the tendency of authoritarianism to line up with nationalism (Kitschelt 1992), but even here it would be premature to see an inherent link. Since fewer than half of the region's national divides were accompanied by authoritarianism-democracy issue divides it would appear that authoritarians need nationalism more than nationalists need unaccountable authority.

Much of this diversity in issue divides appears to be the result of a variety of historical circumstances in the region, but another source is the weakness of structural roots for many divides. The nearly perfect correlation between minority ethnicity and voting for minority ethnic parties offers a rare example of a full cleavage, but such cleavages often had few direct political consequences because of the small size of minority

populations. More important divides exhibited weaker roots. Gijssbeerts and Nieuwbeerta (2000) find that the relationship between social class and economic *attitudes* to be almost as strong in postcommunist Europe as in Western Europe, but economic attitudes related to party choice only in the Czech Republic. In other countries voters recognized their class interests, but rarely voted according to those interests.

Other structural differences did not even produce significant position divides. The vast majority of ethnic majority voters did not choose nationalist parties, and nationalist attitudes among majority-group voters have proven hard to explain. Since the specific details of nation-related issue divides differed from country to country, broad comparative calculations are difficult, but single-country analyses find that within ethnic populations there were few ascriptive markers for nationalist attitudes (Todosijević 2003; Deegan-Krause 2006). The same absence of a clear demographic profile also characterized authoritarian parties especially during the first half of the 1990s before the younger, educated, urban voters realized the consequences of authoritarian leadership for international integration.

Latin America

As another regional laboratory, Latin America raises questions about the relevance of cleavage analysis. Scholarship on the region often focuses on the absence of clear attitudinal or structural bases for party support. Conaghan sees “floating politicians and floating voters” (1995, 450). Roberts notes “a shift from fixed and durable bonds to more fluid and contingent forms of support” and a “severe erosion of both encapsulating and programmatic linkages” (2000, 14-15).

A small number of quantitatively-based pieces suggest the weakness of cleavages in Latin America relative to other regions and their further weakening over time. Mainwaring and Torcal find a considerably smaller relationship between voters’ left-right orientation and their party choice in Latin America than in Western Europe (2003a). Luna and Zechmeister (2005), note “tremendous heterogeneity.” They find Western-strength issue divides in some countries (Chile and Uruguay) but in many other countries they find

12 New Dimensions of Political Cleavage

little meaningful relationship. For those countries where patterns were visible, researchers have attempted to identify broader regional patterns. Moreno finds economic issue divides throughout the region but he argues that in most countries these are less important than regime- and culture-related issue divides. He particularly emphasizes the importance of “democracy-authoritarianism” divides in many countries, an observation confirmed by case studies such as Mainwaring and Torcal’s analysis of Chile (2003b, 83). In the second half of the 1990s, however, Moreno finds that most democracy-related divides had weakened in favor of emerging divides related to cultural questions such as “abortion, religiosity, and nationalist sentiments” (1999, 22).

Notably missing from these assessments is a divide between materialists and postmaterialists along Western European lines. Moreno (1999) finds only small pockets of postmaterialism in Latin America, and as with postcommunist Europe, he contrasts fundamentalism with liberalism rather than postmodernism. As in postcommunist Europe, furthermore, he finds that authority questions tend to stand on their own and concern the rejection of recent authoritarian regimes rather than political participation. Also missing from the list of major Latin America issue divides are ethnic or linguistic questions. Yashar (1998) notes a growing politicization of indigenous populations and issues specific to those populations, but with relatively minor and indirect effects on national-level party competition.

Even to the extent that Latin American politics is “about something,” the attitudes and party choice have little basis in structural elements. Roberts notes that:

Few Latin America party systems have ever lived up to [Bartolini and Mair’s] exacting three-dimensional cleavage standards. In particular, the cleavage structures of most Latin American party systems have had shallower roots in sociological distinctions of class and ethnicity. As pointed out by Dix, most political parties in Latin America draw support from a heterogenous cross-section of society (2002, 8).

Using survey evidence from the mid-1990s, Mainwaring and Torcal concluded that:

On average, Latin American voters have weaker individual level attachments to political parties than Western European voters. They are not strongly anchored to parties through the traditional social cleavages that Lipset and Rokkan (1967) emphasized.... Even after decades of some apparent erosion of such cleavages in Western Europe, they remain far more important in anchoring the vote than in most of Latin America (2003a, 17).

The results are not uniform, however. And some countries demonstrate considerably higher class voting. Roberts finds stronger structural roots for “labor-mobilizing party systems” in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, and Venezuela than in the region’s many “elitist party systems,” but he also notes that neoliberalism and globalization have further undermined these already weak cleavages (2002). Mainwaring and Torcal find class voting to be statistically significant only in Brazil, Argentina and Peru (2003a). Molina and Perez find unexpectedly weak class voting even for Venezuela under Hugo Chavez (2004).

Middle East

In the Middle East only a few countries have produced competitive political systems and comparative research on cleavages focuses on Turkey and Israel. While the specific issues and groups differ, the two countries exhibit some similarities, particularly the emergence of “full cleavages” through the emergence of issue divides that parallel structural differences. According to Shamir and Arian “issues involving identity dilemmas ... have become increasingly important in structuring the vote. Such dilemmas amalgamate policy issues and social allegiances, while reinforcing existing cleavage structures” (1999, 265). In Turkey, relationships between structural, attitudinal and institutional elements have also strengthened over time and Hazama argues that “social cleavages and the party system in Turkey seem to be heading for convergence” (2003, 379). This process diverges from the Western European patterns not only in the direction of movement—toward full cleavages rather than away—but in the nature of the issues and structures. In Israel as in Turkey, the full cleavages emerge around questions of identity related to ethnicity religious sects, and degree of religiosity. In the process, socio-economic issue divides and socio-economic structures have lost importance in political conflict except to the extent that economic position depends on religious or ethnic identity.

14 New Dimensions of Political Cleavage

Asia

As in the Middle East, few Asian countries followed Western European cleavage patterns. Although Japan comes closest to the Western European model, its relatively prominent left-right divide “had more to do with foreign policy and defense” than with class issues, and upheavals in Japanese party politics in the mid-1990s led “the demise of left-right ideological politics in Japan” (Weisberg 2001, 90). In Korea and Taiwan politics experienced even weaker socio-economic divides and tended instead toward democracy-related and nation-related issue divides, though Wong argues that Taiwan’s political parties remained largely “nonprogrammatic” on socioeconomic questions whereas anti-authoritarian parties in Korea were more deeply “anchored in a vision of socioeconomic transformation” (1221-22). Korean parties, however, depended heavily on non-attitudinal elements including structural “regionalism” and “personality dominated, clientelistic parties, built on the basis of vast networks of patron-client relations and informally institutionalized intra-party factions” (Croissant 2002a, 250).

In Southeast Asia, a combination of ethnic structures and clientelist networks (sometimes overlapping and sometimes not) tended to dominate politics with little role for issues that were not immediately reducible to group or clan claims. Croissant argues that “party systems in Asia exhibit a much lower ideological or programmatic orientation than party systems in the Western world” (2002b, 347). In some countries, however, group differences also overlapped broader attitudinal differences, particularly in Indonesia where some party voters exhibited attitudinal and structural characteristics that might be defined as “Islamist” and “secular” (Qodari 2005) and in Thailand where the emergence of a significant new party helped to produce a higher degree of overlap between party choice, attitudes toward redistribution and socio-economic position (at the individual and regional levels) (Croissant, 2005 #1609).

In south Asia, observers note a shift from clientelist networks to ethnic structures. Chhibber argues that the past two decades have witnessed “an erosion of traditional clientelist politics [and] a marked increase

in the political saliency of essentialized identities of caste, religious community, and ethnicity (subnationalism)” (Chhibber 1999, 493-4). These increasingly salient structures, furthermore, have become alternative mechanisms for extracting state resources and the focus on “state resources ... as streams that can be channeled toward those who have the power to control them” has prevented competition over “the basic framework of the economy” (Mehta 1997, 64). At the same time the sheer diversity of groups in India has exerted a restraining influence on the emergence of nation-wide structural divides, and caste differences within the Hindu population have weakened the structural basis of a Hinduism-related cleavage” (Ganguly, 2003, 22).

Africa

In Africa, unlike the regions above, most party systems do not give even a supporting role to attitudinal differences and issue divides. Research in the region begins (and often ends) with the role of structural elements. Young’s research on Africa in the mid-1990s identified “few cases ... where political alignments are not significantly affected by communal solidarities,” because candidates rely on “vague slogans expressing desire for change and opposition to incumbents” rather than “defining alternative visions of society” (1996, 61-62). Nearly a decade later, van de Walle argued that “the low salience of ideology for the majority of [African] parties is unmistakable” (2003, 304). African voting thus depends on a combination the highly individual and the highly structural and “election campaigns have been conducted almost entirely on the basis of personal and ethno-regional appeals for support. In most countries, ... ethnic identity provides a remarkably precise prediction of voting behavior” (305). Posner cautions against an oversimplified view of structural elements, however, noting that “in-group/out-group distinctions” and other “axes of social differentiation” are complex and may emerge on the basis of language, religion, as well as “tribal affiliation, clan membership, geographic region of origin, or race” (2001, 2). He further notes that since no single group is likely to produce an electoral majority, ambitious politicians must engage in coalition building that

16 New Dimensions of Political Cleavage

transcends structural differences. Mozaffar concurs, arguing that the “formation of multiethnic electoral coalitions” may offer some degree of choice and may lead to “variations in the configuration of resulting ethnopolitical cleavages” (2003, 389-390).

Patterns and Trends

Despite what seems an irreducible degree of diversity in the world’s cleavage patterns, some regularities do emerge and some developments prove widespread enough to bear comment. Except in many African states, attitudes play an almost uniformly important role in political choice. The character of the most salient attitudes differs, however, not only from region to region but from country to country. Only among Western democracies do issue divides show signs of an emerging pattern. Even in those countries, the claim to regularity is weak: most Western countries exhibit a socio-economic issue divide between state- and market-distribution that partially overlaps an issue divide between postmaterialism and materialism (or libertarianism and authoritarianism). Other regions exhibit more change and richer variety. An issue divide between pro-market and pro-redistribution parties emerged in nearly all countries, but it frequently played a secondary or tertiary role to issue divides that involved policy on national or religion questions or questions about democracy itself. The variety extends, furthermore, to include patterns of interaction among issue divides, supporting Stimson’s speculation that “what seems to go together” depends less on “logical connections” than on “psychology (what symbols are shared) and social learning (what kinds of ideas are learned together in one’s social background). If nothing is naturally connected, the corollary is that anything can come to seem connected” (2002, 7).

Despite Western research that shows the declining role of class voting, structures have also remained robust, particularly those defined by linguistic and other ethnic boundaries. Rare is the party whose support cuts across such ethnic lines or the ethnicity that does not have at least one party that claims to represent ethnic interests. Party support rarely transcends ethnic lines except in cases where two or more groups band

together in response to a competing group. The link between ethnicity and politics is extremely strong in Africa and nearly so in parts of Asia and the Middle East, but it is hardly less significant in postcommunist Europe. Nor are such cleavages absent in ethnically heterogeneous Western democracies. Structures related to religion have proven nearly as robust, particularly fundamentalist Christianity in parts of North America, Roman Catholicism in parts of postcommunist Europe and certain sects of Islam in the Middle East and parts of Africa and Asia. Even the shrinking role of class in Western countries may reflect less the decline of structure than a shift in salient structural markers away from class hierarchy and toward occupational and sectoral categories.

The relationship between attitudes and structure has also developed new complexities. The growing importance of attitudes may contribute to a further disappearance of many census divides—the non-attitudinal relationship between structure and voting—as structural groups develop attitudinal frames around their collective demands. Issue divides, by contrast, appear capable of surviving without extensive structure, but for some this apparent independence may simply reflect the shift to new and little-studied structural categories. Furthermore, new research suggests that structures can play a different *kind* of role than standard models predict. Examples of the new configuration can be found in many societies with significant ethnic cleavages. Majority and minority ethnic groups may hold very different attitudes about minority rights, but attitudes often differ within those groups as well (especially within majority groups) and in many countries the attitude toward minority rights shapes the central issue divide *within* the majority groups. A similar phenomenon often occurs over religion in the form of sharp disagreements among adherents of a dominant religious sect regarding the role of religion in politics. The central debates of many newer democracies are actually debates within structural segments about whether that structural segment should become the defining element of politics. In a sense, these are *issue divides* about the acceptance or rejection of a particular *full cleavage*. When ethno-nationalists or fundamentalists win convincing victories, full cleavages become more likely. When they fail, issue divides may shift to some other question (perhaps about whether to politicize yet

18 New Dimensions of Political Cleavage

another structural difference). Where the forces are relatively evenly matched, the issue divides concerning the acceptability of nationalism or religious fundamentalism may remain significant for an indefinite period.

Finally, it is necessary to extend the search for structural and attitudinal components of voting into realms that currently receive insufficient attention in cleavage research. The alternatives to structural and attitudinal voting tend to fall under one of three headings: personalism, by which individuals vote on the basis of a candidate's personality or credentials regardless of policy proposals or group affiliations; clientelism, by which individuals exchange their ballot for direct, tangible reward; and pocketbook voting—a combination of clientelist and personalist elements—by which individuals seek tangible reward on the basis of expectations about general economic performance rather than policy proposals. On the map of cleavage politics, these alternatives represent blank spaces, but it is not necessary to cede all of this territory. Cleavage analysis should not ignore the structural nature of clientelism, which often involves large and close-knit social networks. Such networks may be difficult to quantify (especially for outsiders) but to the extent that they perform many of the same functions as ethnic or religious groups and offer a high degree of social closure, they can be understood in structural terms as census-divides or cleavages. Furthermore, pocketbook voting may depend to an unexpected degree on economic program rather than economic performance. Recent findings by Tucker suggest that economic slowdowns in postcommunist Europe hurt parties which oppose redistribution more than those “responsible” for the slowdown (Tucker 2006). Finally, much voting that looks random or purely “personal” may simply reflect the absence of appropriate survey questions. Ostiguy (1998), for example, posits a “high-low” divide in Argentina between “stiff and respectable” and “folksy and coarse” that cuts across standard attitudinal and even structural categories. The multi-country surveys necessary to shed light on the broader cleavage patterns are particularly likely to miss such idiosyncratic divides, particularly those connected with national identity or character. Small-scale, thick description thus remains necessary to prevent big, thin surveys from looking at an unusual cleavage and seeing nothing.

New Explanations for Cleavage

Current work in cleavage studies extends beyond the discernment of patterns to the understanding of causal mechanisms. Much research in the field presents itself as a “classic dichotomy” between those who emphasize the top-down role of political elites against those who emphasize the bottom-up role of society (Hagopian 2004, 5). The best work in the field seeks not to anoint a winner—it is unlikely that one side is right and the other wrong—but to identify the interaction between elites and society and circumstances that may favor one side or the other.

Although nearly all recent scholarship acknowledges a role for individual choice, many scholars still focus on the constraints that make some choices more likely than others. In their study of postcommunist Europe, Evans and Whitefield (2000) give precedence to underlying economic and cultural fault lines. Voters with little experience and little information, they argue, will “respond best to the party appeals which most closely relate to their own significant social experiences, identities and values”; parties, in turn, will emphasize “historic social and ideological divisions within the country,” and the “most pressing contemporary challenges” rather than tempting fate by “impos[ing] divisions on society” (34). Even those who emphasize structural constraints do not agree on their relative influence. Kitschelt, for example, emphasizes the legacies of economic development in 20th century Europe whereas Evans and Whitefield also emphasize significant ethnic and religious differences. Structural accounts have their limits, furthermore. They provide a solid basis for understanding which cleavages are *least* likely to emerge, but in countries with more than one kind of structural fracture, they have difficulty predicting which cleavages will emerge as dominant or how they will align with others. Nor can they easily account for the emergence of issue divides without underlying structural preconditions.

Even Kriesi’s work on “social divisions,” acknowledges that such divisions “are not translated into politics as a matter of course, but that they are decisively shaped by their political articulation” (1998). Recent cleavage studies empirically demonstrate the effects of political agency both on the attitudinal and structural

20 *New Dimensions of Political Cleavage*

elements of cleavage. In their most limited form, claims about the relationship between agency and structure emphasize the potential of political actors to “mitigate social divisions” or “politicize them” through “strategic policy choices” (Chhibber 1997). Netto and Cox (1997, 167) refer to “exploitable cleavages” and Mozaffar, Scarritt and Galaich (2003, 390) view ethnicity as “a strategic resource that is contingently politicized.”

Research provides numerous examples of the reverse principle by which parties *de*-emphasize structural differences when they “identify the common ideological denominator and establish an organizational structure that allows for the aggregation of interests” (Enyedi 2005, 701). Posner further demonstrates that in the right circumstances the amalgamation may even unite groups that otherwise display a high degree of antagonism (Posner 2001). More expansive claims suggest that parties not only increase the political salience of *existing* structural differences but actually create *new* structural differences. Sartori (1969), Zuckerman (1975) and Przeworski and Sprague (1986) emphasizes the capacity for parties to create identities and form communities. Kriesi documents the role of party-organized “collective actions” (1998, 172) to reinforce the “structural and cultural distinctiveness” of left-libertarian sociocultural professionals and of rival segments of the “new middle class” in managerial positions.

Other research focuses on relationship between political elites and attitudes. Mainwaring argues that “political elites emphasize some issues and muffle others. Especially before the institutionalization of a party system, their choices affect the issues that emerge as salient in different political systems” (1999, 59). Other recent research emphasizes the ability of parties to shape issue divides not only by influencing the political salience of attitudes but also by the shaping the attitudes themselves, particularly toward issues of low salience. Layman and Carsey use panel surveys to demonstrate that parties can link previously unrelated attitudes. They find that United States’ voters “change their issue positions in response to changes in the stands of political elites who share their political predispositions” (2002, 202). Party elites can therefore shape alignments among issue divides: “When party elites polarize on multiple issue agendas, rather than just one, the parties in the electorate may well follow suit” (201). A further strong consequence of “party-driven attitudinal

conversion” is that parties with relatively stable electorates may actually be able to restructure the fundamental relationship between structure and attitudes. Enyedi (2005), for example, finds that Hungary’s Young Democrat party succeeded not only in attracting more authoritarian voters while maintaining a younger-than-average base, but also, perhaps, in increasing levels of authoritarianism among young Hungarians.

Not all elite-led efforts face equal odds for success, however, and recent research tests the conditions favoring politicization or depoliticization of attitudes and structures. It appears, for example, that a larger number of raw structural differences increase the role of elites simply by allowing for more choices about *which* difference to politicize (Deegan-Krause 2006). Institutional factors also matter. Mainwaring’s work on Brazil demonstrates how states influence cleavages by shaping party systems (1999). Netto and Cox (1997), Posner (2001), van de Walle (2003), and Burgess (2003) emphasize the role of electoral systems design and party organization. Hagopian (2004) and van de Walle (2003) note that clientelist institutions undermine efforts to politicize particular issues while Chhibber suggests that the weakness of civil society magnifies leaders’ influence over cleavages (1999). Most of these works are individual-country case-studies, however, and there is a significant need for comparative research that can specify the type of elite influence on cleavage formation and test the conditions under which it may occur.

New Consequences of Cleavage?

Extensive comparative research is easier to justify when the phenomenon under study has a significant impact. New research about how cleavages affect democracy points both to new levels of complexity and to new and significant dangers. By far the most frequent justification for the importance of cleavages is its role in creating conditions for stable democratic competition. According to Whitefield’s brief summary of conventional wisdom, “the presence of cleavages... can contribute to democratic stability by solidifying party-public ties and increasing the predictability of political outcomes” (2002, 181-182). Yet research suggests that predictability may not necessarily require full cleavages with structural elements. Tóka’s (1998) survey of

22 *New Dimensions of Political Cleavage*

postcommunist Europe shows that structure played little role in stabilizing voting patterns while attitudes played a significant stabilizing role. The question is further complicated by disputes over the dangers of electoral volatility. Some scholars suggest that structurally-based cleavages may actually threaten democracy since volatility that is too low may produce “winner-take-all exercises between polarized communities” (van de Walle 2003, 305), and Tóka argues that high volatility may on occasion be “an instrument of electoral control” and calls for “some scepticism ... regarding its alleged regime-destabilizing potential” (592). The most significant dangers of volatility are more subtle. Tóka acknowledges that “constant and predictable weakness of party loyalties may undermine the accountability and responsiveness of elected office-holders” (1998, 592), and Dalton worries that without “fixed systems of cleavage systems and alignments,... modern governments may face increasing difficulty in generating a political consensus in favor of any policy” (Dalton 1996, 341). While not instantaneously fatal, persistent volatility resulting from the absence of cleavages could reduce a democracy’s ability to survive over time

A more concrete, but often neglected reason for caring about divides and cleavages is that these have a decisive impact on outcomes. Cleavages have sides, and the side that wins will—in theory, at least—get more of what it wants than the side that loses. Oscillation between rival positions is well understood in the realm of socioeconomic policy and in industrial democracies the relatively narrow swings between market- and state-oriented policies usually evoke little concern. Many newer democracies face more difficult challenges. Not only are their oscillations wider, but they occur along more dangerous lines. In most cases, even sharp swings between more or less redistributive policies pose little threat to civil and political liberties. The same cannot always be said for swings across national, religious or especially democratic divides. The good news is that the victory of democratic and inclusive politicians may produce policies that are even more democratic and inclusive than the society as a whole. The bad news, as many countries have discovered to their peril, is that the imbalance sometimes favors authoritarianism and ethnic or religious exclusion. The questions that divide a country thus shape its destiny.

Works Cited

- Bartolini, S, and Mair, P. 1990. Identity, Competition, and Electoral Availability: The Stability of European Electorates, 1885-1985. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brooks, C., Nieuwbeerta, P., and Manza, J. 2006. Cleavage-Based Voting Behavior in Cross-National Perspective: Evidence from Six Postwar Democracies. Social Science Research, 35: 88-128.
- Burgess, K. and Levitsky, S. 2003. Explaining Populist Party Adaptation in Latin America: Environmental and Organizational Determinants of Party Change in Argentina, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela. Comparative Political Studies 36: 881-911.
- Chhibber, P. 1999. Democracy without Associations: Transformation of the Party System and Social Cleavages in India. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Chhibber, P., and Torcal, M. 1997. Elite Strategy, Social Cleavages, and Party Systems in a New Democracy: Spain. Comparative Political Studies, 30: 27-54.
- Cole, A. 2005. Old Right or New Right? The Ideological Positioning of Parties of the Far Right. European Journal of Political Research, 44: 203–30.
- Conaghan, C. 1995. Politicians against Parties: Discord and Disconnection in Ecuador's Party System. Pp. 434-458 in Building Democratic Institutions in Latin America, eds. S. Mainwaring and T. R. Scully. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.
- Croissant, A. 2002a. Electoral Politics in South Korea. Pp. 233-76 in Electoral Politics in Southeast and East Asia, ed. A. Croissant. Singapore: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.
- . 2002b. Electoral Politics in Southeast and East Asia: A Comparative Perspective. Pp. 231-268 in Electoral Politics in Southeast and East Asia, ed. A. Croissant. Singapore: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.
- Croissant, A. and Pojar, D., Quo Vadis Thailand? Thai Politics after the 2005 Parliamentary Election. Strategic Insights, 4:6, http://www.ciaonet.org/olj/si/si_4_6/si_4_6_005.pdf.

24 *New Dimensions of Political Cleavage*

- Dalton, R. J. 1996. Cleavage Politics, Issues and Electoral Change. Po. 319-342 in Comparing Democracies: Elections and Voting in Comparative Perspective, eds. L. LeDuc, R. G. Niemi and P. Norris. London: Sage.
- Deegan-Krause, K. 2006. Elected Affinities: Democracy and Party Competition in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.
- Enyedi, Zs. 2005. The Role of Agency in Cleavage Formation. European Journal of Political Research, 44: 697-720.
- Evans, G., and Whitefield S. Explaining the Formation of Electoral Cleavages in Post-Communist Democracies. 2000. Pp. 36-70 in Elections in Central and Eastern Europe: The First Wave, eds. H-D. Klingemann, E. Mochmann and K. Newton. Berlin: Sigma.
- Ganguly, S. 2003. The Crisis of Indian Secularism." Journal of Democracy. 14: 11-25.
- Hagopian, Frances. 2004. Economic Liberalization, Party Competition, and Elite Partisan Cleavages: Brazil in Comparative (Latin American) Perspective. Paper presented at the Workshop on the Analysis of Political Cleavages and Party Competition, Duke University, http://cas.uchicago.edu/workshops/cpolit/papers/uchicago_1201.doc
- Hazama, Y. 2003. Social Cleavages and Electoral Support in Turkey: Toward Convergence? The Developing Economics, 61:362-87.
- Horowitz, D. 1985. Ethnic Groups in Conflict. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Inglehart, R. 1977. The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles among Western Publics. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Innes, A. Party Competition in Postcommunist Europe: The Great Electoral Lottery. Comparative Politics, 35:85-105.
- Kitschelt, H. 1992. The Formation of Party Systems in East Central Europe. Politics and Society, 20: 7-50.

- Kitschelt, H. and Rehm, R. 2004. Socio-Economic Group Preferences and Partisan Alignments. Paper presented at the 14th International Conference of Europeanists, Chicago,
<http://cas.uchicago.edu/workshops/cpolit/papers/kitschelt.pdf>
- Knutsen, O. The Impact of Structural and Ideological Party Cleavages in West European Democracies: A Comparative Empirical Analysis. *British Journal of Political Science*, 18: 323-52.
- Knutsen, O. and Scarbrough, E. 1995. Cleavage Politics. Pp. 493-523 in *The Impact of Values*, ed. J. W. van Deth. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kriesi, H. 1998. The Transformation of Cleavage Politics. *European Journal of Political Research* 33: 165-85.
- Layman, G. C., and Carsey, T. M. 2002. Party Polarization and Party Structuring of Policy Attitudes: A Comparison of Three NES Panel Studies. *Political Behavior* 24: 199-236.
- Lijphart, Arend. 1984. *Democracies*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Lipset, S. M., and Rokkan, S. 1967. Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments: An Introduction. Pp. 1-64 in *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives*, eds. S. M. Lipset and S. Rokkan. New York: Free Press.
- Luna, J. and Zechmeister, E. 2005. Political Representation in Latin America: A Study of Elite-Mass Congruence in Nine Countries. *Comparative Political Studies*, 38: 388-416.
- Mainwaring, S. 1999. *Rethinking Party Systems in the Third Wave of Democratization: The Case of Brazil*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1999.
- Mainwaring, S. and Torcal, M. 2003a. Individual Level Anchoring of the Vote and Party System Stability: Latin America and Western Europe. Paper presented at the European Consortium of Political Research, Edinburgh,
<http://www.essex.ac.uk/ecpr/events/jointsessions/paperarchive/edinburgh/ws19/TorcalMainwaring.pdf>

26 *New Dimensions of Political Cleavage*

- . 2003b. The Political Recrafting of Social Bases of Party Competition: Chile, 1973–95. British Journal of Political Science, 33: 55-84.
- Mehta, P. 1997. India: Fragmentation Amid Consensus. Journal of Democracy, 8: 56-69.
- Molina, J. and Pérez, C. 2004. Radical Change at the Ballot Box: Causes and Consequences of Electoral Behavior in Venezuela's 2000 Elections. Latin American Politics and Society, 46: 103-34.
- Moreno, Alejandro. Political Cleavages: Issues, Parties and the Consolidation of Democracy. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Mozaffar, S., Scarritt, J. and Galaich, G. 2003. Electoral Institutions, Ethnopolitical Cleavages, and Party Systems in Africa's Emerging Democracies. American Political Science Review, 97: 379-90.
- Neto, O. and Cox, G. 1997. Electoral Institutions, Cleavage Structures, and the Number of Parties. American Journal of Political Science, 41: 149-74.
- Nieuwbeerta, P. and Ultee, W. 1999. Class Voting in Western Industrialized Countries, 1945–1990: Systematizing and Testing Explanations. European Journal of Political Research, 35: 123-60.
- Ostiguy, P. 1998. Peronism and Anti-Peronism: Class-Cultural Cleavages and Political Identity in Argentina. Doctoral dissertation, University of California, Berkeley.
- Posner, D. 2001. Regime Change and Ethnic Cleavages in Africa. Paper presented at the Workshop on Democracy in Africa in Comparative Perspective, Stanford University, <http://democracy.stanford.edu/Seminar/Posner.htm>
- Przeworski, A. and Sprague, J. 1986. Paper Stones: A History of Electoral Socialism. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Qodari, M. 2005. Indonesia's Quest for Accountable Governance. Journal of Democracy, 16: 73-87.
- Roberts, K. 2000. Party-Society Linkages and Democratic Representation in Latin America. Paper presented at the Conference on Threats to Democracy in Latin America, University of British Columbia.

- . 2002. Social Inequalities without Class Cleavages: Party Systems and Labor Movements in Latin America's Neoliberal Era. Studies in Comparative International Development 36: 3-33.
- Sartori, G. 1976. Parties and Party Systems. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Shamir, M. and Arian A. Collective Identity and Electoral Competition in Israel. The American Political Science Review, 93: 265-77.
- Stimson, J. 2002. The Dimensionality of Issues in Two Party Politics. Paper presented at the Conference on Elections, Columbia University, <http://www.unc.edu/~jstimson/ColPaper.pdf>
- Stubager, Rune. 2003. Cleavages Re-Formulated: The Development of a Sociostructurally Anchored Definition. Paper presented at the European Consortium of Political Research, Edinburgh, <http://www.ps.au.dk/stubager/Project1/Cleavages%20Reformulated%20ECPR%2003.pdf>
- Todosijević, B. 2003. Serbia. Pp. 493-548 in The Handbook of Political Change in Eastern Europe, second edition, eds. S. Berglund, J. Eckman and F. Aarebrot. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Tóka, G. 1998. Party Appeals and Voter Loyalty in New Democracies. Political Studies, 46: 589-610.
- Tucker, J. 2006. Regional Economic Voting: Russia, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic from 1990-99. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- van de Walle, N. 2003. Presidentialism and Clientelism in Africa's Emerging Party Systems. Journal of Modern African Studies, 41: 297-321.
- Weisberg, H. and Tanaka, A. 2001. Change in the Spatial Dimensions of Party Conflict: The Case of Japan in the 1990s. Political Behavior, 23: 75-101.
- Whitefield, S. 2002. Political Cleavages and Post-Communist Politics. Annual Review of Political Science, 5: 181-200.
- Wong, J. 2004. Democratization and the Left: Comparing East Asia and Latin America. Comparative Political Studies, 37: 1213-37.

28 *New Dimensions of Political Cleavage*

Yashar, D. 1998. Contesting Citizenship: Indigenous Movements and Democracy in Latin America.

Comparative Politics, 31: 23-42.

Young, C. 1996. Africa: An Interim Balance Sheet. Journal of Democracy, 7: 53-68.

Zuckerman, A. 1975. Political Cleavage: A Conceptual and Theoretical Analysis. British Journal of Political

Science, 5: 231-48.