Social Structure, Collective Identities, and Patterns of Conflict in Party Systems: Conceptualizing the Formation and Perpetuation of Cleavages

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Introduction

The cleavage concept plays a central role in the literature on the formation of European party systems as well as in accounts of contemporary voting behaviour. This latter literature, however, has produced contradictory results. Whereas some authors claim that the structuring power of the traditional cleavages has veined, others can show that voters' preferences continue to be determined by their socio-structural characteristics. I argue that both views are problematic. The first – exemplified by most studies of voting behaviour – derives from an overly static understanding of cleavages, whereas the second, pioneered by Kitschelt (1994), has difficulties specifying how newly found structural conflicts relate to the historical cleavages identified by Lipset and Rokkan (1967).

Consequently, while the cleavage concept's major strength lies in its ability to bridge the macro- and micro-levels of analysis, contradictions in the understanding of the concept itself limit its analytical usefulness. This paper addresses a number of conceptual issues and proposes a new analytical approach to studying the interplay between historical cleavages and the conflicts structuring competition in party systems at a given moment. Building on the assumption that existing cleavages "organize out" certain conflicts (Schattschneider 1975) and thereby condition the room for the emergence of new cleavages, I propose an analytical model that distinguishes several types of divide that leave varying room for the manifestation of new structural divisions. Apart from addressing conceptual issues, the paper therefore develops a model that helps to explain why the leeway for political agency in cleavage formation is larger in some situations than in others.

The paper is organized as follows. In order to lay the ground for more fruitful empirical applications of the cleavage concept, I start in the first section by addressing conceptual issues. Most importantly, the concept requires a more adequate understanding of the role of collective identity in the initial mobilization as well as in the subsequent perpetuation of cleavages. Although it is often alluded to with reference to Bartolini and Mair's (1990) widely acclaimed definition of a cleavage, collective

identity is often unduly neglected in empirical applications. This is problematic for an understanding of when new cleavages may emerge because historically, structural conflicts have only developed into cleavages under rather specific conditions that facilitate the formation of collective identities. The diverging paths of party system formation in Latin America underscore this point. While the general neglect of the collective identity aspect of cleavages in empirical analyses (with the exception of Knutsen and Scarbrough's 1995 treatment) in part derives from the scarcity of adequate data, shortcomings can on the other hand be traced to a lack of appropriate analytical tools. For this reason, and building on concepts from social psychology, I conceptualize collective identities as formed by individual group attachments. Because each individual has multiple group identities, the relative salience of these attachments determines the potentials for parties' efforts at mobilizing new structural divisions.

The second section seeks to develop a better understanding of how cleavages are perpetuated over long time-spans, and therefore takes issue with Lipset and Rokkan's (1967) famous "freezing hypothesis". Drawing on Sartori's (1968) early criticism, I suggest to shift focus from the homogeneity of a cleavage's underlying structural basis to the process in which party competition itself reproduces collective identities and thereby stabilizes cleavages. This is based on the insight that political conflict has group-binding functions (Coser 1956). In order to empirically determine the evolving nature of cleavages, their political manifestation in terms of the programmatic lines of conflict underlying oppositions in party systems should be taken into account, on the par with the social structural, collective identity, and organizational elements suggested by Bartolini and Mair (1990). Only by paying attention to the policy content of party competition can we determine to which degree the cleavages identified by Lipset and Rokkan have been transformed by new divisions that have appeared in Western Europe since the late 1960s (Kitschelt 1994, 1995; Kriesi et al. 2006).

In the third section, I combine the insights from the foregoing parts of the paper and develop an analytical model that combines the capacity of cleavages to structure voting decisions with an analysis of their political content and the degree of polarization they entail. To determine the space available for the emergence of new conflicts, different types of cleavage are distinguished using three elements: The distances in parties' issue-positions across a cleavage, the degree of correspondence in the preferences of the voters of these parties, and the stability of voter-party alignments. This results in a

typology of different types of divide that have varying consequences for the mobilization of new conflicts.

While the main focus of this paper is conceptual, I present some empirical results in the final section. These are primarily intended to illustrate the applicability of the model. The results come from an analysis that was undertaken to explain the rise of right-wing populist parties in France and Switzerland, and their lack of success in Germany (Bornschier 2007). My hypotheses is that these parties have emerged as a consequence of the country-specific mobilization of a new cultural line of conflict that opposes libertarian-universalistic and traditionalist-communitarian conceptions of community and justice. This antagonism has replaced the religious cleavage as the second major lines of conflict alongside the state-market cleavage in Western European party systems. To analyze the programmatic content of party competition, I rely on data based on a sentence-by-sentence coding of the newspaper coverage of election campaigns in six countries (Bornschier 2005, Kriesi et al. 2006). By means of this data, the axes structuring political competition are determined using Multidimensional Scaling (MDS). Each cleavage is then examined separately using the model described above. On the demand side, voters' positions along these lines of conflict are measured using survey data. A comparison of the 1970s and the 1990s then provides the opportunity to assess how the programmatic content of the traditional cleavages has been transformed, as well as to identify which of the theoretically developed types of cleavages current oppositions correspond to.

The Role of Collective Identities in Cleavage-Formation

Across Europe, the twin processes of the national and the industrial revolutions have constituted "critical junctures" determining subsequent political development, and have led to long-term alignments between social groups and political parties. In Lipset and Rokkan's model (Lipset, Rokkan 1967, Rokkan 2000), the national and the industrial revolutions have each resulted in the establishment of two cleavages. Drawing on this European historical experience, Bartolini and Mair (1990: 213-220)

have offered a definition of a cleavage that has become widely accepted. According to this conceptualisation, a political divide must comprise three elements to constitute a cleavage: (1) A *social-structural* element, such as class, religious denomination, status, or education, (2) an element of *collective identity* of this social group, and (3) an *organizational manifestation* in the form of collective action or a durable organization of the social groups concerned. Going beyond these three constituting elements of a cleavage, it should be noted that the term cleavage is usually reserved for relationships which exhibit a certain stability. A cleavage constitutes a *durable pattern of political behaviour* linking social groups and political organizations. This pattern is reproduced over generations of voters, and possibly beyond the conflicts which originally brought the respective parties into being. Cleavages entail collective political identities and organizational loyalties that determine individual political behaviour, and which are not easily broken down or diluted by new political movements.

As the definition by Bartolini and Mair (1990) noted above makes clear, the collective identities of the social groups divided by a conflict are a constituting element of a cleavage. As far as the initial mobilization of a cleavage is concerned, the reasons for this are straightforward. Tarrow (1992: 177) states that "If the social movement research of the last two decades has shown anything, it is that grievances are not sufficient to trigger collective action, that this requires someone who can take advantage of political opportunities, develop organizations of some kind, *and interpret grievances and mobilize consensus around them*" (emphasis added). There are differing usages of the term collective identity, but I propose here to understand it as the shared beliefs, values and ideologies, as well as the shared definition of the membership criteria and of the boundaries of a group. In a similar vein, Eisenstadt and Giesen (1995: 74) conceive collective identity as "produced by the social construction of boundaries". These divisions, according to the authors, might be related to control over resources and social differentiation, but they are nonetheless dependent upon symbolic codes of distinction. For reasons which will become apparent later on, I propose to keep analytically distinct the second and the third elements of a cleavage mentioned above, namely, the element of collective identity and that of political organization.

The space for new political conflicts is thus conditioned by the existing cleavage structure. The relationship between the last of the four historical cleavages and the

three historically older ones illustrates this nicely. The class divide, contrary to the other cleavages, has proven to be universally polarizing across Europe. But despite representing the main commonality of European party systems, its impact has been far from uniform in the different countries. On the one hand, this is due to the country-specific opportunities for alliances with other political movements. More directly relevant for the present discussion is the fact that the class cleavage's strength as well as the make-up of its social basis have been heavily determined by the older cleavages and the loyalties and identities that they entailed (Rokkan 2000: 277-412, Bartolini 2000: Ch. 8). Workers' parties thus found their mobilization space constrained by prior mobilization efforts of the religious, nationalist and agrarian political movements. As a consequence, the share of the working class voting for left parties varies heavily across countries, and so does the social structural homogeneity of the electorate mobilized by the left (Bartolini 2000: 497).

Social Structure and Collective Identities: An Individual-Level Reading of the Preconditions of Cleavage-Mobilization

In social psychological terms, the political mobilization of a social group requires its members to interpret conflicts of interest or of ideological outlook in inter*group* as opposed to inter*personal* terms. According to social identity theory, this is achieved by the cognitive process of *depersonalisation* (Stets and Burke 2000: 231-2, Tajfel 1981). Tajfel (1981: Ch. 4) has provided an outline of the conditions for interpersonal to become intergroup behaviour: In contexts allowing for individual *social mobility* from one social position to another, behaviour is most likely to remain interpersonal, since individual action in order to change one's situation is possible. Intergroup behaviour, on the other hand, requires what Tajfel calls *social change beliefs,* which emerge only when group boundaries are not easily transgressed, or when the existing social stratification system does not enjoy legitimacy. This mechanism is in many ways similar to Hirschman's (1970) concepts of "exit" and "voice", which play a central role in Bartolini's (2005) analysis of the preconditions of internal cleavage structuring, namely, the drawing up of the outside borders of the polity in the process of nation-building.

In Tajfel's account, social mobility and social change beliefs form a continuum. The further beliefs are away from the "social change" end of the continuum, the more "creativity" is necessary for the fostering of ideologies that make individuals act not as individuals but as group members. In other words, conflicts are only interpreted in group terms if intergroup mobility is low, because these conditions make probable the identification of individuals with the group they belong to. On the other hand, if social mobility is perceived to be high, the symbolic construction of boundaries will be much more difficult. Lipset (1960) has employed a similar reasoning to explain why class-based political action has been common in European countries, while no socialist party emerged in the United States, arguing that differences in interclass social mobility between the United States and Europe go a long way in explaining this fact.

At the individual level, identification with a social group or category is the individual-level equivalent to a collective identity, as Klandermans and de Weerd (2000) have suggested. Because a political mobilization of group interests is dependent upon the prior existence of individuals' identification with the group, the *potential for collective identity formation of a social group or category* is crucial in determining the chances for the political mobilization of structurally rooted grievances. Such collective identities or group identifications are pre-political and do not necessarily include definitions of political action necessary to achieve a group's interests. In a similar vein, Klandermans and de Weerd (2000: 70) point out that collective identities remain "neutral" unless they are politicised.

In this respect, the concept of the "mobilization potential" of a social movement in fruitful. Klandermans (1997: 16) defines it as consisting of the citizens who could theoretically be mobilized by a movement, who share certain values and beliefs, and who are sympathetic to a certain collective action frame (see also Kriesi and Duyvendak 1995: 5-10). Combining this with the definition of a cleavage employed above, the mobilization potential of any political opposition – be it a new conflict or one already represented by the party system – consists of two elements: (1) Groups of individuals defined by objective social conditions or cultural oppositions (e.g., religion), and (2) sharing a collective identity, meaning that members identify with the group in question. While the first of these element identifies *structural potentials,* based on social structural or cultural distinctiveness, it is only the second element which involves the shift to *collective action potentials,* which can be mobilized by

political actors. The relationships between the basic concepts laid out so far are summarized in Table 1. Orientations towards political action, which I have not discussed so far, are only relevant for the third stage of a cleavage, namely the element of political organization. It is here that political actors come into play which can mobilize political potentials in various ways and in different political arenas. As a result, individuals develop loyalties to political organizations such as parties, and the conflict the party represents becomes part of their ideological schema, as will be argued later on. The significance of individual-level role designations and value patterns at the collective level will be discussed later on in the course of this section.

Table 1: Political mobilization at the individual and collective levels

Elements of a cleavage	Social structure	Collective identity	Political organization
Individual-level equivalents	Grievances/interests Roles Ways of life/values	Group identification/ Social identity Value patterns	Political alignments Organizational loyalties Ideological schemas
Resulting potential	Structural potential	Collective action potential	Political action

Collective Identity and the Individual: The Problem of Multiple Group Membership

Evidently, even if the members of a structural category share a collective consciousness – implying that a collective action potential is present – not all of them are likely to be mobilized in terms of the grievances, interests, or ways of life characteristic of this group. This is, of course, partly due to the fact that they have to be reached by mobilization efforts. A more crucial factor accounting for differences between collective action potentials and political action, however, is that individuals are rarely members of one social category or structural potential alone. Hence, even people similarly located in employment terms may variably think of themselves for

example as working-class, as catholic, or as belonging to a certain ethnic community, to name just a few possibilities. If it were not for this fact, the assertion that interest-based mobilization always requires the prior construction of a collective identity may seem too starkly put. If only one group membership were relevant for an individual, its preferences might be clear-cut enough to take a political decision based on individual interest. But in most real-world political situations, decisions are not that simple, and whenever more than one group membership is salient, political behaviour will be more difficult to predict.

From a historical macro perspective, scholars working within the cleavage-perspective have of course been sensitive to the effects of cross-cutting cleavages and the cross-pressures resulting from them, as mentioned (Rokkan 2000, Bartolini 2000: Ch. 8). But at the individual level, there are very few accounts that provide tools to explain why some members of a social category are mobilized on the basis of that category while others are not. It is therefore helpful to turn to social psychological theories that provide the tools to grasp collective identities at the individual level. In social identity theory, a distinction is made between those aspects of a person's identity that are individual, and those that are social. Originally developed by Henri Tajfel (1981: Ch. 5), this distinction is captured concisely by Monroe et al. (2000: 421) as follows: "Broadly defined, social identity refers to the social categories, attributes, or components of the self-concept that are shared with others and therefore define individuals as being similar to others. In contrast, personal identity is made up of those attributes that mark an individual as distinct from all others."

Social identity, in other words, refers to those parts of an individual's identity that are derived from their identification with various social groups. While collective identity is a socially constructed collective belief, *group identification* is situated at the individual level, and refers to the appropriation of collective beliefs (Klandermans, de Weerd 2000: 75, Klandermans 1997). Potentially, individuals can have a wide variety of social identities or groups they identify with: citizens sharing their religious affiliation, their professional group or their social class, their nationality, or the circle of all Europeans, to note just a few examples which are potentially relevant for politics. To the extent that the members feel attached to these groups or categories, they form *collective action potentials,* as argued earlier.

If all of the group identifications referred to above were of the same strength, equivalent political potentials would result. Which identification would prevail in political action would merely be determined by the stimuli of a given situation that activates a specific identification. But in practice, it is quite likely that people will show different intensities in their identification with various groups. Stryker (2000), in one of the rare applications of social psychological concepts to political mobilization, criticizes social identity theory for not being able to account for differentials in social movement participation by individuals who are similarly located in structural terms and ideologically like-minded. Stryker's (1980, 2000) *identity theory* offers conceptual tools to address the question. Although differences between identity theory and social identity theory exist, I will follow recent claims underlining the potential in linking the two theories (Stets and Burke 2000, Hogg and Ridgeway 2003, Brewer 2001, Burke 2004), and offer an account that integrates them.

Identity theory builds on sociological role theory and posits that "Persons potentially have as many [social] identities as sets of role relations in which they participate" (Stryker 2000: 28). Roles are behavioural expectations tied to positions in the social structure. A position, on the other hand, is any socially recognized category of actors. These can be defined by occupation, by status, or simply by characteristics such as "rich man", "poor man", "intellectual", and so on, in the examples that Stryker gives. The expectations attached to positions are of course social *per se,* but another important feature clearly making them social is that they relate to counter-roles – employer vs. employee being an example (Stryker 1980: 57-59). Identities are *internalised role designations* whose salience can vary: Contrary to social identity theory, which posits that they are either activated or not activated due to the features of a specific situation, identity theory holds that identities have different *probabilities* of being activated (Stets and Burke 2000: 229-30). Identities can be conceived as being ordered into a salience hierarchy, "such that the higher the identity in that hierarchy, the more likely that the identity will be invoked in a given situation or in many situations" (Stryker 1980: 60-1).

Stryker's identity theory is based on a symbolic interactionist framework whose premise is that people's actions are determined by the way they interpret situations. In his version of the theory, however, Stryker gives more weight to social structure than to interpretive processes in accounting for an individual's social behaviour, though

sticking to the premises of symbolic interactionalism: "Thus, if the social person is shaped by interaction, it is social structure that shapes the possibilities for interaction and so, ultimately, the person" (Stryker 1980: 66). In other words, the salience hierarchy of identities is influenced by an individual's networks of relationships and commitments to social groups. This is how society and social structure are reflected in an individual's self-concept.

The relevance of these theories for political mobilization can readily be seen. According to Stryker (2000), differences in political mobilization within social categories can be accounted for not simply by emphasizing recruitment processes or campaigning effects, but also by individuals' linkages to various social networks – read: other group identifications – which pull them away from being mobilized in terms of a specific group membership. One of the prototypical historical examples for this process in cleavage theory is the catholic worker who has to chose between class solidarity and his belonging to a religious community – both constituting possibly salient social identities. From a cleavage perspective, then, social psychological accounts linking identity and social structure are interesting because they allow us to study differences in identity-conceptions *within* social categories without ending in a purely social constructionist account.

If cleavages are formed by the interplay between structural or cultural similarities and the development of a collective consciousness of social groups, as I have suggested, then their continued salience must result from the stability of these collective identities. Put differently, they require stability in the salience hierarchy of identities of the members of those social groups divided by a cleavage. In the following, I address the question of how cleavages are perpetuated and how much room they leave for the politicization of new conflicts, and suggest that an important mechanism perpetuating collective identities and individual-level group attachments is political conflict.

The Perpetuation and Transformation of Cleavages and Political Alignments

Differing interpretations of the "freezing-hypothesis"

> „Despite more or less thirty years of close reading by countless scholars in a variety of different fields, and despite what is now a genuinely voluminous literature seeking to explore and often test the ramifications of the so-called »freezing hypothesis«, there still remains a marked degree of confusion about what precisely was believed by Lipset and Rokkan to have settled into place by the 1920s" (Mair 2001: 27).

The mobilization of the historical cleavages identified by Lipset and Rokkan (1967), in processes lasting to the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, have given birth to the modern party systems in Europe. Subsequently, the full mobilization of European electorates led to a "freezing" of the major party alternatives. As the historical record shows, existing cleavages condition the room for the emergence of new conflicts. However, interpretations of the sources of the stability of European party systems differ, and so do notions of what promotes the stability of the basic lines of division underlying these systems. This discord is mirrored in the discussion on whether or not the classical class and religious cleavages have maintained their structuring power, or if their force is waning.

There is a basic contradiction between those strands of research that understand cleavages as (historically rooted) alliances between certain social structural groups and political parties (e.g., Franklin et al. 1992) and those who conceive cleavages as dimensions of conflict that underlie interactions in party system (e.g., Bartolini, Mair 1990, Mair 1997). A third strand (e.g., Evans 1999a) is concerned with new structural divisions that shape voting behaviour, but has difficulties in showing how newly found antagonisms relate to the historical cleavages of the Lipset-Rokkan account. In a similar vein, scholars approaching the question "top down", with a focus on parties' adaptation to new societal demand and structures (e.g., Kitschelt 1994), fail to accommodate within their models the interaction or clash of established political identities and new political conflicts which transform the political contents of the existing cleavage structure.

Contrary to the analysis of the genesis of European party systems, the mechanisms accounting for their ensuing long-term stability have not been analyzed in detail in the original Lipset-Rokkan article, and not in Rokkan's later work (Rokkan 2000). Empirical tests of the continuing validity of the freezing-hypothesis have proceeded along two main lines, as Mair (2001: 28-33) points out. As we will see, they are based on differing interpretations of what exactly "froze" into place in the 1920s: (1) A first possibility is to track the *evolution of social-structural basis of a cleavage,* the strategy pursued by scholars studying the social structural determinants of voting behaviour. In Bartolini's (2000: 24) words, the focus here is on the *social homogeneity* of the structural basis of cleavages. Mair (2001: 30) criticizes this understanding as unrealistic because the hypothesis could only be correct if society itself is "frozen". Since social structure has evidently changed a great deal since the 1920s, the long-term stability of party systems, revealed by Bartolini and Mair' (1990) analysis, must be due to something else than stable patterns of linkage between social strata and political parties. If party systems retain their basic shape in the midst of an evolving society, then this can only be accounted for by the forming of new links between social groups and parties, which compensate the natural process of structural dealignment due to the declining number of religious and working class voters. This is in fact the reasoning put forward by Evans and his colleagues (Evans 1999a). But if the cleavages have been profoundly transformed, then it hardly makes sense to apply the freezing-metaphor to the cleavages themselves.

(2) The second strategy is to focus on the *stability of party systems* formed by the historical cleavages. Most of the work focusing on aggregate levels of electoral volatility falls into this category, such as Bartolini and Mair's (1990) study. This perspective seeks to explain the persistence of parties beyond the conflicts that originally brought them into being. The fact that the links between social groups and parties are subject to change is at least implicitly taken as a given. They are not problematic, quite to the contrary: As Mair (2001) argues, for example, a long-term transformation of cleavages is actually the only possible explanation for the stability of European party systems evidenced in Bartolini and Mair (1990). Their constant adaptation helped parties survive in a profoundly changing environment.

Upon closer reading, Lipset and Rokkan's original formulation of the freezing hypothesis seems to conform more to the second interpretation just discussed than to

the first. Lipset und Rokkan (1990: 134) actually refer to the „freezing of the major party alternatives", and not the cleavages themselves. They explicitly state, „[…] the *party systems* of the 1960s reflect, with few but significant exceptions, the *cleavage structures* of the 1920s" (ibid, emphasis mine). A frozen party system is thus equivalent to a structurally consolidated or institutionalized party system, in Sartori's (1976) terms. The stronger a party system structures the expectations of actors over time – at the elite as well as at the mass level – the more it contributes to channelling old and new conflicts into established structures of competition. Mair also suggests such a nexus between expectations and structuration, in arguing that „Predictability then becomes a surrogate of structuration: the more predictable a party system is, the more it is a system as such, and hence the more institutionalized it has become. This is also what freezing is about" (Mair 2001: 38).

A partial explanation for the confusion as to the exact meaning of the freezing metaphor may actually lie in the influential definition of a cleavage put forward by Bartolini and Mair, which can only be read as putting great emphasis on the social structural homogeneity of parties' electorates. However, in other instances, the authors themselves are much less strict in their understanding of cleavages. This applies to Mair's (1997) later work as well as to Bartolini (2000), who accepts a long-term decline in the social structural homogeneity of a party's electorate as quite natural. Hence, Bartolini and Mair's definition, emphasizing the social structure-collective identity-organization linkage, seems much more adequate to analyze the conditions for the initial mobilization of cleavages than for answering the question to which degree historical cleavages structure politics today. Since studying the contemporary political relevance of cleavages is my aim, I will argue that it does not suffice to focus on social structure and on the stability of partisan alignments, but that we also have to identify the concrete political conflicts carried out in party systems and how they are interpreted and processed along the lines of historical antagonisms reflected in cleavages.

The role of political conflict in the perpetuation of cleavages

To the degree that political conflicts evolve around issues directly linked to the original cleavages, politics is likely to reinforce and sustain the underlying collective identities. Coser (1956) has emphasized the group-binding functions of conflict, while it has also repeatedly been pointed out that basic clusters of values and ensuing value identities are antagonistically related to one another. According to Wildavsky (1987: 7), „conflict among cultures is a precondition of cultural identity". Ongoing political conflict thus serves to highlight the boundaries of the group and to keep group identification salient at the level of the individual member. The structure of conflict represented by the party system thereby perpetuates the collective identifications underlying the cleavage structure. Sartori (1968) has argued, for example, that objective class positions are not automatically transposed into politics, but that it is the existence of a working-class party that turns objective class *membership* into subjective class *consciousness*. It needs to be emphasized, however, that it is not the working class party alone that keeps alive the subjective class-consciousness of the social constituency that once led to the mobilization of that party. Without an antagonist, this identification would lose much of its political relevance, and not being refreshed, would open the way to identifications on the basis of some other group membership. It is thus not parties themselves that reproduce collective identities, but the conflicts they carry out with other parties. In other words, it is the party *system,* defined as a „[...] *system of interactions* resulting from inter-party competition" (Sartori 1976: 44) that reproduces collective identities.

Political space can thus be imagined as structured by parties taking certain positions along the historical dividing lines. These established patterns of interaction within the party system serve to stabilize the collective identities underlying the dividing lines. Contrary to the argument put forward by Campbell et al. (1960: Ch. 7) and Converse (1969), then, it is not necessarily the long-term identification of social groups with a specific party that accounts for the stability of a party system over time, but rather the stability of the patterns of interaction between parties that perpetuates political alignments. Accordingly, party identification appears as the product of a genuinely *political* socialization process.

Party systems then reproduce themselves over time as new generations of voters are socialized into the existing structure of interaction, and come to interpret politics in terms of the prevailing pattern of oppositions. Thus, the configuration of the lines of conflict in a party system represents something like a cognitive schema that helps individuals to make sense of politics. A schema can be conceived as a „cognitive structure of organized prior knowledge, abstracted from experience with specific instances that guides the processing of new information and the retrieval of stored information" (Conover, Feldman 1984: 96). According to the authors, one of the roles of schemas is to generate expectations against which reality is compared (ibid, p. 97), much like the notion of a frozen or an institutionalized party system developed in the preceding section. In the absence of patterned interactions, the party system provides no cognitive schema for the interpretation of politics. Accordingly, no stable links between social constituencies and parties will exist, and levels of volatility from one election to the next can be very high, indicating the absence of any form of structuring. Examples for such constellations are absent in Western Europe, but the experience outside Europe – looking at the contrasts between highly structured and fluid party systems in Latin America, for example – demonstrates that veritable party systems are the product of cleavages, and do not develop in other historical contexts.

The notion that the socialization within a party system entails the development of a cognitive schema then helps to explain why cleavages, once formed, are so resistant to change, and how they can persist beyond the immediate conflicts that have brought the system into being in the first place. As Bartolini and Mair (1990: 218) put it, they offer individuals already existing alternatives for their social identities and political integration. At the same time, this does not mean that there is no change in the content of the conflicts carried out between parties. On the contrary, as Mair (1997) has insisted, the historical party organization's remarkable resilience over time is precisely due to their ability to adapt to structural and cultural changes. Thus, while new political issues are for the most part *interpreted and processed* in terms of the established structure of conflict, there is by no means stability in the *political content of conflict*. Structures of oppositions may resemble those produced by the historical cleavages, but it is not the cleavages or the original conflicts as such that are perpetuated, but the shape of the party system.

At this point, it is obviously necessary to move from *identities anchored in social structure* and tightly bound to the social groups – whose mobilization initially produced a cleavage structure – to more genuinely *political identities,* which are partly a product of politics itself. This interpretation is in line with Sartori's (1968) dictum that we have to conceive of the party system as an independent variable between the domains of social structure and politics. At a fine level of analysis, then, the partisan camps divided by a cleavage consist of social groups that have been mobilized into this opposition by virtue of the homogeneity of their life chances, their religious world-view or their sectoral interests. Represented in the party system, however, are broader patterns of opposition, which are the result of multiple alliances between social groups in opposition to those with opposing interests or ideologies.

The transformation of cleavages: Collective identities and realignments

If new conflicts are usually somehow absorbed into the established structure of conflict without altering it, this does not mean that a party system will be capable of channelling all conflicts around new political issues. Whether this is the case depends on how easily new issues are reconcilable with the predominating antagonisms, or if they cut across them. If new issues divide the same social groups as the conflicts that have been prevailing so far, they will simply be taken up by parties and will result in a somewhat altered meaning or political content of the dominant lines of conflict within a party system. Just like voters, parties rely on ideologies to position themselves with respect to new issues (Budge 1994). However, if parties' established electorates are divided concerning an issue that is new or was of minor salience hitherto, parties will try to avoid positioning themselves regarding this question. The obvious temptation to attract new voters by positioning themselves regarding controversial issues is tempered by the risks inherent of such a strategy. Parties are historical beings and "stand for something", in Klingemann et al.'s (1994: 24) words, and this keeps them from abandoning those political positions that are closely associated with them. I take this to be the background of Schattschneider's (1975) dictum of organization being the "mobilization of bias", every form of organization being receptive to some conflicts but not to others. In times of "normal politics", the party system is not particularly

responsive to new issues, because the established cleavage structure tends to "organize" issues cutting across established lines of division "out of politics".

This situation can change, however, in phases of realignment. If new issues cannot be integrated into the existing structure of conflict, and if one of the parties within the system – or a new party – takes them up, the other parties will have to take sides as well, and chances are that linkages between social groups and political parties are reconfigured. While old connections are weakened in a process of *dealignment,* new and salient issues may lead to the formation of new linkages. The latter processes are at the heart of the theory of *political realignments* (Dalton, Flanagan, Beck 1984, Martin 2000, Mayhew 2000). Small realignments may occur continuously, but according to Martin's (2000) reformulation of the theory, when party systems adapt to new structures of conflict, this is usually a rather eruptive process, and can be traced to a number of "critical elections" characterized by higher levels of volatility accompanying the modification in party constituencies. This eruptiveness is precisely due to the inherent inertia of party systems as a consequence of their freezing along historical antagonisms, and the fact that they are not very responsive to new demands of the populace in times of "normal politics". The latter in the theory of realignment denotes phases where the system is stable and where the prevailing alignments are not altered, despite events such as corruption scandals and economic crises affecting the relative strength of parties in the short run.

Following Martin (2000: 84-86, 422-427), we can distinguish three levels of analysis regarding the evolution of patterns of party competition, each of them being related to a theory that lays primary emphasis on them:

(1) The *long-term evolution of social structure,* which is the primary focus of *cleavage-theory.* Here, the focus is on those critical junctures, such as the national and industrial revolutions, which heavily influenced political development in a path-dependent function. Following Allardt (1968), I would claim that the educational revolution of the 1960s and 1970s has constituted a further critical juncture (see also Knutsen 2002). Higher education fosters universalistic values, and the societal dynamics resulting from the stronger diffusion of such values has led to a counter-mobilization led by right-wing populist parties and to the emergence of a libertarian-universalistic vs. traditionalist-communitarian line of conflict in Western European party systems

(Bornschier 2005, 2007). Claims have been made that an additional critical juncture has been witnessed in the form of the processes of globalization and Europeanization that have intensified since the 1980s and 1990s (Kriesi et al. 2006). In a somewhat different reading, Bartolini (2005) has argued that the lowering of national boundaries in Europe does not necessarily lead to a new line of opposition, but leads to a de-structuring of the functional cleavages at the national level.

(2) These developments do not translate directly into new antagonisms within the party system due to the force of existing alignments and the freezing of party systems along historical divides. The established parties will seek to avert the entry of new parties by responding to new potentials within the electorate, within the limits set by their historical position. The adaptation of the existing structure of conflicts to new political potentials is the central focus of the *theory of political realignments*. The weakening of prevailing alignments and the emergence of conflicts cutting across a prevailing cleavage makes the electoral coalitions united by virtue of that cleavage break apart and opens the way for the *establishment of new links between social groups and political parties.*

(3) The lowest level is that of everyday politics. Here, cyclical issues of minor importance, corruption scandals and the popularity or unpopularity of politicians and governments affect results of elections. Even if they dominate everyday politics, such events rarely affect the two higher levels of political development.

In a restructuring of oppositions in a party system, levels one and two interact and therefore have to be analyzed jointly. A weakening of the grip of the established structure of conflict on voters is a precondition for a process of realignment to occur. As already pointed out earlier on, a dealignment can either be structural and behavioural (Martin 2000, Lachat 2004). In the case of *structural dealignment,* modernization leads to a long-term change in the strength of those social groups in which the old structure of conflict is anchored. Here, the long-term evolution of social structure situated at the first level impinge upon the second level, that of realignment-theory. For example, the advent of a post-industrial economy has led to a shrinking of the traditional working class, while secularization has led to a decline in the share of

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regular churchgoers in Western European countries. A party system reflecting primarily these conflicts will therefore be less rooted in social structure than a few decades ago, opening a window of opportunity for the mobilization of new conflicts.

Processes of *behavioural dealignment,* on the other hand, are not necessarily connected to a gradual shift in the strength of social groups. Here, links between social groups and ideological party blocks formed by cleavages undergo change as a consequence of the rising importance of new political issues, the advent of a new dimension of political conflict, or because a party abandons its customary position. If the policy or value positions of an ideological block of parties and its voters no longer match, or if the electorate considers the political offer to be out-dated, the established links between parties and voters become fragile. A miss-match between the positions of parties and voters means that alignments may remain stable for some time due to habit, as long as voters do not redefine their political identity, but most likely, a realignment will occur. A process of realignment in this case requires a redrawing of individual's personal group attachments. Because new identifications stand in direct competition with established group attachments, much depends on the latter's salience. Behavioural realignments are therefore possible only as a consequence of a gradual transformation in individuals' salience hierarchy of identities.

Behavioural dealignment can, however, also be a consequence of politics itself. If political identities depend on conflict with opposing identities, as stated above, the decline of conflict between parties along any one cleavage will lead to a gradual weakening of the group identities underlying it. As a consequence, other identities can ascend in the salience hierarchy of identities. These can be existing identities, which were supplanted by the salience of new group attachments. Or they can be older group attachments, suppressed by the mobilization of the cleavages outlined by Lipset and Rokkan (1967), which now re-emerge. On the other hand, the fading of the identities linked to the traditional cleavages opens space for the emergence of new collective identities, crafted by political entrepreneurs. However, as the previous section has sought to underline, the possibilities of deliberate forging of new identities are subject to the limits of objective social or political similarities characteristic of the new constituency.

Summing up the discussion so far, the programmatic content of party oppositions is relevant in two respects. First of all, conflict along the broad dimensions of opposition

reflected in the party system activates voters' ideological schema (or cognitive representation of political space), and reinforces the established interpretation of what politics is about in the specific country. To the degree that parties adequately voice the preferences of their constituencies, the conflict over policy also keeps alive the antagonistically related collective (political) identities underlying divisions. At the individual level, conflict therefore renders salient voters' group attachments and, consequently, their political identities, by which they can locate themselves in the ideological political space. Inversely, if a conflict is pacified, this leads to the dilution of the group identifications underlying it, and voters become receptive for new mobilization efforts, leading Kriesi and Duyvendak (1995) to suggest a zero-sum relationship between old and new divides. These mechanisms are displayed graphically in Figure 1, where the three levels correspond to the constituting elements of a cleavage as defined by Bartolini and Mair (1990). At the third level, however, I include the policy propositions issued by parties.
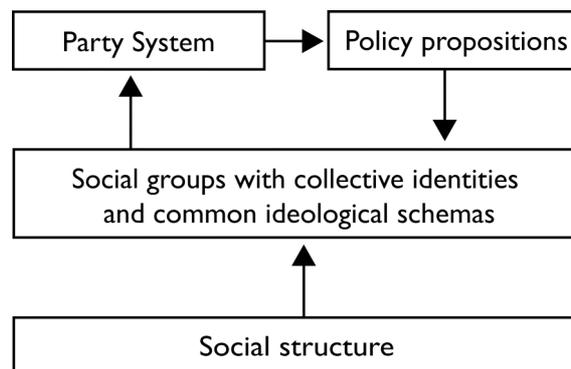
Figure 1: Social structure, collective identities and their reinforcement by parties' differing policy propositions

The programmatic content of party competition can be the source of change of partisan alignments in still a different way, however. In the medium term, alignments can only be expected to remain stable to the degree that parties adequately represent the preferences of voters. In a dynamic interpretation of the Michigan School's "funnel of causality" (Bornschier, Helbling 2005: 27-32), a mismatch in the positions of parties and voters can lead to a reconfiguration of partisan preferences. This is a second way how the programmatic conflicts in the party system impinge on the perpetuation of

cleavages. In terms of the three levels discussed earlier on, realignments then lead to a reconfiguration of the long-term alignments between social groups and political organization that are at the heart of cleavage-theory.

In the short or even in the medium term, the absence of conflict between antagonistic ideological party blocks, or a mismatch in the positions of parties and voters should not lead to dramatic transformations in the of party system. This is because collective identities fade only eventually, and ideological schemas are not reconfigured in a day either. Understandings of politics therefore tend to reproduce themselves in a path-dependent manner (see Pierson 2000: 259-262). To the degree that the adoption of ideological schemas takes place in a political socialization process, as I have suggested, there is an element of inertia in them. This is because early socialization conditions later learning, and change is likely to be at least partially driven by generational replacement (Eckstein 1988). We should thus expect significant differences in the make-up of ideological schemas between cohorts, patterned by the structure of conflict individuals were socialized into when they entered the electorate.[1] Furthermore, voters have developed long-term loyalties to political parties, and continuity in voting behaviour may also occur as a habit.

In all these cases, where the established conflicts have either been pacified, or parties no longer adequately represent their voters along the established or a new dimension of conflict, processes of dealignment and realignment are likely to occur. The established structure of conflict will fade eventually, especially if new parties represent the preferences of certain segments of the electorate more adequately. Based on these insights, we are now in a position to develop a typology of different types of divide that have varying consequences for the likelihood of new conflicts to emerge.

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1   Franklin's (2004) finding that the evolution of electoral turnout can best be explained in terms of stable cohort patterns of political participation, which are shaped by a the level of activism when a cohort enters the electorate, supports such a view.

Cleavages and Lines of Conflict: A Typology of Alignments and Their Implications for the Mobilization Potential of New Conflicts

Starting from the assumption that existing alignments condition the room for new conflicts to emerge, different types of cleavage are likely to have variable consequences for the mobilization capacity of new conflicts. While some cleavages may be at the centre of political disputes, others presumably have a more identitarian role, and stabilize alignments because the social groups divided by them (still) share a collective identity. Drawing on the work of Bartolini and Mair (1990: 19-52, 68-95), as well as Kriesi and Duyvendak (1995), we can differentiate cleavages along two dimensions, namely, salience and closure. Salience denotes the importance of a cleavage relative to other divides in a party system, while closure refers to the stability of the social relationship represented by the cleavage. Together, these elements condition the stability of political alignments. A cleavage, according to these authors' conceptualization, is important if it structures party preferences to a high degree (relative to other cleavages) and if voters do not change allegiances for a party on one side of the cleavage to one belonging to the opposite camp.

From Bartolini and Mair (1990), I retain the notion that the closure of social groups opposing one another along a line of cleavage can be analytically grasped by means of the stability of partisan alignments. Note that this implies a *focus on politically defined collective identities, which are situated at a higher level of generality than the various group attachments and role identities underlying these political identities.* The limitations inherent in cross-nationally comparable data preclude a focus on more specific social identities that are more intimately tied to social structure, and are central in the initial mobilization of cleavages.

In determining the *saliency of a divide,* I depart from Bartolini and Mair in focusing on the *polarization* regarding the issues around which it evolves, using the differences between parties' programmatic statements (instead of cross-cleavage volatility, where low levels can either be a function of virulent conflict, or of social closure, which have differing implications). If parties' positions are far apart along a line of opposition, it represents a salient dimension within the party system. This follows from the central role I have attributed to political conflict in perpetuating cleavage structures.

In order to analyse political conflicts, I use the term *line of opposition* to denote an over-arching issue-dimension that structures party competition in a given election. Through its tight conjunction with the policy level of party competition, it denotes something distinct from a cleavage. Such a dividing line can, but does not necessarily reflect a cleavage. First of all, the number of lines of opposition does not necessarily coincide with that of the cleavages underlying the party system. However, they are likely to reflect the most salient cleavages. As we shall see, the economic and cultural dimensions characterizing party oppositions in Western European countries correspond rather closely to the divisions originally engendered by the class and religious cleavages. At the same time, a cleavage, as a (durable) pattern of political behaviour of social groups, linking them to specific political organizations, is something we do not necessarily encounter in everyday politics. For example, the centre-periphery cleavage, where it exists, may not find expression in a separate dimension of conflict, but is likely to be integrated in the main dividing lines that structure party interaction.

As I have argued, the contemporary impact of the historical cleavages lies primarily in having shaped party systems in the crucial phase of mass enfranchisement and mobilization, which led to their subsequently "freezing", and not so much in the immutability of a cleavage's social structural basis. I therefore propose to lay primary emphasis on the stability of the links between social groups and parties, and pay less attention to the social structural homogeneity of the groups divided by a cleavage. A cleavage structure then denotes a *durable pattern of political behaviour of socially or politically defined groups*. In the model presented here, I regard the stability of alignments over time as the crucial factor distinguishing short-term alignments from cleavages. To the degree that we find the same lines of opposition in a number of consecutive elections, and if these divisions engender durable alignments, it is highly probable that they represent a cleavage. Unstable alignments, on the other hand, be they founded in social-structural divisions or not, are either short-term deviations from the established patterns of cleavage politics, or a herald of an unfreezing party system. If the proposition is correct that collective identities are reproduced by conflict, however, then cleavages that not even occasionally manifest themselves in politics are bound to fade.

The next step is to relate oppositions in the party system to the attitudes of voters. In determining the chances for a realignment to occur as a consequence of a new

dimension of conflict, the match between the positions of parties and that of their respective electorates is crucial: It allows an estimation of the degree to which the party system is responsive to voters. Because the term cleavage has usually been reserved for relationships where political parties represent durable oppositions in the preferences of social groups, I consider a rough match in the positions of parties and their voters as a defining feature of a cleavage. Over the long run, a miss-match between the two will presumably lead to an erosion of the link between parties and their social constituencies. This leads to a waning of the cleavage and opens space for new alignments based on other group attachments.

This results in an analytical schema combining three elements: (1) The *polarization of parties' positions* along a line of opposition, indicating the *salience* of a divide. (2) The *match between the positions of parties and their voters* along this line of opposition, allowing an estimation of the responsiveness of the party system to the preferences of the electorate. (3) The degree of closure a division entails in terms of the organizational loyalties of social groups. Like Bartolini and Mair (1990), I am not interested in partisan loyalties to individual parties, but in the *stability of preferences for ideological blocks of parties along a divide,* which represent the broad divisions reflected in voters' ideological schemas. Stable preferences indicate closure and strongly rooted political identities, while unstable preferences are an indication of a fluid line of opposition or cleavage. Closure gives an indication of the collective identity component of an alignment. If this component is strong, it will delay the manifestation of a new opposition even if parties have converged in their positions and if the conflict is pacified. Figure 2 shows the possible combinations of these three elements. The starting point for analysis is a single dimension structuring political competition in a particular election in a country. The analysis of a number of elections can then reveal either dominant patterns or evolutions in the types of divide. I now explain the content of the cells in the schema and briefly state what the implications of the various types of alignment are for the mobilization capacity of new political oppositions.

Starting at the top left of Figure 2, we find a situation combining high party polarization and a match in positions of parties' and voters, indicating that voter preferences are also polarized. With parties and voters being durably aligned along a

Figure 2: Types of divide as a function of polarization, responsiveness, and
social closure

Polarization of parties	Match		Mismatch	
	Stable alignments	Unstable alignments	Stable alignments	Unstable alignments
high	SEGMENTED CLEAVAGE both parties and voters highly polarized and durably aligned along the dimension	EMERGING LINE OF OPPOSITION segmented opposition cross-cutting other dimension and lacking closure	UNRESPONSIVE PARTY SYSTEM (organizational cartellization) OUT-DATED CLEAVAGE/ SECONDARY POLITICAL DIMENSION Different dimension or established loyalties check emergence of new conflicts	UNRESPONSIVE PARTY SYSTEM (organizational cartellization) UNANCHORED PARTY SYSTEM High potential for realignments or anti-cartel parties
low	IDENTITARIAN CLEAVAGE Alignments stabilized by strong political identities, historically formed	COMPETITIVE POLITICAL DIMENSION / SCHUMPETERIAN COMPETITION Performance of government decisive for voting choices	UNRESPONSIVE PARTY SYSTEM, possibly: NEW DIMENSION OF POLITICAL CONFLICT (Issue-cartellization) Party identification checks emergence of new conflicts/ realignments	UNRESPONSIVE PARTY SYSTEM, possibly: NEW DIMENSION OF POLITICAL CONFLICT (Issue-cartellization) High potential for anti-cartel parties/ realignments

line of opposition, this corresponds to a highly *segmented cleavage*. The term
segmentation comes from depictions of consociational democracy and there denotes
deeply rooted identities such as language or religion. However, following Mair (1997:

162-171), it can fruitfully be used for any deep political opposition entailing strong loyalties and party preferences of certain social groups. As a consequence, the electoral market is tightly restrained and leaves little room for the emergence of new lines of opposition or new political parties. At the extreme, such a structure of opposition rules out any real competition between parties. Political systems characterized by pillarization, where the Netherlands at least used to be a prominent example, each party has its own constituency, and they do not really compete at all. Presumably, therefore, this is the structure of conflict that *most strongly inhibits the emergence of a new conflict* at the centre of the party system. In this category we find on the one hand established cleavages that have either preserved their salience or have been reinvigorated by new issues, or, on the other hand, highly salient new divides that have come to structure politics.

A corresponding case where preferences are volatile, exemplified by the field to the right, points to an *emerging line of opposition.* Competing with other, crosscutting divides, it lacks strong partisan loyalties. Voting choices are therefore dependent on the relative salience of this line of opposition as opposed to other divides in a given election. Should the division prove to be temporary, patterns of party competition will not change much. If, however, the conflict remains salient on the side of the voters, it is likely to lead to realignments resulting in a political structuring and then stabilization of alignments along this divide. The driving force of such realignments is either an outsider-party or an established party reorienting itself in order to attract new voters beyond its traditional constituency.

Moving to the right, we find two situations of a mismatch between the positions of parties and voters. In both cases, parties' positions are far apart on the dimension, but the *party system is unresponsive* to the positions of voters. Supposedly, these constellations are related to Katz and Mair's (1995) thesis of party system cartellization. Cartellization can either refer to the established parties keeping specific issues off the agenda, a situation that will be dealt with in a moment, or to their ability to inhibit the entry of new competitors, partly due to their privileged access to state resources. The latter case, which may be termed *organizational cartellization,* is relevant for cases of polarized, but unresponsive party systems, where the established parties manage to restrict competition. At the same time, grass root party members or

parties' clinging to their old core constituencies make impossible an ideological moderation. If alignments are stable, this indicates that parties either represent (i) an *out-dated cleavage,* which is pacified on the voter side, but still engenders loyalties, or (ii) that the dimension is of *secondary relevance* for voters who are more concerned with the stances parties take regarding a different dimension. As a consequence, the mismatch between voters' preferences and the positions of parties does not lead to realignments. If, on the other hand, party preferences are not stable, the same situation has already led to a waning of partisan attachments. In this case, the hypothesis of a different political dimension stabilizing alignments can be ruled out – the *party system does not reflect voters' preferences and is unanchored* in the electorate. Hence, the *emergence of a new line of opposition is possible either due to the reorientation of an established party, or to the entry of a new competitor* de-emphasizing the established line of opposition for the benefit of a new one.

I now turn to the two cases in the bottom-right corner, where the party system is feebly polarized and at the same time fails to represent voters, implying that party electorates are characterized by more diverging policy preferences. This can be the case in two contrasting situations: Either the established parties have converged along a line of opposition and are thus *unresponsive* to their voters, for whom the dimension remains salient, as some would argue concerning the state-market dimension. The other possibility is that the established parties have not (yet) taken clear positions along a *new dimension of political conflict.* Parties can try to avoid doing so for various reasons, for example because they are internally divided concerning new issues, as it appears to be the case regarding parties' stances towards European integration (Bartolini 2005). In these cases, where parties converge, while their electorates remain polarized, we have evidence for what I propose to call *issue-specific cartellization.* This is *probably the most advantageous situation for anti-establishment parties* to emerge, since they can on the one hand advocate programmatic positions that are not represented within the party system, and on the other hand denounce the other parties for not being responsive to the preferences of voters. In fact, this corresponds to a prominent explanation for the rise of right-wing populist parties in the 1980s (Katz, Mair 1995, Kitschelt 1995, Ignazi 1992, 2003, Abedi 2002). If party alignments are stable, and social closure is high, existing political identities will retard processes of realignment. But since the positions of the established parties are similar, and because

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no visible policy oppositions or conflicts reinforce group attachments, existing party preferences can be expected to decline, opening the way for new conflicts to gain room.

Finally, in those situations represented by the two bottom-left cells, the distances between parties are low. Congruence with their electorates' preferences being given, this means that electorates are not far apart either. The first case is that of an *identitarian cleavage,* where party preferences are stable due to strong collective identities of social groups, constituting political sub-cultures. In either case, closure remains high due to enduring group attachments that carry the imprint of historical conflicts. But since the underlying collective identities are not reinforced by contrasting programmatic stances of parties, preferences are likely to remain stable only as long as new oppositions do not gain in importance relative to the old ones. However, even if this happens, and if the new oppositions crosscut existing constituencies, the rise of a new line of opposition will at least be tempered or delayed by the force of existing loyalties.

A *competitive political dimension,* on the other hand, denotes a kind of competition that is close to Schumpeter's (1942) characterization of party competition: Elections serve to elect competing teams of politicians that try to convince voters in the electoral market. In theory, as Downs (1957) has argued, this results in their targeting the median voter (but see Barry 1978 and Powell 2000). In a situation conforming to these criteria, voters can choose among parties by virtue of their performance in office. If new potentials were to arise, newcomers could in principle find fertile ground, because there is little in political identity to check the emergence of new conflicts. However, since the established parties do not have any strong links to specific constituencies that keep them accountable, they are relatively free to re-orient themselves and to absorb new issues, limiting the chances for challengers to gain success. An exception to this scenario would be if the established parties agreed not to address issues evolving around new oppositions, which would open space for anti-cartel parties.

While the primary aim of this typology is to study patterns of opposition in the party system as a whole in a given election, it is applicable at various levels of specificity. On the one hand, one can move up to a more general level and identify dominant

patterns over a number of elections within a country. On the other hand, it is possible to move down and to characterize the more specific nature of oppositions for certain parties or groups of voters. For example, in cases of pillarization, a cleavage may continue to exist, but it is not necessarily relevant to the same degree for all voters. Thus, in cases of segmented political oppositions there is a certain danger of the party system not being responsive to those who are not integrated into the prevalent networks of societal and political opposition. Thus, such a structure of opposition will only inhibit the emergence of new conflicts if the party system also integrates citizens lacking strong political identities. The schema developed can also be applied to analyse the political behaviour of sub-groups of a party's electorate, whose links to a specific party may be of different kinds.

One of the problems involved in an analysis centring on parties and their respective electorates is that a non-responsive party system can generate both support for new or anti-establishment parties, as well as abstention from voting. For example, right-wing populist parties quite often seem to recruit their voters from previous non-voters, as the example of the French Front National shows (Mayer 2002). More generally, Goldthorpe (2002) has for instance argued that while class voting may be in decline, the relationship between class and non-voting may fortify as a result of the processes of modernization and globalization. Thus, any analysis seeking to gauge the chances of the emergence of new lines of opposition should keep an eye on non-voters. I will therefore take abstention into account when measuring the stability of alignments.

Results from an Empirical Application of the Model to Political Oppositions in France, Switzerland, and Germany

In order to demonstrate the feasibility of the approach laid out, I present some results in this section from an application of the analytical model to the study of patterns of opposition in three Western European countries, namely in France, Switzerland, and Germany. This analysis was undertaken in order to explain the emergence of right-wing populist parties in France and Switzerland, while parties of this type have

remained largely without success in Germany (Bornschier 2007). The first step in the analysis is to determine the dimensionality of political space in the three countries, and to determine the lines of conflict underlying political competition. I then demonstrate how the ideological blocks along the resulting divides are identified and how the polarization of the party system and the match between the positions of parties and their voters are measured. For reasons of space, the presentation of the procedure is only illustrative, and I concentrate on the final results of the analysis.

Determining the dimensionality of political space in the parties' programmatic offer

To be able to identify the lines of conflict structuring political competition in democratic elections, I rely on data based on the media coverage of election campaigns in six European countries. This data has been collected within the research project "National political change in a denationalizing world" (Kriesi, Grande, Lachat, Dolezal, Bornschier, Frey 2006). The data covers one election in the 1970s and three more recent elections that took place between the late 1980s and early 2000s. Parties' programmatic offer is coded in the two months preceding each election. The election in the 1970s serves as a point of reference before the most recent restructuring of conflicts in Western European party systems took place. More specifically, in the 1970s we expect a situation in which the first transformation of the traditional political space has taken place under the mobilization of the New Left. The second transformation, driven by the rise of the New Right, will be traced in the three more recent contests. For each election, we selected all articles related to the electoral contest or politics in general during the last two months before Election Day in a quality newspaper and a tabloid. The articles (and newspaper adverts in Switzerland) were then coded sentence by sentence using the method developed by Jan Kleinnijenhuis and his collaborators (see Kleinnijenhuis and De Ridder 1998 and Kleinnijenhuis and Pennings 2001). This method allows a coding of the relationship between political actors and political issues.

To code political issues, a detailed schema was used, distinguishing between 200 or more categories. For the statistical analysis, they were regrouped into 12 broader categories. In the following, the content of these categories is specified. All categories

have a clear direction, and actor's stance towards them can be either positive or negative. The abbreviations in brackets refer to the ones used in later figures:

Economic issues

- *Welfare*: Expansion of the welfare state and defence against welfare state retrenchment. Tax reforms that have redistributive effects, employment programs, health care programs. Valence issues such as statements "against unemployment" or "against recession" were dropped if there was no specification whether the goal was to be achieved by state intervention or by deregulation.
- *Budget*: Budgetary rigor, reduction of the state deficit, cut on expenditures, reduction of taxes that have no effects on redistribution.
- *Economic liberalism (ecolib)*: Support for deregulation, for more competition, and for privatisation. Opposition to market regulation, provided that the proposed measures do not have an impact on state expenditure – this is the distinguishing criterion from the Welfare-category. Opposition to economic protectionism in agriculture and other sectors.

Cultural issues

- *Cultural liberalism (cultlib)*: Support for the goals of the New Social Movements: Peace, solidarity with the third world, gender equality, human rights. Support for cultural diversity, international cooperation (except for the European Union and Nato), support for the United Nations. Opposition to racism, support for the right to abortion and euthanasia and for a liberal drug policy. *Cultural protectionism, coded negative:* Patriotism, calls for national solidarity, defence of tradition and national sovereignty, traditional moral values.
- *Europe*: Support for European integration – including enlargement – or for EU-membership in the cases of Switzerland and Austria.
- *Culture*: Support for education, culture, and scientific research.
- *Immigration*: Support for a tough immigration and integration policy, and for the restriction of the number of foreigners.
- *Army*: Support for the army (including Nato), for a strong national defence and for nuclear weapons.
- *Security*: Support for more law and order, fight against criminality and political corruption.

Residual categories

- *Environment (eco)*: Calls for environmental protection, opposition to atomic energy.
- *Institutional reform (iref)*: Support for various institutional reforms such as the extension of direct democratic rights, calls for the efficiency of the public administration.
- *Infrastructure (infra)*: Support for the improvement of the infrastructure.

The data are now analysed using Multidimensional Scaling (MDS), which results in a graphical representation of parties and issues in a low-dimensional space in every country. The grouping of the issues into economic, cultural, and residual categories is provided for illustrative purposes and does not determine the analysis. To give salient relationships between political actors and issues more weight than less salient ones, a Weighted Metric Multidimensional Scaling is used. There are always distortions between the "real" distances and their graphical representation in the low-dimensional space resulting from the MDS, but the weighting procedure ensures that the distances corresponding to salient relationships between parties and issues will be more accurate than less salient ones. The results thus take into account both position and saliency.

In the three countries, political space proves to be clearly two-dimensional, since the move from a one-dimensional to a two-dimensional representation results in the clearest improvement in the goodness-of-fit of the solution. The results of the analysis are presented in Figure 3. Because the dimensions underlying the three campaigns between the late 1980s and early 2000s remain the same in every country, only the latest election is shown in Figure 3. It has to be kept in mind that the dimensions resulting from the MDS analysis are not substantially meaningful. The solution can therefore be freely rotated and it is possible to lay theoretically meaningful axes into the distribution. In the solutions, a first line has been drawn between "welfare" and "economic liberalism" as representation of the traditional state-market cleavage. The second line of conflict is a cultural opposition. As a consequence of the mobilization of the New Social Movements of the 1960s and 1970s, cultural liberalism has emerged as a polarizing issue already in the 1970s. The counter-pole is formed by budgetary rigor, law and order stances ("security"), or support for the army, all of which can be interpreted to represent a neo-conservative counter-pole to cultural liberalism.
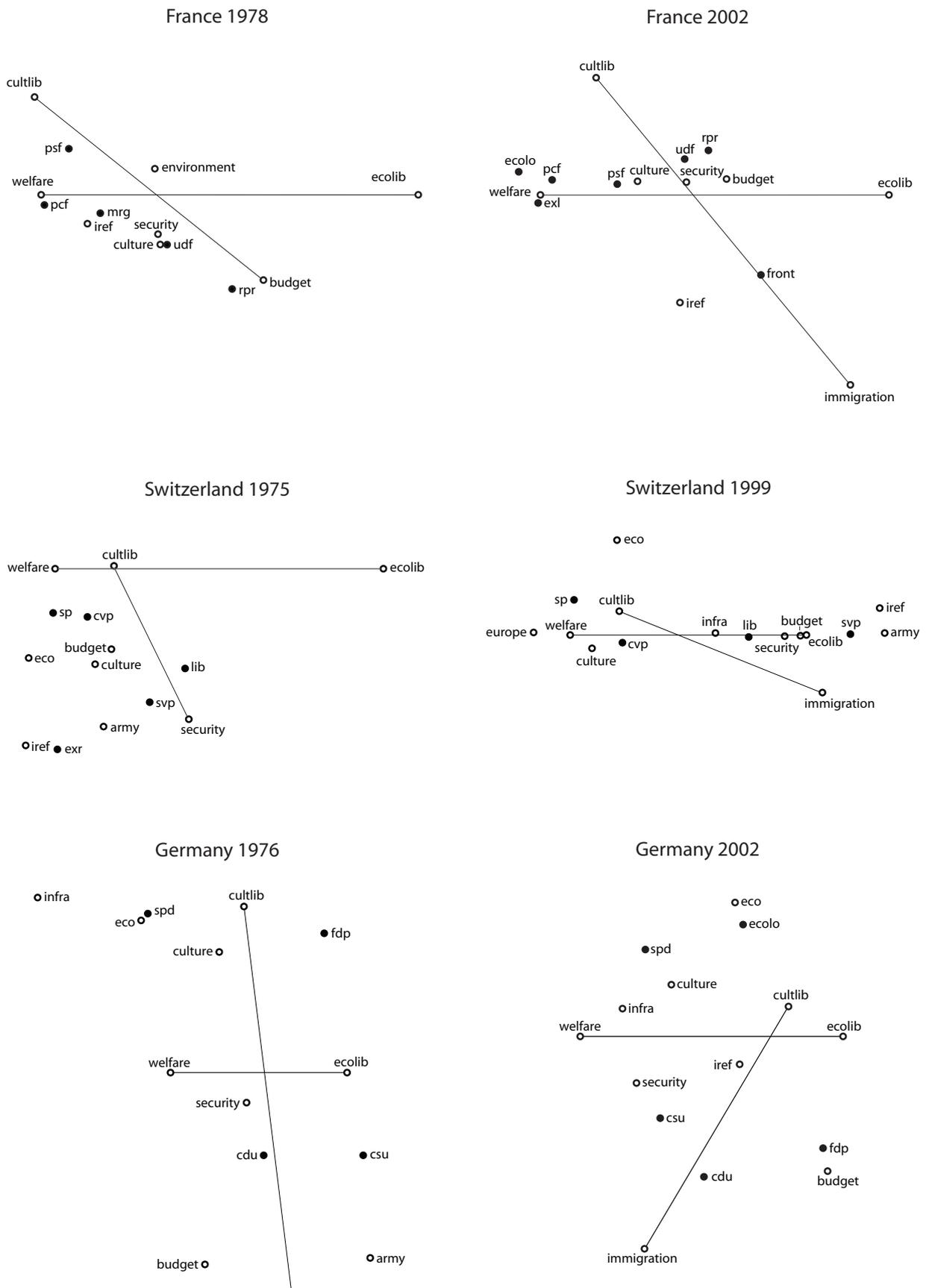
France 1978

cultlib
psf
welfare • environment ecolib
pcf mrg security
iref culture udf
budget rpr

France 2002

cultlib
ecolo udf rpr
pcf culture security budget
welfare psf ecolib
exl
front
iref
immigration

Switzerland 1975

welfare cultlib ecolib
sp cvp
budget culture lib
eco svp
army security
iref exr

Switzerland 1999

eco
sp cultlib infra iref
europe welfare lib budget svp army
culture cvp security ecolib
immigration

Germany 1976

infra cultlib
eco spd fdp
culture
welfare ecolib
security
cdu csu
budget army

Germany 2002

eco
ecolo
spd
culture cultlib
infra
welfare ecolib
iref
security
csu
fdp
cdu budget
immigration

Figure 3: Political space in France, Switzerland, and Germany, mid 1970s and late 1990s/early 2000s. Positions of parties and issue categories

In the more recent election, then, a common cultural dimension of conflict is visible that evolves around the cultural liberalism and anti-immigration stances. These two categories embody what may be called a libertarian-universalistic vs. traditionalist-communitarian line of conflict (Bornschier 2007). Cultural liberalism conveys both support for universalistic values, as well as the repudiation of the opposing normative ideals, namely, the defence of tradition, national sovereignty, and traditional moral values. Opposition to immigration and calls for a tough integration policy (denoted in the figures as "immigration"), on the other hand, captures stances regarding the theme the populist right has used for its construction of a collective identity based on the demarcation from people with cultural backgrounds different from that of the majority population.

Measuring polarization, match, and the stability of alignments

The next step in the analysis is to measure the positions of parties and the overall polarization of the party system along each of the two divides identified. Parties positions along a divide cannot be derived from the MDS-solution, and I therefore calculate their position regarding the two categories that make up the dimension. To have an overall measure of the degree of polarization a divide entailed in a particular election, the standard deviations of parties' positions is a straightforward solution. In order to measure the match between the positions of parties and their electorates, the dimensions found to structure party interactions are reconstructed on the voter side using survey data. Most of the issue categories can be operationalized using demand side data, and I use principal component factor analysis to combine the various survey items that correspond to the categories into an index. Figure 4 shows the example of the cultural dimension in the French 1988 campaign (the bars under the positions of parties and electorates show the heterogeneity of the programmatic stances issued by parties or of the attitudes of their voters). The mean positions of parties and voters cannot be compared directly, because they have been measured on different scales, but it is possible to measure the congruence of representation by calculating the correlation of positions. Because the correlation taps only the covariance between positions, the differing scales are not a problem. The results from the correlations is displayed below

Figure 4. In the example, the match in positions is very high, indicating an almost perfect correspondence between parties' and electorates' positions, which is plausible when looking at their respective locations.

In analyzing the stability of alignments between voters and parties, I am interested in the degree to which a line of opposition engenders loyalties, which indicate social closure of the groups divided by an opposition. Loyal voters are those who vote for a party belonging to the same ideological block in a number of consecutive elections. As urged before, it is crucial also to take into account non-voting, since abstention may be an antecedent to the reconfiguration of preferences. Loyalty in my conception then implies that a voter regularly turns out to vote for his/her ideological party block. The alternative measure, volatility, would only take into account those voters who actually shifted from one block to the other in two consecutive elections, while all those who did not vote in one of them would be excluded from the analysis. By focusing only on wholesale shifts in party preferences, volatility disregards possible erosions of loyalties that are more gradual, but nonetheless result in new political potentials. To measure the stability of alignments, I use recall questions from the surveys.

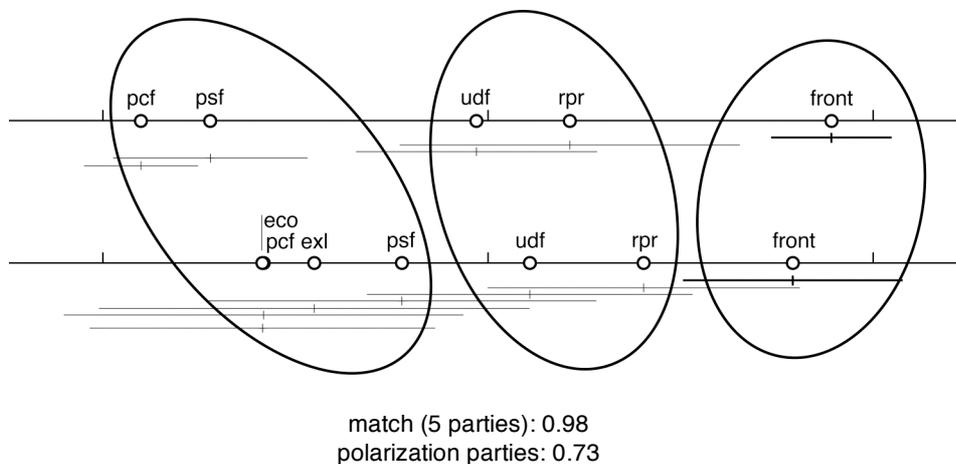match (5 parties): 0.98
polarization parties: 0.73

Figure 4: Positions of parties and voters, and identification of ideological blocks along the cultural dimension, France 1988

Concerning the economic divide, two ideological blocks can be defined based on the sides they take with regard to the traditional class cleavage. The classification of most

parties is relatively easy using what Bartolini (2000: 10-11) calls a "genetic approach", namely, identifying those parties as belonging to the left that have their roots in the process of lower-class enfranchisement and the rise of the class cleavage, characteristic of the structure of industrial conflicts. Bartolini's classification thus provides a good starting point. The more difficult question concerns Christian Democrat and newer parties, in particular the so-called New Left parties and the populist New Right, which emerged since the late 1960s and are not the product of the conflicts of the industrial age. In most countries, Ecologist and New Left parties clearly have their origins in movements that are considered "movements of the left" (Kriesi 1999), but apart from this genetic criterion, I will also use parties' empirically determined positions in political space for the classification. The Swiss Christian Democrats cannot be assigned to the left or right block and therefore form an ideological block of their own (see Frey 2006).

The identification of the relevant blocks along the cultural dimension is more difficult, because we do not have established criteria such as those relating to the class cleavage and the economic dimension as a starting point. From the theoretical point of view, we can expect up to four blocks along the cultural divide: (1) New Left parties, (2) the classical parties of the left, (3) those of the established right, and (4) New Right parties, represented by the populist right. The distinguishing criterion of the two new party families is that they take extreme positions regarding the new cultural dimension of conflict and also primarily mobilize along this dimension, but have a rather indeterminate position with regard to economic conflicts (Bornschier 2007). Empirically, not all of these blocks may be discernible in every country. Furthermore, the distinction between Old Left and New Left is not necessarily an easy one, since New Left parties can either be newly founded parties such as the Ecologists, or result from the transformation of an older Socialist party. To define the blocks, I therefore use the empirically discerned distances between parties' and voters' positions along the cultural dimension. Large gaps between mean positions and low levels of overlap in the spread around these positions indicate a segmentation of competition. If such a pattern is manifest over at least two elections, it seems reasonable to consider the parties separated in this way as belonging to different ideological blocks.

In the example shown in Figure 4, three blocks can be identified. First of all, because neither the positions of parties, nor those of their electorates reveal a divide

between Old Left and the New Left, and because the overlap is especially large on this side of the spectrum, the left as a whole constitutes the first block (PCF, PSF, extreme left and Ecologists in the example). The second block is made up of the established right, the RPR and UDF. Finally, because both the Front National, as well as its voters lie far away from the established right, the populist right forms a New Right block of its own. Based on this classification, the share of voters can be calculated that chose the same party in the preceding election and in the one under study, resulting in the measure for the stability of alignments. Table 2 shows the ideological blocks identified in the analysis of the four election in each of the three countries. In Switzerland and Germany, the patterns of opposition in the 1970s do not reveal clearly discernible ideological blocks, and the analysis therefore begins in the 1990s.

Table 2: Ideological blocks along the economic and cultural dimensions of conflict in
France, Switzerland, and Germany

	State-Market-Cleavage	Cultural divide
France 1978-2002	*Left:* Extreme left, PCF, PSF, Ecologists, MRG	*New Left:* Extreme left, PCF, PSF, Ecologists, MRG
	Right: UDF, RPR/UMP, Front National	*Centre-right:* UDF, RPR/UMP *New Right:* Front National
Switzerland 1991-1999	*Left:* Extreme left, Social , Democrats, Ecologists	*New Left:* Extreme left, Social Democrats, Ecologists
	Christian Democrat: CVP	*Centre-right:* CVP, FDP (liberals)
	Right: FDP (liberals), SVP	*New Right:* SVP, other extreme right parties
Germany 1994-2002	*Left:* SPD, Ecologists	*New Left:* Ecologists
	Right: CDU/CSU	*Old Left:* SPD
		Right: CDU/CSU

We now have the three elements necessary to classify election according to the analytical model summarized in Figure 2: Polarization, match, and stability. Figure 5 shows the nature of economic conflicts in the three countries studied in one election in the mid-1970s and three more recent elections. For ease of representation, only the first two elements of the model are shown, namely, the polarization of the party system and the match between the positions of parties and their electorates, which indicates the responsiveness of the party system to voter preferences. The resulting four quadrants correspond to four basic types of divide, each of which is further differentiated in the full model according to the stability of alignments that the line of conflict entails (see Figure 2). The grey lines indicate (admittedly arbitrary) cut-off points for the classification which are, however, only used as rules of thumb.
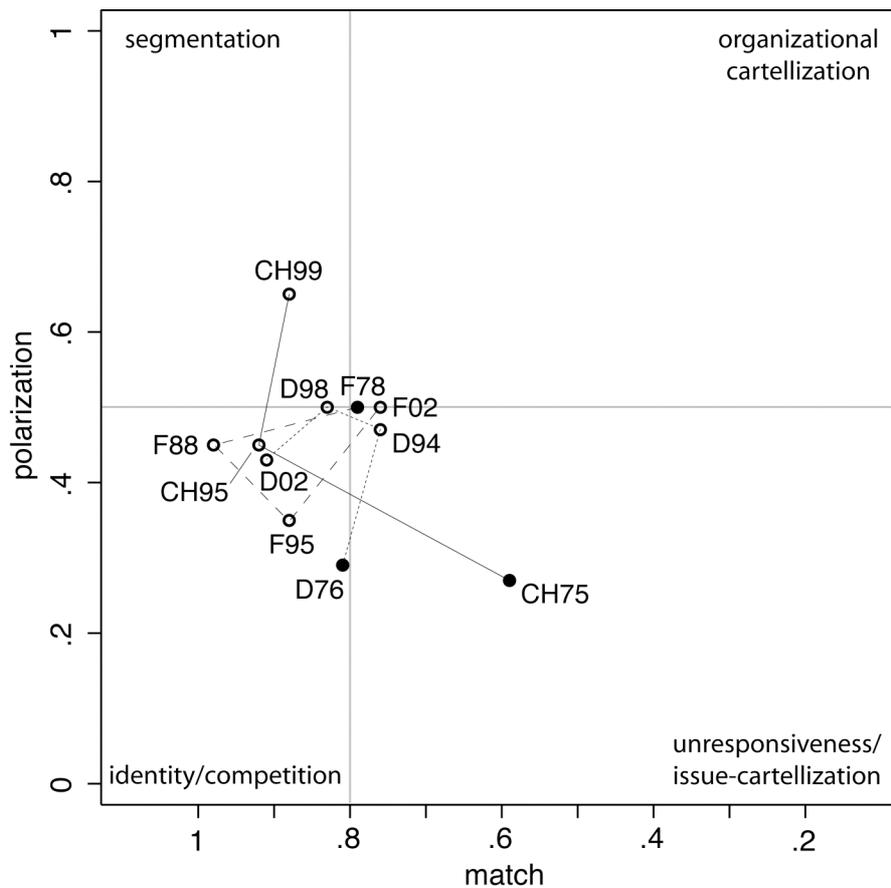

Figure 5: Patterns of opposition along the state-market cleavage
in France, Switzerland, and Germany

While there are elections in which the match in the positions of parties and their voters is somewhat lower, the state-market cleavage represents an identitarian divide in most cases by virtue of medium to low levels of polarization and rather responsive party systems. While voter loyalties to the ideological party blocks defined by the state-market cleavage continue to be strong (see Figure 6), economic conflicts have therefore not been very strongly reinforced by political conflict already in the 1970s, and the situation is similar one or two decades later. Switzerland is an exception to this general picture, in that the party system was first unresponsive in the 1970s and then became more strongly polarized along this dimension than in the other countries at the end of the 1990s.

The state-market cleavage is thus kept alive by the relatively strong political identities associated with it, rather than by segmented patterns of opposition. For those parts of the electorate that do not have strong allegiances to the left and right economic blocks, however, the economic divide is likely to have evolved into a competitive political dimension, where the performance of governments is decisive for voting decisions. In the long run, as established political identities fade, this is what we would expect for the entire electorate. In France, an overall decline in the stability of alignments to these blocks has already been witnessed since the 1970s, while they have remained rather stable in the other countries. Loyalties related to the state-market cleavage have thus delayed, but not organized out completely the rising prominence of political identities related to the new cultural divide.

As Figure 7 reveals, patterns of opposition have become more segmented along the new cultural line of conflict than along the economic divide in Switzerland and France. In both countries, alignments were still structured by the religious and class cleavages in the 1970s, and the manifestation of the left-libertarian agenda in party competition first led to a loss of responsiveness of their party systems, and then to reconfigurations of partisan alignments and parties' political offer. By the 1990s, under the impact of the mobilization of the populist right, a three-block structure has emerged in which the poles are constituted by the left-libertarian and the traditionalist-communitarian blocks, with the centre right squeezed in the middle. At the end of this process of party system transformation, parties closely mirror the positions of the electorate. Right-wing populist parties are an integral part of a segmented pattern of oppositions in

Switzerland and France, and clearly have an electorate of their own in ideological terms.
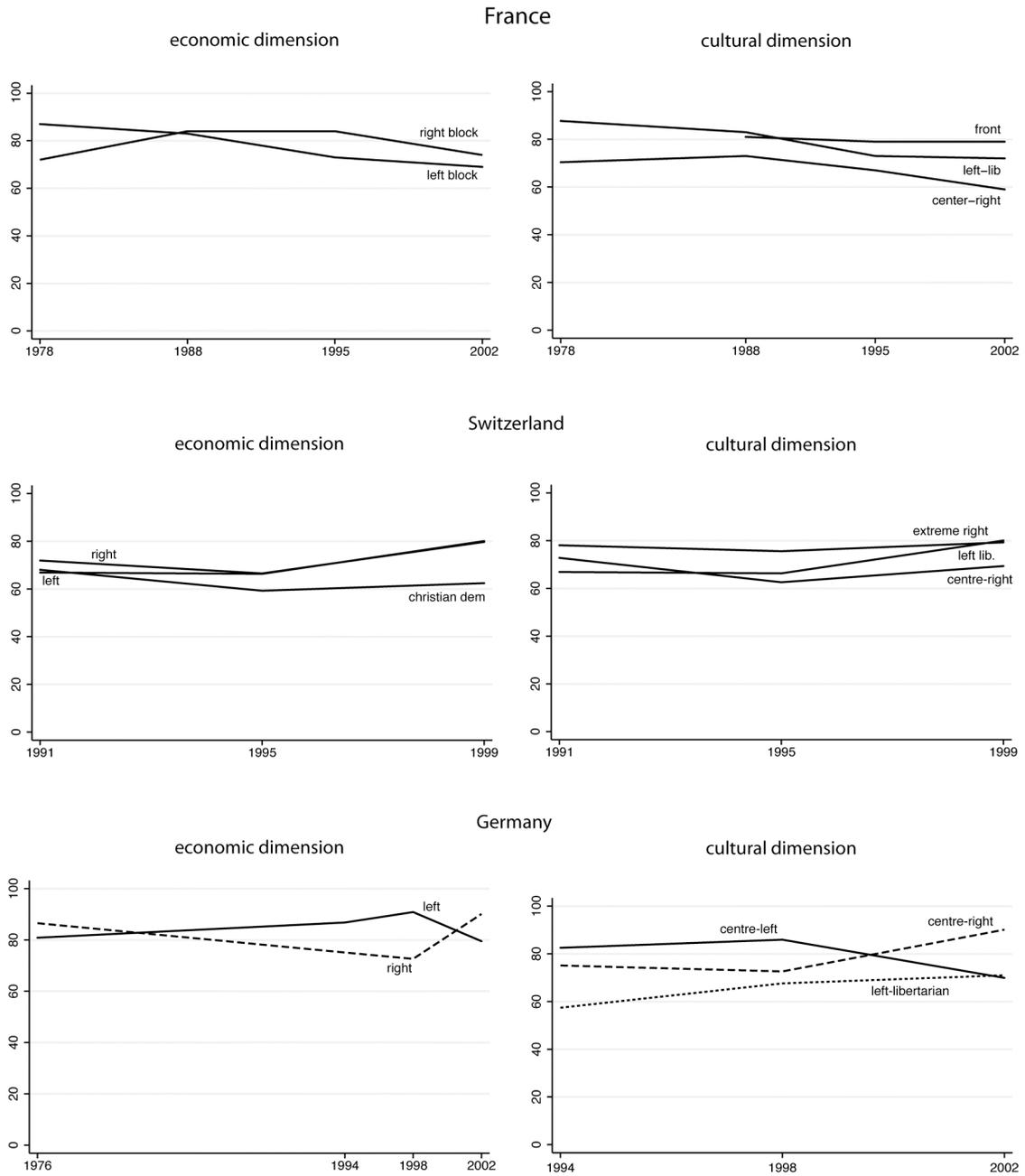

Figure 6: Stability of alignments along the economic and cultural dimensions (measured as the percentage of voters who chose a party from the same ideological block in two consecutive elections)
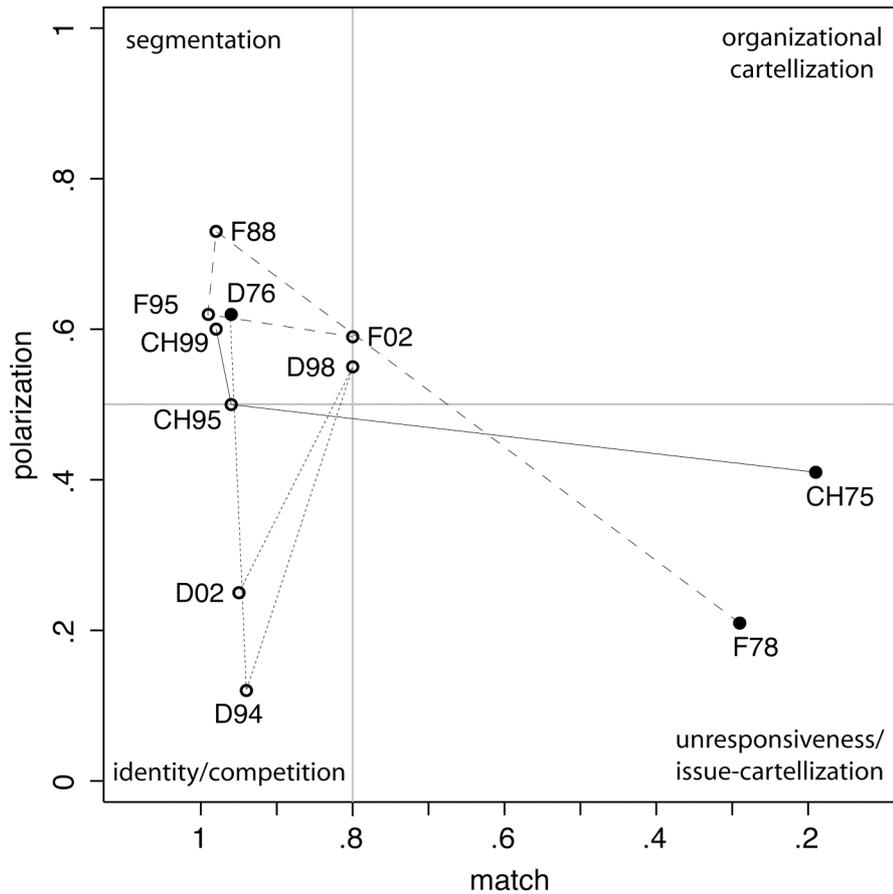
Figure 7: Patterns of opposition along the cultural divide in France, Switzerland, and Germany

The comparison between those two countries where the populist right has been successful with the case of Germany reveals interesting differences in the patterns of competition. In contrast to France and Switzerland, party oppositions in the 1970s were segmented along a libertarian-traditionalist line of conflict in Germany. While retaining responsiveness in the later elections, the party system has become less polarized in two of the three more recent elections, however. With the exception of the 1998 campaign, the pattern of oppositions has been rather centripetal in Germany. In the absence of a strong right-wing populist challenger, the two major parties of the left and right have succeeded in keeping polarization low along the cultural divide of the 1990s, while strong political identities related to the left and right ideological blocks stabilize alignments (see Figure 6). Because the Union parties have retained the ownership of the issues related to traditionalism and immigration, and have the continuing ability to rally voters holding traditionalist-communitarian preferences, the

structural potentials related to the new cultural conflict manifest themselves in tempered form in Germany. However, even in this country, it is not the state-market cleavage that hinders a polarization and subsequent segmentation along the new cultural divide, but rather the strategies of the established parties of the left and right.

In France and Switzerland, on the other hand, where the populist right has made its breakthrough in the 1990s, the segmented pattern of oppositions along the cultural line of opposition suggests that the phase of realignment has come to an end. Right-wing populist parties in these two countries command the highest loyalties of all ideological blocks along the cultural dimension, and it is unlikely that their voters should abandon them all too soon. For those who have been socialized into the new structure of conflicts, cognitive representations of politics centre on cultural, and not economic antagonisms. Considerable parts of the Front National's electorate acclaim Jean-Marie Le Pen's statement that the terms of left and right have become meaningless and that the real antagonism has to do with identity. Consequently, the cultural antagonism is not only the more salient divide for the voters of the populist right (Bornschier 2007), but it is also likely to remain more important for them than the state-market cleavage. What is more, given the strength the populist right has reached, it is rather improbable that disputes over the proper definition of binding norms, over what constitutes the basis of the national community, and over the challenge posed to national sovereignty by European unification should recede all too soon. Political conflict will therefore reinforce the collective political identities underlying the antagonism between libertarian-universalistic and traditionalist-communitarian values.

Conclusion

The first goal of this chapter has been to develop a conceptual framework for the analysis of cleavage-formation at the individual level. I have intended to show that using concepts from social psychology, these processes can be fruitfully studied at that level. The distinction put forward between *structural* and *collective action potentials* allows an assessment of the chances of structural conflicts being politically mobilized. Thus, my aim was both to challenge reductionist views that consider it sufficient to

define political potentials in social structural terms, as well as to offer analytical tools to incorporate the element of collective identity into the study of political cleavages. While collective identity is a constituting element of Bartolini and Mair's (1990) widely accepted definition of a cleavage, it is all too often left aside in empirical analysis due to the difficulties of measurement, a partial exception being Knutsen and Scarbrough (1995). While this is on the one hand due to a lack of appropriate data, a problem that is not easily resolved, shortcomings can on the other hand be traced to a lack of appropriate analytical tools. For this reason, I have attempted to grasp collective identities at the individual level in this paper, hoping to contribute to the integration of the collective identity dimension into the study of cleavage mobilization.

Both the traditional class and religious cleavages, as well as the more recent divide based on the conflict between citizens holding libertarian-universalistic and those defending traditionalist-communitarian values, have emerged due to the interplay of common value priorities, integration into social networks, and the deliberate moulding of collective identities by political elites. Social structure and individual identities have to interact to enable the formation of collective identities that result in collective action potentials. However, to assess the mobilization capacity of a new conflict, we also have to take into account how firmly group members are still rooted in social identities related to older oppositions. In order to develop a model that takes into account the interplay of old and new conflicts, the first step is to develop a proper understanding of how exactly European party systems have "frozen" into place in the 1920s.

Beyond shedding light on the way old cleavages are perpetuated in transformed form, the second central task of this paper has thus been to develop a typology of divides with varying consequences for the emergence of new lines of opposition. To the degree that established cleavages entail collective identities and provide cognitive schemata for the interpretation of politics, they condition the room available for the articulation of new conflicts that cut across the old divisions. Again drawing on social psychology, I have argued that a central mechanism shaping and reinforcing collective identities and ideological schemas is political conflict. It is therefore essential to link historical cleavages to the policy level of oppositions in party systems, over and above the three constituting elements of a cleavage suggested by Bartolini and Mair (1990).

Finally, to illustrate its empirical applicability, the model has been applied to the transformation of Western European party systems as a result of the emergence of new

value-based conflicts since the late 1960s. The analysis shows that the state-market cleavage remains one of the two major dimension of conflict in these party systems. As the same time, Western European party systems have been altered as a result of the mobilization of a new cultural conflict that opposes libertarian-universalistic and traditionalist-communitarian conceptions of justice and community. Given its importance in political competition and the strong loyalties it entails, this conflict has evolved into a cleavage that has displaced the religious opposition as the second cleavage dimension in various Western Europe party systems. However, depending on the nature of the established cleavages on the one hand, and on the strategy of the established parties on the other, the opportunities for right-wing populist parties, whose rise is related to the emergence of this new cleavage, have varied. While the established parties of the left and right in Germany have prevented a segmentation along the new cultural cleavage and have contended the right-wing populist potential, right-wing populist parties have entrenched themselves firmly in the French and Swiss party systems. They contribute to and are an integral part of the segmented nature of the new cleavage in these countries.

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