Is the cleavage approach relevant for Central Eastern Europe?

1. The classical cleavage theory (Lipset/Rokkan 1967)

- Citizens form alliances across **structural conflict lines** (cleavages)
- The societal divisions are institutionalized by political parties
- Thus – **closure and salience** of cleavages shape the party system
- “Freezing thesis” – Western European party system did not change since the 1920s.

- Cleavages arose along two dimensions: **territorial** (oppositions from peripheral regions, elite power conflicts) and **functional** (Conflicts over allocation of recourses, religious - /ideological oppositions).

- The National Revolution spurred cleavages of Centre vs. Periphery and State vs. Church
- The Industrial Revolution spurred cleavages of Land vs. Industry (Rural vs. Urban) and Workers vs. Employers (Labour vs. Capital)

2. „New“ cleavages

- Critique of the freezing thesis

- “Silent revolution” (Ingelhart) – growing salience of new „postmaterialist” issues (globalization, revaluation of knowledge and technology, individualism, equality, human rights, multiculturalism, ecology, gender)
- Realignment/dealignment processes, politics disenchantment, party convergence

- **Emergence of new parties**: Green parties, right wing radical parties

3. Cleavage constellation in Central Eastern Europe: Problems

- Complex and multi-faceted post-communist transition
- Post-communist political system still young
- Parliamentary volatility
- Indefinable goals of political actors, populist stance
- Party disenchantment
- Symbolic politics

- Discontinuity thesis vs. Continuity thesis
4. Cleavage constellation in Central Eastern Europe: Approaches

HERBERT KITSCHELT (1995)

- Kitschelt makes the development of cleavages dependent on the existence of programmatic parties
- **Programmatic parties’ emergence** dependent on system time; political structure; structure of authoritarian rule and democratic transition; timing of industrialization and political mobilization
- **Cleavage dimensions**: boundaries of citizenship: universalist vs. particularist; collective political governance structures: political and social liberalism vs. political and social authoritarianism; redistribution of goods: free-market vs. state-led allocation

- In countries emerging from bureaucratic-authoritarian communist regimes, the focus is on the redistribution dimension
- In countries emerging from national communist regimes and negotiated transitions, issues of social libertarianism/authoritarianism play a role
- In countries emerging from patrimonial communist regimes, politics is highly personalized and symbolic
- In patrimonial regimes, **ethnic divisions** are likely to further weaken the liberal-democratic party camp and limit economic reform

KLAUS VON BEYME (1997)

- In the first run – development of ephemeral, personalized „taxi parties“ that soon were pushed out of the political scene
- Although little continuation on party level existed, not all conflicts were new
- Socialism flattened some old conflict lines such as urban vs. rural (urbanisation politics), state vs. church (secularization)
- Some cleavages were **not developed** in communism (labour vs. capital). Result: overemphasizing of centre vs. periphery, nationalism and regionalism
- Some cleavages **shifted**: regime-anti regime turned into reform-gradualism
- Some cleavages **were created**: materialism vs. postmaterialism

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Source: von Beyme (1997): 42
TIMM BEICHELT (2001)

- Concentration processes of party systems
- (De)centralism: merged with centre vs. periphery (exception: Ukraine)
- (Post)materialism: not present at time

Grouping of cleavages into *integrated conflict lines* determines the party system ability to structure relevant conflicts and transfer them upon the programmatic area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>„Classical“ conflict lines during the development of democratic intermediary systems</th>
<th>Post-socialist design</th>
<th>Concentration of conflict lines in the consolidation process</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regime conflict</strong></td>
<td>Support of the ancient régime/anti-regime, former regime opposition</td>
<td>Fading or persistence of the regime conflict</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Socio-economic conflicts</strong></td>
<td>Capital vs. labour</td>
<td>Rapid vs. gradual market opening</td>
<td>Open vs. protected economy/increasing articulation of particular interests (agricultural sector)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Urban vs. rural</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Socio-cultural conflicts</strong></td>
<td>Centre vs. periphery</td>
<td>Abandonment or conservation of regional disparities</td>
<td>Liberal-open vs. conservative-protective world view</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ethnic-linguistic conflict lines</td>
<td>Integration vs. exclusion of cultural and/or ethnic minorities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Religious conflict lines</td>
<td>Refusal vs. acceptance of world explanatory patterns of the socialist époque</td>
<td>Integration or tolerance of regional, ethnic and cultural minorities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Beichelt (2001): 188

- The most important precondition for a development of a programmatic party system with rationalized conflict lines is the **overcoming of regime conflict**
- Regime conflict solution dependent on the type of the ancient regime, the economical situation, ethical composition and the power of former opposition
- The concentration of conflict lines in the consolidation process allowed a development of programmatic party families
- **Socio-economic** party families: liberal, social-liberal, centre, post-socialistic parties
- **Socio-cultural** party families: nationalistic, minority, confessional, women and green parties
5. Conclusions

- Continuity vs. discontinuity thesis – no winner. Cleavages seem to be anchored in specific legacy-based divisions but reconstructed in the process of consolidation.

- Various variables might play a role in shaping the cleavage constellation, eg. pre-communist cultural legacies, modes of communist rule and transition, institutional and elite factors, social experiences and identities (Whitefeld).

- Despite great volatility, parties seem to circulate around stable socio-economic and socio-cultural cleavages.

- Even if driven by populism and symbolic politics, sooner or later political parties will have to adjust their programmes towards the interests of the voters.

- Modernism vs. postmodernism might gain importance but the conflict is for now distributed among the socio-economic and socio-cultural cleavages.

- Cleavages are becoming more and more important as the system consolidates.

Literature:


