

Gallagher et al define a cleavage by listing three required criteria:

1. Cleavages have distinct social bases (distinguishable in terms of key social characteristics).
2. Members of different cleavages have a sense of collective identity (conscious of belonging to the group and acting as a part of the group).
3. Cleavages give rise to clearly defined organizational structures (institutional expression that joins together individuals on one side of the cleavage).



Lipset and Rokkan (in Gallagher et al) suggest that historically all parties can trace their roots to four primary societal/historical cleavages. These are:

1. **Center** ↔ **Periphery** (dominant-subject culture)
2. **Church** ↔ **State** (power struggle over role of church)
3. **Primary Economy** ↔ **Secondary Economy** (agricultural-industrial)
4. **Employer** ↔ **Worker** (class)



Cleavages can be either **reinforcing** or **cross-cutting**

Example reinforcing cleavages:

Employer/worker & church/state cleavages in Austria
Socialist = anticlerical and Christian Democrat = catholic (overlap)

Example cross-cutting cleavages

Employer/worker & church state in Italy
Liberal = employer *and* anticlerical, Socialist = worker and anticlerical and
Christian Democrats = employers and catholic

Realignment or De-alignment?

Lipset and Rokkan wrote about a “*freezing of the cleavage structure*” in Western Europe because for the most part the party structure of the 1960s was the same as that which had developed by the 1920s.

They believed that the system would remain quite stable in the foreseeable future. By the 1970s it appeared that they were wrong...

Realignment

Realignment means that in fact the cleavages of the past are not forever frozen and new cleavages are forming while the old ones are losing their political relevance (think about the three criteria).

This implies a kind of “swap” new cleavages gain importance as old ones lose importance. This requires the development of a new political order in essence and implies a *significant* change from the past.

De-alignment

De-alignment on the other hand is a less radical form of change. It requires only that some change occur while leaving the basic underlying cleavage structure intact.

Some measures of de-alignment are:

1. Increased abstention and low voter turn-out/interest
2. Increased support for new political parties
3. Increased electoral volatility

All of this occurs while still leaving the basic cleavage structure (generally left-right class cleavage) intact.