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## Political Ideology And Ideological (Re)Alignment 1972-2006

Derrick Ryan Shapley

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POLITICAL IDEOLOGY AND IDEOLOGICAL (RE)ALIGNMENT 1972-2006

By

Derrick Ryan Shapley

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Faculty of  
Mississippi State University  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Science  
in Sociology  
in the Department of Sociology

Mississippi State, Mississippi

December 2010

POLITICAL IDEOLOGY AND IDEOLOGICAL (RE)ALIGNMENT 1972-2006

By

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1972-2006.

Pages in Study: 70

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This study tests the relationship of the 6 ideological variables and 7 contextual variables to shifts in ideological alignment through a latent class regression analysis for three periods of years (1972-1978, 1980-1992, 1993-2006). The latent class regression models determine the number of identifiable classes for each model. Using ideological realignment theory (Abramowitz and Saunders 1998) this study finds there has been a moderate polarization of opinions that has occurred, as well as, a moderate hardening of ideological beliefs with moral issues during the third time period becoming the driving force in ideological makeup. With regard to the culture wars hypothesis (Hunter 1991) there seems to be so much randomness in peoples overall ideological makeup that it hardly suggests a salient culture war is taking place. It also seems to matter very little what opinions individuals express on domain specific issues with regard to political ideology.

## DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to the graduate students of the department of sociology at Mississippi State University without whose friendship and support this project would have never reached fruition.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This project will look at individuals and the global ideological identity they possess, their domain specific opinions on public issues, and their socio-demographic characteristics. An analysis will be conducted of how global ideological identity is a function of domain specific opinions on public issues and socio-demographic characteristics. The analysis will show how the process of generating a global ideological identity has changed from 1972-2006.

According to Sartori (1969 P. 398) discussions about ideology generally fall into two broad but not mutually exclusive domains, namely “ideology in knowledge and ideology in politics.” Lakoff (1996) argues that ideology comes from one sense of what is good in society and from this emerges the antitheses – what is bad or negative in society. Downs (1957) along the same lines as Lakoff defines ideology as “the verbal image of a good society and the chief means of constructing such a society” For Karl Mannheim (1936/1999 p. 49), he believed “ideology was implied to denote that we are skeptical of the ideas and representations advanced by our opponents.” Mannheim believed that we do not take ideas and issues at “face value” instead we “interpret those ideas based on their life-situation (Mannheim 1936/1999 p.49).

Downs (1957, pp 96) provides the most useful definition of political ideology for this investigation. For Downs, political ideology is not just a belief or a set of beliefs, it

is a framework of understanding the world. This framework is rationalized in a set of logical understandings about the world over the role of government, business morality, the individual, freedom and equality. These logical understandings about the world create issue sets that people frame together in a logical fashion to create a coherent worldview. Thus, In order to understand ideology one must first understand how positions with respect to component domains (or issue sets) align or cohere to form the ideology.

In the United States there are two competing ideologies that are battling for supremacy: liberalism and conservatism. These two ideologies have competing positions with respect to the issue sets that have been established. Liberals are more likely prefer less government intervention on social issues such as abortion, pornography laws, and religion, than conservatives. However, conservatives are more likely to prefer less government intervention in economic affairs than liberals.

These political ideologies evolved as the result of history, culture, and crises that have occurred, as well as changes in voter attitudes and voter prioritization among certain issue sets. For example, what was a big issue 30 years ago may not be a big issue today. How people who fall into these two competing ideologies respond to these changes constitutes ideological alignment. Ideological alignment can be defined as the bringing together of separate issue sets into a coherent logical framework in a process that occurs over time and is responsive to shifts in voter attitudes and voter prioritization of issues.

Over the past several years, many scholars have addressed ideological alignment in this country (Abramowitz and Saunders 1998; Schrekhise and Sheilds 2003; Abramowitz and Knotts 2006). Yet, there has been very little discussion on the evolution of the two main competing ideologies: liberalism and conservatism. This research project

takes the view that ideologies are not stable, fixed constructs but rather very fluid constructs that evolve and change as societies advance and situations within the society change. The research project tracks the changes of political ideology from 1972-2006 using the General Social Survey. The main sociological issue being investigated in this project is how group position and issue sets interact with each other to create ideology and how ideology changes across certain time periods.

This project is framed within the debate surrounding the existence of a culture war defined in terms of ideological polarization. Ideological polarization can be defined as the tendency for individuals to hold extremely divergent views on public issues with little consensus in the middle ground. The idea of a culture war became popularized by James Davison Hunter in his book *Culture Wars, The Struggle to Define America*. What Hunter (1991) argues is that the culture wars can be seen in certain “wedge issues” that polarize the public and lead to clashes between competing cultural ideals in this country.

This paper looks at the conceptualization of the culture wars and its role in shaping the current major ideologies in the United States through a conflict extension perspective. The conflict extension perspective (Layman & Carsey 2002a, 2002b Layman et. al. 2006) argues: “attitudes toward social welfare, racial, and cultural issues have remained distinct and somewhat cross-cutting. However, the parties in the electorate have grown increasingly polarized on all three of these dimensions” (Layman et al. 2006, pg. 91). While “clear policy difference between the two parties is not new, what is new is that the parties’ elites, mass coalitions, and activist bases have become sharply divided along the lines of multiple dimensions within a process termed conflict extension” (Layman et al. 2006, pg. 104). Layman et al. (2006) argue that neither the party elites nor

the mass electorate are likely to have started this process of growing polarization but instead it was created by the base activists within the two parties. However, Layman et al. argue that more research needs to be done to find the catalyst for this new conflict among multiple policy dimensions.

The literature on the culture wars, political polarization, and ideological conflict extension intersects with the literature on political ideological alignment and *realignment*. Ideological alignment (see Appendix B) draws attention to the extent to which (1) social groups map onto ideas on specific issue sets, (2) ideas on specific issue sets map onto political ideological identity (e.g. ‘conservatism’ or ‘liberalism’), (3) social groups map onto political ideological identity, and (4) political party affiliation maps onto ideas on specific issue sets, social groups, and political ideological identity. The notion of increased political polarization and conflict extension suggests that these mappings are in flux. When political polarization occurs, some theorists (Black 1948; Downs 1957) posit that shifts in alignment occur. Many explain this process within the median voter theorem. It posits that voters are rational actors who vote along specific policy preference lines. Voters select candidates based on who shares the closest policy preferences to them. During times of polarization, politicians are located not in the center of a hypothetical continuum, but at the poles of the continuum. Thus, the candidate preferences of the majority of the voting public become in flux and ideological realignment can happen. The dynamics of how these mappings change substantively constitutes ideological realignment.

The development of theory about how these dynamics occur is known as ideological realignment theory. Ideological realignment theory has not been highly

developed. There are two main schools of thought as to when and how recent ideological realignment happened. The first school of thought argues that realignment occurred as a result of an enlarged voter pool that occurred with the civil rights movement (Carmines and Stimson 1989). The second school of thought argues that ideological realignment occurred as a result of the policies and practices of the Reagan administration that polarized the public and realigned the parties in the US (Abramowitz and Saunders 1998). Ideological realignment theory is subject to debate about what gave rise to realignment of issue specific ideas, social groups, political parties and political ideological identity. In this paper, I will form an argument that ideological realignment consists of a change in the individual level model of the relationships between one's social group and one's ideological identity. I posit that within the U.S., during a pre-polarized period, ideological alignment – defined in terms of the intercorrelations between social groupings, positions on specific idea sets and political ideological identity – is low and one's set of opinions is a function of their group position in society and the concatenate material and social interests. In a later period, ideological alignment is high because group position determines ideology, which in turn creates issue sets. In other words the key distinction between the earlier and later periods (model 1 and model 2) is whether ideology is causally prior or subsequent to the establishment of an interest set.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The foundations for conceptualizing about the process of ideological realignment are rooted in Downs' (1957) argument that political parties are first and foremost interested in holding political office and not promoting an ideal society. Through the competition and uncertainty of elections this interest pushes parties to develop ideologies as resources in a struggle for office. In this argument, ideologies are conceived as a verbal image of the good society and of the chief means of constructing society. However, functionally, ideology becomes a means to obtaining and consolidating power. Ideologies help focus voters attention on differences between the parties, which leads to a rational voter not making a decision based on a single specific policy but on a wide array of policies. Voters use ideologies as information cost saving devices because they do not have the time or resources to perform a detailed investigation of the records of the candidates.

Also, according to Downs (1957), tension and conflict within society creates a system in which no single ideology becomes dominant because there only so many constituencies one can appeal to without antagonizing others. Disagreement occurs when an ideology serves the interest of one constituency while undermining the interest of another. This conflict between constituencies can lead to changes in political ideology.



For the most part, Downs argues ideologies slowly change over time and remain basically coherent and immobile. Ideological inertia occurs because an ideology cannot convincingly contradict its past formulation unless some radical changes in conditions justify this. There becomes a rational relationship between past action and current action, which leads the latter not to repudiate the former.

Downs' (1957) basic hypothesis is that competing ideologies tend towards convergence at a theoretical center. The Downsian convergence hypothesis explains that the parties, which are the ideological entrepreneurs, will each produce strategies to adjust their ideologies in an attempt to capture the largest constituencies. This strategy leads to ideological convergence around the opinion set of members of the electorate positioned in the center. As these parties move toward the center, or closer to their opponent's ideology, the extremes will abstain from voting. Because of the convergence toward the center, parties become more ambiguous and more rational; however this could make the voters less rational because distinctions are harder to come by. The more party ideology adapts to win elections by moving toward the center the more activists and the extremes in the party want their principles to be placed at the forefront. When party extremists want their principles placed at the forefront the process leads to an emergence of new polarizing ideologies. Therefore, the Downsian model of ideological change is, basically, cyclical.

The Conflict Displacement Perspective focuses attention away from the Downsian emphasis of ideological position on a latent spectrum, to the variable issues sets that comprise the core of an ideology. Conflict displacement literature (See Schattschneider 1960, Sundquist 1983, Carmines & Stimson 1989, Clubb et al. 1990; and

Miller and Schofield 1993) posits party coalitions take place along a single dominant policy dimension. One of the central points of conflict displacement theory is that old conflicts tend to get resolved before new conflicts can occur and become exploited by the major parties. In contrast, the Downsian perspective predicts slow movement toward the center followed by movement away from the cycles of convergence. Both the Downsian perspective and the conflict displacement perspective were works that early in the study of ideological realignment shaped the belief systems and research of others.

The term ideological realignment first emerged in the academic literature in reference to the move by Southern Whites away from the Democratic Party toward the Republican Party during the late 1960s. In addition, there has been a move by liberal Republicans in the North toward the Democratic Party. This movement has provided a stronger link between party affiliation and ideological identity which has increased the extent of polarization. This paper will look at this issue and examine these effects on each party. Some have labeled this perspective the “ideological realignment” argument or ideological realignment theory (Carmines & Stanley 1990, 1992; Levine et. al. 1997; Abramowitz and Saunders 1998, Fleisher & Bond 2001; Putz 2002, Schreckise and Shields 2003; Layman, Carsey, and Horowitz 2006). The ideological realignment perspective argues that people are increasingly choosing their party based on ideological orientations (Carmines & Stanley 1990).

Explanations for why this change has occurred include the fundamentalism polarization affect – that the moral majority movement of the late 1970’s has led to an increased polarization of public opinion and a decrease in toleration of out groups. For example, Jelen (1982) argues southern intolerance was based on the impact of

fundamentalism in the south. Some have argued against the fundamentalism polarization effect. Dimaggio, Evans, and Bryson (1996) found no effect of faith, operationalized as religiously conservative affiliation versus religiously liberal affiliation, on political polarization. Also, Ellison and Musick (1993) tested this hypothesis and found only weak support for this argument. Ellison and Musick argued that there may be a multitude of factors to explain this idea of intolerance in the south, such as lack of personal encounters.

The conflict extension perspective provides a different account for the dynamics described above (Layman & Carsey 2002a, b Layman et al. 2006). This literature argues that there has been an increasing polarization not just along one issue strain but among three issue strains: social welfare, racial, and cultural issues. This perspective reconceptualizes the conflict displacement perspective in suggesting that ideologies realign by mechanisms other than jettisoning issues that have been neutralized through a Downsian convergence process. For example, according to conflict displacement, only after social welfare issues fall into the background can racial and cultural issues come to predominate whereas, within the conflict extension perspective all three issues simultaneously can become operative.

One of the reasons conflict extension could have occurred is through party strategizing to maximize group solidarity through constructing issue sets that exploit racial social divisions. For example, many Americans perceive social welfare programs as primarily benefiting minorities and more specifically blacks. (Peffley, Hurwitz, and Sniderman 1997; Gilens 1999 Valentino and Sears 2005), also many Americans perceive a linkage between crime and African-Americans (Peffley, Hurwitz, and Sniderman 1997;

Kinder and Sanders 1996; Valentino 1999; Mendelberg 2001; Valentino and Sears 2005). The notion of single parent families within the African-American community made famous by the Moynihan report (1965) has led to a linkage between social welfare, race, and issues of culture. We have seen a linkage between the issues of race, culture, and social welfare within our American mass media so it may be the case that this linkage has further promoted conflict extension and polarization (Peffley, Hurwitz, and Sniderman 1997). As a distinct social group –African Americans are linked to a set of social welfare issues, a set of family issues and a set of social control issues. Political parties seeking to maximize votes strategize to construct ideologies to exploit this interest set convergence. The issues surrounding these interest sets become viable wedge issues for building ideologies to capture constituencies when African Americans are in a position to compete for status as a group with other groups. Thus, the underlying issue here is group status. In regions where African Americans have a substantial presence, they compete for status as a group with other groups, most notably whites with low education. Moreover, given that African Americans and low education whites have tightly bounded social networks with few bridging ties, a political party is presented a strategy to maximize votes by constructing an ideology to promote solidarity within one of these groups and to symbolically and materially represent the interest of that group. Through representing the material interests and opinion sets of one group it could set the other group in opposition, which would further lead to issue set alignment.

### CHAPTER III

#### STATEMENT OF HYPOTHESIS

As was noted earlier, conflict extension (Abramowitz and Saunders 1998; Layman and Carsey 2002a; Layman and Carsey 2002b; Layman, Carsey, and Horowitz; 2006) and ideological realignment theory (Abramowitz and Saunders 1998) serve as the theoretical launching point of this paper. The goal of this paper is to extend these theories. It has been previously argued that conflict extension occurs along the three dimensions of racial issues, cultural issues, and social welfare issues; this paper will seek to test an expansion of this argument to include issues of authority/justice (crime), taxation, and environmental issues. Also, this paper will test how group position, interest sets, and ideology are related across periods. In the initial period specified in this analysis – during the 1970s, it is hypothesized that the group position one is located in will lead to certain interest sets, which will then form an ideology. Later, it is hypothesized that group position will lead to a certain ideology, which then creates issue sets. Figure 3.1 depicts these processes.

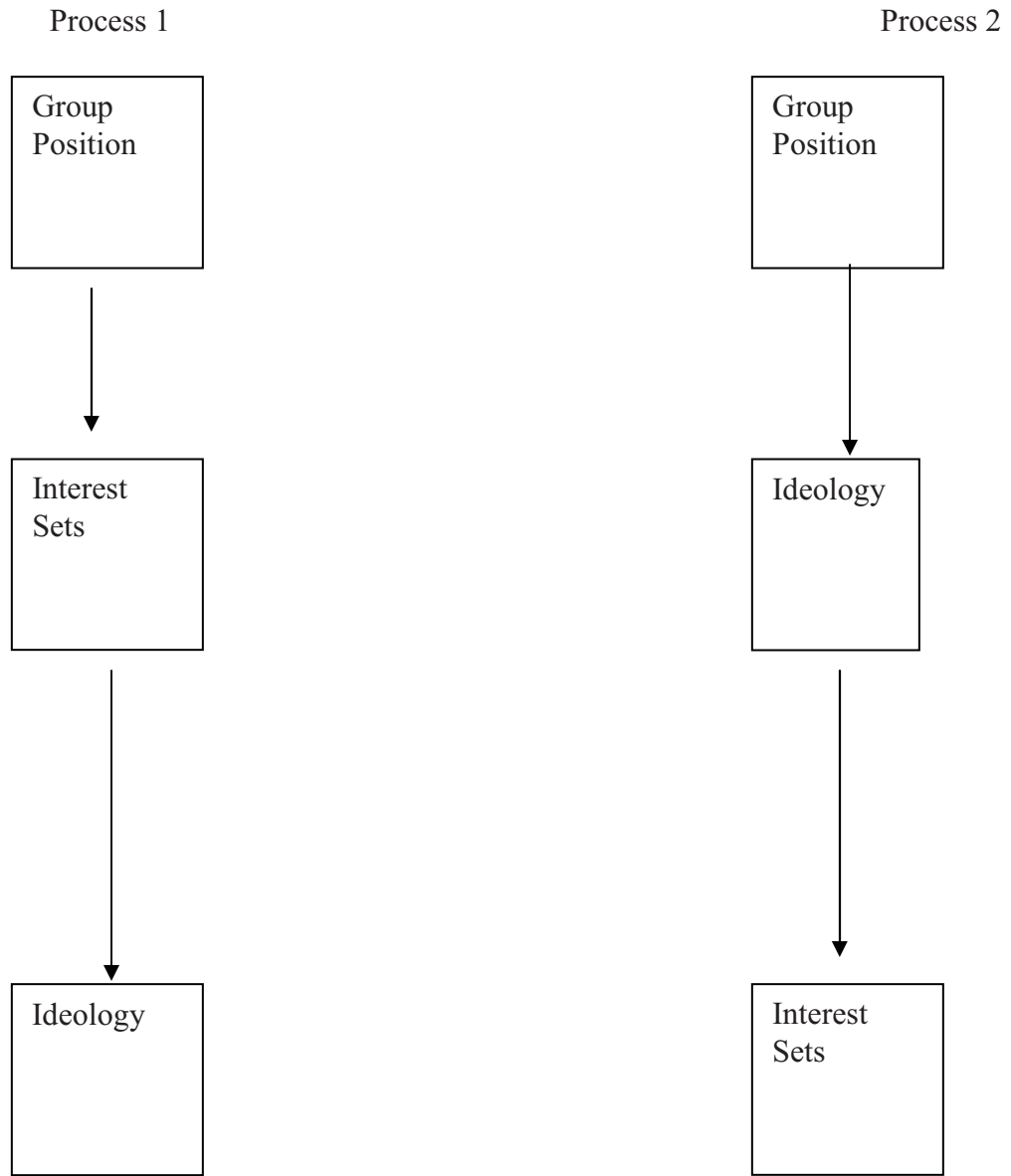


Figure 3.1 Processes of ideological change

Table 3.1 describes the empirical implications of these two distinct models. In the first period, it is hypothesized that the correlation of opinion across component domains will be low and correlation of opinions with ideology will be low. For example, during

the earlier period the correlation between race or region with attitudes toward social welfare policies will not be high, however in the later periods the correlation will increase. Also for period one, it is hypothesized that latent class regression analysis will identify many distinct ways in which opinion sets predict ideology. In other words, a number of unique regression models will be necessary to estimate how commitment to domain specific beliefs will predict global ideology. For example, a model that heavily weights the effect of family-cultural issues might best predict ideology for those living in the south; a model that heavily weights the effect of economic issues might best predict ideology for those living in the North. In the second period, the correlation of opinion across component domains with social group membership will be high and correlations of opinions with ideology will be high. Models that predict ideological identification will be consistent across social groups.

Table 3.1 Hypotheses regarding change in ideological alignment

	Process 1 Pre-Reagan 1972-1978	Reagan 1980-1992	Process 2 Post Reagan 1993-2006
Correlation between component domains	Low	Med	High
Correlation of component domains with ideological identity	Low	Med	High
Regression patterns based on component domains	Many	Med	Few

- Hypothesis 1: Correlations Between Public Opinion Items Across Component Domains:
  - a. Correlation of responses to public opinion items across component domains during Pre-Reagan will be low.
  - b. Correlation of responses to public opinion items across component domains post-Reagan will be high
- Hypothesis 2: Correlations Between Public Opinion Items and Global Ideological Identification:
  - a. Correlations between individual public opinion items and global ideological commitment (liberal/conservative) will be higher post-Reagan than Pre-Reagan.
- Hypothesis 3: In Latent Class Regression Analysis (LCRA):
  - a. An LCRA will produce fewer distinct latent classes post-Reagan than pre-Reagan.



## CHAPTER IV

### METHODOLOGY

#### Data

Data for this paper come from The General Social Survey (GSS), which is published by the National Opinion Research Center. The years covered are from 1972-2006. The data are split into three different time periods 1972 -1978 (Period 1), 1980-1992 (Period 2), 1993-2006 (Period 3). For Period 1, 10,652 cases were present. Of those cases, 2,251 fit the specifications for the model in this paper. For Period 2, there were 17,130 total cases and 5,798 that fit the specifications for the models in this analysis. For Period 3, there were 23,238 total cases in the model and 3,758 cases that fit the specifications of the model.

The GSS has a total of 5,364 variables for the years 1972-2008. From 1972 through 2006, 51,020 people responded to the survey questions (each person was surveyed only once). The GSS was started in 1972 and is a cross sectional study that looks at public opinion and social change. The GSS completed its 27<sup>th</sup> round of surveying in 2008. The GSS is the largest project funded by the sociology program of the National Science Foundation and except for the US. Census the GSS is the most frequently analyzed source of data in the United States. For the years 1972-2000, interviews were

conducted face to face and manually with questionnaires that were coded and key punched. Since 2002, the GSS switched to computer assisted personal interviewing. There are no longer printed questionnaires but the showcards are still printed. Interviews usually last for 90 minutes.

For the years 1972 and 1974, samples followed a modified probability design. This analysis employed a block quota system. For every year in the survey since 1974, a full probability sample has been used. In 1982 and 1987, blacks were oversampled by design. One limitation of the GSS is that for the years 1972-2006 they only sampled the English speaking population.

For the GSS while there are many questions that are given for all years such as; age, sex, region, race, and other attitudinal questions, not all questions are given for all years. The questions given for all years are known as the core. Some questions from the core were removed in 1994. Despite the fact that the interview is often 90 minutes long what can be included in the interview is often limited. Also, some questions may not apply to all members of the survey. Additionally, there are topical modules which are used on certain topics in one year but then may not be used again for a while. For example, there is a topical module on social networks in 1985 and it is not seen again until 2004 (National Opinion Research Center 2010).

The GSS collects basic demographic data on each respondent, including both gender and race. Race is observed as black, white, and other since black/white distinctions are of greatest interest for the research conducted. Hispanics may be undersampled in this survey because from the years 1972-2006 the only people surveyed were the English speaking population. Some of the questions used to construct the issue

set indices used in analyses reported in this paper were not asked in the same year. Only years that will be used are those where sufficient questions were asked to construct each index in the following analyses.

### Variables

The dependent variable in this research is political ideology. Respondents to the General Social Survey were asked do they think of themselves as liberal or conservative on a 7 point scale: 1. extremely liberal, 2. liberal, 3. slightly liberal, 4. moderate, 5. slightly conservative, 6. conservative and 7. extremely conservative. Table 2 presents the distribution of responses to this item by period. For political ideology, more people put themselves in one of the three conservative categories than the liberal categories consistently throughout all years in the survey. However, in all periods, moderates represented the plurality of respondents with roughly 39 percent of the responses. The middle three categories; slightly liberal, moderate, and slightly conservative make up over 60 percent of the survey respondents for all periods listed.

Table 4.1 Distribution of responses by period to the prompt:

Year -	1972-1978 -		1980-1992 -		1993-2006 -	
P- litical views -	n -	(%) -	n -	(%) -	n -	(%) -
Ex-remel- Liberal -	158 -	2.2 -	383 -	2.5 -	563 -	2.9 -
Liberal -	878 -	12.4 -	1698 -	10.9 -	2263 -	11.6 -
Slig- l- liberal -	1044 -	14.7 -	2096 -	13.5 -	2380 -	12.2 -
Moderate -	2795 -	39.4 -	6089 -	39.2 -	7411 -	38.0 -
Slightly- conservative -	1188 -	16.7 -	2652 -	17.1 -	3050 -	15.7 -
Conservative -	867 -	12.2 -	2157 -	13.9 -	3134 -	16.1 -
Extremel- conservative -	166 -	2.3 -	447 -	2.9 -	677 -	3.5 -
Total -	10652	--	17130	--	23238	--

The analysis includes contextual independent variables capturing a basic profile of the respondent: age, gender, region educational attainment, and income. Age is measured in terms of years but a small portion of the sample were coded “89 or over”. Gender was classified simply as male or female. Region was classified into the nine census divisions: New England, Middle Atlantic, East North Central, West North Central, South Atlantic, East South Central, West South Central, Mountain and Pacific. Educational attainment was divided into five categories; 1-less than high school, 2-high school, 3-some college, 4-bachelor, 5-graduate degree. Income was measured ordinally, but cut points were scaled to 1970 standards. In some analyses in this paper, race and religion have been cross classified with region of the US, creating 5 distinct categories of respondents. These five distinct categories were: 1-blacks, 2-whites from the south who were fundamentalist, 3-white fundamentalist in general, 4-white other, 5-other. In this classification, the south combined the regions South Atlantic and East South Central.

Table 4.2 presents the distribution of scores for these contextual independent variables for each period. For each period in the survey, women outnumbered men. While whites, continued to be the largest racial category surveyed, they declined from 87.7 percent of the survey in the years 1972-1978 to 78.9 percent of the survey in 1993-2006. There was an increase in the survey of those whose racial category is identified as other, from 0.6 percent in 1972-1978 to 7.2 percent in 1993-2006. Since income was measured ordinarily, based on 1970's standards there was a large increase from the first period to the third period in people who made over 25000 dollars going from 8.2 percent in the first period to over 57 percent in the third period. The largest regions surveyed through all three relevant periods were the Mid-Atlantic, East North Central, and South Atlantic. Through all periods, the three regions listed averaged between 14 and 21 percent of the survey with the South Atlantic being the region with highest growth in the survey going from 14 percent in the first period to 19 percent in the last. Moderates were the largest religious group in all periods of this survey. However, both liberal and fundamentalist religious adherents increased in periods 2 and periods 3 within the survey. For the first period, religious moderates made up over 50 percent of the survey during the third period they made up roughly 39 percent. While fundamentalists were higher than liberals in all years of the survey liberal religious adherents seemed to be the fastest growing religious group going from 18.8 percent in the first period to nearly 30 percent in the third period.

Table 4.2 Distribution of scores for contextual co-variates

	1972-1978		1980-1992		1993-2006	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Sex						
Male	4874	45.8	7333	42.8	10232	44.0
Female	5778	54.2	9797	57.2	13006	56.0
Race						
White	9341	87.7	14084	82.2	18339	78.9
black	1243	11.7	2571	15.0	3219	13.9
Other	68	0.6	475	2.8	1680	7.2
Age						
18-25	1685	15.9	2334	13.6	2512	10.8
26-40	3280	30.9	5940	34.8	7503	32.4
41-55	1515	23.9	3636	21.0	6680	29.8
56-65	1535	14.5	2198	13.0	3383	14.6
Above 65	1456	13.6	2948	17.3	3686	15.9
Income						
Less than 1000	158	1.5	173	1.0	260	1.1
1000 to 2999	539	5.1	365	2.1	245	1.1
3000 to 3999	489	4.6	459	2.7	208	0.9
4000 to 4999	388	3.6	487	2.8	221	1.0
5000 to 5999	413	3.9	489	2.9	282	1.2
6000 to 6999	395	3.7	437	2.6	286	1.2
7000 to 7999	429	4.0	434	2.5	288	1.2
8000 to 9999	730	6.9	691	4.0	520	2.2
10000to14999	1896	17.8	2099	12.3	1657	7.1
15000to19999	1230	11.5	1717	10.0	1471	6.3
20000to24999	812	7.6	1784	10.4	1700	7.3
25000 ormore	905	8.5	6461	37.7	13303	57.2
Highest degree completed						
LT High School	3779	35.5	4425	25.8	3573	15.4
High School	5209	48.9	8911	52.0	12187	52.4
Junior college	195	1.8	728	4.2	1678	7.2
Bachelor	977	9.2	2094	12.2	3847	16.6
Graduate	437	4.1	921	5.4	1895	8.2
Region						
New England	504	4.7	864	5.0	1054	4.5
Middle Atlantic	1857	17.4	2559	14.9	3261	14.0
East North Central	2320	21.8	3251	19.0	3941	17.0
WestNorthCentral	35	6.9	1454	8.5	1668	7.2

Table 4.2 Continued

South Atlantic	1979	18.6	3149	18.4	4545	19.6
EastSouth Central	564	5.3	1306	7.6	1540	6.6
Pacific	1367	12.8	2141	12.5	3234	13.9
Racefundsouth						
Blacks	1243	11.7	1067	6.2	1382	5.9
White southern fundamentalists	866	8.2	2790	16.3	3454	14.9
White fundamentalists nonsouth	977	9.2	2571	15.0	3219	13.9
Other whites	7100	67.2	10227	59.7	13503	58.1
All others.	194	1.8	475	2.8	1680	7.2
Religion						
Fundamentalist	3046	29.1	5691	34.2	6937	31.4
Moderate	5438	52.0	6990	42.0	8579	38.9
Liberal	1968	18.8	3957	23.1	6565	29.7

Public opinion issue set variables are constructed from inventories of questions that cover six domains. These six domains are moral issues, racial issues, social welfare issues, crime issues, taxation, environmental concerns. Questions used to construct each scale are identified below. Scales were created by averaging the within year Z-scores for each of the items within the scale. This method enabled reliable estimates of scales even when individual items within a scale were missing during that year. All scales were tested with the reliability coefficient Kronbach's alpha. All scales had a reliability of over 0.70 .

For sexual morality and family issues, five items composed the scale. The first item captures whether the respondent agrees that a woman should be able to have an abortion if the woman wants one for any reason: "yes" or "no". The next item in the scale captures responses to whether or not the respondent favored or opposed sex education in public schools. The third item for this scale captures people's feelings

regarding whether divorce laws should be easier or more difficult. The fourth item for this scale captures level of (dis)approval of homosexual sex collapsed to a two point scale: ‘never wrong’ and ‘sometimes wrong’ versus ‘always wrong’ and ‘almost always wrong.’ The fifth item on this scale captures on a three point scale, opinions regarding restrictions on pornographic materials: from ‘never illegal’ to ‘illegal under 18’ to ‘always illegal.’ Table 4.3 displays descriptive statistics for each of these items (prior to Z-transformations) by period. Three of these items (abortion, sex education, and homosexual acts) are measured as binary outcomes – and therefore, the reported means in Table 4.3 represent the proportion of respondents during that period that take a more conservative stance on the issue. The third item (divorce) and fifth item (pornography) are measured on a three point scale (0 to 2) with higher scores indicating a more conservative response.

The most significant change over time with regard to sexual and morality issues came with regard to homosexual acts. A huge shift of opinion occurred between the first period and the second period. With the proportion reporting that homosexual acts are wrong declining from 78 percent to 60 percent between these two time periods. There was a slight increase in the proportion reporting opposition to homosexual acts between 1993-2006 rising to 65 percent of the respondents. Another relevant finding from this table is while sex education has received broad support from the public even in the first time period the proportion of opposition has decreased going from 20 percent in the first period to 12 percent in the third. Respondents in the survey are also declining in their opposition to abortion from 64 percent of the respondents in the first time period to 57 percent of the respondents in the last time period. For pornography laws there seems to be



a consistency in the table that remains constant throughout all time periods. This consistency seems to show that people believe pornography should be illegal to anybody under 18 for the mean average.

Table 4.3 Items contributing to Moral issues

	1972-1978			1980-1992			1993-2006		
	X	SD	N	X	SD	N	X	SD	N
Abortion	0.64	0.48	2963	0.61	0.48	13065	0.57	0.50	12003
Divorce laws	0.92	0.72	7135	0.94	0.68	9868	0.96	0.70	11859
Homosexual relations	0.78	0.41	5657	0.60	0.24	9222	0.65	0.48	11790
Pornography laws	0.67	0.63	5920	0.64	0.57	11571	0.65	0.55	12415
Sex education	0.20	0.41	4356	0.14	0.35	10083	0.12	0.33	12254

These items were combined together into a single scale, by first transforming each valid responses to each item into a within year z-score. Second, z-scores for each item were averaged together to generate a composite measure. Thus, items with missing values were not incorporated into the composite measure. The items contributing to this scale varied across years.

For racial issues there were two items that are represented in this scale. The first item used captured whether the respondent favored a law against racial intermarriage. The next item captured whether respondents agreed with the statement ‘blacks shouldn’t push themselves where they’re not wanted.’ Responses ‘agree strongly’ or ‘agree slightly’

were collapsed together and responses ‘disagree strongly’ or ‘disagree slightly’ were similarly collapsed together.

Table 4.4 displays descriptive statistics for each of these items (prior to Z-transformations) by period. Both of these items are measured as binary outcomes – and therefore, the reported means in Table 5 represent the proportion of respondents during that period that take a more conservative stance on the issue. The scale for the racial issues was constructed in much the same way as the moral values scale using Z-scores.

For Table 4.4 below there has been a substantial increase in the number of people who disagree with the statement blacks shouldn’t push going from 74 percent in the first period to 40 percent in the third period. This is indicative of larger support from the public for African Americans being allowed into certain institutions that they may not have been in the past. Also, there has been a decline in support for laws banning interracial marriage laws from 50 percent of the respondents in the first time period to 28 percent in the third. On issues of race, it seems there has been larger movement toward liberal ideology than conservative ideology.

For social welfare issues, five items were used in this scale. The first item captures people’s opinion on the level of government spending for welfare. The next item on the captures people’s opinion on the level of government spending on cities. The third item for this scale looked at government spending on the nation’s education system and the fourth item for this scale looked at government spending for the nation’s health. Each of these items are scored on a three points scale from ‘too little,’ to ‘about right,’ to ‘too much.’ The fifth item on this scale asked the question should government reduce

income differences. This item was based on a seven point scale from ‘government should reduce income differences’ to ‘no action should be taken by the government to reduce income differences.’ The Scale for social welfare issues was once again created by finding the within year Z-scores for each item and then creating composite averages.

Table 4.4 Items contributing to racial issues

	1972-1978			1980-1992			1993-2006		
	X	SD	N	X	SD	N	X	SD	N
Blacks shouldn't push	0.74	0.44	6505	0.58	0.49	5395	0.40	0.49	7545
Laws against interracial marriage	0.50	0.08	8002	0.43	0.19	11986	.28	0.09	12322

For the social welfare scale there was very little change over the periods in the means and standard deviation for all items in this analysis. There was a large increase in the number of people who were asked the question ‘should government reduce income differences’ from the first period to the third period: increasing from 747 respondents to 12,322 respondents. The mean for each of the items listed described that people tended to believe government was spending too little in the areas of healthcare, cities, and education. With regard to welfare, the items in Table 4.5 indicate that people believed the government was spending too much.

Table 4.5 Items contributing to Social welfare issues

	1972-1978			1980-1992			1993-2006		
	X	SD	N	X	SD	N	X	SD	N
Improving nations health	1.44	0.60	8662	1.41	0.590	9994	1.34	0.58	10495
Welfare	2.37	0.74	8610	2.23	0.796	9902	2.27	0.77	10354
Improving nations education system	1.59	0.67	8662	1.42	0.602	10039	1.34	0.58	10576
Solving problems of big cities	1.67	0.76	7781	1.67	0.755	9022	1.61	0.71	9613
Should government reduce income differences	3.66	2.00	747	3.63	1.963	3613	3.80	1.95	12322

For the crime scale, three items were contained in this measure. The first item dealt with spending of government on reducing crime: with responses reported as ‘Too little,’ ‘Too much,’ or ‘About right.’ The second item that was used to create this scale captured whether the respondent favors or opposes the death penalty for murder. The final item for this scale captured whether respondents favor or oppose laws restricting gun ownership. Descriptive statistics for these items are listed in Table 4.6 with higher scores indicating more conservative opinions.

For Table 4.6 there was very little change in the crime scale mean and standard deviation over the years. What the analyses show is that the overwhelming majority of

people favor gun permits and also support the death penalty in all periods of the survey. Also, most people believe the government spends too little on crime.

Table 4.6 Items contributing to crime issues

	1972-1978			1980-1992			1993-2006		
	X	SD	N	X	SD	N	X	SD	N
Halting rising crime rate	1.37	0.60	8514	1.34	0.57	9926	1.41	0.61	10436
Favor or oppose gun laws	0.74	0.44	8912	0.75	0.43	11810	0.81	0.39	12312
Death penalty	0.68	0.46	7079	0.75	0.43	16050	0.73	0.45	17507

The taxation construct consists of only one item from the survey. The GSS asks: ‘are taxes too high, too low, or about right.’ This was coded on a three point scale: ‘too high,’ ‘about right,’ or ‘too low.’ numbered consecutively from 0 to 2. For Table 4.7, there was a small increase in the number of people thinking there taxes were too high from the first time period to the third. However, this difference is so modest the change could be mostly due to sampling error. There was also only one item used for analysis for the environment as well. This question asked respondent’s opinions on government spending for the environment. The question was also coded on the same three point scale: ‘too low,’ ‘about right,’ or ‘too high.’ For Table 4.8, during all periods of the survey there was a consistent belief that spending on the environment was too low.

Table 4.7 Items contributing to taxes

	1972-1978			1980-1992			1993-2006		
	X	SD	N	X	SD	N	X	SD	N
Taxes	1.44	0.69	2904	1.40	0.60	11527	1.38	0.50	12067

Table 4.8 Items contributing to environment

	1972-1978			1980-1992			1993-2006		
	X	SD	N	X	SD	N	X	SD	N
Spending on environment	1.52	0.67	8476	1.47	0.65	9820	1.46	0.64	10395

### Statistical analysis

For hypotheses 1 and 2, correlations were run to test the relationship of opinions across items and with global ideology for all three periods. These correlations constituted the first stage of the analysis. For hypothesis 3, a series of latent class regression analyses were estimated for all three periods testing the effects of domain specific ideological variables on global ideology. These latent class regression analyses estimates were made iteratively increasing the number of latent classes and/or the number of constraints in the specified model. A best fit model (i.e. the number of latent classes and constraints) are selected based on model fit criteria. Once the number of latent classes is identified, the model will be elaborated to estimate the effect of the contextual level variables on class assignment.

Latent class regression analysis (LCRA) is an extension of latent class analysis (LCA). Latent class regression analysis assigns cases to separate classes for application of statistical test, then through the use of the Bayesian information criteria (BIC) creates a best fit model for the data. In Latent Class Analysis, cases are assigned to different

classes as a result of scores that are distributed on a specific set of observed variables. Through the use of LCA, formal hypotheses for this study were better able to be evaluated than through other regression models because LCA can identify multiple latent classes within the sample (Morrison, Rudd, Zumeta, Nerad 2010).

LCA also allows the use of covariates (age, race, region, etc.) to predict membership in a given class. Using LCRA will extend LCA by estimating the latent classes as a function of how sets of exogenous variables (here the public opinion constructs) predict the single dependent variable (political ideology).<sup>1</sup> In order to identify the number of latent classes and set of model constraints that best fits with the data, alternative models are estimated and compared to one-another using maximum likelihood estimation. Analysis starts with a simple one class model and a baseline BIC score is calculated. More complicated models are subsequently specified and their BIC score is also calculated. Parameter constraints may be used to measure whether estimates are different across classes.<sup>2</sup> The lowest BIC statistic identifies the best fit model among all

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<sup>1</sup> Using Maximum Likelihood, LCRA simultaneously estimates (1) within each of the latent classes a coefficient and a t-test statistic for the net effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable (2) a Wald test statistic the size and significance of which provides a test of the null hypothesis that the effects of a given variable on the dependent variable are equal across latent classes; (3) a likelihood test for each case of membership in each of the latent classes; (4) for each of the covariates modeled, a coefficient and t-test statistic that tests the hypothesis that the covariate predicts membership in a latent class; (5) a goodness-of-fit statistic for the model--- the likelihood ratio statistic ( $L^2$ )---- that reflects the odds of finding the observed distribution in the data given the model parameter estimates; and (6) explained variance statistics ( $r^2$ ) capturing how much variance is explained across classes (Magidson and Vermunt 2004; quoted directly from Morrison et. Al 2010 P. 13)

<sup>2</sup> In a LCRA with multiple classes, parameters that estimate the effect of an independent variable on a dependent variable may be unique for each class. However a parameter may be constrained to be the same across classes suggesting that for more than one group the effect of x on y is identical---- which therefore limits the number of parameters to be estimated and thus gains parsimony. This study constrained parameters to be the same only where parameters were found to have no significant difference. (Morrison et. Al. p. 13)

specified models (Raftery 1995).<sup>3</sup> In latent class analysis there are three criteria for measuring the goodness of fit; the BIC, AIC and CAIC criteria. (Lazarsfeld & Henry 1968). The BIC was chosen as the best fit criteria because it provides the optimum balance between the number of variables and connection to theoretical implications.

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<sup>3</sup> The BIC statistic is a function of the model likelihood statistic (how likely we are to observe the data as it is distributed if the estimated parameters represented the true model) and the number of parameters estimated in the model. Thus, the BIC statistic balances the parsimony with the model fit. In evaluating models, the smaller the BIC statistic the more empirical evidence in favor of the model. (Raftery 1995; quoted directly from Morrison et. Al 2010 p. 13)



## CHAPTER V

### FINDINGS

Table 10 describes the correlations as described by hypothesis 1 and 2 of this study. The correlations of opinion items to each other, as well as political ideology were actually extremely weak in this table. The tax issue had the weakest relationship with other variables in the model. The two items that were most strongly correlated with political ideology were moral issues and social welfare issues. Social welfare issues tended to be stronger during the first period of the study while moral issues became the strongest correlate during the third period of the study. Social welfare issues and moral issues are also significantly correlated (at the  $p < 0.01$  level) with all other issue set variables except for crime in 1972-1978. Moral issues are also not significantly correlated with taxes in 1980-1992. While there are more correlations among opinion items across component domains post-Reagan vs. Pre-Reagan it is only a slight increase and the correlations are still relatively weak. For the correlations between the ideology variables and political beliefs there is relatively little difference pre-Reagan compared to post Reagan. There is a weak association between domain specific variables and one's overall political ideology.

With regard to hypothesis one of this study addressing correlation among public opinion items across component domains Pre-Reagan and Post Reagan. Correlations for

public opinion items post Reagan was higher than pre-Reagan. However, the correlations pre-Reagan on most responses was still significant. While hypothesis 1A in this analysis is rejected, hypothesis 1B in this analysis still holds true that correlations of public opinion items are greater post Reagan than pre-Reagan. Hypothesis 2A in this analysis was rejected because there was no significant difference between correlation of public opinion items with political ideology post-Reagan as compared to pre-Reagan. Also, the correlations regarding all items were very weak in these analyses.

Table 5.1 Correlations

	Moral Issues	Race Issues	Social Welfare Issues	Crime Issues	Tax Issues	Environmental Issues	Political Ideology
Moral Issues	1.00	0.21**	0.14**	0.11	0.05*	0.15**	0.23**
1973-1978	1.00	0.11**	0.10**	0.08**	0.00	0.15**	0.21**
1980-1992	1.00	0.18**	0.14**	0.09**	0.05**	0.15**	0.31**
1993-2006	0.21**	1.00	0.11**	0.09**	-0.06**	0.17**	0.12**
1973-1978	0.11**	1.00	0.11**	0.09**	0.01	0.14**	0.11**
1980-1992	0.18**	1.00	0.07**	0.10**	0.02	0.08**	0.1**
1993-2006	0.14**	0.11**	1.00	0.39	0.03**	0.34**	0.34**
1973-1978	0.10**	0.11**	1.00	0.05**	0.02**	0.32**	0.23**
1980-1992	0.14**	0.07**	1.00	0.06**	0.07**	0.36**	0.28**
1993-2006	0.11	.01**	0.39	1.00	0.08**	0.07**	0.15**
1973-1978	0.08**	0.09**	0.05**	1.00	0.06**	0.06**	0.12**
1980-1992	0.09**	0.10**	0.06**	1.00	0.09**	0.05**	0.15**
1993-2006	0.05*	0.06**	0.03**	0.08**	1.00	-0.01	0.05*
1973-1978	-0.00	-0.01	0.02**	0.06**	1.00	0.02	0.03*
1980-1992	0.05**	0.02	0.07**	0.09**	1.00	0.05	0.09**
1993-2006	0.15**	0.17**	0.34**	0.07**	-0.01	1.00	0.18**
1973-1978	0.15**	0.14**	0.32**	0.06**	0.02	1.00	0.17**
1980-1992	0.15**	0.08**	0.36**	0.05**	0.05	1.00	0.21**
1993-2006							

Table 5.2 describes all 26 latent class models that were estimated for the years 1972-1978. The best fit model was the simplest model, the one-class latent regression analysis. Table 5.1 reveals that this model obtains the lowest BIC statistic (7100.52)

among all models for the first period Model 1 was a one class regression including all public opinion variables.

Table 5.2 Model Fit comparisons for Latent Class Regression Analysis 1972-1978

		LL	BIC(LL)		L <sup>2</sup>	R
<b>Model1</b>	1-Class Regression all contextual ideology variables	3503.94	7100.52	12	7007.89	0.13
<b>Model2</b>	2-Class Regression same as model 1	3411.54	7162.73	44	6823.09	0.27
<b>Model3</b>	3-Class Regression same as model 1	3350.07	7286.79	76	6700.13	0.30
<b>Model4</b>	2-Class Regression same as model 2 no-age, no-fund	3493.13	7303.61	41	6983.49	0.28
<b>Model5</b>	1-Class Regression same as model 4	-3585.8	7264.47	12	7168.82	0.12
<b>Model6</b>	1-Class Regression same as model 1 no-sex	3503.94	7100.52	12	7007.89	0.13
<b>Model7</b>	2-Class Regression same as model 2 no-sex	3412.56	7157.04	43	6825.12	0.26
<b>Model8</b>	2-Class Regression same as model 7 environmental and tax issues equal	-3420.9	7158.29	41	6841.81	0.22
<b>Model9</b>	2-Class Regression same as model 2	3411.54	7162.73	44	6823.09	0.27
<b>Model10</b>	2-Class Regression same as model 2 with environmental tax and race issues equal	3419.65	7163.51	42	6839.31	0.23
<b>Model11</b>	1-Class Regression same as model 8	3503.94	7100.52	12	7007.89	0.13
<b>Model12</b>	2-Class Regression same as model 11	3417.22	7166.35	43	6834.43	0.24
<b>Model13</b>	2-Class Regression same as model 12 added race, fund, region gone equal effects race issues	3496.47	7240.53	32	6992.94	0.24

Table 5.2 (Continued)

		LL	BIC(LL)		L <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup>
<b>Model14</b>	2-Class Regression same as model 13 race scale no longer equal effects	3491.79	7238.92	33	6983.59	0.27
<b>Model15</b>	2-Class Regression race funds source nominal	3487.73	7254.01	36	6975.47	0.27
<b>Model16</b>	2-Class Regression same as model 15 equal effects environment and tax issues	3493.39	7249.85	34	6986.78	0.23
<b>Model17</b>	2-Class Regression same as model 16 equal effects race issues	3498.54	7252.41	33	6997.08	0.20
<b>Model18</b>	2-Class Regression same as model 17 no income no age	3658.71	7558.51	31	7288.64	0.20
<b>Model19</b>	2-Class Regression included all contextual variables include race funds source	3419.03	7146.83	40	6838.07	0.28
<b>Model20</b>	1-Class Regression same as model 19 one class	3503.94	7100.52	12	7007.89	0.13
<b>Model21</b>	1-Class Regression deleted race scale tax and environmental issues	10533.3	21145.8	9	21066.57	0.10
<b>Model22</b>	2-Class Regression same as model 21	10358.7	20981.4	30	20717.31	0.17
<b>Model23</b>	3-Class Regression same as model 21	10265.3	20979.5	51	20530.51	0.35
<b>Model24</b>	4-Class Regression same as model 21	10214.8	21063.5	72	20429.60	0.32
<b>Model25</b>	1-Class Regression same as model 1 race funds source added	3503.94	7100.52	12	7007.89	0.13

Table 5.2 (continued)

<b>Model26</b>	2-Class Regressi- n same as model 25	3411.13	7169.61	45	6822.25	0.26
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Table 5.2 indicates that 20 models that were specified for the years 1980-1992. The best fit model in this analysis was model 14, a two class regression model with estimated effects for all issue set variables, and environmental issues, race issues, and tax issues constrained to be equal sized effects across classes. The effects of all contextual variables on class were estimated except the effect of race by fundamentalism by region was set to zero. The BIC criteria for the best fit model (model 14) was 18354.65.

Table 5.3 Model Fit comparisons for Latent Class Regression Analysis 1980-1992

		LL	BIC(LL)		L <sup>2</sup>	R
<b>Model1</b>	1-Class Regressi- n all ideolog- and contex-ual variables	9322.13	18748.25	12	18644.27	0.10
<b>Model2</b>	1-Class Regressi- n same as model 1 nominal	9322.13	18748.25	12	18644.27	0.10
<b>Model3</b>	2-Class Regressi- n same as model 2	9175.02	18731.32	44	18350.05	0.17
<b>Model4</b>	3-Class Regressi- n Same as model 2	9091.81	18842.19	76	18183.63	0.14
<b>Model5</b>	2-Class Regressi- n equal effec- tax	9176.51	18725.62	43	18353.01	0.18

Table 5.3 (Continued)

		LL	BIC(LL)		L <sup>2</sup>	R
<b>Model6</b>	3-Class Regressi- n same as model 6	9113.55	18868.33	74	18227.1	0.20
<b>Model7</b>	3-Class Regressi- n same as model 6 no race no fund	9402.93	19379.68	66	18805.87	0.21
<b>Model8</b>	2-Class Regressi- n no race, n- region, n- fund, racefundsou- added	9464.99	19208.19	32	18929.98	0.17
<b>Model9</b>	2-Class Regressi- n same as model 5 wi- racefundsou- added	-9176.5	18734.27	44	18353	0.18



Table 5.3 (Continued)

		LL	BIC(LL)		L <sup>2</sup>	R
<b>Model10</b>	2-Class Regressi- n equal effec-s environmen- and tax issues	9176.88	18717.7	42	18353.76	0.18
<b>Model11</b>	1-Class Regressi- n same as model 10	9322.13	18748.25	12	18644.27	0.10
<b>Model12</b>	3-Class Regressi- n same as model 10	9114.63	18853.16	72	18229.26	0.20
<b>Model13</b>	3-Class Regressi- n same as model 12 with-equal effects race scale	9114.87	18836.32	70	18229.75	0.16
<b>Model14</b>	2-Class Regressi- n same as model 13	9177.33	18709.93	41	18354.65	0.17

Table 5.3 (continued)

		LL	BIC(LL)		L <sup>2</sup>	R
<b>Model15</b>	1-Class Regressi- n same as model 13	9322.13	18748.25	12	18644.27	0.10
<b>Model16</b>	2-Class Regressi- n same as model 14	9177.33	18709.93	41	18354.65	0.17
<b>Model17</b>	2-Class Regressi- nwith racefundsou- added	9177.32	18718.58	42	18354.64	0.17
<b>Model18</b>	2-Class Regressi- n race, fund and age deleted	9485.78	19293.35	37	18968.8	0.17
<b>Model19</b>	2-Class Regressi- n same as model 18 with-region dele-ed	9494.46	19241.13	29	18977.83	0.17
<b>Model20</b>	2-Class Regressi- n same as model 19 racescale dele-ed	9494.91	19233.33	28	18964.87	0.17

Table 5.3 indicates the 23 models that were ran for the years 1993-2006. The best fit model (model 3) in this analysis was the baseline 1-class regression model. The BIC criteria for the best fit model was 11960.56.

Table 5.4 Model Fit comparisons for Latent Class Regression Analysis 1993-2006

		LL	BIC(LL)		L <sup>2</sup>	R
<b>Model1</b>	1-Class Regressi- n All contex-ual and all ideol- gy variables	5930.89	11960.56	12	11861.78	0.18
<b>Model2</b>	2-Class Regressi- n same as model 1	5853.27	11969.94	32	11706.53	0.24
<b>Model3</b>	1-Class Regressi- n same as model 1 excep- ordinal variables added	5930.89	11960.56	12	11861.78	0.18
<b>Model4</b>	2-Class Regressi- n same as model 3	5840.84	12043.88	44	11681.68	0.24
<b>Model5</b>	2-Class Regressi- n same as model 3 3qual effec- s race issues	5841.05	12036.07	43	11682.10	0.24

Table 5.4 (Continued)

		LL	BIC(LL)		L <sup>2</sup>	R
<b>Model6</b>	1-Class Regressi- n same as model 5	5930.89	11960.56	12	11861.78	0.18
<b>Model7</b>	1-Class Regressi- n equal effec- s - n ax and environmen- added	5930.89	11960.56	12	11861.78	0.18
<b>Model8</b>	2-Class Regressi- n same as model 7	5845.65	12028.79	41	11691.29	0.21
<b>Model9</b>	2-Class Regressi- n same as model 4 wi- racefund added	5840.73	12051.89	45	11681.47	0.24
<b>Model10</b>	2-Class Regressi- n Region, fundamentalism and race dele-ed	6225.84	12725.37	33	12451.67	0.24
<b>Model11</b>	2-Class Regressi- n region race fund added equal effec- s racial issues	5840.89	12043.98	44	11681.79	0.23
<b>Model12</b>	2-Class Regressi- n age and racefundsou- dele-ed	5850.92	12055.89	43	11701.84	0.24

Table 5.4 (Continued)

		LL	BIC(LL)		L <sup>2</sup>	R
<b>Model13</b>	1-Class Regressi- n same as model 12	5940.59	11979.99	12	11881.18	0.18
<b>Model14</b>	1-Class Regressi- n equal effec- s ax added	5930.89	11960.56	12	11861.78	0.18
<b>Model15</b>	1-Class Regressi- n dele- ed all contex- ual variables excep- degree	6560.06	13220.11	12	13066.40	0.18
<b>Model16</b>	1-Class Regressi- n racefundsou- added	6560.06	13220.11	12	13103.49	0.18
<b>Model17</b>	1-Class Regressi- n sex added	6560.06	13220.11	12	13109.03	0.18
<b>Model18</b>	1-Class Regressi- n income added	6321.81	12743.16	12	12640.84	0.18

Table 5.4 (Continued)

		LL	BIC(LL)		L <sup>2</sup>	R
<b>Model23</b>	2-Class Regressi- n region added race and fund deleted	-6233	12789.54	39	12463.23	0.24
<b>Model19</b>	1-Class Regressi- n no equal effec- s on tax	6321.81	12743.16	12	12640.84	0.18
<b>Model20</b>	1-Class Regressi- n racefundsou- dele-ed race added	6321.81	12743.16	12	12626.98	0.18
<b>Model21</b>	1-Class Regressi- n fund added	5940.59	11979.99	12	11881.18	0.18
<b>Model22</b>	2-Class Regressi- n same as model 21	5860.87	12009.93	35	11721.75	0.24

Table 5.4 shows the estimated coefficients from the best fit models for the three periods. For the first period, a one class model was the best fit model. Both moral issues and social welfare issues are the most significant driving forces during these years. The effect of opinion vis-à-vis crime is also quite strong. Tax issues and environmental spending while also significant factors in influencing political ideology had nowhere near an intense effect as both moral issues and social welfare issues. Once other issues are

controlled racial issues only have significant effects in the second time period when set to equal effects.

From 1980-1992 the best fit model was a two class model. Environmental issues, tax issues, and race issues were all constrained to equal effects across classes for this model. For class one in this analysis, Moral issues were the strongest driving force in predicting political ideology. Opinion on spending to improve the environment also had a relatively strong effect. For class one the total amount of people who fell into this model were 3878 and it explained almost none of the variance in political ideology (4 percent).

For class two of the 1980-1992 model social welfare issues were the strongest predictor of political ideology. Moral issues were the second strongest predictor in the class two model with crime also being a significant predictor of political ideology. For the 1980-1992 class 2 model, 34 percent of the variance was explained and 1920 people were found to be in this model. Overall 17 percent of the variance was explained by the 1980-1992 best fit model. For this model, it is not so much that one factor is dominant but there are four factors that are strongly significant predictors of political ideology. Thus, those in this class have a more multidimensional pattern underlying their political belief system.

For the years 1993-2006, the best fit model was a one class regression model. Moral issues were the strongest predictor in this model and were significantly stronger than the either the 1980-1992 models or 1972-1978 models. Social welfare issues while also an extremely significant predictor of political ideology was not as strong as moral issues. Tax issues also became a significant factor in predictor political ideology after not being a significant factor in the 1980-1992 models. Overall, the strength of the models in

1993-2006 seems to indicate a crystallization of ideology, both by the increase in the z-scores and by the increase in variance. 3758 people were in the best fit model for 1993-2006 with a variance of 18 percent.

Table 5.5 Ideological variables best fit models for datasets of each year

	1972-1978	1980-1992		1993-2006
	Class 1	Class 1	Class 2	Class 1
Moral Issues	0.23** (8.50)	0.15*** (6.11)	0.31*** (7.90)	0.31*** (15.64)
Race Issues	0.05 (1.70)	0.06** (4.05)	0.06** (4.05)	0.01 (1.05)
Social Welfare Issues	0.27** (8.47)	0.07 * (2.29)	0.67*** (9.41)	0.29*** (12.19)
Crime Issues	0.17** (5.56)	0.01 (0.48)	0.32*** (5.84)	0.16*** (7.00)
Tax Issues	0.06* (2.28)	0.03 (1.69)	0.03 (1.69)	0.09*** (3.60)
Environmental Issues	0.01** (3.54)	0.10*** (5.65)	0.10*** (5.65)	0.14*** (6.36)
Explained Variance Within classes	0.13	0.04	0.34	0.18
Total Explained variance	0.13	0.17		0.18
N Within Class	2251	3878	1920	3758
N Total	2251	5798		3758

\*\*\*significant at the .001 level.

\*\* . significant at the 0.01 level.

\*. significant at the 0.05 level .

() Z-score

Table 5.5 shows the coefficients for the effects of contextual variables on class assignments (and the Z test statistics associated with these coefficients) for the 2 class



regression model from 1980-1992. Coefficients represent the effect on the log odds of assignment to Class 2 (the class in which opinions on issues matter for overall reported political ideology) for a one unit increase in the contextual variable. People with less education were more likely to be in class one of this model than class two. Income was a significant predictor of Class assignment – the higher one’s income the more likely one is to be a member of Class 2. Finally, males are also significantly more likely to be in the Class 2. Overall, the higher one’s status (as measured by income, education, and gender) the more likely one was to be a member of a class in which preferences on specific issues were correlated with political ideological identification.

Table 5.6 Best fit model for contextual variables

		1980-1992 Class 1	
		Coefficient	Z value
Race			
	White	0.00	0.01
	Black	0.23	1.14
	Other	-0.23	-0.79
Fundamentalism			
	Fundamentalist	-0.06	-0.55
	Moderate	-0.04	-0.40
	Liberal	0.09	0.83
Age			
	Age	-0.01	-1.52

Table.5.6 (Continued)

		1980-1992	
		Coefficient	Z-Value
Degree			
	Less than high school	2.03*	2.49
	High School	0.84	1.31
	Junior College	0.37	0.57
	Bachelor	-0.54	-0.85
	Graduate	-2.70	-1.08
	Middle atlantic	0.35	1.92
	E. North Central	0.00	0.03
	W. North Central	-0.08	-0.34
	South Atlantic	-0.27	-1.70
	E. South Central	0.06	.24
	West South Central	-0.08	-0.39
	Mountain	-0.13	-0.56
	Pacific	-0.41	-2.37
Income			
	Income	-0.12*	-2.43

\*\*\*significant at the .001 level.

\*\* . significant at the 0.01 level.

\*. significant at the 0.05 level .

-Class 2 of the 1980-1992 Latent Class Regression model is simply the inverse of class one contextual variables.

## CHAPTER VI

### DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION

With regard to hypothesis one of this study addressing correlation among public opinion items across component domains Pre-Reagan and Post Reagan. Correlations for public opinion items post Reagan was higher than pre-Reagan. However, the correlations pre-Reagan on most responses was still significant. While hypothesis 1A in this analysis is rejected hypothesis 1B in this analysis still holds true that correlations of public opinion items are greater post Reagan than pre-Reagan. Hypothesis 2A in this analysis was rejected because there was no significant difference between correlation of public opinion items with political ideology post-Reagan as compared to pre-Reagan. Also the correlations regarding all items were very weak in these analyses. For hypothesis 3, the latent class regression analysis conducted for this research did not produce more latent classes post Reagan than pre Reagan. For 1972-1978, one latent class was produced. During the Reagan and George H. W Bush years, there were two latent classes. During the third period in the survey post-Reagan the number of latent classes moved back to one. During none of the three periods, do domain specific opinions explain very much of the variation in self declared political ideology. In short, it seems to matter very little what opinions individuals express on domain specific issues, with regard to their self declared political ideology. When people say they are ‘conservative’ or ‘liberal’ in the

context of a public opinion survey, they seem to be revealing very little about how they will respond to a domain specific question. We are left with a question of what it does mean when some self declares (in the context of a public opinion survey) that they are 'liberal' or 'conservative.'

With regard to the culture wars argument portrayed by Hunter (1991) there is so much randomness in patterns of responses it hardly suggests a salient culture war amongst the general public. Opinions that one would presume to divide the public into competing camps are correlated at extremely modest levels.

The analysis seems to follow the conclusion of Abramowitz and Saunders (1998) and Layman and Carsey (2002a; 2002b; and 2006) of there being an ideological realignment that occurred during the Reagan years and quickly this realignment became more partisan, which led to the increase in significance in the public opinion variables. While it can be said that liberals and conservatives may look at issues differently it seems like the mechanisms involved in making ideological decisions are the similar.

The examination of the GSS through LCRA does also support Layman and Carsey (2002) contention that the mass response to elite level development should be limited to particularly strong partisans and strong party identifiers. The groups who identify themselves as strongly liberal or strongly conservative do not fit well into any classes within the models indicated. From the conclusion of the LCRA the masses create their view of ideology separate from that of the strong ideological identifiers.

This analysis does take contention with ideological realignment in some areas. For one there does not seem to be mass ideological change that is occurring. The classes observed in these models did not change in ideological make up or identity, the classes

just modestly increased in the alignment of their beliefs. The findings suggest that while extension may be occurring there is not a mass ideological shift that is occurring. Further research through longitudinal studies may be helpful in furthering these findings or challenging these findings. This analysis was based on cross sectional data so a strong definitive finding cannot be concluded, but the findings do indicate there has been a very modest increase in polarization: people who answer on the extreme ends of the ideological spectrum as increasing modestly over time (see Table 2). Additionally correlations between issues sets do increase over time but this increase is very modest. However, there seems to be no evidence of a strong realignment within political ideology.

The analysis from this research indicates that issue sets play a weak (albeit modestly gaining in strength) role in the alignment of ideologies in all years in the data. Eighty-two to eighty seven percent of the variation in self-declared ideology remains after accounting for domain specific opinions that presumably constitute each respective ideology. While this paper does not make the claim that contextual or group position variables are not important this analysis indicates that ideological variables are dominant in determining ones ideology. If anything, these variables distinguish (during period 2) whether domain specific opinions matter at all. It seems from period 2 that higher status individuals in education and income are more aligned than lower status individuals. Also the article incorporates other issues that seem to have effects on political ideology such as the environment and crime issues, which furthers the conflict extension hypothesis into new areas. The analysis conducted in this project is consistent with Abramowitz and Saunders (1998) contention that the Reagan years created more partisanship but only a

modest increase in partisanship. However, the reasons behind this may need more scrutiny through further research. Also, the analysis found that classes tended to derive from the center. Extreme liberals and extreme conservatives seem to form their ideological components different from those who consider themselves moderate. More analysis should be conducted to see how people who consider themselves on the extremes of the two ideologies form ideological opinions.

One major importance of this study is that contrary to past studies on the subject of ideology instead of using party id as the dependent variable this study uses political ideology. While the parties have tended to be bound by one ideological unit today in the past you had liberal Republicans in the northeast and conservative Democrats in the south and still have conservative Democrats in the south today, although not as frequent. This analysis is different than many past studies on political ideology because we look specifically at the political ideology variable and do not incorporate party identification into our analysis. This analyses did not ask about the effects of contextual variables on political ideology, instead this analyses asked how opinions are correlated with ideology thus contextual variables are not as strong in this analyses as past analyses

Moral issues are, in the 1993-2006 period, the driving force in self identification of political ideology. It seems that the effects of moral issues are more pronounced in later periods rather than earlier periods. In the earlier periods social welfare issues were equal to and in class 2 of the 1980-1992 model greater than moral issues in determining political ideology. This indicates not only more focus on moral issues in later years of the study, but a higher focus in moral issues among the higher educated as well. Class 2, in the 1980-1992 period, are more multidimensional in their decisions on ideology based on

issue sets. In the last period of the one class model for 1993-2006 seems to indicate that the lesser educated have become more aligned with their political ideology. If people with lower education had not increased in alignment they would have remained as a separate class distinct from those with higher education as in the second period. For people with lower education issue sets would explain only very little variation. However, as was shown in Table 14 only one class is prevalent. Also there seems to be a moderate crystallization of meanings about what conservatism and liberalism have become. Therefore, issue sets have become more salient in predicting one's ideological viewpoint but only modestly more important.

#### Future Research

Future research should also look at other surveys such as the National Election Survey (NES) to see if patterns indicated in this analysis hold. While the National Election Survey has been used frequently in realignment research, to this author's knowledge a LCRA has never been conducted with regards to ideological realignment. While this analyses did look at the relationship between age, religion, and race. Future analyses that include more recent elections may want to look at generational trends based on age, race, and income. Also, while this analysis focused heavily on blacks and whites due to data limitations, future analyses must include the growing Hispanic demographic and its effects on shifting ideological paradigms. Future research should also look at the Americans for Democratic Action ratings and American Conservative Union ratings to further investigate the convergence or divergence between the elite's from each ideological perspective vs. the masses. In other words, do the elites move the masses or

do the masses move the elites. Future research must also further investigate issues with crime. Due to limitations on the GSS questions could not be asked about drug legalization and stiffer penalties for certain crimes such as drug abuse, rape, molestation, murder, and many others. Future research must also address crime issues more thoroughly. While this article makes the claim that more polarization is occurring it seems that with regard to crime there is congruence or coming together of liberals and conservatives. However, this could be an artifact of the data with not enough questions to create an adequate scale.

Future research must also investigate the role of political engagement in contributing to one's ideology. With the weak association of issue sets and ideology one potential explanation could be the political engagement of the participants in the survey. Adding a variable political engagement, which could not be done with this study would greatly expand our understanding of the creation and maintenance of political ideologies. Also, there should possibly be more fieldwork and qualitative research done in the area of ideological realignment to gain a richer understanding of the mechanisms incorporated in an individual's creation of ideology.

### Limitations

While this study advances the framework on political ideology into new dimensions there was also some limitations. The most prevalent limitation was from the data. Some variables that could have been included in this analysis such as; defense spending, beliefs on homosexual marriage, or many other issues could not be included in the study due to the volume of missing variables or variables that were not present during



all years of the study. Also because of limitations in the classes this study failed to measure adequately how the extremes in both ideologies come to their global component domains. Another limitation from this study is that while we found that moral issues are the driving factor in political ideology this could simply be a measurement issue. The scales that were created could have been a better fit for moral issues.

Despite the limitations of this paper, the analysis provides modest support in furtherance of the ideological realignment. This article also indicates that there was some polarization that occurred during and right after the Reagan presidency that intensified this effect. This analysis has also expanded the conflict extension perspective to investigate environmental issues and crime issues as possible elements of creating an ideological opinion. The analysis seems to indicate that one's self-reported ideology only has a weak association with issue-sets.

There is also much to be said about the importance of this literature in not only sociology but also political science. The research conducted for this article may shed some light on new types of conflicts that are emerging with relation to political ideology. The evidence indicated in this survey shows that family and sexual morality issues are a driving force in the identification of one's political ideology at least in the last years of the survey. What this research indicates is that sexual morality and family issues play a modest yet stronger than other issue sets role in the decisions of those who tend to consider themselves moderates and not just the extremes of each ideology. This has profound consequences for our understanding of these issues. Moral issues are not driving the extremes of each ideology as much as they are driving moderate forces. This could explain the rise of Republican dominance during this era. The focus Republicans

gave to moral issues such as the 2004 marriage amendment and many other issues over the last 30 years may have been a beneficial link to explain the rise of conservative dominance politically in the US.

Another important point sociologically to make from this literature is that with growing polarization may lead to a new form of segregation in which we as Americans segregate ourselves on the basis of political ideology (Bishop and Cushing 2009; Kaus 1995). The effects of political polarization is not just a political issue but a social issue in as much as new forms of conflict and segregation emerge, which must be explained by future research into this subject

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APPENDIX A  
PUBLIC OPINION



## PUBLIC OPINION

This project is designed to investigate how ideologies change, as well as investigate how the likelihood and the extent of constituents adherence to ideology changes. In order to consider how an ideology changes one must first consider what an ideology consists of. Empirically, an ideology can be observed as the coherence of views on a divergent set of public opinion issues. Thus in order to provide a full context for understanding how political parties polarize and how ideological realignment occurs it is important to provide a full context and definition to exactly what public opinion is. Erikson and Tedin (2007 P. 7) define public opinion by focusing on each component word. Thus they state “the public is a group that has something in common.” Similarly Yeric and Todd (1996 P. 5) define the public as a collection of individuals who share a common attitude. Yeric and Todd break the public into three different types; the single issue public which is composed of persons who share a common concern over one particular issue, the organizational public is formed because some members belong to some special interest organization, and the ideological public, which is distinctive because of its adherence to an ideology. Erikson and Tedin (2007) look at who makes up the public and conclude that the public is a broad based general concept including anybody 18 and over with the right to vote.

In defining opinion one must first understand that it is “the verbal expression of an attitude” (Erikson and Tedin 2007 P. 7). “Attitudes are also latent they cannot be directly observed” (Erikson and Tedin 2007 P. 7). Attitudes tend to remain stable for extended periods of time so for one to examine change in public opinion one must first look at what attitudes have changed within society and then describe and explain the

cause and effect relationship that led to the change. It is also important to differentiate between attitudes and tastes. If one is polled on what type of music they prefer that is not a public opinion that is a taste. It is also important to note that what type of music one prefers is going to never be resolved therefore this is what distinguishes tastes from beliefs (Erikson and Tedin 2007).

It is also important to distinguish beliefs from opinions, “disagreements about questions of facts are not opinions but beliefs” (Erikson and Tedin 2007 P. 7). With beliefs, perhaps one day through science, there may be a way to end the argument and find, which side is right, whereas with opinions the debate theoretically could continue without end (Erikson and Tedin 2007).

APPENDIX B  
IDEOLOGICAL REALIGNMENT

## IDEOLOGICAL REALIGNMENT

In the *American Voter* (Campbell et al., 1960) partisan identification was a significant factor in vote choice. According to the views presented in the *American Voter* partisanship is handed down from parent to child and creates and shapes the way that people view the world. Partisanship and ideology according to this view become part of the socialization process of children, creating an early representation of the morals and values that will guide a person's politics throughout their life. Some have also argued that political ideologies create a general notion of what is a perfect society or utopia (Lakoff 1996). Political ideologies unify certain stances into a larger theoretical framework in order to create a notion of what a perfect society would look like according the ideology's philosophy. The utopia that is envisioned is based on the moral system of the ideology and the economic system of the ideology. One notion that must be understood in addressing ideology is that, for the most part, ideology is a radial category – a category “not definable by properties that all members of the group possess” – especially with regard to the ideologies of liberalism and conservatism in the United States (Clancey 2005, P. 2). Thus an ideology becomes defined by a set of components that cluster together but are imperfectly correlated.

Ladd and Hadley (1978) argue that ideological realignment happens in response to changes in the social or economic environment. The fundamental argument here consistent with Downs (1957) is that change in ideology is normally slow and stable, but can be abrupt due to an economic, political, or international crisis. One such crises that Ladd and Hadley invoke is the Great Depression, which created an opening for Democrats to gain power for a large majority of the time from 1930 till 1980. A second

such crisis was the emergent 1960's social movements, which represented a generational and cultural shift that caused a realignment of southern whites to the Republican Party and African Americans to the Democratic Party. Others similarly make arguments that alignment is relatively stable but does change during crisis. (Key 1955, 1959, Burnham 1970; Clubb, Flanigan and Zingale 1980; Sundquist 1983) Also, many scholars have argued that realignments occur because of newly enfranchised voters, which enlarge the voter pool (Anderson 1979; Beck 1976; Campbell 1985; Carmines and Stimson 1989; Abramowitz and Saunders 1998). A further purported precipitator of realignment is that long term single party power monopoly causes policy innovations by contending parties that may contribute to a changing ideology (Clubb, Flanigan and Zingale 1980).<sup>4</sup>

Abramowitz and Saunders (1998) look at ideological realignment in the US electorate and through NES Panel data in 1976-1978 and 1992-1994. What they find is that during the Reagan years there was a move toward increased polarization, which in turn made it easier for citizens to distinguish between the two separate party ideologies. The authors disagree with Carmine and Stimson (1989) who argues that realignment happened as a result of the civil rights movement, which occurred during the 1960's and

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<sup>4</sup> Many of the arguments above make the claim that ideological dominance has a cyclical pattern with one ideology dominant for a certain period of time while another ideology is emergent during times of economic, political or moral crisis. Mayhew (2002) argues "none of the claims of the realignments genre holds up well" (P 69). He argues by analyzing the elections of 1820 all the way up to 1992 that party identification does not seem to succeed any better as a cyclical motor for ideological realignment than do tension and boiling points.

Mayhew continues to argue that classical realignment does not only involve cyclical patterns but also periodicity, and party systems. Through analyzing these three notions with ideological realignment concludes that "the realignments way of thinking adds little or no illumination but it does exact opportunity costs. Other lines of investigation could be more promising" (P. 165). In the end, Mayhew makes an argument for abandoning the terminology all together.

created a new wave of voters and began the decline of the Democratic Party in the south. As blacks began to gain more power whites began to feel threatened and solidified their issue sets, which consolidated around conservative Republican ideal's, whereas newly enfranchised blacks began to consolidate ideologically around liberal Democratic ideas. Abramowitz and Saunders (1998) argue that this ideological realignment occurred not because of one issue but of a whole host of issues in which people became more polarized. This is the very beginning of what would later be categorized conflict extension.

Valentino and Sears (2005) argue that racial attitudes precipitated new forms of ideological alignment. Through an examination of the National Election Study from 1980 to 2000 they find that polarization has occurred because racial attitudes in the south have spilled over into other domestic policy issues that what would be considered as race neutral. Considerable evidence has been given that racial attitudes have spilled over into issues such as welfare (Peffley, Hurwitz and Sniderman 1997; Gilens 1999 Valentino and Sears 2005), crime (Peffley Hurwitz and Sniderman 1997; Kinder and Sanders 1996; Valentino 1999; Mendelberg 2001; Valentino and Sears 2005), taxes and spending (Sears and Citrin 1985; Valentino, Hutchings, and White 2002, Valentino and Sears 2005), and moral issues (Layman and Carsey 2002a, 2002b, Layman, Carsey, and Horowitz 2006).

Bartels (2000) continue the analysis of voting behavior by using the National Election study and finds conclusions similar to Abramowitz and Saunders (1998) in that partisan voting decreased from 1964-1976 however it began increasing from 1978-1996. Partisan voting can be defined as the tendency of Democratic voters to vote Democratic in all races and similarly Republican voter's tendency to vote for Republican candidates

in all races on the ticket. Schreckhise and Shields (2003) revisit ideological realignment based on Abramowitz and Saunders (1998) analysis and find that the “empirical evidence presented supports the argument of the ideological realignment theory, with some clarifications, we find evidence suggesting a secular ideological realignment toward the republican party among southern white males based largely on ideological factors. We also find evidence of an ideological realignment among non-southern white women based on both ideology and the transmission of parental partisanship.” (P. 606). The authors argue that this alignment occurred for southern whites based on the “southern strategy” which was launched during the Nixon years in order to get more whites in the south to vote for the Republican Party. However, the authors say that a “rigorous theoretical and empirical examination is beyond the scope of this investigation.” They do present evidence that issues related to race may be the driving force among ideological realignment among southern white male voters” (P. 606) one of the goals of this paper is to further investigate this realignment through empirical analysis for further results of the influencing factors of southern white male ideological realignment.

While racial issues are predominant in the literature to explain southern realignment among whites. There is other literature such as Black and Black (2002) and Petrocik (1987), which explain realignment based social class. The basic argument is that as the south began to industrialize more people were moving into elevated social classes which caused the shift from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party. Also some argue (Green et al. 2003) that the shift in ideological alignment occurred based on religion. With the south having more evangelical and fundamentalists than other sections

of the country the emphasizing of issues such as abortion and gay rights by Conservatives caused a shift away from the Democratic Party and toward Republicans.