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Mass Belief Systems Revisited: Political Change and Attitude Structure

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MODERN SURVEY TECHNIQUES have often been most fruitful in undercutting common wisdom about politics. These techniques—more precise than the impressionistic techniques of earlier observers—have shown that some common understandings of the nature of mass political beliefs have been wrong. But one must approach survey-based findings with caution. Surveys too can distort, par-

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ticularly if one assumes that a pattern that is found at one point in time represents a general, long-term tendency extending beyond the specific time period in which the research was conducted. We must be careful that we do not replace a common wisdom of impressionistic political science by a common wisdom based on a precise, but time-bound, research technique.

One of the newer "common wisdoms" derived from survey techniques has to do with the absence of ideology in the American public. Ideology has many meanings, but one of its components is usually a high degree of consistency among political attitudes—attitudes on a wide range of issues falling into clear liberal and conservative tendencies.[1] And this component has been found to be particularly lacking in the American mass public.

[1] The empirical study of ideology in the mass public has proceeded along three lines. First, researchers have investigated the degree to which citizens conceptualize politics in ideological terms, either by deciding whether their spontaneous evaluations of political objects have ideological content or by directly determining their knowledge of ideological terms. (Cf. Angus Campbell et al., *The American Voter*, New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1960; and Philip Converse, "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics," chap. 6 in *Ideology and Discontent*, David Apter, ed., New York: Free Press, 1964). Second, students of mass opinion have looked for a coherent structure among citizens' attitudes on political issues which would suggest that they organize their political beliefs on a broad ideological continuum such as liberalism/conservatism. Finally, other students of ideology—operating on a somewhat different level and with a completely different methodology—have attempted to probe for deeper and more personal ways in which citizens make order of the political world around them. (Cf. especially Robert Lane, *Political Ideology* [New York: Free Press, 1962]).

While all three techniques have been useful in elucidating various aspects of the nature of belief systems in mass publics, the degree to which the citizenry holds consistent liberal or conservative attitudes on a wide variety of issues is perhaps the best single indicator of the political relevance of ideology. This is true, we believe, for several reasons. First, consistent views are not subject to the changing fashions in political terminology; they measure more than the facility with which people are able to bring rhetorical labels to mind. Secondly, examining attitude constraint is an economical and reliable way of studying mass ideology, whereas techniques such as those used by Lane require such intensive analysis of individuals that generalizations about national populations are difficult if not impossible. Moreover, even if techniques like Lane's can uncover some deeper structuring of an individual's political beliefs, in most of a citizen's interactions with the political world, he is presented with and asked to assume rather narrowly conceived alternative positions on political issues.

The mass public has usually been contrasted with more elite publics—for example, politicians, journalists and academics. In elite publics, attitudes on a wide variety of issues are bound together in highly predictable ways. Attitudes on welfare measures, government spending, and taxation are usually highly intercorrelated, reflecting a general position on the proper scope of government activity. Furthermore, attitudes on issues such as race, civil liberties, and foreign policy also tend to be related to each other as well as to attitudes on domestic economic policies. This relationship across a wide range of issues enables us to identify many members of political elite groups as liberals or conservatives.

Studies of the interrelationship of opinions among mass publics, on the other hand, have found little evidence for this kind of ideological structuring. The citizenry at large has not organized its political beliefs along liberal/conservative lines. Within a given issue-domain there is some evidence of attitude consistency—for example, positions on governmental responsibility for providing employment are related to those on governmental responsibility in the areas of medicine and housing. However, attitudes in separate issue-spheres appear to bear little or no relationship to each other. Attitudes on welfare, taxation, government spending, as well as those on other domestic economic policies show only minor relationships to each other. And attitudes on the more remote issues of race, civil liberties, and foreign policy have virtually no relationship to each other or to positions on welfare or economic liberalism. In short, available studies indicate that there is little or no interdependence or opinion constraint, to use Converse's term, in mass attitudes.[2]

The explanation usually given for the difference in the structure

[2] This discussion of the difference between the organization of attitudes in elites and mass publics has drawn heavily on the following works: Converse, "Belief Systems," 227-231 particularly; Herbert McClosky, "Consensus and Ideology in American Politics," *American Political Science Review*, 58 (June 1964), 361-382; McClosky, Paul J. Hoffman, and Rosemary O'Hara, "Issue Conflict and Consensus among Leaders and Followers," *American Political Science Review*, 54 (June 1960), 419; James W. Prothro and C. W. Grigg, "Fundamental Principles of Democracy: Basis of Agreement and Disagreement," *Journal of Politics*, 22 (May 1969), 276-294. The specific description of the relationship among opinions in the mass public relies upon the analysis of V. O. Key, Jr., in *Public Opinion in American Democracy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961), chap. 7, 153-181.

of beliefs between elite and mass emphasizes certain critical limitations inherent in mass publics. The mass public has neither the educational background, the contextual knowledge, nor the capacity to deal with abstract concepts that sustain an organized set of beliefs over a wide range of political issues.[3]

There is, however, one major problem with these descriptions of the state of mass belief systems: the studies on which they are based are all from a single historical period some 15 to 20 years ago. V. O. Key's major work on attitude consistency is based on data gathered during the 1956 presidential election. Philip Converse's seminal article on "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics," though published somewhat later, uses data collected in 1958 and 1960. Most of the other studies which contribute to our knowledge of mass ideology, such as *The American Voter* and McClosky's study of party elites and regulars, are also based on data gathered around 1960.

Why so few follow-up investigations were made in such an important area can probably only be accounted for by the character of the findings themselves and the theory which evolved to explain them. These early studies were convincing, and they were consistent with each other. Furthermore, the theoretical argument put forward to explain the absence of ideological organization convincingly stressed inherent and thus enduring limitations of mass publics. The initial questions about the nature of mass political beliefs had been answered in a way which foreclosed continued research on the question.[4]

[3] This explanation for the structure of mass beliefs is most coherently stated by Converse, "Belief Systems." However, it is explicit or implicit in most of the other studies cited.

[4] There are a few notable exceptions. Field and Anderson have replicated the analysis of levels of ideological conceptualization from Campbell, *American Voter* and they find a significant increase in the proportions of the public thinking in ideological terms in 1964. This work, however, does not deal directly with attitude consistency. J. O. Field and R. E. Anderson, "Ideology in the Public's Conceptualization of the 1964 Election," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 33 (Fall 1969), 389-398. Two recent articles have examined attitude consistency, but each deals with either a special public or local issue. See Norman Luttbeg, "The Structure of Beliefs Among Leaders and the Public," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 32 (Fall 1968), 398-409; and Jack L. Walker and Joel D. Aberbach, "The Meanings of Black Power: A Comparison of White and Black Interpretations of a Political Slogan," *American Political Science Review*, 64 (June 1970), 367-388. Both of these articles in one way or another challenge some of the findings of the earlier studies.

But American politics in the 60s and early 70s were not the same as those of the 1950s. The quiescent Eisenhower years were followed by turmoil on many fronts: the civil-rights movement, black militancy and urban violence, a protracted and divisive war, campus unrest, changing morals and life-styles—all interspersed with a tragic series of political assassinations. This change in the nature of American politics provides a crucial test of the analysis of mass-belief systems. If the lack of organization of mass political attitudes is based on enduring characteristics of the mass public, it should be relatively insensitive to such changes in the world of politics. But if we find that the structure of mass attitudes has been affected by the political upheavals of the 1960s, we may have to reconsider the character of mass attitudes and the factors which affect their structure.

In this paper we propose to examine the structure of mass attitudes over the past 16 years. We will show that there have been major increases in the levels of attitude consistency within the mass public.[5] Not only has the constraint among traditional issues such as those examined by Converse and Key increased substantially, but new issues as they have emerged in the 60s have been incorporated by the mass public into what now appears to be a broad liberal/conservative ideology.

In our analysis we will attempt to determine what attitudes are involved in this increasing consistency on the part of the mass public. We will also be concerned with precisely when these changes have taken place. We will try to search out the factors which produced the increases in attitude consistency, showing that the inherent characteristics of the mass public are less important as determinants of mass ideology than are variations in the nature and salience of political stimuli. Finally, we will review these various findings in order to see what they suggest about the validity of the current theory of mass beliefs and about the general determinants of belief-systems in mass publics. In the conclusion of the paper we will consider briefly how increased coherence of the mass political beliefs may be affecting American electoral politics—ranging from its growing effect on national elections to its deeper role in what may be a period of realignment.

[5] Throughout this paper we use the terms attitude consistency and attitude constraint interchangeably. For us, both terms simply imply predictability of liberal/conservative attitudes across issue areas.

We should note here that our definition of liberal/conservative consistency is not based on a priori logical relationships between political attitudes; in fact, none of the issues with which we are concerned, though they may share common symbols, bear any strictly logical relationship to one another.[6] Instead, our definition of consistency is based upon the political context in which attitudes are formed. Regardless of whether issues are logically connected, liberal and conservative positions on a wide variety of issues are established over a period of time and come to constitute the ideological "cues" of the political system. It is in this way that on such logically distant issues as the conduct of the Vietnam War and attitudes toward school integration, "liberal" and "conservative" stances are clearly defined and accepted.

THE DATA

The analysis is based on data gathered by the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan in conjunction with its national election studies. Between 1952 and 1972, the Survey Research Center (SRC) has interviewed a representative sample of some 1,500 to 2,700 adult Americans in each of the presidential elections and in several of the off-year congressional elections. The respondents in each of these surveys were asked questions about their attitudes on a wide variety of political issues. Many of these opinion questions appear in only one or two of the surveys, but a set of questions covering five basic issue-areas is available for each of the presidential election years from 1956 through 1972 and for the 1958 congressional election. Similar questions were asked of a national sample in a survey which was administered by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) in the spring of 1971.

The five issue-areas for which we have comparable data over the entire time period are:

(1) *Social Welfare.* The questions elicit the respondent's atti-

[6] For example, respondents were asked whether they thought the federal government ought to play an active role in seeing to it that black and white children go to the same schools. They were also asked whether they thought the government should devise special programs to help blacks economically. While both questions share the symbol of blacks, it would not be illogical for a respondent to be against government enforcement of integration, but at the same time favor economic assistance to blacks. The issues may be symbolically related, but there is no formal logical connection between them.

tudes on the federal government's responsibility to provide welfare programs in the areas of employment, of education, and of medical care.

(2) *Welfare Measures Specific for Blacks.* Respondents were asked whether they thought the federal government should provide special welfare programs for blacks in the areas of jobs and housing.

(3) *The Size of Government.* From 1956 through 1960 respondents were asked whether they thought it best that the federal government be kept out of areas such as housing and electric power generation that were traditionally handled by private industry. From 1964 through 1972, respondents were asked a slightly more general question concerning whether they thought the federal government was already too big and involved in too many areas. (This question is not asked in the 1971 NORC study.)

(4) *Racial Integration in the Schools.* The questions asked whether the federal government ought to enforce school integration or stay completely out of that problem.

(5) *The Cold War.* These questions vary from period to period as the nature of the cold war changed, but they are all concerned with the toughness of the United States toward communism and the desirability of military intervention. In 1956, 1958, and 1960, respondents were asked whether they thought the government ought to send soldiers abroad to aid countries fighting communism. The 1964 and '68 surveys asked whether the United States government should sit down and talk to Communist leaders to settle differences. In 1968, '71, and '72, the questions asked whether we should pursue a military victory against the Communists in Vietnam or withdraw our forces.

With the exceptions mentioned above, the questions to be used in the analysis are, with minor variations in wording and coding, identical at all points in time. To make interpretation easier, coding categories were reordered wherever necessary to range from conservative to liberal. For purposes of statistical comparability, answers to questions which originally permitted more than three codes were collapsed so that responses to all questions conformed to a unified trichotomous format of: 1) conservative; 2) centrist; 3) liberal.[7] Refusals, those with no opinions, and those giving

[7] Because Tau-gamma is used as our basic measure of association and because it is somewhat sensitive to the number of degrees of freedom in a table, recoding was required in order to get an unbiased estimation of the relationship

"don't know" responses were always excluded from the analysis.

The Emergence of Mass Ideology: Over-Time Comparisons of Attitude Consistency

Figure 1 presents a comparison of levels of attitude consistency among the five issue-areas in 1956, 1964, and 1972—the beginning, middle and end points of the period under investigation. Since we will be using the basic presentational format of Figure 1 throughout our analysis, it may be worthwhile to explicate its contents before proceeding to the substantive interpretation. The indicators of attitude constraint in 1956 are presented on the left-hand vertical line; those for 1964 on the vertical line in the middle, and those for 1972 on the line to the right. The data points represent the relationship of attitudes (measured by Gammas)[8] across pairs of issues—there being ten such paired relationships for the five issues.

The coefficients tell us how much of a relationship there is between the questions in any two issue-areas. Positive correlations indicate the presence of at least some liberal/conservative opinion consistency. Zero or low correlations indicate an absence of liberal/conservative consistency, while negative coefficients signify that those giving liberal responses to questions within one issue-area are more likely to give conservative responses to questions in the other.

For those issue-areas where more than one question is available —namely social welfare and the cold war—the correlations presented are an average of the gammas between each of the questions in that issue-area and the question or questions in the other area. In those cases where there is only one question for each of the two

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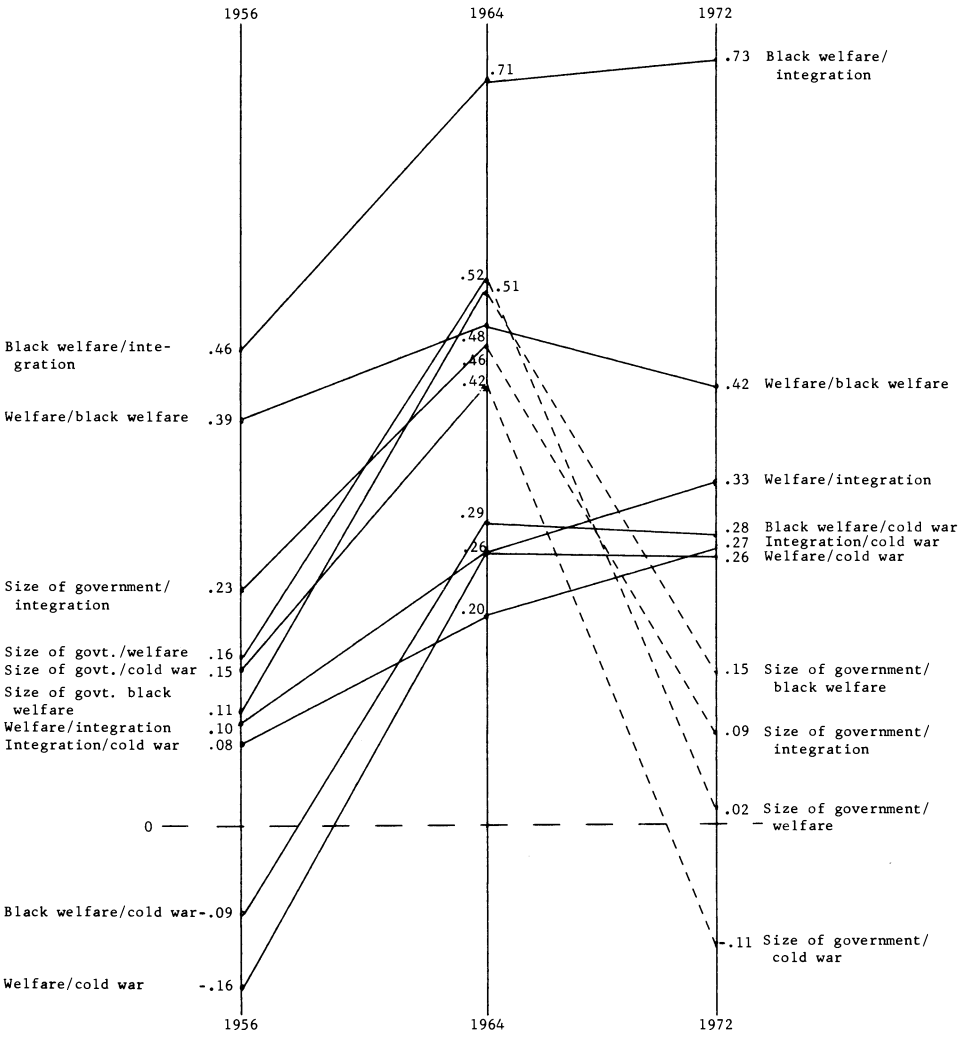
between the various attitudes and between the same attitudes across time. In the recoding of the data, two guidelines were followed: (1) to make as even as possible the proportions of the population in each of the three categories, while (2) not permitting the first guideline to place respondents on the agree and disagree side of an issue in the same category. The rationale for the second recoding guideline is obvious in any attempt to classify responses as basically liberal or conservative. The rationale for the first guideline again relates to the use of gamma as the measure of association because it is highly sensitive and unreliable when there are extreme marginals.

[8] Tau-gamma was chosen as the measure of association because it is sensitive to attitude consistency of the scalar as well as the correlational type. Further, of the ordinal measures with this property it is the one most widely understood, and therefore the one most easy to interpret.

FIGURE 1

COMPARISON OF ATTITUDE CONSISTENCY IN 1956, 1964, AND 1972: AVERAGE GAMMAS BETWEEN FIVE ISSUE AREAS



Key: – – – – – overtime change in correlations between pairs of issue-areas
———— 1964–1972 change in correlation between size of government issue and other issue areas

issue-areas the simple correlation between those two questions is presented.[9]

The relatively low level of liberal/conservative attitude consistency in 1956 is quite apparent in the data presented in Figure 1. All but three of the coefficients in this year are below .25 and two of the ten are slightly negative. None of the correlations for domestic and foreign policy attitudes is greater than .15; two are negative. Even in the domestic sphere, the average correlation is quite low; attitudes on only two pairs of issues indicate even moderately high levels of consistency in 1956. Blacks are the key referent in both questions for one of these pairs (that is, black welfare/integration) while government responsibility for welfare is mentioned in all of the questions involved in the other pair (welfare/black welfare).

Thus our findings closely parallel those reported in the earlier studies. As of 1956, there is little evidence of any unified liberal/conservative attitude continuum, and with only two exceptions—involving questions which share common symbols—there appears to be little or no opinion structure.

A quick glance at the parallel figures for 1964 reveals a dramatic change in levels of attitude consistency. The degree of association between attitudes on each of the five issues has increased, and in almost all cases the increases are quite substantial. There are no longer any negative correlations, and in contrast to 1956 where only two of the ten coefficients were greater than .25, we now find just the opposite—only one of the ten is less than .25. What is truly impressive about the pattern of consistency in 1964 is not only the magnitude of the over-all increase in consistency, but also the number of different issue-domains which have come to be bound together. In 1956, moderate to high levels of attitude consistency

[9] The alternative to this procedure would have been to construct multiple-item indices in those areas where more than one question was available. This alternative was rejected however, because indices tend to be more powerful measures than individual items and would have thus artificially increased consistency in all pairs of relationships involving the scales, while the relationships involving the single items would have been denied this advantage. Furthermore, this presented us with a particularly knotty problem because the number of items in a given issue-area varies from one point in time to the next. Employing averages of the gammas preserves as much information as possible without introducing the bias that would result from having some measures composed of multiple items and others not. Correlation matrices for the individual items for each year are available on request from the authors.

were encountered on only two pairs of domestic issues. In 1964, on the other hand, not only has the relationship between attitudes on these increased substantially but attitudes on *all* of the domestic issues are highly intercorrelated and appear to reflect the kind of over-arching liberal/conservative ideology which is, the theory of mass beliefs suggests, beyond the capacity of the mass public. Furthermore, in 1964, there is considerable consistency between attitudes on domestic issues and positions on the conduct of the cold war.

The pattern for 1972 is more complicated. At first glance, there appears to be a substantial decline in the level of attitude constraint compared to 1964, but on closer inspection of the data, we can see that all relationships not involving size of government have (within the range of sampling error) maintained themselves or increased. Correlations among all issue-areas, both domestic and foreign, with the exception of size of government are above .25 in 1972.[10]

[10] Given that the major shifts in levels of attitude constraint take place between 1960 and 1964, coinciding with some subtle and perhaps important shifts in the question format used by the SRC, the issue arises as to whether or not any of the observed increase in attitude consistency is an artifact of questionnaire design. A number of different types of evidence suggest that this is not the case. 1) While the '64 question format utilizes a stronger screener to deter those who "have not thought about the issue" from responding than was used in the '56, '58, and '60 studies, there is no appreciable increase in the average number of "no opinion" responses between the pre- and post-1964 periods. Increased attitude consistency is therefore not simply a function of screening out a larger proportion of the less interested and articulate segment of the population. 2) While the timing of changes in levels of constraint and question format coincide between '60 and '64, there have been two subsequent question format changes of equal significance since 1968, and neither of these seems to have had any bearing on the level of attitude consistency. The NORC '71 study utilizes a seven-point liberal to conservative scale much closer in format to the SRC pre-1964 Likert-type questions than to the dichotomous choices used by the SRC in '64 and '68. Furthermore, the questions in the NORC study make no explicit attempt to screen out those who had "perhaps not thought enough about the issues" to have an opinion. In 1972, the SRC itself adopted a seven-point scale, similar to that used in the NORC '71 study, for a number of the opinion questions we use. However, the SRC continued to follow its practice of attempting to deter from responding those who claimed to have thought little about individual issues. There has, in other words, been a continuous modification of question format from '68 onward, yet levels of attitude constraint have remained more or less constant in that period. In short, we have one instance—that is, between '60 and '64—where a significant shift in attitude constraint coincided with a basic change in

The comparison of levels of attitude constraint across these three time points raises several questions. When did such vast changes in the organization of mass beliefs come about? Has the increase in ideological constraint been a gradual one or did the shift occur suddenly? Or is it possible that the presence or absence of ideological constraint in the mass public is a much more ephemeral characteristic than has been thought, varying in response to relatively short-term forces? All three of the surveys that we have been using were, after all, conducted in the middle of presidential election campaigns, and it is possible that the nature of particular campaigns and the kinds of candidates who are running have a significant impact on whether or not the mass public sees connections between the issues in general and between specific sets of issues in particular. Finally, while attitude constraint across all domestic and foreign issue-areas seems to be on the rise, why should attitude

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question format. But from '64 onward we find a virtually constant level of attitude consistency in the face of two equally dramatic variations in question format. 3) Finally, it has long been a tenet of survey research that changes in question wording and format are most likely to affect the response of those who are least interested and concerned with the subject matter and thus who are least likely to have strong positions. Conversely, respondents who are highly interested and concerned, and who are most likely to take intense positions, have been found to be much less affected by the types of question changes described above. In order to provide a further test of the artifact hypothesis, we created a pool of respondents whose attitude structure should have been least susceptible to changes in question wording and format. This subset of the population was composed of those in each year who claimed to be: (a) strong partisan identifiers; (b) highly concerned with the election outcome; and (c) greatly interested in the campaign. Our findings about the levels of attitude constraint in this group are unambiguous. The largest increase in levels of attitude consistency within the population are found within this group, which is least likely to be affected by changes in the wording and coding of questions.

The arguments countering the artifact hypothesis briefly discussed above are presented in greater depth in a document entitled, "Levels of Attitude Consistency and Changes in Question Format: An Analysis of the Problem of Artifact," which can be obtained upon request from the authors. This document more fully elaborates the changes in the question formats and their significance and presents, as well, the supporting data alluded to in points 1 and 3 above.

Finally, NORC has a study currently in the field containing a full methodological experiment which should provide more definitive data on the actual impact of questionnaire wording and format on the intercorrelation among political attitudes of the type under investigation.

toward the size of government have, between 1964 and 1972, fallen off the liberal/conservative continuum?

We have the data and can begin to address ourselves to these problems. The questions on the five policy areas posed to samples of the citizenry in the presidential elections of 1956, 1964, and 1972 were also included on surveys conducted in the 1960 and 1968 presidential elections as well as on a survey conducted during the 1958 off-year congressional elections. These data should permit us to learn more about the timing of the changes in attitude consistency.[11]

In addition to these data, a similar though not identical set of questions (providing parallel information on four of the five issue-areas) was included in the 1971 NORC survey. The 1971 NORC data and the data from the 1958 congressional elections provide us with two data points, widely separated in time, which are free from the potentially contaminating short-term forces at work in presidential campaigns. These two data sets, then, should be particularly useful in determining whether individual presidential elections have significant short-term effects on levels of opinion constraint.[12]

Using the data from these studies we can examine levels of attitude constraint on a common set of issues at seven separate points in time over a sixteen-year period beginning in 1956 and ending in 1972. These data are presented in Table 1. The table presents the gammas among the attitudes in the five issue-areas at each of the seven points in time. The correlation coefficients displayed in the table were arrived at in a manner identical to those presented in Figure 1. Changes over time in the level of attitude constraint between any given pair of issues can be seen by scanning the appropriate row of the table. Comparisons of the over-all levels of constraint from one year to the next (our main interest) can be made by comparing the columns in the table.

The answers to several of the questions we have raised are con-

[11]Readers familiar with the Michigan election studies might be curious as to why we did not use the 1970 off-year election study. The answer lies in the design of the study; a decision was made to use shorter questionnaires with varying sets of questions so that at least some information could be collected in a wide variety of areas. The result, for our purposes, is to reduce so drastically the number of cases on which we could base correlations between issue-areas that the reliability of the correlation was doubtful.

[12] The exact questions from the NORC Study are presented, along with the questions from the SRC studies, in the Appendix.

tained in the pattern of correlations found in Table 1. First, the different levels of attitude constraint we encountered in 1956, 1964, and 1972 do not appear to be the result of either short-term fluctuations or of a gradual trend-like increase throughout the period. Rather, a very sharp shift appears to have occurred in levels of ideological constraint between 1960 and 1964. Similar low levels of ideological constraint are found in 1956, 1958, and 1960. There is a major shift upward in levels of constraint in 1964, involving substantial increases in the correlation between attitudes in almost all of the issue domains. More specifically, the cold-war issues have, from 1964 onward, become increasingly tied to the attitudes on domestic policies. Integration and black welfare, the only issues which were substantially related to each other prior to 1964, are now related at an even higher level.[13] In general, issues involving race began to be strongly related both to other domestic and to cold-war issues in 1964 and were even more strongly related in 1968, falling off slightly thereafter.

Though there are small fluctuations observed in the correlations (some perhaps due to sampling error, others reflecting short-term electoral forces acting on specific issues), with the exception of the disintegration of the relationship between size of government and

TABLE 1

LEVELS OF ATTITUDE CONSTRAINT, 1956–72

	1956	1958	1960	1964	1968	1971[a]	1972
Welfare/black welfare	.39	.34	.38	.48	.51	.49	.42
Welfare/integration	.11	.16	.19	.26	.49	.42	.33
Welfare/size of government	.16	.05	.14	.52	.47	—	.02
Welfare/cold war	−.16	−.16	−.12	.26	.18	.25	.26
Black welfare/integration	.46	.64	.53	.71	.73	.63	.73
Black welfare/size of government	.11	.03	.05	.51	.40	—	.15
Black welfare/cold war	−.09	−.14	−.15	.29	.26	.24	.28
Integration/size of government	.23	.16	.17	.46	.44	—	.09
Integration/cold war	.08	−.01	.05	.20	.27	.24	.27
Size of government/cold war	.15	.04	.08	.42	.20	—	.11

[a] Data for 1971 come from the NORC National Survey. No question on size of government is available in that survey.

[13] The small drop-off in 1971 is most likely caused by differences in question wording between the NORC and SRC studies.

all other issues between 1968 and 1972, we can observe two periods. There was a very low level of attitude consistency in 1956 through 1960, and constraint grew rapidly at some point between 1960 and 1964, moving the correlation among attitudes to a new level which remains at each subsequent point through 1972.

Second, there is very little evidence to suggest that individual presidential elections or any other specific events exert significant *short-term* influences over general levels of constraint. If, for example, the Goldwater-Johnson presidential election played some special role in the emergence of ideological constraint within the mass public—an hypothesis which would not be inconsistent with the timing of the changes—the changes it helped bring about persisted.

The Growth and Decline of the Size of Government Issue: An Explanation

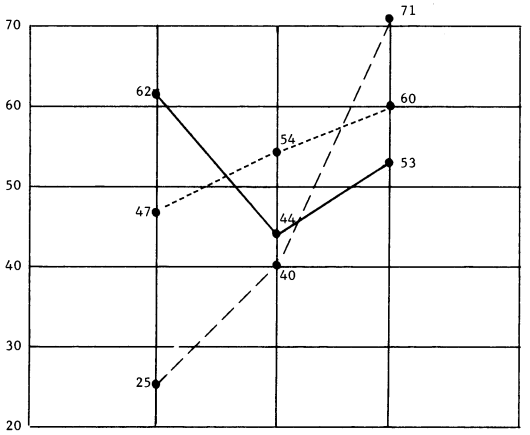
The description we have given of the emergence of a clear liberal/conservative structuring of attitudes among the mass public is supported by all of the data except that which shows the virtual disappearance, between 1968 and 1972, of the relationship between the issue of size of government and all of the domestic and foreign issues. Is the decline in relationship between size of government and other issues evidence of a weakening of constraint, or does it indicate instead that changing political cues have produced a different, perhaps more sophisticated, attitude structure?

It is true that for many years "that government is best which governs least" has been a central tenet of the American conservative position, and that at least from the time of the New Deal, American liberalism has held equally strongly that the desirable role of government is to enter as many areas of social life as necessary to rectify social and economic injustices. However, sometime in the late 1960s, a sense began to emerge among the leadership of the liberal community that big government was merely acting to reinforce existing injustices.

The data below clearly indicate that the core of these ideas has indeed taken hold in the mass public. We can demonstrate this by examining the redefinition, over the past eight years, of the liberal and conservative positions on the size of government issue. From 1964 onward, the SRC asked respondents to place several groups,

FIGURE 2

PROPORTION SAYING THE GOVERNMENT IS TOO BIG AMONG LIBERALS, MODERATES, AND CONSERVATIVES IN 1964, 1968 AND 1972*



	Liberals	Moderates	Conservatives
1964:	$N=237$	$N=720$	$N=285$
1968:	$N=192$	$N=713$	$N=322$
1972:	$N=185$	$N=369$	$N=110$

Key: — — — — 1964
- - - - - - 1968
———— 1972

*The categories in this table were constructed by subtracting the respondents' ratings of conservatives from their ratings of liberals. The small N's in 1972 result from the fact that over three times as many respondents as in 1968 refused to rank these groups.

including liberals and conservatives, on a "feeling thermometer" which reflected their degree of affect toward the groups. On the basis of how respondents placed liberals and conservatives on these feeling thermometers, we were able to classify the population in 1964, '68, and '72 into liberals, moderates, and conservatives.[14]

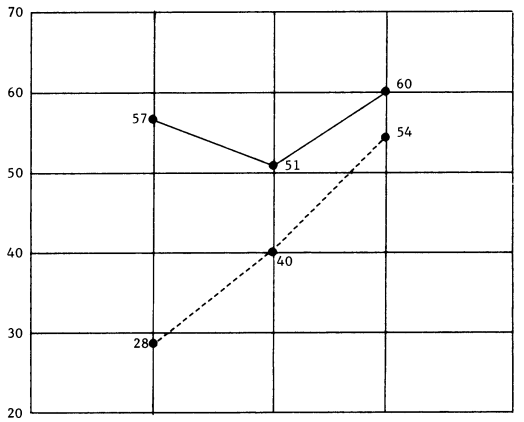
[14] For each respondent his rating of conservatives (0 to 97) was subtracted from his rating of liberals (0 to 97). The resulting scores, ranging from -97 to 97, were recoded to obtain the categories of "liberal," "moderate" and "conservative."

Figure 2 presents the proportion of each of these groups, at the three points in time, who state that the government is too big and too powerful and involved in too many areas.

As of 1964, the data show that the size-of-government issue split the population along classical liberal/conservative lines. Only 25 percent of the liberals said that government was too big, while 40 percent of the moderates and fully 71 percent of the conservatives took this position. Although the direction of the relationship remained the same in 1968, the relationship had clearly begun to decline, with a substantial increase in the proportion of liberals agreeing with the conservatives that government had become too big. By 1972, as shown in Figure 2, a monotonic relationship no longer existed between liberalism and conservatism and attitudes towards the size of government. Rather, we now find a majority of both liberals and conservatives responding that government is too big, with the moderates least opposed to big government.

FIGURE 3

PROPORTION OF SELF-IDENTIFIED LIBERALS, MODERATES, AND CONSERVATIVES SAYING GOVERNMENT IS TOO BIG AND OPPOSING NATIONAL HEALTH CARE PROGRAM, 1972



Key: ———— Say that government is too big
– – – – – – Oppose national health care program

Figure 3 further clarifies the nature of this relationship in 1972. For the first time the SRC asked respondents to identify themselves as liberals, moderates, or conservatives. It is clear that using this somewhat more direct indicator, the U-shaped relationship between liberalism and conservatism and attitude on size of government persists. Virtually identical proportions of liberals and conservatives agree that the government is too big and too powerful. For comparative purposes we have presented additionally in 1972, the relationship between the liberalism/conservativism scale and attitude on government-subsidized health care, an attitude which remains monotonically related to self-identification as liberal, moderate, or conservative. What is more, attitudes on each of the four issue-areas we have been discussing show a similar, monotonic relationship to self-placement on this scale. Statistically, however, there is almost as strong a relationship between liberal and conservative identification and position on size of government. The relationship, however, is not linear. With measures sensitive to curvilinear relationships, liberal/conservative position would show a considerable association with attitude on size of government.

The important point for the purposes of our analysis is that the data indicate an absence of linear correlation in 1972 which nevertheless does not represent a decline in the consistency of attitude structure but the redefinition of the liberal and conservative positions on this issue on the part of the mass public. What we find now is that there still exists, among those who identify themselves as conservatives, a substantial majority to whom big government has always been and continues to be an anathema. In addition, among self-identified liberals, a group which once accepted large government as a solution to social problems, a similar majority has emerged who are equally skeptical of big government. Given Vietnam, the failure of the New Deal and Great Society welfare programs, and the resurgence of the notion of "returning the government to the people," such a finding is only surprising in terms of *extent* to which this ideological redefinition has penetrated to the mass public.

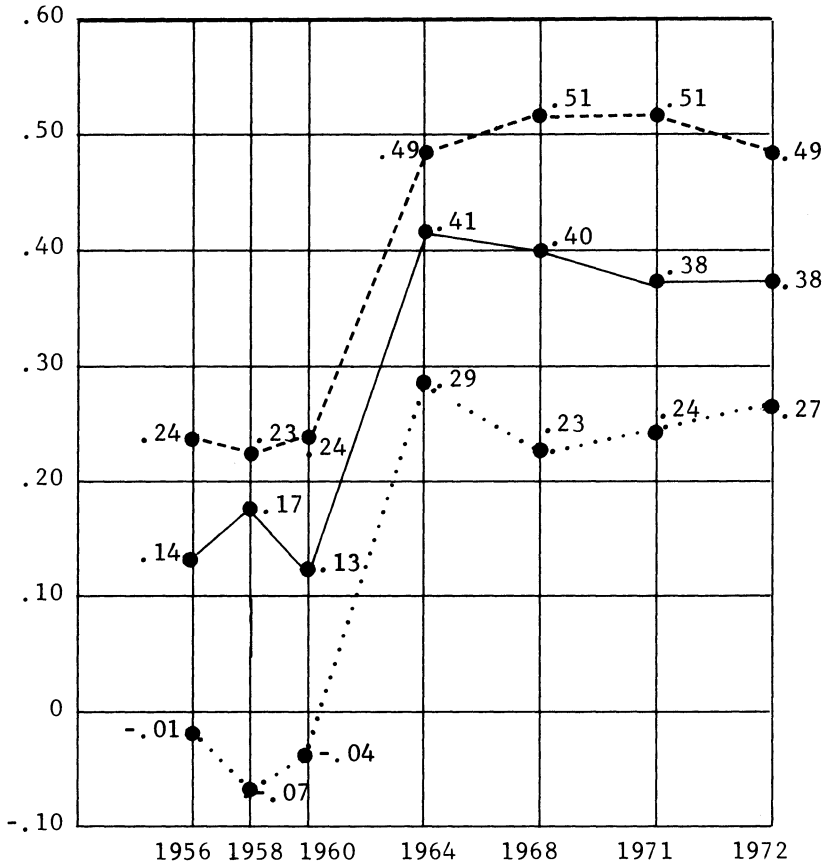
Unfortunately, we are left with the problem of how to analyze relationships involving this variable in 1972. Inasmuch as we have no way to compare the magnitude of a curvilinear relationship to the type of linear measures of association we are utilizing, throughout the remaining analysis, the issue of size of government is not included with the 1972 data.

Summarizing the Growth of Ideological Consistency

The timing as well as the scope and magnitude of the growth of attitude consistency can be seen most clearly in the summary measures presented in Figure 4. Plotted through time in this figure are three measures of attitude consistency. The solid line presents the

Figure 4

Changes in Attitude Consistency, 1956–72



Key: ———— Over-all index of consistency
– – – – – – Domestic attitude consistency
. . . . . Consistency between domestic and foreign

over-all index of constraint—a simple average of the ten correlations in each column of Table 1. The line composed of dashes is the index of domestic attitude consistency and is computed by taking the average for each year of the correlations among the four domestic issue-areas. The dotted line is the average correlation of the four domestic issues with attitudes on the cold war.

The difference between the two periods—1956 to 1960 and after 1964—is quite striking. In the earlier period the over-all index hovers around .15, but in 1964 and each year thereafter it is at about .40. The over-all index of constraint has therefore increased by over two and one-half times. The index of domestic attitude constraint shows the same basic patterns. Through 1960, the index is slightly below .25, but in 1964 it climbs to about .50 and stays there in all subsequent years.

The pattern with regard to the index of the relationship between attitudes on domestic issues and positions on the cold war indicates an equally dramatic and similarly timed increase in ideological constraint. In 1956, just a few years after the end of the Korean War, the average relationship between liberal/conservative attitude on the domestic issues and the desirability of a tough stand on the international Communist threat (including attitudes on the desirability of sending American soldiers abroad to fight communism) was almost zero. In 1964 and thereafter, on the other hand, the correlation between domestic attitudes and keeping American soldiers abroad (in Vietnam specifically in 1968, '71, and '72) and otherwise taking a tough or conciliatory stand on the cold war rose to around .25. In other words, in contrast to the situation in the mid-fifties and early sixties, foreign policy attitudes, at least as measured by position on the cold war, have increasingly become part of the public's general stance on the issues.

To summarize our findings thus far: the existing description of low levels of attitude consistency in the mass public and the absence of an over-arching liberal/conservative ideology indicated by this lack of consistency no longer appears accurate. From 1964 onward, attitudes in the mass public on the issues of social welfare, welfare measures specific for blacks, racial integration in the schools, and positions on the cold war are substantially intercorrelated. That is, those who are liberal in one of these issue-areas tend to take liberal positions on the others, and the same is true for those at the conservative end of the attitude continuum. The relationship of the

issue of the proper size of government to the other four issue-areas has undergone more complex changes. Like attitudes in the other issue-areas, it was part of no clear ideological structure in the mid 1950s and early '60s. In the middle '60s, when ideological constraint became more pronounced, attitudes on size of government correlated highly with liberal/conservative positions on both domestic and foreign issues. Between 1968 and 1972, it appears that the ideological meaning of this issue shifted; for different reasons, both liberals and conservatives found themselves opponents of big government, while those in the center appeared less apprehensive about it. Though the linear relationship between this issue and the others has disappeared, the curvilinear relationship is clear and pronounced, and what is more, makes sense given the ideological redefinition of this issue which we demonstrated above. In regard to these five issue-areas, at least, evidence of the emergence of ideological constraints appears quite convincing.

Scope and Magnitude of the Emerging Mass Ideology

But the question of whether or not the increased attitude constraint we have been examining actually constitutes a comprehensive liberal/conservative ideology in the mass public is not a simple one. How high must correlations be before one can safely assume that something approaching a generalized ideology exists? And perhaps even more important—how many different kinds of attitudes ranging over what types of issues must be found to interrelate before we can reach such a conclusion? Questions like these must always be given relativistic answers, for a glass half full to some people will be one-half empty to others. Much, that is, depends upon one's expectations. However, a number of additional types of evidence can be examined and other comparisons can be made in order to help us estimate the current prevalence of ideology in the mass public.

In order to approach the question of changes in the scope of ideology, we will examine attitudes about the civil liberties of political dissenters as they related to our five issue-areas at the end of the McCarthy era and when this issue emerged again in the late 1960s. In addition, we will examine the extent to which the "social issues" which emerged in the 1960s have been incorporated into the over-all liberal/conservative attitude structure. Finally, in order

to obtain a better basis for assessing the absolute amount of mass ideology, we will compare levels of ideological constraint within mass and elite populations.

Liberal/Conservative Constraint and Attitudes on the Civil Liberties of Dissenters

Among its many components a comprehensive liberal ideology has traditionally involved not only liberal attitudes on social welfare, minority rights, and governmental control over the economy, but a concern about civil liberties and the rights of political dissenters as well. One of the key pieces of data often cited as evidence of the absence of a generalized liberal/conservative ideology in the mass public has been the lack of any relationship between positions on issues such as welfare, race, and foreign policy on the one hand, and attitudes toward civil liberties on the other.[15]

If we are now to argue that a comprehensive liberal/conservative ideology has recently emerged in the mass public, we must attempt to address ourselves to this issue. Although comparable data for attitudes on civil liberties do not exist for the entire period we are examining, several questions on attitudes toward political dissent and the treatment of dissenters are available in the beginning and towards the end of the time period.

In the 1956 election study—at the conclusion of the McCarthy era—the Survey Research Center asked the citizenry whether they thought government workers suspected of being Communists ought to be fired even though their Communist affiliation had not been proven. The 1971 NORC study included equivalent questions on the rights of political dissenters. Specifically the questions were: (1) whether the government had the right to spy on radicals and radical groups even though they may not have violated any law; (2) whether the government should have the right to enter and search the meeting places of such groups without the possession of a warrant; and (3) whether the government has the right to hold without bail individuals who stand accused of incitement to riot. In 1972, a related question is that of amnesty for those who dissented from government policy by refusing to participate in the war in Vietnam. In addition, we have in the NORC 1971 and SRC 1968 and 1972 studies

[15] For a particularly good discussion of this point, see V. O. Key, *Public Opinion*, 171-172.

a common set of questions on attitudes toward civil protest and demonstrations, specifically on whether or not there are any circumstances in which sit-ins and peaceful demonstrations should be tolerated.

Table 2 presents the relationships of these civil-liberties attitudes to attitudes on our basic set of issues at these three points in time. The pattern in 1956 substantiates findings reported by others and once again confirms the general absence of attitude constraint in the mid-'50s. All of the correlations are low, and there is no discernible pattern.

In contrast, the data in 1971, perhaps the best comparison with the 1956 data, indicate considerable attitude consistency between positions on the protection of civil liberties of radical activists and attitudes in the four other issue areas. In 1972, the relationships between all four issue-areas and whether or not to grant amnesty to those who refused to serve in the military during the Vietnam War were even stronger than the substantial relationships observed in 1971. The average gammas between the issues and firing government workers in 1956 was .01; in 1971, the average correlation between the four issues and position on rights of radicals had risen to .28. And by 1972, the average correlation with attitudes on amnesty was a striking .51.

TABLE 2

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTITUDES ON CIVIL LIBERTIES OF DISSENTERS AND ATTITUDES ON DOMESTIC AND COLD-WAR ISSUES

	Firing government workers suspected of Communist affiliation	Rights of radicals	Amnesty for those who refused the draft	Acceptability of protests and peaceful demonstrations		
	1956	1971	1972	1968	1971	1972
Welfare	−.14	.22	.43	.28	.25	.25
Black welfare	.07	.33	.41	.38	.31	.33
Integration	.14	.32	.50	.29	.21	.29
Size of government	−.04	—[a]	—[b]	.23	—[a]	—[b]
Cold war	.04	.23	.70	.28	.18	.27
Average gammas	.01	.28	.51	.29	.26	.29

[a] Not available

[b] Not used in calculations

With regard to the tolerance for sit-ins and protest demonstrations, the average correlation with the domestic and cold-war issues is also substantial. Those who believed in 1968, 1971, and 1972 that under certain circumstances individuals "have the right to stop the government from engaging in its usual activities through protest and demonstration" also tend to be those giving the most liberal responses in each of the other five issue-areas. All of the correlations are consistent on this point, and they range from moderate to moderately high in comparison to others we have viewed.

If a generalized liberal/conservative ideology requires evidence not only of a highly consistent set of beliefs in the areas of race, welfare, economics, and foreign policy, but also consistency between these areas and attitudes toward civil liberties, our data indicate that although this condition did not exist in 1956, it had come into being by 1968 and has persisted through 1972.

Liberal/Conservative Constraint and Attitudes on the Social Issue

Whether or not a pervasive liberal/conservative ideology exists depends, as we have noted, on its scope, that is, on the number of different issue spheres included within its structure, as well as upon the degree to which the attitudes are bound together. Another test of the scope of the emerging attitude structure we have described is provided by the emergence of the "social issue" in the late 1960s. This term has been used to refer to some of the civil-liberties issues we discussed in the previous section, particularly attitudes about political radicals; to the growing concern with violence and safety; and to changes in morals and values among the young. Scammon and Wattenberg and others have argued that these issues form a new political dimension, completely independent of positions on a traditional liberal/conservative continuum.[16]

Table 3 contains data in two areas which come under the rubric of the social issue. The first three columns of the table present the average gammas between attitudes on the issues used throughout this paper and positions on the proper way to deal with urban unrest and crime (1968, 1971, and 1972). The alternatives were employing force versus solving the problems which produced urban

[16] R. M. Scammon and B. J. Wattenberg, *The Real Majority* (3rd ed; New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1970).

TABLE 3

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTITUDES ON "SOCIAL ISSUES" AND ATTITUDES ON DOMESTIC AND COLD-WAR ISSUES, 1968–72

	Urban unrest	Urban unrest and rights of criminals		Hippies, marijuana	Use of marijuana
	1968	1971	1972	1971	1972
Welfare	.32	.32	.24	.21	.09
Black welfare	.31	.41	.24	.34	.15
Integration	.38	.37	.29	.36	.19
Size of government	.22	— [a]	— [b]	— [a]	— [b]
Cold war	.32	.29	.26	.25	.27
Average gammas	.31	.35	.26	.29	.18

[a] Not available
[b] Not used in calculations

unrest, and being concerned with the rights of criminals versus the safety of society. The other two columns in Table 3 present similar relationships to the life-style component of the social issue (attitudes toward hippies, asked only in 1971, and attitudes towards the use of marijuana, asked in both 1971 and 1972). Though the relationships are most modest here, particularly in 1972, all are significant and positive.

The data in Table 3 clearly indicate—in contrast to the Scammon and Wattenberg interpretation—that from the birth of these issues in the late 1960s, they were at least moderately related to the issues of integration and cold war as well as welfare and black welfare.

In short, by 1972 we find substantial correlations between domestic and cold-war issues, strong relationships between positions on these issues and attitudes on the civil liberties of dissenters, and a moderate to strong relationship between all these issues and the new social issues—indicating clearly a striking growth in the scope of the mass public's ideology as well as in its magnitude.

ATTITUDE CONSISTENCY IN THE MASS AND ELITE

Do these data allow us to talk of the emergence of "ideology" among the mass public? Clearly not, if by that we mean a totally consistent and logically ordered political world view. The attitude consistency we have uncovered is a weaker phenomenon. But we

can obtain some notion of the extent to which the correlations we find after 1964 represent meaningful consistency by comparing the mass public with a more elite group among whom one has found consistent attitudes.

We have no data over time on elite attitude consistency, but we do have it for one point in time. In conjunction with the Survey Research Center study of the 1958 congressional election, a sample of congressional candidates was interviewed and each of the candidates was asked about his attitudes on a set of questions parallel to the five main issues which we have been examining.[17] When Converse compared the elite groups to the mass public, with data collected in 1956 and 1960, the mass came off quite badly.[18] In Table 4 we compare the attitude consistency among the congressional candidates in 1958 with that found in the mass public at each of the seven points in time. The top line of Table 3 summarizes the level of constraint on the issues for the sample of congressional candidates. The subsequent lines of the Table repeat from Figure 4 the three parallel measures for the representative samples of the American population at each of the points in time.

Given the enormous differences between the two contrasting populations in levels of education, political sophistication, and contextual knowledge about politics and public affairs, the extent of attitude consistency which has come to characterize the mass public in the later period is impressive. Levels of consistency among the congressional candidates in 1958 are much higher than those encountered in the mass public in 1956, 1958, and 1960. In the 1964-72 era, however, liberal/conservative constraint across the issues, both domestic and foreign, equals or exceeds that found among congressional candidates in earlier periods. This is not to say that

[17] Specifically, questions in four major issue-areas were utilized—Social welfare, size of government, government role in aiding blacks, and attitudes toward the cold war. The responses to the questions in each of these areas were trichotomized to conform to the specifications developed for handling the mass public surveys. The computational procedures were also identical to those employed in the cross-section analysis.

[18] Converse, "Belief Systems," 228-229. The figures presented in Table 3 of this paper and those presented in his article are somewhat different. There are a few differences in the items employed (particularly in the foreign policy sphere) but the biggest differences stem from the fact that he includes the correlations among attitudes within issue-spheres as well as across issue-spheres, while our analysis concentrates exclusively on the latter relationships.

TABLE 4

COMPARISON OF LEVELS OF ATTITUDE CONSISTENCY BETWEEN ELITES AND MASS PUBLIC

	Index of attitude consistency within domestic issues	Index of consistency between domestic and foreign	Over-all index of attitude consistency
Congressional candidates 1958[a]	.38	.25	.31
Mass public 1956	.24	−.01	.14
Mass public 1958	.23	−.07	.17
Mass public 1960	.24	−.04	.13
Mass public 1964	.49	.29	.41
Mass public 1968	.51	.23	.40
Mass public 1971	.51	.24	.38
Mass public 1972	.49	.27	.38

[a] Exact questions posed to congressional candidates are to be found in the Appendix.

the mass citizenry now displays patterns of attitude consistency equal to that of their leaders, for we do not have data on the interrelationship of attitudes among a comparable elite population during the later period. What we can say, however, is that the average American citizen from 1964 onward displays a level of attitude consistency similar to and in some areas exceeding that of congressional candidates just a few years earlier. If we use the level of attitude consistency of these candidates as a criterion for a generalized liberal/conservative political ideology, it would seem that we must conclude that a similar level of ideology now exists among the citizenry at large.

CHANGING LEVELS OF EDUCATION IN THE MASS PUBLIC: A POSSIBLE EXPLANATION

What has been responsible for the changes in the structure of mass beliefs in so short a period of time? The question is critical for the social scientist generally interested in the nature and determinants of belief systems in mass publics. The argument put forward to explain the low level of issue consistency encountered earlier in the American public is one which emphasizes certain fundamental limitations *inherent* in mass publics. Mass publics,

this argument asserts, simply do not have the ideational sophistication or the contextual knowledge required to organize opinions on diverse issues into inclusive ideologies.

This view of the mass public has little place for the kind of change we have encountered. Given the size of the increases in attitude consistency that have taken place, such a line of argument can continue to stand *only if* the increasing consistency can be shown to be associated with equally large *decreases* in the inherent limitations of the mass populations.

The first place to look for the source of the growth of attitude consistency, therefore, is in an increase within the mass public in the "ideological capacities" stressed by the theory. Capacities such as the ability to understand and manipulate highly abstract concepts and to absorb and utilize contextual knowledge have been seen (in general and within the argument itself) to be highly associated with levels of education. How much change in the educational composition of the population has there actually been in this period, and have these changes been substantial enough to have played any significant role in the growth of attitude consistency? As indicated by the data in Figure 5, this period has indeed been one of significant changes in educational attainment. In the 16 years from 1956 to 1972 that portion of the population most likely to have the capacities stressed in the argument—those with at least some college training—has increased from less than 20 percent to almost 30 percent of the population. At the same time, those with less than a complete high school education have decreased from 52 percent of the population in 1956 to 38 percent in 1972. There has been, in other words, a 24 percent point shift in the educational composition of the population in 16 years.

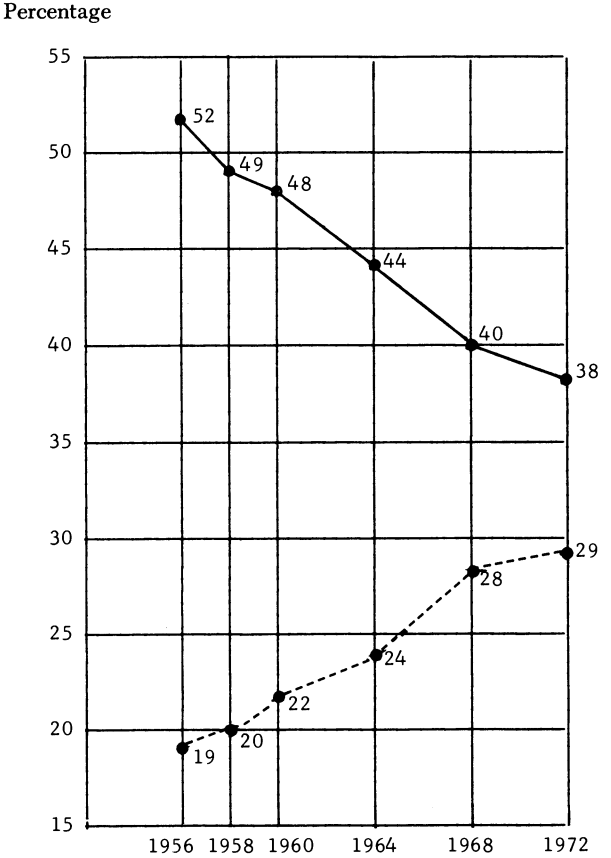
It is interesting to note that the most substantial changes at both ends of the educational ladder have taken place after 1960, precisely when levels of attitude constraint shifted most significantly.[19]

[19] There are two related reasons why the educational shifts become so much more pronounced after 1960. First, 1964 is the first year in which large numbers of the war-baby-boom population became old enough to be interviewed in the surveys. Second, this group is not only very large, but has received an unprecedented amount of educational training. In short, because these young adults represent a big portion of the population who are highly educated, they have a major effect on the over-all proportions of the population at various levels of educational attainment.

In short, in terms of both magnitude and timing, it seems possible that the growth of ideological constraint within the mass public has been in part, at least, the consequence of an increasingly educated and thus more knowledgeable and sophisticated public.

FIGURE 5

CHANGES IN LEVELS OF EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT, 1956–72



Total percent increase from 1956	4	7	13	21	24

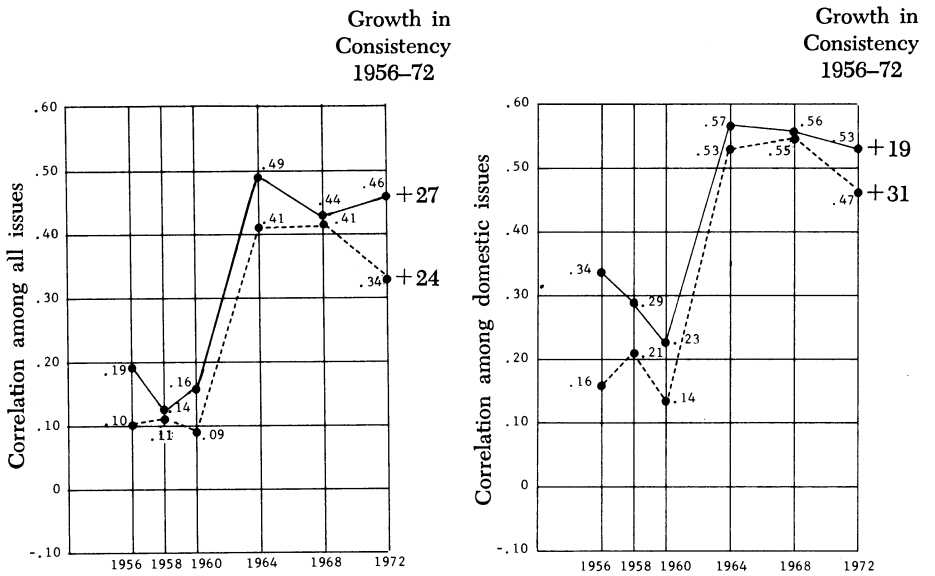
Key: ———— Percent not having completed high school
– – – – – – Percent with some college

However, increases in levels of educational attainment, no matter how large, are not in themselves evidence that the growth of ideological constraint is in any way related to these changes. In order to determine whether and to what degree increased educational attainment is responsible for the emergence of consistent liberal/conservative attitudes in the masses we must examine, over time, the levels of consistency of those at different levels of educational attainment.

Figure 6 presents over-time data on levels of attitude consistency for two educational groups—those with less than a complete high school education and those who have at least some college training. We present two separate summary measures of the degree of ideological constraint. The left hand graph in Figure 6 contains the over-all summary measure (average gammas) that takes into account the relationship among all the core issues, both domestic and

FIGURE 6

COMPARISON OF LEVELS OF ATTITUDE CONSISTENCY THROUGH TIME FOR TWO EDUCATIONAL GROUPS



foreign. The right hand graph presents the average degrees of constraint considering only the relationships among the domestic issues.

Let us concentrate for the moment on the left hand graph which indexes over-all levels of attitude consistency across both domestic and foreign issues. The data in this graph make it quite clear that educational shifts have had little if any impact on the changes in the structure of mass beliefs that we have encountered. While those with some college education manifest higher levels of consistency throughout the period, both the educated and less-educated groups have shown increases in consistency which are far greater than the differences between the groups at any point in time. More important, those with less than a high school education have shown increases in consistency almost equal in magnitude to the increases shown for the college educated.

When we concentrate on the core domestic issues, which, after all, have been the major focus for liberal/conservative divisions throughout the era, we find that there has been a decline in the disparity in levels of attitude consistency between the less- and the better-educated. Moreover, though consistency on these issues has increased for those at both levels of educational achievement, increases in consistency have been greater for the low educational group—those, according to the theory of mass beliefs, who are the least capable of maintaining a highly organized liberal/conservative ideology. The level of attitude consistency among those with less than a high school education has increased by 31 points, while the comparable figure for those with at least some college is only 19 points.

Most important, with regard to both over-all and domestic attitude consistency, is the fact that the sharp increases in levels of attitude constraint which occurred between 1960 and 1964 took place among both the highly educated and those with little formal education.

The implication of the findings in Figure 6 can be easily summarized. The growth of attitude consistency within the mass public is clearly not the result of increases in the population's "ideological capacities" brought about by gains in educational attainment. These findings seem to have major implications for the theory of mass beliefs, for they seriously question the importance of permanent personal characteristics such as ideational sophistication or the ability to obtain and utilize contextual knowledge as deter-

minants of levels of attitude consistency in mass publics. Those with the lowest educational attainment have experienced the largest increases in consistency on the core domestic issues; and little significant difference appears to be present between the two educational groups in comparison to the dramatic increases in consistency which both groups have experienced. It would be hard to argue that those who have not completed high school are as capable of manipulating abstract concepts as those who have some college training. Yet if factors such as these place limits on the level of attitudinal consistency among the masses, we would not now find that those at the educational extremes display relatively equal and high levels of attitude consistency.

The Changing Salience of Politics: An Explanation

The explanation of the emerging ideological constraint among political attitudes does not appear to be related to inherent limitation in the mass public. What, then, can account for the dramatic shifts in both the breadth and the depth of liberal/conservative attitude structure which we have documented? The answer, we believe, lies in the changing nature of politics from the 1950s to the 1970s and, as a result of these changes, the growing sense on the part of the mass public that politics has a significant effect on their lives.

A repeated finding from social-psychological research on attitude change and attitude structure is that inconsistent or dissonant beliefs are frequently held in areas of people's lives distant from their daily concerns.[20] However, these studies indicate that when the salience or centrality of the psychological object is heightened, tremendous pressures are brought on individuals to force their heretofore inconsistent beliefs into harmony. We argue that the political events of the last decade, and the crisis atmosphere which has attended them, have caused citizens to perceive politics as increasingly central to their lives. If we are correct about this increased

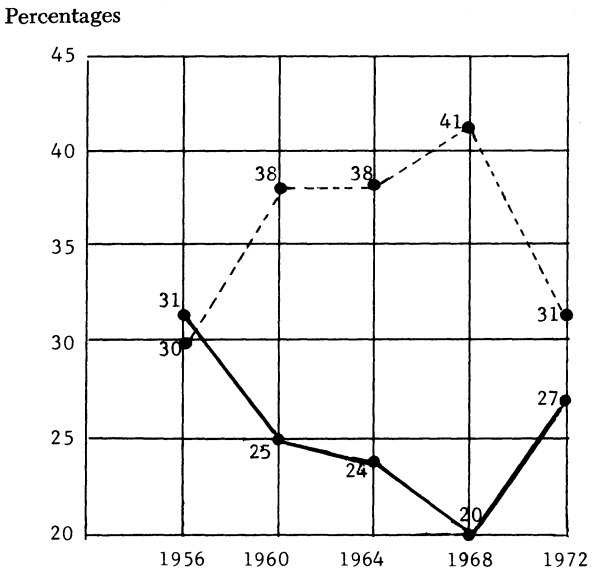
[20] See Leon Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (Stanford, Calif., Stanford University Press, 1968). Various types of empirical evidence confirming the proposition that increased salience leads to increased attitude constraint can be found in Milton J. Rosenberg et al., *Attitude Organization and Change,* Yale Studies in Attitude Communication, vol. 3, New Haven, Conn., 1960.

salience, then the social-psychological theories of attitude change represent a possible explanation for the observed increases in ideological constraint. However, in order to test this argument we must show first, that the level of salience of politics has increased; and second, that consistency has increased primarily among those to whom politics has become salient.

Although we have no data tapping the centrality of politics to people's lives, we do have a number of alternative measures of what one might call "positive salience," that is, the degree to which citizens report being interested or actively involved in politics. These include over time data on rates of campaign participation, frequency of following election campaigns in the media, and general interest in the campaigns. Each of these measures displays the same pattern as revealed in Figure 7, which presents the proportion of the population who are "very much interested" and "not at all

FIGURE 7

INTEREST IN PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNS, 1956–72



Key: - - - - - - Very interested
———— Not at all interested

interested" in each of the presidential elections between 1956 and 1972.[21]

As the data in this figure show, citizen interest in presidential elections rose steadily from 1956 through 1968. The percentage who report being very interested in the campaigns grew from 30 percent in 1956 to 41 percent in 1968. Conversely, the proportion reporting no interest at all in the campaigns registered an equally sharp decline—from 31 percent to 20 percent. There was, in other words, a 22 percentage-point increase in campaign interest between 1956 and 1968. However, in 1972, levels of campaign interest in the mass public fell precipitously, with the proportion reporting high interest declining almost to the 1956 level and the proportion reporting no interest rising sharply from 20 to 27 percent.[22]

If attitude consistency is a function of the salience of politics, and if the level of campaign interest taps the salience of politics, consistency should show a concomitant decline in 1972. The data, however, indicate that the level of attitude consistency remained constant between 1968 and 1972. Thus, while the salience hypothesis seems plausible up until 1968, the pattern after this point casts some doubt on the argument.

But simply examining marginal shifts in interest does not enable us to come to any conclusion; as was the case with the hypothesis involving education, we need to examine the levels of attitude consistency over time among the interested and uninterested. This we do in Figure 8, where we plot the levels of attitude consistency for those who are highly interested in the campaigns and for those who report no interest at all. Once again we present two separate graphs: the first displays the level of consistency for the two groups taking into account positions on all of the issues, domestic and

[21] The precise questions asked in each year was: "Some people don't pay much attention to the political campaigns. How about you, would you say that you were very much interested, somewhat interested, or not much interested in following the political campaigns this year?" Responses to this question are not affected by the spread of television as are the media questions, and they provide more variance than campaign participation.

[22] The total percentage point increase from 1956 to 1968 in interest in presidential elections (as computed in Figure 7) is 19 percentage points for those with at least some college training and 17 percentage points for those who have not completed high school. Furthermore, sizable increases are also found among blacks and whites, young and old, and those residing in both North and South.

foreign. The second graph presents the average levels of consistency for the core domestic issues.

We can see that the growth of interest does not alone account for the rise of liberal/conservative ideology because consistency has gone up among the interested and uninterested alike, just as it has gone up among both the educated and less educated. However, while increased educational attainment appeared to play almost no role in the growth of attitude consistency, increases in political interest (or the salience of politics), as these data indicate, have played a very significant role.

Between 1960 and 1968, it was among the growing group of citizens interested in politics that one found the largest increase in attitude consistency. Furthermore, unlike the data on education—where there tended to be less difference in the degree of ideological consistency between the better and lesser educated at the end of the time period than at the beginning—we find in relation to political interest that there was a much greater gap in constraint between the more and less interested in 1964 and 1968 than in the pre-1964 period. By 1968, over-all consistency (including domestic and foreign issues) among those with no interest had increased only 15 percentage points from 1956, while for the highly interested the average gammas among the same issues had grown 26 points. The pattern is the same for the average correlations among the core domestic issues.

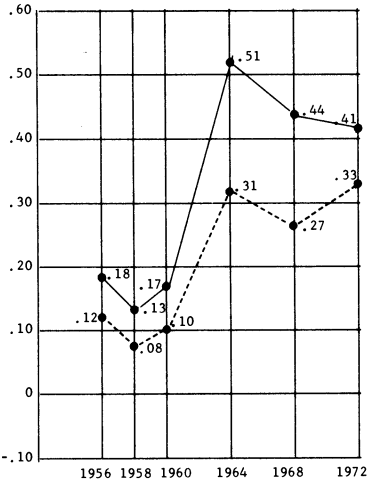
Remember also that the relative size of the interested group had undergone a steady increase, from 30 to 40 percent of the population, while the uninterested declined from 30 percent to 20 percent of the population. The combined impact of the rise in attitude consistency among those interested in politics and the increase in the numbers of such citizens accounts for a major proportion of the observed growth of ideological constraint in the population as a whole.

By 1968 and 1972, however, the interest-based explanation seems to fall apart. While the group of highly interested citizens displays levels of consistency comparable to, or only slightly less than, those found in 1968, consistency among those reporting no interest in the campaign unexpectedly rises rather sharply. What is more, as we saw in Figure 7, the highly interested group has significantly diminished in size from its 1968 level, while those claiming no interest have increased in number.

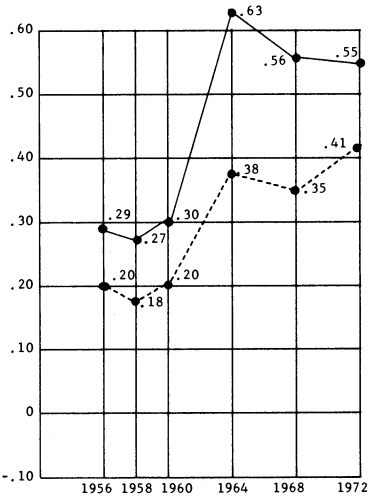
FIGURE 8

COMPARISON OF LEVELS OF ATTITUDE CONSISTENCY THROUGH TIME FOR THE INTERESTED AND UNINTERESTED IN PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNS, 1956–72

Correlation of all issues for two levels of campaign interest.



Correlation among four domestic issues for two levels of campaign interest.



Key: ———— Very Interested
– – – – – – Not at all interested

If the rise of constraint among the manifestly uninterested is responsible for the maintenance of high levels of consistency in the face of a sharp decline in campaign interest, how can this pattern be reconciled with the salience hypothesis? The answer, we believe, is that the nature of salience has changed: events of recent years have rendered campaign interest inadequate as a measure of the salience of politics. As we pointed out earlier, indicators such as levels of campaign interest or campaign participation are not direct measures of salience but measure it only insofar as *positive* involvement captures the major part of salience. In fact, it is both possible and, in circumstances such as those of the late 1960s and early 1970s, likely that there are citizens for whom politics is quite salient in terms of its perceived ability to affect their lives, but whose frustration with governmental policies or political processes

has led them to withdraw from or express disinterest in specific political events such as elections. Thus among the recently expanded segment of the population that reports no interest in the presidential campaign, the group which is crucial to understanding the patterns we have found in the 1972 data, at least two kinds of citizens may be present. There are those who are simply quiescent; their attitude toward politics is one of apathy toward a remote phenomenon. Others who claim to be uninterested may do so out of a sense of frustration or disenchantment—they are dissatisfied with the choices they must make or feel that government and politics are corrupt and unresponsive. For this latter group, lack of interest may indicate anything but a lack of salience.

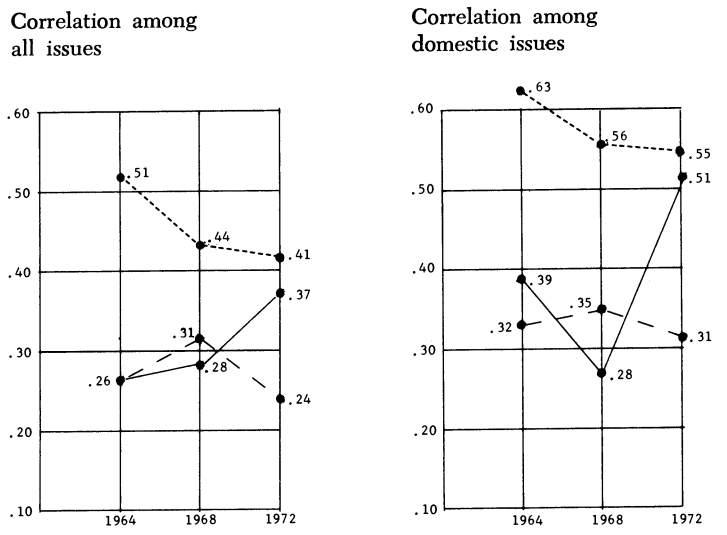
While we do not have data to differentiate between these two groups throughout the time period, we do have a comprehensive battery of questions on cynicism toward political and governmental processes which precisely tap this dimension from 1964 onward.[23] By combining these items into a summary index we can examine two types of citizens who profess disinterest in election campaigns —the disenchanted (those who are distrustful or cynical towards government) and the quiescent (those who basically trust the government). The proportion of "uninterested" citizens who respond in a predominantly disenchanted manner to these questions has grown steadily since 1964. In that year, only 40 percent of those who reported no interest in the campaign could be categorized as disenchanted, with the remainder quiescent. This propor-

[23] The questions are as follows: "Do you think that people in government waste a lot of the money we pay in taxes, waste some of it, or don't waste very much of it?" "How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington to do what is right?" "Would you say the government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves or that it is run for the benefit of all the people?" "Do you feel that almost all of the people running the government are smart people who usually know what they are doing or do you think that quite a lot of them don't seem to know what they are doing?" "Do you think that quite a few of the people running the government are a little crooked, not very many are, or do you think hardly any of them are crooked at all?" These questions were entered into a factor analysis; the scale based on the first principal component was dichotomized at the over-all (that is, for all years) mean. Our interest in the relationship between political trust and ideology was initially stimulated by Arthur H. Miller, "Political Issues and Trust in Government 1964-1970" (paper delivered at the 68th annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, D.C., September 5-9, 1972.)

tion had risen to 50 percent in 1968 and by 1972 the disenchanted had come to constitute almost 65 percent of those who claimed to be uninterested. In fact, we have some reason to believe that it is this very growth of disenchantment which is largely responsible for driving down levels of interest.

FIGURE 9

ATTITUDE CONSISTENCY FOR THREE GROUPS: 1964–72



Key: - - - - - - Interested
——— Disenchanted
— — — — Quiescent

If we examine levels of attitude consistency for those two types of citizens—the quiescent and the disenchanted—alongside the citizens who report high levels of political interest, perhaps we can begin to solve the puzzle presented by the patterns of consistency in the 1972 data.[24] The two graphs in Figure 9 present the levels

[24] Of course the highly interested population can also be broken into two groups according to their level of distrust. If this division is made, we find that the proportion of distrustful citizens among the interested has also been rising since 1964, and that these people show higher levels of consistency in all three years than do those who trust the government.

of over-all consistency and inconsistency on domestic issues for three groups: the interested, the disenchanted, and the quiescent.

What has happened to maintain high levels of attitude consistency despite the drastic decline in campaign interest, or what we term "positive salience," is quite clear. First, in 1964 and 1968, only the positively involved were characterized by high levels of consistency; both the disenchanted and the quiescent displayed modest levels of constraint, relative to the interested population. In 1972, on the other hand, we can discern two markedly different groups among those who claim to be uninterested in the presidential campaign, with the disenchanted now approaching the levels of ideological constraint shown by the highly interested. The levels of consistency shown by the quiescent group, on the other hand, remain at a low level. Furthermore, the disenchanted are the only group to show, between 1964 and 1972, a marked increase in their liberal/conservative consistency on the core domestic issues. The modest levels of consistency manifested in 1964 and 1968 by both the quiescent and the disenchanted suggest that politics was salient for neither group.

Several factors lead us to believe, however, that the nature of the disenchanted group underwent a fundamental change between 1968 and 1972. While the proportion of the population reporting no interest in the election campaign rose sharply from '68 to '72 and the proportion reporting high interest declined even more steeply, the percentage of the population classified by our measures as quiescent remained virtually constant. Given this constancy in the proportion of quiescent in 1968 and 1972, the growth of the disenchanted in '72 must have resulted from the withdrawal of citizens who were previously among the interested—that is, among those for whom politics was highly salient. The high levels of ideological constraint displayed by the disenchanted in 1972 suggest that politics has remained central to these individuals but has turned from a politics of positive salience to one of negative salience. Whether or not this interpretation is precisely correct there can be little doubt about the empirical facts: the disenchanted have become a significant portion of the population in 1972; and it is this group alone which has caused the level of ideological constraint to remain high despite a decline in positive political interest.

Summary

Once again we want to stress that the data in the preceding section are by no means a definitive test of the hypothesis that heightened salience of politics has produced higher levels of attitude constraint among the mass public. Without a direct measure of centrality of politics to people's lives, the argument is tentative at best. And, even with a direct measure of salience we would be without a data-based explanation for the causes of the rise in salience. But, after all, this is the crux of our argument. The problem with the classical theory of mass beliefs is that it is built around notions of enduring characteristics of the mass public, of the sort which are relatively impervious to changes in the nature of the political world. Linking changes in attitude structure instead to events in the real world, which are not measurable characteristics of individuals, is a much more difficult task.

But let us think for a moment about American politics during the period we are investigating. The year 1956 was the middle of the Eisenhower era; the Korean War and the McCarthy hearings were in the past, and in a very real sense, not very much was happening politically. Not only were there no visible social problems which threw into question the system's ability to cope, but the administration's policy was one of de-emphasizing Washington and the federal government as the focal point of politics. It is not surprising that the modal attitude toward government was one of acceptance and noninvolvement. Politics was indeed, as Robert Dahl described it at the time, merely a sideshow in the circus of life.

The first big change in this picture occurred in 1960 with the advent of a deliberately activist administration, a new focus on the problems of race and poverty, and perhaps most important, a Kennedy-inspired conviction, on the part of many citizens, that involvement in politics could actually bring about desired changes. Available data on participation support the claim that one of the most significant accomplishments of the Kennedy administration was an increased positive interest and involvement in politics.

The tremendous media focus on Kennedy's assassination brought politics even more into the forefront of national life, and within a year all of this heightened positive involvement was channeled into a highly ideological election. As we have seen, issue positions in 1964 displayed a consistency and a polarization which was in stark contrast to the situation found in 1956, '58, and '60. But the 1964

election, and the impetus it provided to citizens to structure their political beliefs into a coherent liberal/conservative ideology, was not merely a transient phenomenon. In the middle and late 1960s, Americans were bombarded with one social and political crisis after another: urban rioting, increased militancy within the civil-rights movement, campus demonstrations, political assassinations, deeper involvement in the quagmire of a distant war. Even though our data are essentially pre-Watergate, by the late 1960s the positive involvement of the early and mid-60s had turned decidedly sour. The war lingered on, the Great Society programs appeared to have failed, and it seemed as if the government was incapable of dealing with new problems such as crime, pollution, and inflation. The cynicism which arose from government's failure to deal with the society's problems by no means decreased the salience of politics—the feeling that what happens in Washington affects one's life persists—but, we believe, did cause many people to withdraw from politics in frustration.

The important point is that the pattern of attitudes found among Americans in the 1950s was a transient phenomenon and not an inevitable characteristic of mass politics. Of course, the pattern that emerged in the 1960s may be transient as well, but that does not change our argument about the lack of inevitability of the earlier pattern. Indeed, our data suggest that not only specific political attitudes but the *structure* of mass attitudes may be affected by politics in the real world. The average citizen may not be as apolitical as has been thought.

Ideology and Electoral Behavior: Some Political Implications

We have located a substantial and widespread increase in the consistency of political attitudes in the post-1960 era and we have argued that this finding is indicative of the growth of a more ideologically-oriented mass public. However, the analysis thus far has dealt exclusively with the interrelationships among attitudes, and the question remains as to whether or not such attitudes have actually come to play a more significant role in American politics. In the concluding section of the paper we will endeavor to provide an answer to one aspect of this question by determining whether positions on the issues have come to have a greater impact on the way citizens vote and thereby on the outcome of elections.

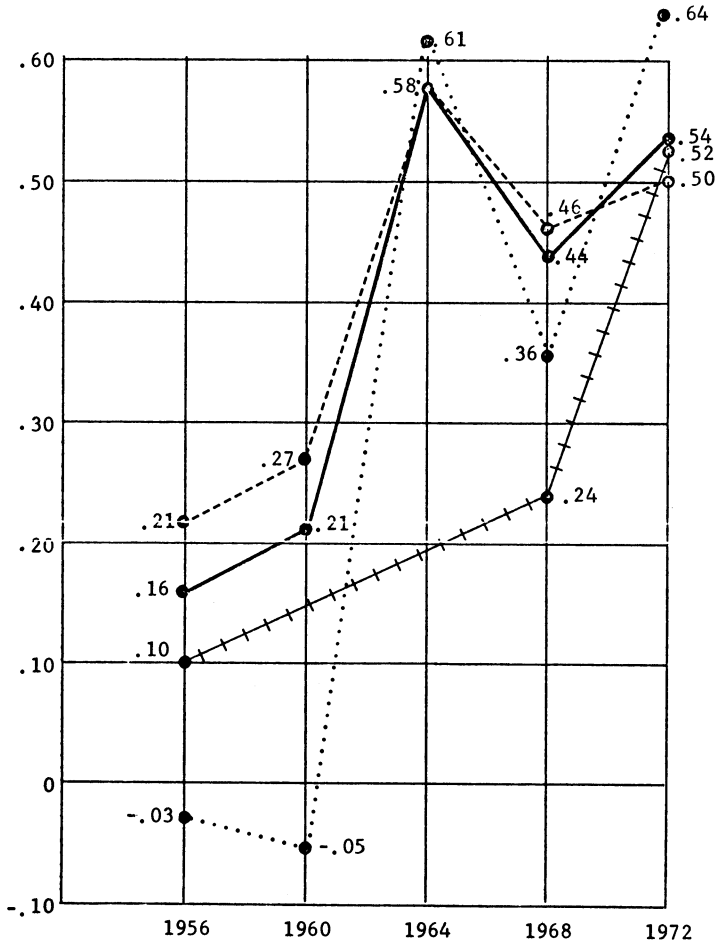
In the last several years there has been a surge of interest in voter rationality and issue voting; there are now a number of studies which show an increase in the degree to which citizens are voting in accordance with their attitudes on political issues.[25] An extensive over-time analysis of issue voting and its relationships to increased ideological consistency obviously is a mammoth undertaking in its own right and is beyond the scope of this paper. However without some evidence as to whether the emergent mass ideology is having an impact on electoral behavior, the analysis presented here becomes more an exercise in social psychology than a piece of political analysis. If heightened attitude consistency is indicative of an increased ideological orientation within the electorate, then the types of attitudes with which we have been dealing should have become more consistent with voting preferences, as well as with each other. Furthermore, if there has been a substantial increase in issue-oriented voting, this would seem to be a good indication that the changes in attitude structure we have observed are having significant political consequences.[26] In each presidential election between 1956 and 1972 we will examine the relationship between left-right attitudes on our comparable issues and voting choice (that is, whether the respondent voted for the Democratic or Republican candidate). In addition, we will present the relationships between

[25] The increase in issue-oriented voting is becoming well-documented. In fact, a recent edition of the *American Political Science Review* contained two articles, several comments, and several rejoinders making this argument. While the authors often disagreed on the meaning and on many of the implications of issue-oriented voting, they all clearly pointed out a recent increase in the relationship between issue positions and partisan choice. See in *American Political Science Review*, 66 (June 1972), the following: Gerald M. Pomper, "From Confusion to Clarity: Issues and American Voters, 1956-1968," 415-428; Richard W. Boyd, "Popular Control of Public Policy: A Normal Vote Analysis of the 1968 Election," 429-449; Richard A. Brody and B. I. Page, "Comment: The Assessment of Policy Voting," 450-458; John H. Kessel, "Comment: The Issues in Issue Voting," 459-465; Pomper, "Rejoinder to 'Comments' by Richard A. Brody and B. I. Page and John Kessel," 466-467; Boyd, "Rejoinder to 'Comments' by Richard A. Brody and Benjamin I. Page and John H. Kessel," 468-470.

[26] Consistency between attitudes and voting choice however, is not wholly dependent on the mass public. A strong relationship requires not only an ideological orientation on the part of the public but also depends upon whether or not the parties and candidates offer the kinds of choices that enable citizens to act upon their preferences.

FIGURE 10

AVERAGE CORRELATION (GAMMAS) BETWEEN LIBERAL/CONSERVATIVE ATTITUDES AND PRESIDENTIAL VOTE CHOICE (DEMOCRATIC VS. REPUBLICAN) 1956–72



Key: ———— Average of all issue areas
– – – – – – Average for domestic issues
..... Average for attitudes on Cold War
+ + + + Average for civil liberties attitudes

attitudes on civil liberties of dissenters and presidential vote for 1956, 1968, and 1972. The relevant data are presented in Figure 10. The measures of association are once again average gammas.

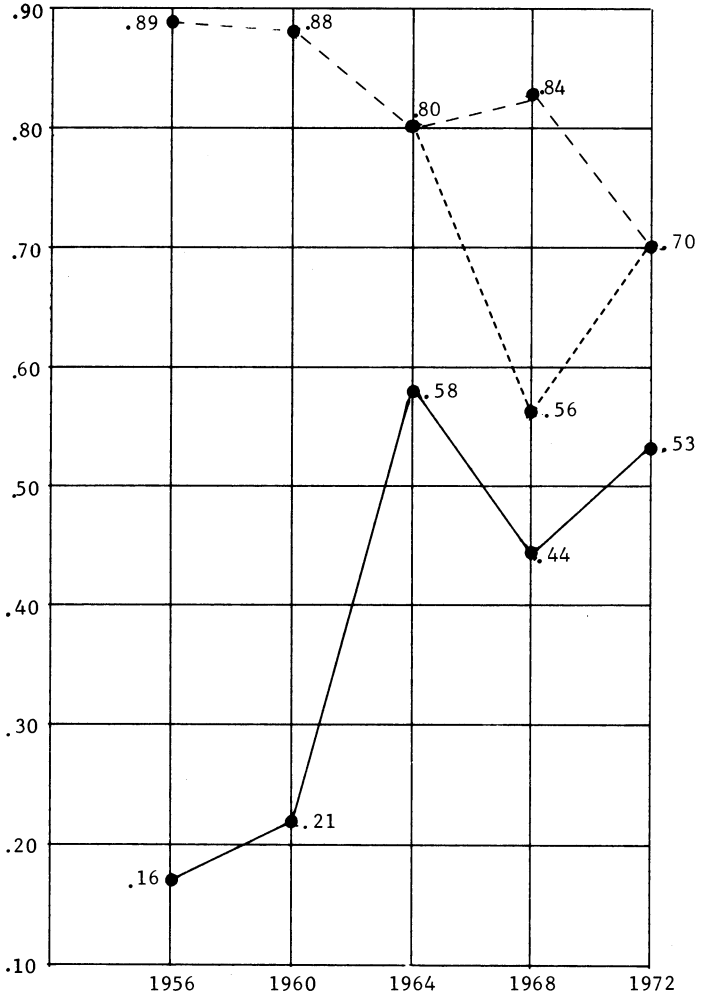
The heavy solid line in the figure presents the average gammas at each point in time between liberal/conservative positions on the standard set of issues and the direction of the presidential vote. The broken line displays parallel information but takes into account only the attitudes on the domestic issues. The dotted line gives the average correlation between the presidential vote and left-right positions on the conduct of the cold war. Finally, the hatched line displays for 1956, 1968, and 1972 the average gamma between attitudes on civil liberties and the vote.

All of these measures indicate that the relationship between liberal/conservative attitudes and the presidential vote has increased rather dramatically during the 1956-72 period. Furthermore, as can be seen, the increased relationship between attitudes and voting pertains to positions on civil liberties as well as both foreign and domestic issues; and a more detailed analysis of these data reveal that the correlations for each of the individual attitudes on which the averages in the figure are based have increased significantly. Finally, we note that the increased association between voting and attitudes has occurred at approximately the same point in time at which we earlier found increases in attitude consistency. Once again, the distinction between the pre- and post-1964 era is apparent. However, as one would expect, there appears to be more election-specific fluctuation in these relations than in the levels of consistency themselves. No matter how the Wallace voters are treated, in the 1968 election, issues bore less relation to the vote than in either 1964 or 1972.[27] More important, however, is the fact that all three of the presidential elections since 1964 are on a new, higher plateau than those in 1956 and 1960. To this extent at least

[27] There are, of course, special problems in dealing with the three-candidate 1968 election. When the Wallace voters are excluded from the analysis, party identification and presidential vote are quite highly correlated, but excluding them distorts reality by ignoring 12 percent of the population who defected in their vote from the normal party identification. When the Wallace voters are included, placed to the right of the Nixon voters, the gamma between party and the vote falls to .56. However, this figure probably represents a distortion in the opposite direction, and we have presented both relationships. Reality undoubtedly lies somewhere in between, revealing a steady decline in the impact of party identification throughout the period.

FIGURE 11

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN ATTITUDES AND PRESIDENTIAL VOTE AND BETWEEN PARTY IDENTIFICATION AND PRESIDENTIAL VOTE, 1956–72



Key: — — — — Party identification and vote
- - - - - - Wallace voters included
———— Attitude and vote

the growth of ideology appears to be having a significant impact on presidential elections.

The increased importance of ideology in the voting behavior of the mass public as well as its heightened importance in presidential elections is brought into even starker relief when we compare the changing impact of political attitudes with more habitual determinants of the vote such as partisan identification. An over-time comparison of the importance of attitudes versus that of partisan identification as alternative explanations of the presidential vote appears in Figure 11.[28]

The solid line in Figure 11 simply displays once again the average gammas between the comparable attitudes and presidential vote. The dashed line represents the gamma between party identification and presidential vote for each year. In 1956 and 1960 political attitudes appear to have had only a small impact on presidential voting while standing partisan affiliation played a predominant if not exclusive role in explaining the direction of the presidential vote. In 1964, 1968, and 1972, the situation changes substantially; in these elections, position on the issues has come to have a much greater impact on the vote, while the role of party identification declines concomitantly. In 1956, the average gamma between attitudes and presidential vote was .16. By 1972, it had grown to .53 and in each of the elections after 1964 it hovered around .50. In contrast, the relationship between party identification and the vote has steadily declined throughout the period, from .89 in 1956 to .70 in 1972. In short, in the last three presidential elections, political attitudes have come to be an increasingly significant force in determining the direction of the presidential vote while the impact of partisan identification, once predominant, has become much less significant. Perhaps voter rationality, like attitude consistency, is also more a function of the political context than a consequence of innate limitations of the mass public.

Some of our findings are also relevant to another change in American politics which has lately come to be of much concern—

[28] On the basis of the same questions asked in each survey the respondents were coded into three categories of partisan identification from left to right: (1) Democratic; (2) independent; and (3) Republican. Those sometimes classified as Democrat or Republican leaners as well as those who maintained their independent stance throughout the battery of questions were classified as independents for our analysis.

the possibility that the United States may be in a period of major party realignment. Our data show that greater potentiality exists now for the division of the American public into ideological camps than was the case just a few years ago.[29] In this connection it is interesting to note the evolving relationship between the political attitudes on the one hand and presidential voting and party identification on the other. Table 5 presents the data.

TABLE 5

COMPARISON OF CORRELATIONS (GAMMAS) WITH ATTITUDES 1956-72

	1956	1960	1964	1968	1972
Presidential voting and attitudes	.16	.21	.57	.43	.53
Party identification and attitudes	.12	.15	.32	.26	.16
Difference	.04	.06	.25	.17	.37

At the beginning of the period under investigation, political attitudes had little relationship to either presidential voting or partisan identification. As we have shown, the relationship between attitudes and presidential voting has risen dramatically from the pre- to the post-1964 period. The relationship between these attitudes and more permanent party allegiance has undergone a more complex pattern of change. In 1956 attitudes on political issues bore little or no relationship to party identification. In 1964 and to a lesser degree in 1968, this picture appeared to have changed somewhat: while rising less rapidly and dramatically than the relationship between attitudes and presidential voting, that between attitudes and party allegiance had increased substantially over the 1956 level.[30] As Pomper argues, in 1964 and 1968 it appeared that

[29] Critical election periods heralding major realignments have been long thought to depend upon the emergence of a deep and enduring cleavage in the electorate, precisely of the sort we have located. See Key, "A Theory of Critical Elections," *Journal of Politics*, 17 (February 1955), 3-18. The phenomenon of critical elections, as well as the role of policy questions and group divisions in such realignments are discussed at some length in W. D. Burham, *Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1970).

[30] In his recent article, "Confusion to Clarity," Pomper has demonstrated increases in the relationship between political attitudes (of the kind we have been looking at) and partisan identification. Pomper argues that this may be evidence of a party realignment.

the parties were capturing the heightened ideological consistency and polarization and effecting a realignment which reinforced existing party divisions: a liberal Democratic party and a conservative Republican one. In 1972, however, while attitude consistency in the mass public remained at the same high level as in 1968 and the impact of attitudes on the vote had increased somewhat, the parties in 1972 no longer appeared to be reflecting attitudes which are increasingly aligned on a left-right continuum. In fact, the average gamma falls almost to the 1956 level. This drop raises the spectre of a very different kind of realignment than that suggested by Pomper, one in which new partisan attachments may form that are not based on an increasingly liberal Democratic party versus an increasingly conservative Republican party. We are obviously in the midst of rapid social and political change, and it is very difficult given the possible election-specific nature of many of the shifting relationships, to see any clear long-term trends with regard to realignment. Whether the growth of political ideology in America results in any type of ideologically opposed political parties will turn upon whether the more consistent and polarized attitude structure persists among citizens and upon the evolving party positions and the candidates they nominate. The persistence of attitude consistency among the mass public will depend—as we have demonstrated—on the character of the American political experience in the 1970s.

APPENDIX

PART I. QUESTIONS FROM THE MAIN FIVE ISSUE AREAS

A. *Social Welfare*

1. *Employment*:
   (*1956, 1958, 1960*) "The government in Washington ought to see to it that everybody who wants to work can find a job. Do you have an opinion on this or not?"
   (Agree strongly—disagree strongly.)
   (*1964, 1968*) "In general, some people feel that the government in Washington should see to it that every person has a job and a good standard of living. Others think the government should just let each person get ahead on his own. Have you been interested enough in this to favor one side over the other?"
   (*1972*) Same as 1964 and 1968. "Where would you place yourself on this scale?"

2. *School Aid*:
   (*1956, 1958, 1960*) "If cities and towns around the country need help to build more schools, the government in Washington ought to give them the money they need. Do you have an opinion on this or not?"
   (Agree strongly—disagree strongly.)
   (*1964, 1968*) "Some people think the government in Washington should help towns and cities provide education for grade and high school children; others think that this should be handled by the states and local communities. Have you been interested enough in this to favor one side over the other?"
   (*1972*) Not asked.

3. *Medicare*:
   (*1956, 1960,* No question asked in 1958) "The government ought to help people get doctors and hospital care at low cost. Do you have an opinion on this or not?"
   (Agree strongly—disagree strongly.)
   (*1964, 1968*) "Some say the government in Washington ought to help people get doctors and hospital care at low cost, others say the government should not get into this. Have you been interested enough in this to favor one side over the other?"
   (*1972*) "There is much concern about the rapid rise in medical and hospital costs. Some feel there should be a government insurance plan which would cover all medical and hospital expenses. Others feel that medical expenses should be paid by individuals, and through private insurance like Blue Cross. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this?"

4. *NORC 1971 Welfare Questions*: "Now about welfare. Some people think that the government should support any family that doesn't have enough money to live on, even if the father is working. Look at Card F. They would be at point 1. Other people think that, no matter how poor a family is, they should take care of themselves. They would be at point 7.

Still other people have an opinion that falls somewhere in between. Where would you place yourself?"

"Some people think that the government should use all its resources to eliminate poverty in this country. Look at Card K. They would be at point 1. Others think the government has already done too much about poverty. They would be at point 7. And others have opinions that fall somewhere in between 1 and 7. Where would you place yourself?"

B. *Black Welfare*

(*1956, 1958, 1960*) "If Negroes are not getting fair treatment in jobs and housing, the government should see to it that they do. Do you have an opinion on this or not?"

(Agree strongly—disagree strongly.)

(*1964 and 1968*) "Some people feel that if Negroes (colored people) are not getting fair treatment in jobs the government in Washington ought to see to it that they do. Others feel that this is not the federal government's business. Have you had enough interest in this question to favor one side over the other?"

(*NORC 1971*) "Some people think that the recent attempts to improve conditions for blacks in America should be speeded up. Look at Card E. They would be at point 1. Others think that these efforts should be slowed down; they would be at point 7. And those who have other opinions would be somewhere between 1 and 7. Where would you place yourself?"

(*1972*) "Some people feel that if black people are not getting fair treatment in jobs the government in Washington ought to see to it that they do. Others feel that this is not the federal government's business. Have you had enough interest in this question to favor one side over the other?"

C. *School Integration*

(*1956, 1958, 1960*) "The government in Washington should stay out of the question of whether white and colored children go to the same school. Do you have an opinion on this or not?"

(Agree strongly—disagree strongly.)

(*1964, 1968, and 1972*) "Some people say that the government in Washington should see to it that white and Negro children are allowed to go to the same schools. Others claim this is not the government's business. Have you been concerned enough about this question to favor one side over the other?"

(*NORC 1971*) "Some people believe that the government should do whatever is necessary to see to it that blacks can buy homes in white neighborhoods. Look at Card I. They would be at point 1. Others feel that the government should stay out of it altogether. They would be at point 7. While others have opinions somewhere in between. Where would you place yourself?"

D. *Size of Government*

(*1956, 1958*) "The government should leave things like electric power and housing for private businessmen to handle."

(Agree strongly—disagree strongly.)

(*1960*) "The government should leave things like electric power and housing for private business to handle. Do you have an opinion on this or not?

(*If Yes*) Do you think the government should leave things like this to private business?"

(*1964, 1968, and 1972*) "Some people are afraid the government in Washington is getting too powerful for the good of the country and the individual person. Others feel that the government in Washington is not getting too strong for the good of the country. Have you been interested enough in this to favor one side over the other?"

(*NORC 1971*—no parallel question)

E. *Cold War*

(*1956, 1958, 1960*) "The United States should keep soldiers overseas where they can help countries that are against Communism. Do you have an opinion on this or not?"

(Agree strongly—disagree strongly.)

(*1964, 1968*) "Some people think our government should sit down and talk to the leaders of the Communist countries and try to settle our differences, while others think we should refuse to have anything to do with them. Have you been interested enough in this to favor one side over the other?"

(*1968 and 1972*) "There is much talk about 'hawks' and 'doves' in connection with Vietnam, and considerable disagreement as to what action the United States should take in Vietnam. Some people think we should do everything possible to win a complete military victory, no matter what results. Some people think we should withdraw completely from Vietnam right now, no matter what results. And, of course, other people have opinions somewhere between these two extreme positions. Suppose the people who support an immediate withdrawal are at one end of this scale at point number 1 and suppose the people who support a complete military victory are at the other end of the scale at point number 7. At what point on the scale would you place yourself?"

(*NORC 1971*) "About the war in Vietnam. Some people think we should withdraw completely from Vietnam right now; other people think we should do everything necessary to win a complete military victory; and others have opinions somewhere in between. Look at this card. If you think of the people who support an immediate withdrawal at point 1, and the people who support complete military victory at point 7, and those who have other opinions as somewhere between 1 and 7, where would you place yourself?"

PART II. ELITE ATTITUDE QUESTIONS

A. *Welfare*

1. *Education*:
"Do you think the government should provide grants to the states for the construction and operation of public schools, or do you think the support of public education should be left entirely to the state and local governments?"

2. *Jobs*:
"Do you think that the federal government ought to sponsor programs such as large public works in order to maintain full employment, or do you think that problems of economic readjustment ought to be left more to private industry or state and local government?"

B. *Size of Government*
"How about the controversy over the development of atomic power. Do you think the government should develop power from atomic energy, or do you think this should be left to private industry?"

C. *Race*

1. *Voting*:
"Now, in the area of civil rights. Do you think the question of the voting rights of Negroes should generally be left to state and local authorities, or should the federal government take action in this field?"

2. *Jobs*:
"Do you think the federal government should establish a fair employment practices commission to prevent discrimination in employment?"

3. *Schools*:
"If Congress were to vote to give federal aid to public schools, do you think this aid should be given to schools which are integrated?"

D. *Cold War*
"What do you feel about aid for underdeveloped countries that take a neutral position between the United States and the Soviet Union? Do you think we should give them aid only if they support the West?"