



Split: Class and Cultural Divides In American Politics

Jeffery M Stonecash, Mark D Brewer

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Talk of politics in the United States today is abuzz with warring red and blue factions. The message is that Americans are split due to deeply-held beliefs--over abortion, gay marriage, stem-cell research, prayer in public schools. Is this cultural divide a myth, the product of elite partisans? Or is the split real?

Yes, argue authors Mark Brewer and Jeffrey Stonecash--the cultural divisions are real. Yet they tell only half the story. Differences in income and economic opportunity also fuel division--a split along class lines. Cultural issues have not displaced class issues, as many believe. *Split* shows that both divisions coexist meaning that levels of taxation and the quality of healthcare matter just as much as the debate over the right to life versus the right to choose.

The authors offer balanced, objective analysis, complete with a wealth of data-rich figures and tables, to explain the social trends underlying these class and cultural divides and then explore the response of the parties and voters. Offering solid empirical evidence, the authors show that how politicians, the media, and interest groups perceive citizen preferences--be they cultural or class based--determines whether or not the public gets what it wants. Simply put, each set of issues creates political conflict and debate that produce very different policies and laws. With a lively and highly readable narrative, students at every level will appreciate the brevity and punch of *Split* and come away with a more nuanced understanding of the divisions that drive the current American polity.

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