

SOCIAL CLEAVAGES, POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND PARTY SYSTEMS:
PUTTING PREFERENCES BACK INTO THE
FUNDAMENTAL EQUATION OF POLITICS

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Abstract

Do the fundamental conflicts in democracies vary? If so, how does this variance affect the party system? And what determines which conflicts are salient where and when? This dissertation explores these questions in an attempt to revitalize debate about the neglected (if not denigrated) part of the fundamental equation of politics: preferences. While the comparative politics literature on political institutions such as electoral systems has exploded in the last two decades, the same cannot be said for the variable that has been called social cleavages, political cleavages, ideological dimensions, and—most generally—preferences.

The dissertation revisits the ways in which preferences, the societal inputs into the political process, interact with political institutions to shape party systems. It lays conceptual groundwork by drawing upon the constructivist literature; evaluates the literature that attempts to account for variance in the number of parties competing in elections; develops new measures of the conflicts both dividing political elites and latent within society-at-large; constructs and empirically tests new hypotheses about the link between these conflicts and the number of parties; and endogenizes elite-level conflicts. The empirical analysis, which employs an original time series cross-sectional data set, is primarily quantitative and cross-national although based around advanced industrial (and specifically Western European) democracies. Measurement and model specification issues that most empirical studies ignore are explored.

Striking variation in the fundamental conflicts within societies is identified, which suggests that common assumptions of one-dimensional political competition are untenable. While the dissertation concludes that the nature and number of these conflicts matter, it disagrees with existing studies about the ways in which they matter. It argues against the traditional approach of relating what are usually called social cleavages to the *number* of political parties. Instead, it suggests linking latent conflicts within society-at-large to the political agenda itself, the elite-level conflicts that divide political parties. Features of society such as ethnic heterogeneity are only weakly and non-linearly related to the number of competitors but strongly related to the types of issues that dominate the political agenda, which we might view as a more normative attribute of party systems.

Chapter 2

Conceptual and Measurement Issues

Despite a generally accepted sense that preferences matter, the variable of ‘social cleavages’ or ‘preferences’ has been conceptualized in a myriad of ways in comparative politics. For example, the Manifesto Research Group investigates the policy space underpinning political competition (Budge, Robertson and Hearl 1987, Budge, Klingemann, Volkens, Bara and Tanenbaum 2001); Inglehart (1984) explores the ideological dimensions structuring mass opinion; and Cox (1997) studies the heterogeneity of social structures. The origin of these different perspectives lies at least partly in the different literatures—spatial theory and political behavior—from which macro-level comparative scholars have borrowed. The commonly used term ‘social cleavages’ has contributed to the conceptual confusion. Some have used it with the aim of focusing attention on society’s input into the political process, which they want to distinguish from the institutions that govern the process. This perspective has roots in spatial theory and in formal theory more generally. Others have used it to mean large-scale sociological divisions between individuals, a perspective with roots in political behavior. The former is the topic with which this thesis is broadly concerned. The latter, as will shortly become clear, is one particularly narrow definition of the abstract concept of interest.

Different perspectives are reflected in the terminology employed; in the empirical measures of the concept that are developed; and in the theories into which the variable is incorporated. Nevertheless, all such studies assume that “the particular manner in which members of a society divide from and associate with one another in regard to political issues has major, direct, and specifiable consequences for political conflict” (Zuckerman 1975, 232).¹ What these consequences are is the topic of later chapters. This chapter reviews the way scholars have thought about and tried to measure conflicts within societies.

The first section of this chapter identifies the fundamental definitional issues that inform the debate. It also weighs in on the debate, establishing the definitional position that the remainder of the thesis will take. The second section surveys existing operationalizations. The third and final section evaluates both the validity and reliability of these existing operationalizations.

¹A debt to Zuckerman (1975) is acknowledged here: although dated, his article provides interested scholars with an excellent overview of past thinking about cleavages and their relationship to political conflict.

2.1 Defining Preferences

G. K. Chesterton pithily wrote in *As I was Saying* (1936), “A man does not know what he is saying until he knows what he is not saying”. An essential part of a social science that seeks to “make descriptive and causal inferences about the world” (King, Keohane and Verba 1994, 7) is the testing of hypotheses that posit relationships between abstract concepts. This requires scholars to define concepts in a way that allows them (or their implications) to be observed and measured, what some have described as “maximizing concreteness” (King, Keohane and Verba 1994, 109). The greater the gaps between an abstract concept, definition, and operationalization, the less certain is the ultimate status of a theory. Such an approach to social science views concepts as neither right nor wrong but as more or less useful, where utility is determined by balancing theoretical importance and empirical precision (Zuckerman 1975). In other words, definitions must clearly convey what the concept of interest is and what it is not. Chesterton would no doubt consider this simple common sense, yet too often definitional matters do not receive the attention that they deserve.

2.1.1 Definitional Issues

Three definitional issues underpin different perspectives on the abstract concept of interest, preferences or social cleavages. These issues comprise distinct conceptual dimensions of any definition. First, should preferences be solely viewed as of sociological origin? On one hand, the earliest view is of an inherently sociological phenomenon—of divisions between groups rooted in objective, ascriptive traits. On the other hand, a more recent view is of a non-sociological phenomenon—of divisions between groups that are not necessarily rooted in objective traits. Divisions may, for example, relate to the opinions that people develop about issues such as foreign policy. Second, should preferences be viewed as persistent across time? One view is of a fundamentally long-term (stable across many elections) phenomenon; another is of a short-term (potentially specific to one election) phenomenon. Third, should preferences be viewed as latent, politicized within the electorate, or underpinning divisions between political parties? The first two issues, which tend to ‘hang together’, are dealt with simultaneously and are followed by a discussion of the third issue.

The most influential piece of scholarship on what has historically been called social cleavages in the comparative politics literature laid the theoretical groundwork for a long-term, sociological definition. Lipset and Rokkan (1967, 6) defined social cleavages as the “conflicts and controversies [that] can arise out of . . . relationships in the social structure . . .” between groups in a political community. They identified four historically important cleavages arising out of the national and industrial revolutions: the urban–rural, worker–employer, center–periphery, and church–state. This perspective remains widely accepted today. Social cleavages are commonly defined as conflicts among large segments of the population rooted in sociological divisions, to be distinguished from similarly-scaled conflicts rooted in other (non-sociological) divisions. The attributes that comprise sociological divisions are difficult for individuals to change, such as race. Some have called such traits ‘sticky’ (van der Veen and Laitin 2004) and others ‘ethnic’ (Chandra and Boulet 2003).² Constructivist scholars

²Chandra and Boulet (2003), for example, place the types of attributes, the values of which comprise identity categories (or social groups), on a scale according to the difficulty of changing them. Physical features

assume that individuals will favor sticky or ethnic attributes over non-sticky or -ethnic ones in choosing the social group to which they will belong. Further, divisions underpinned by such attributes are viewed as likely to persist over a long period, although constructivists in particular are careful to argue that stickiness does not guarantee persistence. The perceived preference for groups defined by sociological attributes combined with the persistence of the resulting divisions are taken by many to justify a focus on sociological divisions. This long-term, sociological perspective is the theoretical well-spring for those who empirically model social cleavages as objective features of society such as Cox (1997). It is not surprisingly closely identified with early voting behavior studies, e.g. Rose (1974).

Others diverge from a purely sociological perspective. Dahl (1966) defined cleavages as the long-standing conflicts around issues that characterized a political system. Eckstein (1966) differentiated between ‘segmental cleavages’, political divisions that closely follow lines of objective social differentiation; ‘cultural divergence’, divisions resulting from different interpretations of the world; and ‘specific disagreements’, divisions over policy. While Rae and Taylor (1970) defined cleavages similarly to Lipset and Rokkan (1967) as the criteria that divide the members of a community into groups, they distinguished between three classes of cleavages: ascriptive or trait; attitudinal or opinion; and behavioral. Their now-famous index of fragmentation, the probability that two randomly chosen individuals in a community will belong to the same group, allows for comparisons of community diversity along a single cleavage. Today, the Manifesto Research Group implicitly builds upon works by these scholars. Research in this tradition broadens the definition of social cleavages to encompass non-sociological divisions: conflicts do not have to be rooted in sociological traits. Additionally, while maintaining what is essentially a view of social cleavages as long-standing divisions between groups, it seems agnostic towards a definition that includes short-lived sources of conflict (say, along the lines of foreign policy).

Finally, more recent work in formal theory adopts a short-term, non-sociological definition. Cantillon (2001) studies the incentives provided by different electoral rules for parties to adopt emerging issues. She concludes that what she calls issue dimensions do change over time if such change is in the strategic interests of political parties. This definition of the abstract concept of interest encompasses a wide variety of sources of division, from non-partisan issues such as corruption to partisan issues such as environmental regulation or affirmative action. Further, attention is not confined solely to long-standing conflicts. By accepting the possibility of change in the cleavage structure and by making political actors its agent, short-lived conflicts are included in the definition: they are picked up and then discarded by parties as the strategic game of competition demands. A similar perspective is taken by the realignment literature, which primarily contains case studies of party system change (Sundquist 1973, Butler and Stokes 1969, Burnham 1970). While the realignments studied are short bursts of change, both followed and preceded by equilibrium, it is the fact that change occurs that aligns these two literatures. Both recognize that short-lived divisions of many types sometimes emerge and are consequential for the structure of com-

such as skin color are placed at the high end of the scale and occupation or place of residence at the low end. They define the types of attributes that fall from the high to the middle end of the scale as ethnic and the types of attributes that fall towards the low end as non-ethnic. van der Veen and Laitin, as noted, apply the term ‘stickiness’ to this concept. These definitional parameters allow for more fine-grained distinctions than does the dichotomized sociological vs. non-sociological conceptual dimension utilized by this thesis. For example, race and religion are both sociological and sticky relative to foreign policy preferences, but we would clearly view race as much stickier than religion.

petition. Here, then, is another perspective on social cleavages: one that defines them as non-sociological and potentially short-term phenomena.

The remaining definitional matter concerns where social cleavages or preferences are situated in their evolution from latent divisions between individuals to lines of full-fledged political conflict. Few scholars fail to recognize that what are usually called ‘political cleavages’, divisions institutionalized in the party system, are endogenous when push comes to shove. What is to some extent a straw man opposition is cited as assuming a one-to-one relationship between latent divisions and these ‘political cleavages’, i.e., that the former are objectively and automatically translated into the latter.³ Yet even scholars such as Lipset and Rokkan, who are usually viewed as proponents of sociological determinism, do not adopt this position. Below, a rough two-stage process of what Carmines and Stimson (1989) call issue evolution (for lack of a better term) is extracted from the literature.⁴

First, latent cleavages are politicized, creating political cleavages. By political cleavages, the thesis means criteria that divide the electorate into self-aware and organized groups based on their preferences related to the criteria. In the constructivist literature, politicization is often described as an identity category becoming either salient (van der Veen and Laitin 2004) or activated (Chandra and Boulet 2003). For example, religion may divide citizens. Those who are secular may share an identity and organization that differs from the identity and organization shared by those who are religious. Differences in identity between the two groups should encompass differences in beliefs about important issues such as the proper relationship between church and state. If a cleavage is latent or unpoliticized, groups are either not aware that they share a common identity or are not organized in a way that allows their interests deriving from the common identity to be expressed. In contrast, if a cleavage is politicized, groups both share a collective identity and are organized to express their interests.⁵ Latent sociological cleavages, divisions around ascriptive traits such as race, may be translated into political cleavages; however, not all political cleavages have a sociological basis. For example, most students of Israeli politics would

³Zuckerman (1975, 237) distinguishes between the deterministic approach that views social divisions as a “necessary and a sufficient condition” for the emergence of political cleavages and the non-deterministic approach that views them as either a “necessary but not a sufficient condition” or “neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition”. We might re-phrase his description of the former approach as ‘given a group, a political party will form to represent the group.’ Astute observers of the late 1980s might term this the Ray Kinsella approach: build it (a baseball diamond in an Iowa cornfield or an ethnic group) and they (the Chicago White Sox or a political party) will come. Several recent studies that highlight the difference between the two approaches include Chhibber and Torcal (1997), Torcal and Mainwaring (2003), and Chhibber and Kollman (2004). However, one is hard pressed to actually identify modern political science scholarship that endorses the Ray Kinsella approach. A large proportion of the electoral and party systems literature recognizes that something or someone intervenes to turn social divisions into political conflicts. What usually happens is that scholars simply omit (for whatever reason) a discussion of this process. Most literature that assumes objective and automatic translation is from other sub-disciplines or fields, such as religious studies, history, conventional area studies, and sociology.

⁴This discussion draws primarily from Cantillon (2001) and Cox (1997), who in turn draws from Jaensch (1983) and Meisel (1974).

⁵Defining political cleavages in terms of two criteria, organization of some sort that allows the realization of collective action (e.g. schools, unions, interest groups, clubs, newspapers, etc.) as well as common interest, follows a long tradition in this literature (e.g., Bartolini and Mair 1990). In contrast to studies that omit the first stage of the two-stage politicization process discussed here, the organization is not required to take the form of a political party at this stage. Clearly, in the absence of common interest, organization is unlikely. As the thesis will argue later when it endogenizes political cleavages, common interests do not presume organization.

identify the foreign policy conflict over the future boundaries of the Israeli state as one of the most virulent contemporary political cleavages in Israel (Dowty 1998). Additionally, not all latent sociological cleavages may be politicized. For example, gender—an ascriptive division more enduring than any save perhaps race—has historically not been politicized in many countries (Kaplan 1992, Lovenduski 1986). The key point is that even seemingly exogenous and natural sociological political cleavages such as race do not “happen spontaneously as reflections of objective conditions in the psyches of individuals” (Przeworski and Sprague 1986, 7). Ultimately, all primordial identities are politically forged (Laitin 1986, 159–60).

Second, political cleavages are *particized*, that is, made into important lines of partisan division. Particized cleavages are on the political agenda in the sense that political parties address and take positions on the issues that derive from them. For example, socioeconomics—the debate about the role of the state in the operation of markets—has in modern history been an if not the most important source of partisan conflict (Budge, Robertson and Hearl 1987, Budge et al. 2001). Simplistically, this cleavage divides parties into two groups, those that support an economically interventionist state (the left) and those that do not (the right). An important point to consider about this second stage of issue evolution is that not all politicized conflicts will be particized. Either political elites may deliberately suppress the particization of particular political cleavages or there may simply be little strategic incentive for elites to adopt them.⁶ There is no guarantee that parties and voters are “in the same space,” and in fact they are likely to not be (Budge, Robertson and Hearl 1987, 393). Symptomatic of the particization of a cleavage is an issue working its way into party platforms within the existing party system or a re-structuring of the party system whereby new parties emerge to take up particular cleavages.⁷ New parties can either replace or supplement existing parties.

Comparativists have generally focused on the second stage in the process of issue evolution although there is disagreement about which stage is the proper object of study. Specifically, many comparativists use the terms ‘political cleavages’ and ‘social cleavages’ to mean what are referred to here as ‘particized cleavages’ and ‘latent cleavages,’ respectively. The first stage of the process is frequently omitted altogether and the distinction between latent and politicized cleavages elided over at inopportune moments. Others, a minority, use terms such as ‘identity’ to refer to what the thesis terms ‘political cleavages’ and endogenize both it and particized cleavages (e.g., Kalyvas 1994). A hypothesis accounting for the traditional focus on the second stage is that where democracy is the rule of the game, particization is viewed as the key to changing the status quo of a conflict. Political parties in party-centered democracies and parties plus political representatives in candidate-centered

⁶See, for example, Carmines and Stimson (1989) on the racial cleavage in American politics. The point here, as emerges from van der Veen and Laitin (2004) and will be developed at greater length in Chapter 6, is that particization results from the choices of political entrepreneurs.

⁷Note that there is an important ambiguity in this discussion about what constitutes multi-dimensionality in the particized ideological space. For example, consider a two-dimensional space with a socioeconomic (L–R) cleavage as the x-axis and an anti-clerical–religious cleavage as the y-axis. Let there be three parties. If the parties take positions represented by the (x, y) coordinates in this plane of $(-1, -1)$, $(0, 0)$, $(1, 1)$, should the particized ideological space really be considered two-dimensional? A straight line in this plane, which has one dimension, describes their positions perfectly; alternatively, rotating the plane 45 degrees reveals the one-dimensionality of the party positions. However, the parties do each stake out positions on issues related to socioeconomics and religion (e.g., these issues will feature in their manifestos). The thesis will return to this point later in the chapter.

ones pull the strings that apply the massive coercive powers of the modern state. While there are alternative methods for upsetting the status quo in some places and time periods, e.g. the judicial process in the United States, substantive change usually involves political parties setting the wheels of bureaucracy in motion.⁸ A two-stage view of politicization is adopted here because of its more detailed (and presumably accurate) representation of the causal process. Objections that may be raised to this two-stage process include the direction of the causal arrows, an issue that a later chapter will address.⁹

Either implicitly or explicitly, then, scholars have disagreed about how the abstract concept of interest should be defined with respect to three conceptual dimensions. By mapping the abstract concept to different values along each of the three dimensions, we can generate different definitions of our variable. In fact, the social cleavage or preferences variable has stood for many types of conflicts due to just this sort of differential mapping. To illustrate, the Manifesto Research Group's 'party policy dimensions', identified from party platforms, are *particized*, *non-sociological*, and *long-term* cleavages. Cox's (1997) 'social cleavages' are *latent*, *sociological*, and *long-term* cleavages. Inglehart's (1984) 'political cleavages' refer at times to *politicized* and at other times to *particized*, *non-sociological*, and usually (but not always) *short-term* cleavages.

Note that there is no necessary relationship between the values a definition adopts along the three conceptual dimensions. For example, one could define social cleavages either as *long-term*, *sociological*, and *politicized* divisions or as *short-term*, *non-sociological* and *politicized* divisions. However, those who have adopted a *non-sociological* perspective have almost exclusively mapped their variable to either the *political* or *particized* points on the conceptual dimension of issue evolution. In this case, by the very nature of a focus upon attitudes, opinions, and ideologies, it is difficult to view preferences as *latent*, when individuals usually have no awareness of their interests. In fact, most scholars writing in this tradition have regarded *sociological* traits merely as bases for communal action, not to be equated with groups capable of it. Conversely, those who have adopted a *sociological* perspective have frequently studied the *latent* stage in issue evolution.

The nutshell of this story is that there are different kinds of preferences that might distinguish between polities. Once we move beyond the abstract, general concept of societal input into the political process and start to think concretely about defining and operationalizing this variable, we are confronted with this fact. The type of preferences that appears in theories and empirical work, embodied in the values taken along the three conceptual dimensions of a definition discussed in this section, might be consequential for the conclusions drawn. Scholars should be more careful than they have been in alerting readers to the definition of their variable, whether it is employed on the left-hand side (a variable that

⁸Again see Carmines and Stimson (1989). The civil rights movement—non-violent action along a politicized racial cleavage—might have been sufficient to provoke wide-spread change in the social, political, and economic circumstances of African-Americans in the United States given both determination and time, although counterfactuals of this sort are inherently difficult to evaluate. Historically speaking, however, rapid and significant change in African-Americans' day-to-day life experiences followed the politicization of the racial cleavage in the 1960s, when the federal government used both carrots and sticks in public policy to overturn the discriminatory status quo.

⁹That is, the thesis initially assumes that politicized cleavages are exogenous to political competition and *particized* cleavages. Parties develop issue agendas in anticipation of electoral behavior, which are a function of voters' tastes or preferences. They do not fashion the political cleavages that structure voters' preferences. Przeworski and Sprague (1986) famously demonstrated the untenability of this assumption, but it is one that is both commonly made and useful for the time being.

itself deserves explanation) or on the right (a variable useful in accounting for variance in other important political outcomes).

This is not to say that there is a single correct definition. Rather, “how scholars understand and operationalize a concept can and should depend on what they are going to do with it” (Collier and Alcock 1999, 539). In other words, scholars should justify their definition and operationalization of abstract concepts in light of the goals of their research; others can then evaluate the merits of their arguments. For example, the long-term, sociological definition confines attention to a subset of the phenomena studied by the short-term, non-sociological definition. What are the relative merits of the less restrictive latter and more restrictive former definitions? Scholars should but unfortunately do not ask such questions in the electoral and party systems literature. A useful contrast is provided by the democratization literature, where Przeworski et al. (1996) revitalized a debate about the proper definition and operationalization of democracy.¹⁰ Debates of this kind are important because they reveal precisely which hypothesis empirical work is testing and the defensible scope of conclusions that can be drawn. They are also important because empirical tests of poorly specified hypotheses contribute little to our stock of knowledge.

2.1.2 And the Definition Is...?

Differences aside, the various definitions discussed above have significant overlaps. Any common elements reflect a scholarly consensus about how the abstract phenomenon of interest should be defined. The first element of a minimal definition of preferences is the criteria that divide a political community into groups, whether the criteria are issues such as foreign policy or ascriptive traits such as race. The number and type of criteria combine with the number of groups generated by each to characterize what this thesis will henceforth call the cleavage structure of a polity.¹¹ The second element is that political communities may be divided by a plethora of criteria. For example, from the sociological perspective, a political community may be divided by several sociological traits such as religion, race, and class. Similarly, from the non-sociological perspective, several issue dimensions such as the economy, foreign policy, and race may divide a political community. Operationalizations of all preference variables, however defined along the three conceptual dimensions discussed in the previous section, must at a minimum reflect these two definitional elements to attain validity.

To elaborate, this definition of a cleavage structure builds upon Posner (N.d.), who in turn builds upon Sacks (1992). Posner’s discussion of ethnic cleavages, ethnic groups, and ethnic cleavage structures helpfully illuminates the differences between the more general concepts of cleavages, groups, and cleavage structures that concern us. First, he equates ethnic groups with Sacks’s ‘identity categories’, the group labels that people use to de-

¹⁰See, for example, Alvarez, Cheibub, Limongi and Przeworski (1996) and Collier and Alcock (1999) to get a flavor of this debate.

¹¹Note that for simplicity, the ideological space—to use terminology from the spatial literature—is effectively discretized by this definition. The conventional spatial model defines the cleavage structure as the ideological space (the number and nature of dimensions) and individuals’ multi-dimensional ideal points in this space, which are vectors in \mathbb{R}^n . Here, the ideal points are sets. Each element corresponds to an individual’s position on a dimension and is itself an element of a discrete set of possible positions. These positions may be either ordered or unordered. In the latter case a spatial model cannot be used, but more general types of analyses have been developed in the formal theory literature to accommodate such cases.

fine who they are. Examples include ‘Orthodox Jew’, ‘dove’, ‘hawk’, and ‘aethist’. These identity categories are the building blocks of the social groups this thesis discusses. Second, Posner’s ethnic cleavages are equivalent to Sacks’s ‘category sets’, the lines of division into which identity categories can be sorted. Examples include religion and foreign policy, which obviously correspond to what this thesis has called cleavages or ideological dimensions. Third, Posner’s ethnic cleavage structure combines the two. It is simply known here as the cleavage structure. Constructivists such as Chandra and Boulet (2003) employ the terminology ‘identity category’ similarly to Posner and Sacks, although they add an additional conceptual distinction by introducing ‘types of attributes’, such as skin color and place of birth, which are constitutive of identity categories. As they argue, given a domain of analysis, their ‘types of attributes’ describe the inputs into the production of categories, while the term ‘dimension’ or ‘cleavage’ describes the output.

In an attempt to improve clarity, the rest of the thesis drops the use of the term ‘social cleavages’. Instead, it explicitly maps the abstract concept of preferences onto the three distinct conceptual dimensions identified in the prior section: stage in issue evolution; sociological vs. non-sociological divisional nature; and divisional persistence. Specifically, viewing the stage in issue evolution as the most important of these definitional parameters, the thesis refers to latent, political, and particized cleavages (sometimes substituting the terms preferences, cleavage structure, ideological space, or dimensions for the word ‘cleavages’)¹² as defined above without, for the moment, taking a position with respect to the definitional issues of divisional nature and persistence. Note that the emphasis placed on the stage in issue evolution is not intended to obscure the existence of the two other definitional parameters or to suggest that the three automatically bundle together. The three parameters represent distinct aspects of any conceptualization of preferences, although with varying degrees of importance to theory-building. Trichotomizing the abstract concept according to the issue evolution definitional parameter merely reflects the judgment of the thesis that this parameter is the most consequential. Throughout, the thesis will use the term ‘preferences’ to refer to the general, abstract concept of social inputs into the political process.

No thesis would be complete without staking its own claim to the contested definitional field. Comments accordingly seem in order about the merits of the various possible values along the three conceptual dimensions. Other definitional matters that deserve attention, such as important clarifications that have repercussions for later analyses, are also dealt with below.

First, with respect to the most fundamental definitional parameter, the stage of issue evolution, a review of the comparative politics literature leads one to conclude that countries might differ in the number and nature of their latent, politicized, and particized cleavages. To merely speak of preferences is not enough; we need to assess the variance in the latent,

¹²Zuckerman (1975) makes the point that the word ‘cleavage’ has semantic baggage: it denotes a specific kind of division, one along natural lines. Indeed, its predominant use is by those writing in the sociological tradition, while those in the non-sociological tradition tend to employ the words ‘division’, ‘dimension’, ‘preferences’, and ‘issues’. The word ‘cleavage’ has not been jettisoned here in favor of these other words, despite the definition that will be shortly proposed, in order to maintain some continuity with past scholarship. In contravention of the dictionary definition, then, ‘cleavage’ as used in this thesis is synonymous with ‘division’. If anything, it implies a consequential (large-scale) division but nothing more. Zuckerman himself uses ‘cleavage’ similarly to imply a sub-set of political divisions, although for him it refers to divisions that are both large-scale and persistent.

politicized, and partitized cleavages that structure political life in democracies around the globe. The remainder of the thesis will independently consider variation in all three. But why not simply choose a value along this conceptual dimension? Does not one value yield a definition that is superior to others? Unfortunately, there is not a clear-cut answer in this case. Which definition should be employed depends upon a scholar's research goals, as Chapter 3 will argue in the context of models for party system fractionalization.

Second, with respect to the conceptual dimension of divisional nature, the thesis is sympathetic to the minimalist stance taken by Alvarez et al. (1996, 4), who argue that

“Almost all normatively desirable aspects of political, and sometimes even of social and economic, life are credited as definitional features of democracy. . . From an analytical point of view, lumping all good things together is of little use. The typical research problem is to examine relations between them. Thus, we may want to know if holding repeated elections induces governmental accountability, if participation generates equality. . . Hence, we want to define democracy narrowly”.

This debate about how democracy should be defined can shed useful light on the debate surrounding the definition of preferences outlined above. Political and partitized cleavages may or may not have a basis in the ascriptive, sociological identities of a polity's citizens.¹³ Conflating the two by definition precludes us from asking many important questions, such as how variation in the sociological basis of politicized and partitized cleavages affects political conflict and if cleavages with a sociological base are in fact more persistent than those without. Hence, the inclination here is towards the more general—less restrictive—definition, what this thesis has termed the non-sociological value along the conceptual dimension of divisional nature. This leaves “the tie to social divisions. . . to hypothesis” (Zuckerman 1975, 236). Throughout, the thesis makes a special effort to measure non-sociological cleavages. In this respect, it differs significantly from much existing electoral and party systems scholarship, particularly that with roots in the political behavior literature.

Third and finally, with respect to the remaining conceptual dimension, divisional persistence, choice of a long- vs. short-term definition again depends on a researcher's goals. If the dependent variable is the party system in a particular election, then the most proper independent variable seems to be the cleavages relevant at that moment in time, which may include transitory cleavages. If the dependent variable is an average over time or another measure of the party system in equilibrium, then the independent variable should correspondingly be the equilibrium or persistent cleavages. Both of these definitions are employed by the thesis. The practical problem of insufficient time series data combined with the fact that the latent cleavage structure usually changes slowly over time¹⁴ leads to the latent preference variable being defined primarily as long-term for the purposes of this thesis. Conversely, theory suggests that short-term changes in political and partitized

¹³Allardt and Pesonen (1967) distinguish between ‘structural’ and ‘non-structural’ partitized cleavages. In the former case, the partitized cleavage corresponds to a politicized, sociological cleavage; in the latter case, the partitized cleavage corresponds to either a politicized but non-sociological or a non-politicized (latent) sociological cleavage.

¹⁴Fearon (2002, 30) makes this point with respect to the ethnic cleavage structure of polities. He found that “recent population estimates [of ethnic groups] . . . showed a remarkable degree of consistency” with older, post-colonial estimates. Similarly, Fearon and Laitin (2003a, 4) note that with a few exceptions, the religious cleavage structure did not appear to change much over time. Change that does occur in latent cleavage structures will almost always take place over generations, although Chandra and Boulet (2003, 2) are certainly correct to argue that “a country's ethnic demography . . . is not fixed but changes over time”.

preferences both occur and might be consequential for political outcomes of interest such as the party system. Available data combined with this theoretical insight leads the thesis to primarily define these variables as short-term. In general, though, the inclination here is again to favor the less restrictive definition, that generated by the choice of the short-term value on the conceptual dimension of divisional persistence.

Hence, the use of the terms ‘latent cleavages’ or ‘latent preferences’ throughout the remainder of the thesis will refer to non-sociological, long-term, latent cleavages unless otherwise noted. Similarly, the use of the terms ‘political cleavages’ or ‘politicized preferences’ will refer to non-sociological, short-term, politicized cleavages and the terms ‘particized cleavages’ to non-sociological, short-term, and particized cleavages. A few clarifications and elaborations are necessary before continuing on to a review of existent operationalizations of the three variables. We begin with the definition of latent cleavages.

The variable of latent cleavages has a different flavor from that of its cousins, political and particized cleavages. A few examples may help to flesh out the approach to this variable. Religiously diverse but ethnically homogeneous and isolationist or neutral modern, industrial countries are likely to have two cleavages, religion and socioeconomics. Conversely, a similar but religiously homogeneous polity is likely to only have one cleavage, socioeconomics. The most famous variant of this argument is the Lipset and Rokkan (1967) thesis. They argued that countries with a large Catholic minority in Western Europe were characterized by clerical–anti-clerical politicized and particized cleavages, whereas predominantly Protestant countries were not, religious issues having been settled during the Reformation. Hence, by this argument, greater latent diversity of religious affiliation in the Netherlands than in the United Kingdom led to a corresponding greater diversity of politicized and particized preferences. The religious cleavage was both politicized and particized in the Netherlands but only (at most) politicized in the United Kingdom, as evidenced by the existence of expressly religious parties in the former but not in the latter. A similar argument has been made with respect to ethnicity. Whether primarily defined in terms of language or race, ethnic heterogeneity—the presence of more than one ethnic group—is likely to give rise to a politicized and particized ethnic cleavage, with greater heterogeneity producing more politicized and particized groups along the ethnic cleavage. Lipset and Rokkan also offer a version of this argument, although they frame their discussion in terms of conflict between a political center and peripheral territories, which usually have distinct languages and cultures.

‘Latent cleavages’ as a variable is best thought of as the potential for politicized and particized cleavages. That is, as illustrated by the examples in the prior paragraph, a existence of latent sociological cleavage is determined by the heterogeneity or homogeneity of a country in terms of an objective sociological characteristic such as religion, ethnicity, race, or class. If the country is homogeneous in terms of the characteristic, neither the corresponding political nor particized cleavage can emerge; if it is heterogeneous, emergence is somewhere between possible and likely. Somewhat differently, a latent non-sociological cleavage exists to the extent to which a country exhibits characteristics that are likely to lead to the formation of a corresponding political or particized cleavage. For example, a country’s involvement in foreign military conflicts is a flash-point for debate and increases the probability of politicized and particized cleavages forming around foreign policy issues. For latent sociological cleavages, then, the focus is on the groups produced by dividing the community along the sociological characteristic, since this provides the necessary informa-

tion about a community's heterogeneity. For latent non-sociological cleavages, the focus is on the likelihood of conflict along the criteria, measured not in terms of groups but in a manner relevant to the criteria, such as the number of military conflicts within a given time period. Countries with greater latent preference diversity are viewed as more likely to exhibit politicized and particized preference diversity. Such countries, the thinking goes, are characterized by either many latent cleavages or many groups generated by each latent cleavage, or both. Latent preference diversity is defined as the number of latent cleavages, where the presence or absence of a latent cleavage is determined as described above. The key throughout is the notion of exogeneity: the focus on 'objective' characteristics of society supposedly ensures that they are exogenous to political institutions and competition. However, as Chandra and Boulet (2003) argue on behalf of the large constructivist literature addressing ethnic demography, the common assumption that latent sociological cleavages are exogenous to the process of interest, here party competition, is seriously flawed. This topic will be addressed in greater detail both by a later section of this chapter and by later chapters.

In contrast, for political and particized cleavages, the focus is on the number and identity of the cleavages, not the groups formed along them. The reasoning behind this decision is that while both the groupings along cleavages and the cleavages themselves are malleable, groupings seem the most malleable. That is, groups generated by political cleavages are the result of strategic behavior on the part of the entrepreneurs who organize them as well as the individuals who identify with and contribute to them. In non-discrete terms, the voter distribution over a particular issue dimension is shaped by strategic behavior on the parts of both individuals and elites. In the short run at least, it seems more plausible that strategic behavior might affect the particular groups with which individuals identify (more generally, the political views that individuals hold) than the set of ideologies that underpin their understanding of the political world. Similarly, how parties position themselves along a given issue dimension is a highly strategic and iterative (frequently updated) decision, the subject of the large spatial literature dating back to Downs (1957). The introduction of new dimensions, while also strategic, occurs less frequently and is viewed as having far-reaching consequences for political competition. In general, groupings are conditional on the cleavages. The more fundamental nature of the latter justifies the focus advocated here. Some may certainly disagree with this perspective, which will be developed at greater length in Chapter 6, but the remainder of the thesis adopts the position of identifying and counting political and particized cleavages instead of groups. Accordingly, countries characterized by politicized and particized preference diversity have many politicized or particized cleavages, a definition that makes no reference to groups.

Another important issue in need of clarification is how overlapping, or reinforcing, cleavages should be treated. Take, for example, the historically near-orthogonal clerical–anti-clerical (religious) and free market–controlled economy (socioeconomic or 'left–right') cleavages. Scholars such as Inglehart (1984) argue that the latter has assimilated the former in advanced industrial democracies. That is, these cleavages are now overlapping instead of cross-cutting, with leftist economic views increasingly associated with secularism and rightist economic views with religiosity. Parties and individuals may address and take positions on both of these types of issues, but the positions they take hang together in predictable ways. Knowing a person's or party's position on one cleavage allows us to predict her or its position on the other. Should such societies be considered to have two cleavages, reli-

gion and socioeconomics, or merely one? In spatial terms, this corresponds to individuals and/or parties being concentrated around, say, a line passing through the coordinates (0, 0) and (1, 1) in the Cartesian plane instead of scattered widely over the plane. In discrete terms, this corresponds to the socioeconomic and religious criteria for dividing members of a community into groups yielding the same partition of the set of individuals, i.e. the individuals in the community with socioeconomic trait S_1 (e.g., manual workers) all have (and are the only members of the community that have) religious trait R_1 .

Theoretically, it seems hard to argue against counting the two cleavages as one particularly virulent cleavage. As Laver and Hunt (1992) argue, this is a natural extension of the assumption that preferences are exogenous to political competition. Practically speaking, however, it is difficult to determine if cleavages cross-cut or overlap. Further, as Rae and Taylor (1970, 14) argue, “virtually all extant cleavage systems result in some cross-cutting and . . . none result in complete cross-cutting; the pertinent question is not whether cleavages cross-cut each other, but rather how much they cross-cut each other.” This, too, is a difficult question to resolve empirically. Ideally, then, we would like to count significantly overlapping cleavages only once and define the cleavage structure as all orthogonal or near-orthogonal cleavages. Principal components analysis, one technique for operationalizing political and politicized cleavages, allows the identification of such underlying structures, as do similar statistical tools such as confirmatory factor analysis. However, data that allows the use of this technique is not always available (for example, latent cleavages are usually operationalized using aggregate data) or its use may have undesirable repercussions that do not outweigh the identification of the cleavages that overlap. Consequently, the best that can often be done is to identify all existent cleavages, including some that may significantly overlap with others. On a more positive note, this allows us to endogenize preferences—to explain why it is, say, that political parties cluster tightly around a 45 degree line through the origin in a Cartesian ideological space. In other words, we are faced with a “clear intellectual challenge to explain why large sections of the space are uninhabited” (Laver and Hunt 1992, 23–4).¹⁵

In conclusion, it is worth reiterating an important point about the definition of politicized preferences used here. The approach to political cleavages taken by this thesis corresponds to what Budge and Farlie (1978) have called ‘policy-defined space’, although the dimensions are ideologies instead of issues. Political cleavages reside within voters’ minds and are expressed by what may be called their opinions, attitudes, or values. As such, the members of a group generated by a cleavage perceive a shared interest; in other words, the cleavage “engages some set of values common to members of the group” and members know a “common life” (Knutsen and Scarbrough 1995, 494). Latent cleavages, in contrast, do not generate a set of common values and life that is institutionalized in organizational form. This distinction has a long pedigree: it corresponds to the distinction Marx drew between a ‘class in itself’ (*Klasse en sich*) and a ‘class for itself’ (*Klasse fuer sich*). The former

¹⁵Contra to Laver and Hunt (1992), estimates of what they call the ‘real’ dimensionality of the space are developed in Chapter 4 of the thesis. Of course, to a large degree Laver and Hunt are correct to argue that all empirical estimators are conditioned by the particular state of political competition. Nevertheless, we can estimate the extent to which both socio-economics and social policy, to use their example, are salient dimensions, even if data reduction techniques would argue for their representation by one underlying ‘socioeconomic left–right’ dimensions. This is at least a first stab at an estimate of a ‘real’ space, albeit one that is conditioned on a priori beliefs about the set of dimensions that should be considered potentially relevant.

may be described as a latent cleavage but only the latter, where the class is conscious of its shared interests and capable of acting on them, is a political cleavage.¹⁶ Accordingly, this thesis views only political and politicized cleavages as capable of impacting the political world. If the world is a stage, latent cleavages are actors waiting in the wings.

2.2 Existent Operationalizations

2.2.1 Latent Cleavages

Existing operationalizations of this variable are culled from a variety of literatures in comparative politics, from civil war to economic growth to electoral and party systems. Numerous qualitative operationalizations exist, such as Lipset and Rokkan's (1967) own study, but these are either case or small-N studies that do not produce a measure appropriate for statistical analyses. Until recently, quantitative operationalizations sought to characterize a country's latent cleavage structure and preference diversity in terms of one sociological cleavage such as ethnicity or religion, with ethnicity being the most frequently utilized cleavage. Most have measured heterogeneity along the cleavage using either Rae and Taylor's (1970) index of fragmentation,¹⁷

$$F = 1 - \sum_{i=1}^n p_i^2,$$

or the effective number transformation of this index popularized in comparative politics by Laakso and Taagepera (1979),

$$N = \frac{1}{\sum_{i=1}^n p_i^2},$$

where

$$N = \frac{1}{1 - F},$$

p_i is the population share of each group, and the summation is taken over all n groups. These two measures carry equivalent information.¹⁸ Some comparativists have preferred

¹⁶Marx viewed it as axiomatic that the potential for class conflict inheres in all differentiated societies, i.e. those where individuals' relationships to the means of production grant unequal access to scarce resources and power. However, he was quite careful to note that differentiation need not always lead to conflict. Common interests must first develop among similarly situated individuals, which occurs when such individuals repeatedly interact in particular social circumstances.

¹⁷Somewhere along the line, the phrase 'index of fractionalization' became associated with this measure in addition to the original 'index of fragmentation.' No attempt has been made to trace the source of the former term; it suffices to note that both are in use in the literature. The thesis likewise uses the two terms interchangeably.

¹⁸The measure N defined above is closely related to a member of the family of Rényi entropies, which are used in information theory to measure the amount of uncertainty in a probability mass function (Cover and Thomas 1991). This member is the quadratic Rényi entropy. Other members lead to different measures: for example, alternatives are $N' = n$, the number of groups, or $N'' = \frac{1}{\max(p_i)}$, the reciprocal of the largest population share. These three measures quantify different properties of the sequence p_1, p_2, \dots, p_n . In comparison, F , a transformation of N , and N quantify the same properties and thus can be viewed as equivalent measures, to be contrasted with alternative measures such as N' and N'' . Rényi entropies are defined by a parameter $\alpha \in [0, +\infty]$. N' has parameter $\alpha = 0$, N has $\alpha = 2$, and N'' has $\alpha = +\infty$. Increasing α emphasizes larger groups and provides greater robustness to incomplete information about the smaller groups. In a way, N is a compromise between the two extremes N' and N'' .

the effective number of groups, N , because of its more intuitive interpretation. The thesis will argue later that there is reason to prefer either the index of fragmentation, F , or the log of N on empirical grounds despite the less intuitive interpretation. Nevertheless, the index of fragmentation and the effective number of groups represent essentially identical operationalizations of the abstract concept of diversity.

It used to be the case that ELF, an index of fractionalization constructed from an atlas of ethno-linguistic groups and population figures compiled by Soviet geographers in the early 1960s (Bruk and Apenchenko 1964, Taylor and Jodice 1983), was the only game in town for scholars seeking to measure ethnic heterogeneity. Ordeshook and Shvetsova (1994) pioneered the use of this operationalization in the electoral and party systems literature. They also used an updated version of the atlas (Bromlei and Arut'i'unov 1988) to produce data on this variable at a second time point.¹⁹ However, political scientists and economists working in the civil war and economic growth literatures, respectively, have recently developed alternative operationalizations. Fearon (2002) sought a more up-to-date measure of ethnic diversity. He derived his own cross-national list of ethnic groups comprising at least 1% of a country's population and population figures for the early 1990s. His definition of an ethnic group, which incorporates 'groupness', shared culture (including religion and language), and membership by descent, is broader than the primarily linguistic definition employed by the Soviet geographers.²⁰ Alesina, Devleeschauwer, Easterly, Kurlat and Wacziarg (2003) derived a similar data set for the 1990s that also employs a broader definition of ethnicity, although they do not exclude groups comprising less than 1% of a polity's population. These three data sets on ethnic structure allow us to compare the impact of differences in sources, time periods, definitions of ethnicity, and coders on the standard operationalization of ethnic heterogeneity, the index of ethnic fractionalization. While the overall correlations between the fractionalization indices derived from the three data sets are reasonably high, there are enough differences to warrant a sensitivity analysis for empirical models that employ one of them.²¹ Relatedly, Alesina et al. (2003) constructed a data set of linguistic groups that generates an index of linguistic fractionalization. This index of linguistic fractionalization is also reasonably correlated with indices of ethnic fractionalization such as ELF.²²

The possibilities do not end here. As suggested above, ethnicity is only one potential latent cleavage. Religion immediately comes to mind as a second, one that has historically

¹⁹Roeder (2001) has helpfully created a dataset containing several versions of ELF at two time points, 1961 and 1985, based on the same two Soviet atlases.

²⁰Note that Fearon's (2002) data for Africa and overall approach is based on Scarritt and Mozaffar (1999), whose list of ethnic groups is of politically relevant (politicized) groups. The latter's resulting fractionalization index is by explicit construction no longer a measure of latent preference diversity. Fearon (2002, 13) breaks with their definition because he finds their requirement of political significance "too restrictive"; however, he still strives to only count groups that evidence 'groupness', some sense of common identity. As he notes, the extent to which this requirement is met in some cases (primarily in Asia and Africa) is unclear. Regardless, one could certainly argue that operationalizations derived from Fearon's data do not measure the latent cleavage variable. I include it here because others have used it this way (e.g., Golder and Clark 2003).

²¹Fearon (2002, 30) reports a correlation of 0.75 between the measure of ethnic fractionalization based on his data and ELF as well as similar correlations between the measure based on Alesina et al.'s data and ELF.

²²Alesina et al. (2003, 162) report correlations of 0.88 between ELF and their linguistic fractionalization index and 0.70 between their ethno-linguistic and linguistic fractionalization indices.

been viewed as more important than ethnicity and language in the party systems and voting behavior literatures (Rose and Urwin 1969, Lijphart 1971*a*, Lijphart 1979). Alesina et al. (2003), Fearon and Laitin (2003*a*), and Annett (2001) have all constructed cross-national lists of religious groups and population figures, the former two for the 1990s and the latter for the 1980s.²³ The former relies upon Barret (1982) and defines the population of religious groups to be fifteen major world religions or denominations, of which only Christianity is disaggregated.²⁴ Alesina et al. (2003) and Fearon and Laitin (2003*a*) do not seem to limit themselves to a pre-defined population of religious groups. I have not seen Fearon and Laitin’s list of groups, but Alesina et al. follow their source, the *Encyclopedia Britannica Book of the Year*, in allowing the level of aggregation to vary across countries (Christianity is usually disaggregated; Islam is sometimes disaggregated; Judaism is never disaggregated). As before, the overall correlations between the fractionalization indices derived from the different data sets are reasonably high while reflecting differences.²⁵ However, pairwise correlations between the religious fractionalization and either the ethnic or linguistic fractionalization indices are low, as one might expect.²⁶

Scholars have also made attempts to move beyond the fractionalization index. As Fearon (2002, 18) notes, “many hypotheses and arguments in the literature refer not just to measures of ethnic diversity like [ethnic fractionalization], but to more fine-grained conceptualizations of ethnic structure,” such as highly fragmented, bipolar, or dominant majority structures. Future work that refines hypotheses in the currently theoretically underdeveloped electoral and party systems literature should certainly pursue the development and use of such alternatives. In the economic growth literature, Montalvo and Reynal-Querol (2000) propose an index of religious polarization based on the data sets described above,

$$P = 1 - \sum_{i=1}^n \left(\frac{0.5 - \pi_i}{0.5} \right)^2 \pi_i ,$$

where p_i is the population share of each religious group and the summation is taken over all n groups. This index attains its maximum when there are two religious groups of equal size. In the civil war literature, Collier and Hoeffler (2000) and Fearon and Laitin (2003*b*) use various indicators of ethnic dominance: a dummy variable for one ethnic group comprising between 45 to 90 percent of a country’s population; the share of the population belonging to the largest ethnic group; and a dummy variable that marks the countries whose largest and second-largest ethnic groups exceed 49 and 7 percent of the population, respectively. In

²³Montalvo and Reynal-Querol (2000) also construct a cross-national list of religious groups and population shares based upon Barret (1982), as do Barro (1997) and Collier and Hoeffler (2000). To the best of my knowledge, none of these data sets are publicly available. No response has been received to a request in March 2004 (made to Montalvo, the corresponding author) for the Montalvo and Reynal-Querol data.

²⁴These groups are Catholic, Protestant, Eastern Orthodox, Indigenous Christian, Crypto-Christian, Judaic, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, tribal, Chinese folk, traditional, other, non-religious, and aethist. Economists such as Montalvo and Reynal-Querol (2000, 2003) have relied upon the same source but use a thirteen-group classification, which does not disaggregate Christianity. Others, such as Barro (1997) and Collier and Hoeffler (2000), use a nine-group classification, which again does not disaggregate Christianity.

²⁵For example, Alesina et al. (2003, 162) report a correlation of 0.837 between their and Annett’s (2001) index.

²⁶The reported pairwise correlations between Alesina et al.’s (2003, 162) religious fractionalization index and the following indices are: ethnic fractionalization based on their data, 0.14; linguistic fractionalization based on their data, 0.269; ELF, 0.37.

the electoral and party systems literature, Mozaffar, Scarritt and Galaich (2003) develop an ethno-political group concentration index, which is the sum over all groups of the population share of each group multiplied by its Minorities at Risk concentration code.

An important recent development is the more inclusive look some scholars have taken at the latent cleavage structure of a country. An overall scale of latent preference diversity has been constructed by combining an indicator of heterogeneity along one cleavage, such as the ethnic, religious, or linguistic fractionalization indices, with an indicator of heterogeneity along another cleavage. Collier and Hoeffler (2000) and Annett (2001) propose several ways in which to combine indices of religious and ethnic fractionalization. The former multiply the two and then add whichever yields the largest number to the product. The latter both multiplies the sum of the two by $1/2$ and uses factor analysis to generate scores on a latent dimension of ethno-religious diversity. Of course, the simplest combination is the tried-and-true linear additive scale.

This survey of existing operationalizations reveals some glaring omissions. Some sociological cleavages such as the traditional worker-owner (class) or the urban-rural divisions, two of the four historically important cleavages identified by Lipset and Rokkan's (1967) seminal study, as nowhere considered. With respect to socioeconomic divisions outside of the traditional Marxist purview, new cleavages identified by postmodernists such as Inglehart (1984, 1990) between those employed in the manufacturing and service sectors or between the upper middle and lower middle plus working classes have also gone untapped. Further, latent non-sociological cleavages have received little attention: the thesis is aware of no operationalizations of latent preference diversity that attempt to capture a propensity for division on foreign policy or military conflict lines. An important point to emphasize in conclusion is that the latent preferences variable is defined at the aggregate level and is accordingly operationalized using aggregate-level data. While voting behavior studies have incorporated either traditional class or post-modern socioeconomic cleavages or both (e.g. Lijphart 1979, Kriesi 1998), their data and analyses are all at the individual level. Hence, they do not provide operationalizations of the abstract concept of interest to us here.

2.2.2 Politicized Cleavages

To date, few empirical studies have operationalized the variable of political cleavage structure or its close relative, politicized preference diversity. By far the most common strategy derives from the public opinion literature, which uses surveys to identify the position of individuals on a variety of issues. By aggregating these survey responses, the literature then makes inferences about the opinions of the electorate of the whole. The general notion is that political cleavages as this thesis has defined them should be visible in public opinion surveys. That is, the public should have opinions that 'hang together' about issues related to a politicized cleavage. For example, the existence of a racial political cleavage should be reflected in citizens caring about issues such as affirmative action, immigration, and segregation either in addition to or instead of expressing blatant racial prejudices. Further, their positions on these issues should vary systematically. For example, support for affirmative action might be linked with opposition to segregation and little opposition to immigration, while opposition to affirmative action might be associated with support for segregation and

opposition to immigration.²⁷ Clusters of opinions like these that are visible in surveys correspond to the groups generated by the cleavage. For example, in a predominantly white, Anglo-Saxon country these groups might simplistically be described as those who favor active government intervention to ensure racial equality and those who oppose intervention in favor of a discriminatory status quo. Membership in these groups may or may not be associated with either the actual race of individuals or their partisan groupings.²⁸

Studies in the public opinion literature almost invariably use the statistical tools of principal components or factor analysis to identify the number and identity of the ideological dimensions underlying public opinion. An excellent example of this type of study is Jackman (1998). He utilizes public and political party candidate opinion data from the Australian Election and Candidate Studies and exploratory factor analysis to identify the cleavages that structure Australian public and elite political ideology prior to the 1996 election. The analysis reveals four cleavages structuring mass political ideology: union-related, ‘the republic’, women’s rights, and a dominant racial cleavage. Four cleavages also structure political elites’ ideology: immigration, union-related, ‘the republic’, and a dominant left–right cleavage. Confirmatory factor analysis is then used to determine the relationship between the four components of the electorate’s and candidates’ political ideologies. That is, it is necessary to discriminate between the null hypothesis of orthogonality, where each dimension cuts across the other dimensions at a right angle and attitudes towards one dimension are unrelated to attitudes towards others, and the alternative hypothesis of possible correlation between dimensions, where attitudes towards one dimension are related to attitudes towards others. For the mass electorate, Jackman finds that while the racial dimension is not uncorrelated with other dimensions such as republicanism and unions, it does cut across them. In contrast, political candidates’ racial attitudes do not cut across the left–right ideological dimension; rather, they are a crucial component of that dimension, part of a general ideological debate that separates parties.

Most empirical analyses of this type are case studies of particular countries at particular times, e.g. Australia in 1996 as in Jackman’s study. Such studies *might* be able to provide data on the cross-time variance of the political cleavage structure for the country in question. However, they cannot provide data on the cross-national variance of political cleavage structures due to the incomparability of the survey instruments used in each case study. Further, these case studies usually rely on national election surveys such as the NES in the United States and the New Zealand Election Study in New Zealand. Such surveys have historically been and largely continue to be a providence of advanced industrial democracies. Hence, case studies that measure the political cleavage structure using this strategy exist for only a small sample of the countries for which data should ideally be available. At any rate, this data could only be used in a cross-national statistical analysis if all of the case studies were based on similar (comparable) surveys and data reduction methods, which of course they are not.

²⁷To illustrate, Jackman (1998) finds that a racially oriented ideological dimension is the most dominant force structuring the political ideology of the mass Australian electorate. It structures attitudes about immigration, aboriginals, and links with Asia, among others.

²⁸To illustrate again using the analysis in Jackman (1998), two factor scores for each individual, the estimated positions of the individual on the racial and union ideological dimensions, are plotted against each other in a Cartesian plane. This yields a continuous instead of a discrete representation of the electorate’s position in the ideological space. Jackman breaks down the electorate by partisan groups, which reveals parties drawing their supporters from different clusters of positions.

A second operationalization also uses public opinion survey data. Instead of using the statistical tools of factor analysis or principal components to uncover the structure of public opinion, however, it does so impressionistically. Responses to questions that are related to a few dimensions deemed theoretically relevant are compared, as are correlations between questions representing different dimensions. A few small-N studies of this sort do exist. For example, Evans and Whitefield (1998) compare the political cleavage structures in the Czech Republic and Slovakia in 1994, a ‘most similar system’ research design (Przeworski and Teune 1970). Evans and Whitefield (1994) perform a similar analysis for several Eastern European polities. While this approach may allow for cross-national comparisons, it is inherently qualitative: it does not produce a quantitative measure that can be used in statistical analyses, despite its ostensible focus on quantitative data.

The thesis is aware of only one existing operationalization of the politicized cleavage structure that provides comparable data on many countries. It is constructed using the former strategy although it additionally adds a time series dimension for a subset of the countries included in the analysis. Not surprisingly, it relies upon a public opinion survey that has been administered in many polities over time: the World Values Survey, carried out at four time points in an increasing number of democracies.²⁹ Moreno (1999) uses the second and third waves of the World Values Survey to identify what he terms the ‘issue dimensions’ of 33 countries. Of these countries, 55% are advanced industrial, 20% are Latin American, and 25% are post-communist (Eastern European plus former Soviet republics). For each country, he conducts a theoretically guided principal components factor analysis to determine the number and nature of its political cleavages. Two dimensions are adequate in advanced industrial polities, which he identifies as left–right materialism and postmaterial–fundamentalism. Three dimensions are adequate in post-communist polities: the dimensions of political and economic reform, left–right (or liberal–fundamentalism), and democratic–authoritarianism. Two dimensions are adequate in Latin American polities in the early 1990s and three dimensions in the mid-1990s; these dimensions are democratic–authoritarianism and economic left–right in the early 1990s with the addition of liberal–fundamentalism in the mid-1990s.

Since readers will likely object that several important studies have been neglected in the discussion so far, the next few paragraphs explicate why some well-known studies that seem to operationalize this variable do not in fact do so.

First, Inglehart (1984) uses the 1979 EuroBarometer³⁰ instead of the World Values survey to test his argument about the emergence of a cross-cutting post-materialist cleavage. Like many public opinion studies, he uses factor analysis; however, the factor analysis is not conducted at the national level—that is, nine factor analyses, one for each of the nine countries surveyed—but on the pooled survey sample. Accordingly, data on the issue dimensions of each of the nine European countries is *not* generated. This is a case study of the dimensions underlying the “issue preferences of Western publics” (36) in the then-European Community, not a source of data that allows the exploration of cross-national

²⁹The first wave of the World Values Survey was conducted in 22 democracies in 1981–83; the second wave expanded the sample to 42 democracies in 1990–91; the third wave to 54 in 1995–97; and the fourth wave to 60 in 1999–2001.

³⁰The EuroBarometer has been conducted annually in member states of the European Union, a small sample of all democracies, since 1973; surveys on special topics (“EuroBarometer Special Surveys”) have been conducted occasionally since 1972.

variation in politicized preferences.³¹ Similarly, both Inglehart’s later individual work (e.g., 1990; 1997) and joint work with other scholars (e.g., Abramson and Inglehart 1995) do not yield the cross-national data desired. For example, Inglehart (1997) conducts a principal components factor analysis of the 1990 World Values Survey data where each observation is a country, with the mean score (over the sample of individuals surveyed) in that country used for each input variable to the analysis. This is again not an analysis of issue dimensions in each of the 43 countries included in the survey but an analysis of the issue dimensions in the meta-state comprised of all 43 countries. His research goals, which situate each country in a common politicized issue space instead of allowing the data to determine the extent to which such a space is shared by the countries, are not the research goals of this thesis.³² As Inglehart (1997, 84) himself writes,

“Brilliant and instructive books have been written about the ways in which given societies differ from others. This book focuses on the general themes underlying the cross-national pattern...”

Not surprisingly, the data that his study generates does not operationalize the variable of politicized preferences as it is defined by this thesis.

Second, Knutsen (1988, 1989) uses discriminant analysis to identify what he calls ‘political cleavages’ in ten West European democracies. This approach seeks to identify the so-called ‘cleavage dimensions’ most predictive of party preference, defined primarily as vote choice. Research of this sort should be viewed as part and parcel of the political behavior literature. Where it differs from the conventional political behavior literature is in the variables included. Individuals’ positions on two issue dimensions—left–right materialism and post-materialism—are added to the more conventional social and demographic variables. Positions on these two issue dimensions are obtained from the EuroBarometer 16 (administered in 1981).³³ Discriminant analysis then reveals the dimensions that best discriminate between the groups of individuals that vote for a given party, which are linear combinations of the issue dimensions, sociological, and demographic variables. Knutsen describes this approach as identifying what Budge and Farlie (1978) call a ‘mixed-input’ instead of a ‘policy-defined’ voter space. Others have approached the same variable similarly. Moreno (1999) essentially goes on to use Knutsen’s approach for a broader sample of countries, as do Evans and Whitefield (1998) for the Czech Republic and Slovakia, although the latter do not include social and demographic variables. In this thesis, however, the variable of politicized preferences is not tied to the party preferences of individuals, nor does it incorporate

³¹No mention is made of separate nation-by-nation analyses of the public opinion data although mention is made of separate analyses of the candidate data. If he did perform such analyses and the individual results were similar to pooled results, a (limited) cross-national data set operationalizing political cleavages would exist, albeit one without variance.

³²This can be contrasted to the approach of the Manifesto Research Group, who confronted similar issues when approaching the politicized preference variable. Their ultimate goal was to compare party movements (convergence or divergence) over time along a generalized left–right dimension. However, as Budge and Robertson (1987, 391) write, “. . . we made an undertaking not to take the general comparability of data across countries for granted, but to ascertain first, through the results of the separate country studies, whether a real basis of comparison existed.” That is, they first investigated the country-specific party policy spaces in which competition occurred to see if such a cross-national comparison was reasonable.

³³Theoretically guided factor analysis is used to confirm the existence of the two underlying dimensions. In other words, the EuroBarometer variables in the factor analysis are the questions that are believed to reflect the two dimensions.

ascriptive features of individuals. Again, something different from the concept of interest to this thesis is being measured by these analyses.

The dearth of cross-national data on this variable persists despite the development of new survey instruments such as CSES and calls for its use (e.g., Jones 1999). CSES, the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems, is a new cross-national collaboration amongst national election studies in over fifty countries. A common module of public opinion questions is included in the national post-election surveys of the participating countries. However, despite the ostensible focus of the first (1996–2001) of its two rounds on the “nature of political and social cleavages and alignments” (<http://www.umich.edu/~cses/about.htm>), the development of questions relevant to operationalizing the politicized cleavages variable—the issue-related opinion questions mentioned above—is left to the individual collaborators. In the second round (2001–2006), a limited number of socio-demographic questions are included in the common module but as before the questions relevant to operationalizing politicized cleavages are left to the individual collaborators.³⁴ Survey incomparability issues and the outright lack of relevant data seem likely to reduce the usefulness of this new instrument. Indeed, an examination of the bibliography compiled by the CSES of papers and publications that utilize CSES data does not reveal new sources of cross-national data on politicized cleavages.

In closing, it is worth mentioning another impediment to developing the cross-sectional time-series data sought by this thesis: the limited time series provided by the World Values and EuroBarometer Surveys. The former was first conducted in 1981 and the latter in 1973, so an analysis of variation in politicized preferences over the entire post-war period is out of reach using any operationalization based on these surveys.

2.2.3 Particized Cleavages

Scholars interested in coalition theory have primarily driven the operationalization of the politicized preferences variable. Contra Riker (1962), they seek to incorporate policy concerns into analyses of the government formation process, which has “encouraged spatial representations of the coalition process [with which] each party could be represented by its preferred policy on one or more policy dimensions” (Budge and Laver 1993, 501). Research has consequently focused on identifying the dimensions or cleavages underlying political competition, the nature and number of which generally correspond to the definition of politicized cleavages used by this thesis,³⁵ as well as the positions taken by parties in the resulting N -dimensional space (Grofman 1982), which is not relevant here.

The earliest quantitative operationalizations of this variable rely upon expert surveys. Morgan (1976) asked country specialists to place the parties competing in their country on up to three policy scales. The proportion of specialists who nominated a particular dimension as the ‘primary scale’ provides evidence as to the salience of a particular dimension and the overall number of dimensions in a polity. For example, 18% of respondents cited the

³⁴One exception to this statement is the inclusion of the following question in the CSES micro questionnaire (CSES 2003): “What do you think has been the most important issue facing [country] over the last [number of years that the last government was in office] years?” The bibliography did not appear to contain analyses that made use of this question, though.

³⁵Some implicitly view these dimensions as ideological. Others adopt the classical issue-based view that does not correspond to the position taken by this thesis. In the greater scheme of things, though, this is a minor difference.

religious dimension as the primary scale in Belgium, 64% the left–right dimension, 33% the cultural–linguistic dimension, and 5% ‘other’, suggesting that Belgium has three particized cleavages. Compare this to Denmark, where 95% of specialists cited the left–right dimension as the primary scale and 6% the center–periphery, suggesting that Denmark has only one particized cleavage.³⁶ Somewhat similarly, Laver and Hunt (1992) asked experts to assess the salience of 8 policy issues in their country to party leaders and to place party leaders along these issue dimensions; 24 primarily West European countries were the subject of the study.³⁷ However, expert surveys where the cleavage structure itself is freely elicited have only been conducted for a small number of polities, all of which are advanced industrial (e.g., Morgan’s study).³⁸ Further, most ask experts to judge the salience of a cleavage either over a long time period, e.g. 1945–73 for Morgan’s study, or for an indeterminate period (Budge 2000). Although nothing precludes future surveys from asking about specific and shorter periods, as matters stand, most studies, like Morgan’s, either are or should be viewed as operationalizations of a long-run definition.³⁹ Warwick 2002 performed a principal components analysis on the positions of parties on issue (policy) dimensions derived

³⁶The preceding discussion follows the excellent overview of Morgan’s and other expert surveys in Laver and Shofield (1991, Appendix B).

³⁷The 8 policy dimensions were taxes versus public services; foreign policy towards the USSR; public ownership; permissiveness towards homosexuality and abortion; religion; urban versus rural interests; centralization of decision-making; and environmentalism. Clearly, at least two of these (public ownership and taxes versus public services) relate to conventional understandings of the left–right dimension.

³⁸The expert survey of Castles and Mair (1984) only asked country specialists to place parties on a left–right dimension. This study does not provide information about the cleavage structure. By presuming a common space in which party competition occurs (one-dimensional left–right), cross-national differences in the space cannot be empirically derived. While respondents in the Laver and Hunt survey could indicate the relevant salience of the 8 policy issues deemed a priori important in their polity and thus provide information about the dimensionality of the issue space, the use of such a limited set of issues must be deemed a drawback. So too must the use of issues instead of ideological dimensions. Experts were allowed to suggest additional policy issues and some took advantage of this. However, one cannot help but think that the particular issues related to underlying ideological dimensions may have driven results, as might have the omission of issues related to other dimensions. Huber and Inglehart (1995) focused primarily on the left–right dimension but constructed a somewhat open-ended survey that allowed for some cross-national differences to be elicited, although not enough for the purposes of this thesis. 42 countries were surveyed in all. They asked country specialists if the left–right dimension was currently the most important dimension of political conflict in their country. Eighty percent of the respondents agreed that it was. The only country where a majority of respondents suggested an alternative dimension was S. Korea, where a progressive–conservative dimension was preferred; this dimension, in fact, was the most widely used alternative primary dimension of conflict (81), which would be viewed by many comparativists as a near cousin of the traditional left–right dimension. Huber and Inglehart also asked experts if there was a second dimension of political conflict in their country, and if so, to identify it. Only 40% of respondents identified a secondary dimension of conflict and of these respondents, few agreed about the nature of the secondary dimension (82). Only in four countries did more than 1/3 of the respondents agree about the nature of the second dimension: in Norway, it was pro- vs. anti-EU; in Sweden and Switzerland, economic growth vs. environment; and in India, secularism vs. religion/fundamentalism. Huber and Inglehart compared these results to Morgan’s and found them similar. However, unlike Morgan, they did not report the country-specific responses, except for the four countries noted here, which were discussed in the text of the article. Huber and Inglehart also note how the underlying meaning of left and right varies across countries, from traditional notions of economic conflict to (primarily in new democracies) authoritarian versus democratic forces.

³⁹Castles and Mair (1984) and Huber and Inglehart (1995) did ask experts to place parties at a fixed time point, 1982 and “today” (i.e., when the survey was conducted—1995), respectively, which illustrates how a short-run operationalization using expert surveys might work. However, the actual time period used by experts to make their judgments is unclear, regardless of the survey’s question wording (Budge 2000).

from expert surveys in 16 Western European countries, in this case the eight dimensions from Laver and Hunt 1992. He found that three components explained most of the variance in party positions, which he interpreted as the left–right, social control, and materialist–postmaterialist dimensions. Overall, despite the attractiveness of expert surveys, it is hard to refute Budge’s (2000) criticism that it is unclear what expert surveys are actually measuring: party preferences versus behavior, a specific versus an extended time period, the preferences of leaders versus members versus voters, etc.

Inspired by the latter and other investigations such as Taylor and Laver (1973) and Dodd (1976) into the policy dimensions relevant to coalition formation,⁴⁰ the empirical expert judgment approach promoted by Lijphart (1990*b*, 1984, 1999) measures the salience of a variety of types of cleavages by impressionistically coding each as of high, medium, or low salience. The data supporting the coding decisions is the analyst’s knowledge of the countries. These cleavages include socio-economics; religion; culture–ethnicity; urban–rural; regime support; foreign policy; and post-materialism. Cleavages of high salience are assigned a value of 1 and cleavages of medium salience a value of 0.5; if the salience of a cleavage varied over the post-war period, it is assigned a value of 0.5. An index of the number of ‘issue dimensions’ for each country is constructed by calculating the sum of these values. This approach is the only operationalization used in the party and electoral systems literature by scholars who incorporate a particized cleavage variable in their models. It clearly operationalizes a long-run, non-sociological definition of particized preferences, not a short-run, sociological one.⁴¹

The Manifesto Research Group’s and Comparative Manifesto Project’s⁴² content analyses of post-war political party platforms in 25 advanced industrial democracies were developed with the goal of systematically estimating the policy preferences of political parties and their change over time without relying on expert judgments. They provide a rich source of empirical data for identifying particized cleavages.

A first approach that uses this data performs two-stage factor analysis⁴³ on the saliency (percent of sentences in an election programme) of 54 categories in the 7 subject area domains (foreign affairs; freedom and democracy; government; economy; welfare; fabric of society; and social groups). Unfortunately, the published factor analyses of the issue dimensions underpinning competition in each polity average over time, generally yielding a four- or five-dimensional space for each polity (Budge 1987, Budge and Robertson 1987). This

⁴⁰These studies derived the dimensions of competition and the placement (usually ordering) of parties on the dimensions from expert judgments. In Taylor and Laver (1973), de Swaan (1973), and Dodd (1976), the authors compile information from secondary sources. The dimensions identified by Taylor and Laver and Dodd resemble Lijphart’s (1990*b*) closely, while de Swaan only places parties on a left–right socioeconomic scale. In Browne and Drijmanis (1982), a country specialist offered the best (in his or her judgment) two-dimensional representation of the policy space. See Laver and Shofield (1991, Appendix B) for a good overview of this literature.

⁴¹The definition of the concept being operationalized is revealed implicitly by its operationalization. An issue dimension is considered highly or moderately salient if it divides political parties; the issue dimensions considered are not all rooted in sociological traits; and the level of salience reflects the salience over the entire post-war period (Lijphart 1999, 78–79).

⁴²The Comparative Manifesto Project is the successor to the Manifesto Research Group. The former took over from the latter in the early 1990s.

⁴³Choice of this procedure, to first identify dimensions within domains, was largely driven by the need to reduce the number of variables given the practical constraint of the small number of observations. Different strategies were sometimes employed in the country-specific analyses published in the chapters of Budge, Robertson and Hearl (1987).

approach is almost a necessary consequence of the small number of observations generated when the unit of analysis is a party⁴⁴ in an election year for a particular country. The total number of issue dimensions identified is consequently not a useful operationalization of the variable when the dependent variable is election-specific.⁴⁵ Further, the published number and nature of the issue dimensions (Budge, Robertson and Hearl 1987) identified from the two-stage factor analyses only cover 18 largely advanced industrial polities ('largely' because Sri Lanka and Israel are included in addition to the usual OECD suspects). A more serious problem is that many of the dimensions produced are not readily interpretable. Similarly, Warwick (2002) performed an exploratory principal components analysis on all 56 variables (coding categories) in the Comparative Manifesto Project's 1997 data, rejecting the above two-stage approach. While he notes that this data does not yield large principal components (for whatever reason, the issues in the data set are not highly correlated), the first three principal components seem to correspond to the three dimensions he identified using the Laver and Hunt (1992) expert survey data, although here, too, there are difficulties with interpretability. He concludes that three dimensions characterize West European politics. This analysis also averages over time. More importantly, unlike the prior analysis, it does not identify cross-national differences in the ideological space; rather, it identifies an ideological space common to the countries included in the analysis.

A second approach uses this same data to construct indices without sole recourse to factor analysis. First, a number of dimensions are selected from the Manifesto Research Group's coding categories. These dimensions are assumed to define the politicized issue (or policy) space. Sometimes the set is obtained by grouping together the categories that data reduction techniques reveal tend to load on the same dimension. Second, party positions on these dimensions are then computed. For example, Budge and Laver (1992) perform exploratory factor analysis to identify issues that consistently loaded together in several countries; by combining these issues, they arrive at twenty new policy issues such as 'capitalist economics' and 'social conservatism' that they take to define a twenty-dimensional policy space. They also estimate a one-dimensional, left-right policy space, constructing a measure of left-right party positions by subtracting the coding categories identified as 'leftist' through a combination of theory and exploratory factor analysis from the 'rightist' ones. An important feature of their study is that the initial exploratory factor analyses were conducted on a country-by-country basis with the goal—and eventual result—of identifying two common dimensions across countries, left-right and what they call 'new politics'. In contrast, Budge and Laver (1993) simply select twenty policy coding categories ranging from state intervention to capitalist economics to agriculture and farmers; interpret these categories as dimensions; and estimate party positions on each dimension by calculating the saliency of the category to the party (the percent of manifesto sentences devoted to it). They also represent the data in terms of a single left-right dimension.⁴⁶ Budge et al. (2001) report a similar left-right index and party positions on four constituent policy dimensions of the overall left-right scale: planning, market reliance, welfare, and peace. In closing,

⁴⁴Only significant parties according to Sartori's (1976) criteria were included in the analysis.

⁴⁵For example, while political competition in the Netherlands may be dominated by one or at most two issue dimensions at any one given time, the total number of dimensions to emerge from the factor analysis is larger (three), reflecting change over time (Dittrich 1987).

⁴⁶Only the one or twenty (or greater) dimensional space generalized across the countries. However, since the goal here is not to generalize across countries but to explore cross-national differences in the issue space underpinning political competition, this thesis is not bound to employ one of these two representations.

it is worth emphasizing how the goal of this thesis diverges from that of the Manifesto Research Group and its successors, who explicitly aim for “. . . invariance of measure over time and space. . .” (Budge 2001, 77). All of the measures discussed in this and the prior paragraph with the exception of Budge, Robertson and Hearl (1987) identify cross-national commonalities in the issue or ideological space, not cross-national differences.

A third and final approach based on this data is very new. It takes the first step towards a cross-sectional time-series measure of particized cleavages, which this thesis naturally applauds. Nyblade (2004) calculates the effective number of issues dimensions, N , for each Western European country (17 in total) and election in the Comparative Manifestos Project data set. The issues (coding categories) are weighted by their similarity⁴⁷ as well as their salience. Additionally, in each country–election, the contribution of a party’s manifesto to the overall issue salience is weighed by the party’s vote share.⁴⁸ This measure goes a long way towards providing a quantitative measure of the dimensionality of the ideological space in which parties are situated. However, a few problems with the approach deserve attention. First, as Nyblade notes, the identity of the dimensions cannot be obtained using this procedure. Since one of the goals of the thesis is to identify the nature as well as the number of political conflicts in a variety of societies, this is a significant drawback. Second, the variable is only operationalized for West European countries. While this can easily be remedied (other countries are included in the Comparative Manifestos Project data set), it does impede the use of the data. Third, particular choices made by Nyblade such as weighting parties by their vote share, employing the effective number (N) as the summary measure, and the use of angular separation similarity scores are not obviously good ones. Particularly problematic is the use of N to weight the various dimensions by salience, which tends to over-count the most salient dimension (Molinar 1991). For example, Sweden has the smallest average (over time) effective number of issue dimensions according to this method: 2.46 (Nyblade 2004, 26). This does not correspond to our intuition that competition may be close to one-dimensional in some countries and time periods. Nyblade’s measure shows competition that is always two-to four-dimensional. Relatedly, there is not as much cross-national variance as one might expect. In general, his approach is essentially data-driven, comparable in spirit to exploratory factor analysis. One cannot help but wonder if a simpler, index-driven approach combining theoretical beliefs about the likely content of the ideological space with past empirical work about the specific issues likely to be associated

⁴⁷Angular similarity scores calculated over the entire data set—that is, over all countries and elections—are used instead of standard correlation coefficients in order to provide a score between 0 and 1. As Nyblade acknowledges, the calculation of the similarity scores using the entire data set when the goal is to explore cross-national differences is potentially problematic.

⁴⁸The advisability of this procedure must be questioned. First, the Manifesto Research Group and Comparative Manifestos Project have already screened out small parties. Only those that satisfy Sartori’s (1976) coalition or blackmail potential are included. Further down-weighting parties’ contributions by their vote share seems to unduly privilege the issues emphasized by large parties. Whether because entrepreneurial parties introducing new issues (and potentially dimensions) take time to build a following or because a minority segment of society assigns different degrees of salience to different issues (and potentially dimensions), the fact that the parties promoting a particular set of issues attract less votes than others does not mean that their contribution to the issue (or ideological) space’s dimensionality should be discounted. In fact, these circumstances may be a sign of a persistent and virulent cleavage in a society. To be clear, this argument applies somewhat fuzzily to parties that are not marginal, within reason, but all of the parties included in the Comparative Manifestos Project’s analysis should satisfy this criterion. Second and more importantly, weighing party contributions by their vote shares conflates the voter and party spaces. One of the goals of the thesis is to see if the two spaces differ, which this procedure impedes.

with a given ideological dimension could not do just as reasonable of a job, in a more straightforward manner. It would be nice to have a measure that could be checked more extensively against our understanding of politics.

Leaving aside the Comparative Manifestos Project data for the time being, an alternative approach to operationalizing the particized cleavage variable follows the strategy described in the prior sub-section to operationalize the political preference variable: factor or principal components analysis of political elite survey data. The political elites are usually legislative candidates, as in Jackman (1998) and Inglehart (1984); in other operationalizations, they constitute a broader collection of individuals, from parliamentarians to officials and activists, as in Iversen (1994). As before, many studies of this type are analyses of particular cases and time periods, such as 1996 Australia in Jackman (1998). Others, such as Inglehart (1984) and Iversen (1994), are still analyses of particular time periods but do cover more than one case, although the cases are once again restricted to European or advanced industrial polities. In one of these studies, Inglehart (1984) performs a factor analysis on a survey of a sample of candidates running for seats in the European Parliament, which yields a similar number and nature of dimensions to that obtained from a factor analysis of the public opinion data. In his discussion of these results, he remarks, “. . . only the results from a pooled sample. . . are shown here; separate nation-by-nation analyses show essentially the same patterns, with minor variations” (35). Similarly, Iversen (1994) performs a factor analysis on the European Political Party Middle Level Elite (EPPMLE) survey of delegates to the party conferences of 56 parties in 11 West European polities in 1979, although analysis is limited to 7 countries.⁴⁹ Iversen finds two distinct dimensions underlying elite opinion, one corresponding to traditional economic issues and one to post-materialist issues. However, both data sets show no significant cross-national variance, which is greatly at odds with conventional understanding. It may in fact be the case that there is no variance in particized preferences for these polities; before drawing such a conclusion, though, one might well question this measure’s validity, an issue that the next section will take up. Previous comments about the scope of the cases in Inglehart (1984) apply here as well.

A final operationalization is suggested but not actually implemented by Zielinski (2002). He notes that roll-call votes in successive parliaments can be used to compute NOMINATE scores (Poole and Rosenthal 1997), which in turn can be used to estimate the number of dimensions of political conflict. However, while roll-call vote analysis has a long history in the U.S., its application elsewhere has been limited for a variety of practical and theoretical reasons. Data sets on roll call votes where they exist have not been comprehensively collected across countries and even where roll calls are conducted, the information they carry in parliamentary systems that are not candidate-centered (i.e., with high party discipline) is unclear.

2.3 Assessing Validity and Reliability

A question that one might naturally ask following this review of existing operationalizations of the three preference variables is: are the measures valid and reliable? In fact, this section will make the case that many fail to attain validity. In discussing measure validity, both

⁴⁹This survey is similar to the EuroBarometer. In fact, Iversen compared mass responses to a subset of EuroBarometer questions with candidate responses to comparable questions from the EPPMLE survey.

general difficulties with operationalizing some definitions and disjunctures between specific empirical operationalizations and theoretical definitions will be highlighted. The reliability of the measures will be the final topic of the section.

2.3.1 Validity

Validity refers to nothing other than “measuring what we think we are measuring” (King, Keohane and Verba 1994, 25). Do the measures of latent, political, and particized cleavages discussed above actually measure latent, political, and particized cleavages as defined by this thesis? The answer, sadly enough, is that many do not. Problems of validity are most acute for the measures of latent cleavages, which may ultimately be intractable by the very nature of the concept that we seek to measure. The discussion begins with measures of latent cleavages and concludes with measures of particized cleavages, mimicking the process of issue evolution.

It is very difficult to measure what this thesis has defined as latent preferences. Recall that a latent cleavage is defined as a potential politicized or particized cleavage. The set of latent cleavages contains all criteria that have positive probability of being politicized or particized. The identification of such a set entails estimating this probability for every conceivable criterion that might divide a community. The problem is that there are infinitely many such criteria: individuals can be divided by criteria ranging from their favorite color to their shoe size to their taste in alcohol to their desire to engage in trade with other countries, *ad nauseam*. Further, we will frequently have difficulty measuring the probability that a given cleavage will be politicized (e.g., the country’s homogeneity with respect to a sociological cleavage). For example, take the latent cleavage of eye color. Without any historical knowledge of political conflicts related to this cleavage, we have no idea how to define the groups that will determine the country’s homogeneity: homogeneity could be attained if there are no blue- or green-eyed persons (i.e., all brownish-eyed persons view themselves as similar); alternatively, dark brown-eyed individuals might array themselves against the light brown- and hazel-eyed. In other words, we cannot even define the population of all potential cleavages, let alone the population of the potential groups generated by these cleavages.⁵⁰ Should each country, then, be assigned a value of infinity? This is clearly a nonsensical strategy, even though it highlights the fact that any conceivable division that we can imagine—and even some that we cannot—may be seized upon by entrepreneurs and politicized. The possibilities really are endless.

An alternative strategy is to evaluate the probability of politicization or participation only for either inductively- or deductively-derived relevant criteria. An inductive strategy would consider a set of historically important cleavages, where ‘historically important’ is assessed across space and time and is defined as criteria that have been politicized in the past.⁵¹ For example, if history tells us that class (occupation, not status) has sometimes

⁵⁰In fact, Fearon (2002, 8–9) goes so far as to argue that his list of ethnic groups and their sizes cannot be used “to ask empirically why some possible ethnic groups become actual ethnic groups at a given time, or why ethnic as opposed to other political cleavages develop... [because] we do not have a sample of all hypothetically possible ethnic (or other) groups... Since it is not clear that the population of ‘all possible ethnic groups in a country’ is well-defined, even in theory, some sort of case-control approach would be necessary.”

⁵¹We might want to assess importance via a running window: e.g., for a time point in the 1970s, assess the potential for political conflict along the cleavages that were important between 1945 and 1969; for a time

divided individuals into politicized groups, we might want to assess a polity's homogeneity with respect to this criterion. However, as either the rules underlying the strategic calculations of elites or the world changes (or both), so too will the ability of historically important latent cleavages to predict future lines of political conflict. Latent divisions around immigration, the use of nuclear power, and aboriginal rights, for example, only came to our attention when they were politicized although they had always existed as potential criteria for mobilization. If scholars such as Inglehart or Kitschelt are to be believed, their politicization and the declining relevance of the traditional historically important cleavages have followed changes in the structure of society such as post-war prosperity and the growth of the service sector. In this vein, certain sociological cleavages such as race, religion, class, and language seem to be both frequently and enduringly politicized relative to non-sociological cleavages such as colonialism (Bartolini 2000). Thus, this strategy will yield a better measure of sociological than non-sociological latent cleavages, which is no doubt why many scholars either implicitly or explicitly turn to a sociological definition. Adding deductive elements to this strategy would entail also assessing the potential for conflict along cleavages that have not been historically important but that scholars nevertheless believe are relevant. One key point about this strategy is that it assumes the set of relevant cleavages is constant across a subset of space and time, an assumption that may be more or less tenable for a given application. The other is that the analyst's judgment is certain to significantly shape results; sensitivity analyses should be performed and, whenever possible, deference paid to existing scholarly opinions about what the relevant set of cleavages should look like. Note that by relying on relevant cleavages, however defined, the latent cleavage variable underestimates the true potential for political conflict.

The issue then confronting the analyst is how to go about actually measuring the polity's homogeneity with respect to a relevant cleavage (or, for non-sociological cleavages, the potential for conflict as appropriately defined for a particular cleavage). That is, say we agree that religion has historically been an important cleavage and we want to measure the latent potential for religious conflict in a given society. How do we assess a polity's religious homogeneity? The problem is that if individuals can identify with a particular religious group, there is a good chance that the religious cleavage is no longer latent. Physical features of individuals such as skin color, gender, and left-handedness can arguably be viewed as independent of an individual's identification with corresponding groups and objectively measurable; accordingly, measuring homogeneity along latent cleavages such as race and gender might be possible.⁵² However, many other sociological divisions are not objectively observable. For example, religion can usually only be identified through self-reporting and language is observable but a trait ultimately subject to individual choice. There is no easy way around the problem that non-objectively observable groups (e.g., ethnic, linguistic,

point in the 1990s, we might instead use the period 1965–1989. Alternatively, if we think that the set of important conflicts has remained reasonably stable over the post-war period, we can use the entire period. Chandra and Boulet (2003) and van der Veen and Laitin (2004) effectively adopt this approach although not in so many words, describing this set of cleavages as those that are salient or politically relevant, respectively. For both these studies, the selection process of what this thesis has called 'historically important' or relevant cleavages is exogenous to the models.

⁵²Even the view of race as an exogenously generated independent variable that affects politics is increasingly subject to challenge. Smith (2004, 45) argues that "political scientists... have thought of races as created beyond the bounds of politics precisely because those notions have served to legitimate what were in fact always profoundly political constructions of status and identity."

and religious groups) can only be measured by asking individuals with which group they identify,⁵³ either explicitly in the case of religion or implicitly in the case of language. One cannot but conclude that these groups are endogenous or politicized (Alesina et al. 2003, Fearon 2002), which contaminates the measure.

The consequences of this theoretical (and hence empirical) difficulty are serious. Chandra and Boulet (2003) issue a stinging rebuke to many literatures in political science on these grounds. They argue that theories that make ethnic or other sociological structures independent variables must explicitly grapple with their fluidity and potential endogeneity to the dependent variable of interest. Researchers ignore constructivist findings that exogenous (latent) social demography is a chimera at their own peril. This issue is explored in greater depth in later chapters.

But the saga does not end here: practical issues rear their ugly heads. The validity problem described in the prior paragraph is ultimately insurmountable. Nevertheless, a more moderate goal of assessing homogeneity along a non-objectively measurable sociological cleavage—whether latent or politicized—is theoretically obtainable. A survey conducted in every country of interest that asked individuals either to classify themselves or to simply list all relevant groups would do the job. Both of these questions must be open-ended. Unfortunately, however, such open-ended classificatory surveys do not exist, certainly not in a cross-national context⁵⁴ and often not even in the context of a single country. Classificatory data is instead usually assembled country-by-country using close-ended questions in a census or other study, where survey administrators or researchers supply in advance the set of groups to which individuals can belong. Here, the strategy outlined above for selecting a set of relevant cleavages—historically important ones—is also presumably applied: the list of groups from which individuals are allowed to select is a list of historically important groups for the country in question (i.e., those that have been politicized in the past or are deductively viewed as relevant).

While the theoretical limitations described earlier apply to the selection of relevant groups in this manner, there is an important additional, practical limitation. There are many different ways to list the groups to which individuals can belong at different levels of aggregation. For example, the religious diversity of countries will look very different at the aggregate (Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, etc.) and the doctrinal (Protestant, Catholic, Sunni, Shi'i, etc.) levels. That is, the significant religious groups in the Netherlands could be viewed as Christians and Muslims; as Protestants, Catholics, and Muslims; or as Catholics, Dutch Reformed (*Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk*), Reformed Dutch (*Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland*), Evangelical Lutheran (*Evangelisch-Lutherse Kerk*), and Muslim.⁵⁵ If the groups that have been politicized in the past vary, particularly in the level of aggregation, it is unclear how to proceed. There is unfortunately no exogenously supplied list of groups to which an analyst can turn. The level that is used for classification may have profound implications for research. Accordingly, results should be checked for robustness to different classification schemes to ensure that the choice of schema does not favorably drive results

⁵³Alternatively, as Fearon (2002) suggests, one could ask an individual of which groups most other people in the community would consider him or her a member. This may or may not resolve the problem.

⁵⁴Fearon (2002) notes that such a survey does not exist with respect to ethnic groups and that he lacks the resources to carry it out. Consequently, he argues, the only option available to analysts is to rely upon existing lists of groups and secondary sources.

⁵⁵The major Protestant denominations in the Netherlands decided to unite in 2004 after two to five hundred years of serious schism.

(Fearon 2002). Additionally, graded instead of nominal measures are more appropriate when the cleavage is not salient (Brady and Kaplan 2000), yet existing measures, e.g. the ethno-linguistic fractionalization index (ELF), are usually nominal.

Further, some cross-national aggregate data sets seem to use biased lists of ‘relevant’ groups across countries, a problem that seems particularly acute for existing cross-national lists of religious groups.⁵⁶ That is, similar inductive and deductive criteria are not applied to select the list of relevant groups for each country. In some, the list is an artifact of unconscious bias (critics such as Said might use the term ‘orientalism’) or limited data, not the sought-after list of relevant groups.

To elaborate, in the lists of groups that comprise the Alesina et al. (2003) data set,⁵⁷ religion is more disaggregated in advanced industrial relative to developing countries, producing higher relative religious fractionalization in the former than is probably warranted. For example, compare their data on the U.S., which disaggregates Christianity into seven groups (a combined 85% of the population), with Liberia, where Christianity (68% of the population) is not disaggregated, yielding fractionalization indices of 0.824 and 0.488, respectively. It may be the case that these are the relevant religious groups in the U.S. and Liberia. It may also be the case that other factors underlie the disparate levels of aggregation employed—that the secondary studies upon which this list is based exhibit a bias towards disaggregating advanced industrial relative to developing countries. For example, in advanced industrial polities, fewer political sensibilities may restrict data gathering; there may be more resources available to researchers to facilitate data gathering; and researchers, usually hailing from advanced industrial countries themselves, may be more attuned to fine-grained distinctions by personal experience. Similarly, a tendency to disaggregate Christianity may result in Christian but non-advanced industrial countries exhibiting higher-than-warranted religious fractionalization relative to non-Christian, developing countries. For example, compare Alesina et al.’s data on Brazil, which disaggregates Christianity into two groups (a combined 61% of the population), with Indonesia, which does not disaggregate Islam (87% of the population), and India, which does not disaggregate Hinduism (82% of the population), yielding fractionalization indices of 0.605, 0.234 and 0.326, respectively. Again, the secondary sources upon which Alesina et al.’s list relies may exhibit a bias towards disaggregating Christianity relative to other religions. Perhaps many of the researchers who conducted the studies were themselves Christian and did not understand the religious fault lines of non-Western societies. Empirical studies utilizing measures based on this data that include developing and non-Christian countries as cases should be particularly cautious when interpreting results.

In short, operationalizing the latent cleavage variable is fraught with difficulties. It is in actuality almost impossible to validly measure exogenous determinants of preferences. A

⁵⁶I do not agree with Alesina et al.’s (2003, 159) argument that “distinctions in this [religious fractionalization] data are perhaps less controversial and subject to arbitrary definitions than the data on linguistic and ethnic fractionalization, since the boundaries of religions are more clear and definitions consistent across countries.” As Fearon (2002, 9) argues with respect to ethnic groups, “no plausible definition. . . will by itself imply a unique list of groups for a country.” As with ethnic groups, there are often many plausible ways of listing the religious groups in a given country, which might influence the conclusions an analyst eventually draws.

⁵⁷As noted in the previous section, I have not seen the list of groups and population shares used to generate either Fearon and Laitin’s (2003*b*) or Annett’s (2001) data sets. However, from an examination of the sources of each, the problems identified here are likely to also apply to their data.

healthy dose of skepticism is consequently warranted when one is confronted with conclusions drawn from empirical tests of hypotheses involving latent preferences.

Aside from these issues, are existing operationalizations a valid measure of the abstract concept of interest, latent preferences, as minimally defined earlier in the chapter? The most widespread empirical approach, which measures latent preferences along one cleavage such as religion or ethnicity, is invalid. Both elements of the minimal definition are not present in such an operationalization: it measures the number of groups generated by one criterion that divides the members of a polity, most frequently ethnicity, but does not consider others.⁵⁸ While ethnicity may be an important latent cleavage, it is not the only one. If one cleavage were to be picked as an overall proxy, two contenders would probably emerge—religion and socio-economics. Ethnicity has not been considered as important a cleavage in either the micro-level voting behavior (e.g., Lijphart 1971*a*) or macro-level party systems (e.g., Budge, Robertson and Hearl 1987) literatures. Similarly, despite the exclusive focus of existing operationalizations on latent sociological cleavages, these are not the only cleavages in the latent universe. Important latent non-sociological cleavages should be measured as well. In short, operationalizing latent preferences by only assessing potential politicization with respect to one criterion that divides a community ignores the bulk of a polity's cleavage structure.

An additive index represents a valid response to this criticism. However, it does not account for the possibility that certain cleavages may overlap, reducing diversity while increasing the salience of the overlapping cleavages. As Fearon (2002, 31) notes, “so far no cross-national data examines whether cross-cutting or overlapping cleavages between language/ethnicity and religion matter for dependent variables of interest.” He posits that such a task is “relatively straightforward,” but this assessment seems unduly optimistic. Country specialists would almost certainly be required to determine the extent to which lists of religious and ethnic groups overlapped. And even for the specialists, this would not be a straightforward task. For all intents and purposes, given the decision to not focus solely on cross-cutting cleavages for precisely these practical reasons, an additive or other composite index seems the best measure of latent preference diversity obtainable.

Similar criticisms apply to the existing cross-national measure of political cleavages, that developed by Moreno (1999), although for more subtle reasons. While factor analysis can result in a valid measure (all underlying structural components of mass opinion expressed in the survey are revealed), this validity is conditional on the survey instrument. The problem with the World Values and EuroBarometer Surveys, and hence any data on political cleavages derived from them, is that they are fundamentally designed to tap only two cleavages: the left–right (socioeconomic) and post-materialist cleavages. Other cleavages identified as important and discussed here, such as ethnic, religious, or foreign policy cleavages, are not adequately represented in the questionnaires and thus cannot be identified by factor analytic (or, for that matter, any other quantitative or qualitative) techniques.⁵⁹ The data resulting

⁵⁸Ethnic fractionalization indexes typically measure slightly different things. For example, Fearon (2002) incorporates religion, language, and race into his definition of an ethnic group; *Atlas Narodov Mira* and *Narodi Mira*, to which Ordeshook and Shvetsova (1994) turn, primarily define ethnicity in terms of language. Thus, some operationalizations might tap multiple cleavages; however, even the most expansive such measure underestimates preference diversity by ignoring other historically relevant cleavages such as the worker–owner (left–right) cleavage.

⁵⁹The questions in the surveys that are designed to tap ethnic, religious, class, and other such ‘social cleavages’ ask about socioeconomic traits such as an individual’s gender. As the thesis has argued at length,

from individual case studies that rely on different surveys such as Jackman (1998) do not necessarily have the same validity problems, although their validity, too, is conditional upon the validity of the survey instrument used. The strategy that was discussed with respect to latent preferences should be applied here as well. To obtain minimal validity, the survey should ask questions related to a set of relevant cleavages. This set of relevant cleavages can be both inductively and deductively derived, but it should reflect scholarly consensus.

Beyond this general criticism of measures based on the World Values and EuroBarometer surveys that applies to Moreno (1999)'s operationalization of the political preferences variable suffers from a principal components factor analysis that is too theoretically constrained. Effectively, political preferences are not allowed to vary within each group of countries. Left–right materialism and postmaterial–fundamentalism are the two issue dimensions considered for *all* advanced industrial democracies, for example. The questions from the World Values Survey that are (theoretically) viewed as relating to these dimensions are the only variables included in the principal components factor analysis. Similarly, the set of possible issue dimensions is constrained over the whole sample: only six possible dimensions, many of which are region-specific variants of others, are considered. The result is a measure with very minimal cross-national variance. Of course, empirical analyses are rarely (and usually should not be) devoid of theory, as discussed at length above. On a spectrum with completely automated data mining algorithms at one extreme and theoretically-driven analyses that make no reference to data on the other, this type of analysis falls too close to the latter. In sum, the only existing cross-national data set on political cleavages is not a valid measure of the abstract concept of interest. Like the operationalizations of latent preferences that only tap one potential component of the cleavage structure, this operationalization of political cleavages neglects a significant number of important cleavages.

What about the existing operationalizations of the politicized cleavage variable? The approach that conducts a factor analysis of political elite opinion data is subject to the same validity problems discussed above with respect to a factor analysis of public opinion data. None of the other approaches seem to suffer from noteworthy face invalidity. However, most rely upon the analyst selecting a relevant set of issues for consideration. Whether this set of relevant issues is inductively or deductively derived, or both, the perils—as highlighted earlier while reviewing existing operationalizations of the latent and political preferences variables—have hopefully been made clear to readers. As before, minimal validity requires analysts to choose a set of potential party-dividing criteria that reflects scholarly consensus. Expert survey approaches such as Morgan (1976) that explicitly elicit cleavage structures from a variety of specialists accomplish this, at least with respect to the scholarly consensus obtaining amongst the individuals and at the particular time surveyed. An inclusive sample of specialists will naturally do the best job of canvassing the range of scholarly opinion. One issue with the existing indices constructed from the Manifesto Research Group data is that the sets of relevant cleavages considered do not reflect scholarly consensus.⁶⁰ This is not surprising, because the indices were constructed with very particular applications

these questions will identify latent, not political, cleavages. Their inclusion alongside ideological and opinion questions illustrates the ties of this approach to the political behavior literature.

⁶⁰For example, of the twenty ‘cleavages’ considered by Budge and Laver (1992, 1993), each of which corresponds to a coding category, several relate to the left–right socioeconomic cleavage. Elsewhere, these categories have been shown to load onto one underlying left–right dimension (e.g., Budge, Robertson and Hearl 1987). Other cleavages many scholars view as important such as ethnicity and religion are not considered.

(to coalition theory, for example) in mind. Similar indices for a different set of relevant cleavages can easily be constructed from the data, following the example set by existing studies and using the approach described in Budge et al. (2001).

Specific comments about several of the approaches are in order, beginning with the operationalizations that utilize the Manifesto Research Group data. First, the two-stage factor analysis approach weights each of the seven general subject area domains equally, which has substantive implications. As Budge (1987, 33) notes, “it means we ignore possible variations in importance between domains, and the possibility also that these occur between countries.” Second, the data generated by the Group reflects the way political parties—specifically, the officials who draw up party manifestos—would like political competition to be structured. The particized cleavages that actually underpin political competition after (and even during) an election may be quite different once individual activists, interest groups, and representatives (parliamentarians) enter the equation. However, for all of the theoretical and practical reasons articulated in Budge (2001), it makes sense for the purposes of this thesis to allow parties to define the space via their most authoritative documents.

A cautionary note about Lijphart’s (1984, 1990a, 1999) operationalization applies more broadly to the expert judgment approach in general. Both elements of the minimal definition of preferences are present in Lijphart’s operationalization. The number of criteria that divide a polity (if not the number of groups generated by the criteria) is measured and a plethora of criteria are considered. In fact, this operationalization seems to validly measure the particized preferences variable as defined by this thesis in that it examines the issues that divide parties; weighs changes over time; and includes non-sociological cleavages such as foreign policy in the set of relevant cleavages considered. However, the absence of clear data generation procedures makes this supportive evaluation a tentative one. The opaque coding rules leave both Lijphart and the expert judgment approach as a whole vulnerable to charges of coding bias. That is, since the hypothesis in Lijphart’s case is that the number of issue dimensions is positively correlated with the effective number of parties, the effective number of parties in a country (the value of the dependent variable) may have influenced his coding of the salience of the various issue dimensions (the value of the independent variable). For example, the socioeconomic issue dimension is coded as high salience for all countries save for the United States, the Bahamas, Canada, and Trinidad, with only minimal justification provided for these coding decisions.⁶¹ The reduced salience of this issue dimension for these countries contributes to their ending up with a small index value. Perhaps not coincidentally, three of these countries have two party systems. Without further information about how these coding decisions were made, it is difficult to dismiss the possibility of bias out of hand. In general, then, the expert judgment approach may arrive at valid measures of the particized preferences variable. By the very nature of the fact that it relies upon the judgments of individuals, however, this validity is far from assured. Specifically, charges of bias cannot be easily dismissed.

Finally, in closing, all of the approaches operationalizing particized cleavages that do not

⁶¹The only justification provided follows. “Left–right differences. . . have generally declined since the 1960s but not to the extent that, over the period under consideration for each country, this issue dimension can be said to have disappeared in any of the countries or even moderated from ‘high’ to only ‘medium’ salience in most countries” (Lijphart 1999, 81–82). No specific information is shared with readers as to why the salience has moderated enough in these four countries alone to justify the socioeconomic cleavage being coded as of ‘medium’ salience for them and as of ‘high’ salience everywhere else.

use factor analysis—expert surveys, expert judgment, and indices constructed using Manifesto Research Group data—are unable to distinguish between orthogonal and overlapping cleavages. This again underscores the practical difficulty of operationalizing some interesting and compelling theoretical ideas. While factor analytic approaches are able to explore orthogonality, there is a cost. Either the measures average over time (e.g., the Manifesto Research Group’s two-stage factor analysis), which operationalizes a long-run definition, or suffer from invalidity due to the use of survey instruments that fail to measure many—let alone all—relevant cleavages (e.g., Inglehart’s factor analysis of political elite survey data).

2.3.2 Reliability

A reliable measure is one that “appl[ies] the same procedure in the same way [and] . . . always produce[s] the same measure” (King, Keohane and Verba 1994, 25). Reliability obviously requires that the data generation procedure is known. More specifically, it requires that it is known in detail, i.e. that there are explicit procedures for other analysts to follow.

Most of the operationalizations of the three preference variables described in this chapter are reliable for all reasonable intents and purposes. Existing operationalizations of latent preferences, for example, perform calculations upon data sets developed by third parties. The calculations are clearly reliable; taking the data sets themselves as exogenously given makes the measure as a whole reliable. Even the lists of groups and population shares that comprise the data sets probably do not do so badly on the reliability front. They are based on secondary sources that others can consult and many researchers such as Fearon (2002) have outlined their procedures as explicitly as possible in order to facilitate replication. Additionally, comparable data sets compiled by different researchers such as Alesina et al. (2003) and Fearon (2002), which have sources in common, serve as a natural check. Happily, as noted earlier in the chapter, the correlations between the different measures are high, suggesting measure reliability is not a serious problem for these operationalizations. Similarly, the factor analytic techniques for operationalizing political and particized cleavages as well as the indices constructed using the Manifesto Research Group data to operationalize the particized cleavages variable are all reliable. Given the theoretical structure imposed upon the factor analysis and the relevant data, for example, another analyst should be able to produce an identical measure.

However, reliability is far from assured for the measures of particized cleavages constructed using the expert judgment approach. Clear coding rules are not provided, which impedes replication. For example, Lijphart’s (1999, 81) rule for assigning to an issue dimension one of three ordinal categorical values (low, medium, or high salience) in a country is described as follows: “A distinction is made between dimensions of high salience (H) and those of only medium intensity or those that varied between high and low intensity over time (M). The judgments . . . are necessarily subjective, but most are straightforward and uncontroversial.” It would be surprising if other analysts made identical coding decisions as Lijphart given the lack of explicit procedures to be followed. In general, reliability is a serious problem for these measures precisely because they are inherently subjective. The advantage of the expert survey approach, which also relies upon expert judgments, is that biases and errors of individual specialists might (and hopefully will) balance out in the aggregate.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to define the abstract concepts with which this thesis is broadly concerned. Three types of preferences have been identified—latent, political, and politicized—and distinctions made between long- and short-run as well as sociological and non-sociological variants of these types. The chapter has argued that setting the definitional record straight is more important than many scholars incorporating preferences into their research have recognized. Although scholars may of course define the abstract concept that interests them as they please, they must do so explicitly. Different abstract concepts and hence different definitions may be more or less appropriate—empirically and theoretically—in the context of particular research questions. Other researchers must be able to weigh in on these issues if social science is to be done. G. K. Chesterton would no doubt argue that this requires everyone to be on the same page, so to speak, with respect to what is and what is not being argued. Definitions, too often afterthoughts derived from particular operationalizations, must take their proper place on center stage.

Moreover, doing the social science advocated by this thesis requires empirical data with which to test hypotheses involving abstract concepts, however defined. In other words, the latent, political, and politicized preference variables must be operationalized and data on a large sample of polities gathered. This chapter has also reviewed and evaluated the existent operationalizations of the three variables. A variety of operationalizations of the latent preferences variable can be culled from several literatures; however, almost all measure latent preferences solely with respect to one potential division of the community such as ethnicity or religion. Further, it is quite difficult to ensure that the measure is not contaminated, i.e. that it actually measures latent, not politicized, cleavages. Existing operationalizations, then, are not valid measures of the latent preferences variable defined by this thesis. New, better measures can and should be developed that tap a broader scope of potential divisions. However, this chapter has sought to put scholars on notice as to the ultimate intractability of this abstract concept to empirical measurement. With this in mind, scholars should use caution when drawing conclusions about hypotheses that incorporate latent preferences as a variable on either the left- or right-hand side.

Conversely, there is only one existent operationalization of the political preferences variable, although it too suffers from invalidity. The lack of cross-national data on this variable stems from cross-national survey instruments that do not ask the right questions, those necessary to identify the underlying political cleavage structure as defined by this thesis. Unfortunately, this empirical roadblock is not likely to be removed any time soon. Valid data can only be obtained by launching a new cross-national survey, an undertaking that would require massive amounts of both time and resources.

Finally, a variety of operationalizations of the politicized preference variable have been identified. The expert judgment approach of Lijphart (1984, 1990a, 1999), which has generated the most widely used data set in the electoral and party systems literature, is certainly unreliable and therefore invalid. The Manifesto Research Group's party manifesto data has supported both factor analytic and simpler quantitative operationalizations. The former, unfortunately, averages over time and thus does not provide an operationalization of a short-run definition of politicized preferences. The latter, while embracing a set of cleavages that is narrower in scope than is ideal, provides a useful benchmark for future work, which can easily extend the original set of cleavages considered.

In short, substantial work needs to be done before we can empirically assess how preferences vary across polities. Chapter 4 will attempt to make strides in this direction by proposing new measures of both latent and particized preferences. First, however, the thesis will review how preferences have been incorporated into the electoral and party systems literature, the topic of Chapter 3.

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