

A COMPARISON OF THE STUCTURE OF ELITE AND MASS POLITICAL ATTITUDES:
THE DIMENSIONALITY OF AMERICAN POLITICAL THINKING, 1980-2004

By

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ABSTRACT

A COMPARISON OF THE STRUCTURE OF ELITE AND MASS POLITICAL ATTITUDES: THE DIMENSIONALITY OF AMERICAN POLITICAL THINKING, 1980-2004

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This dissertation examines the structure of Americans' political attitudes among political elites and the mass public. I demonstrate the presence, nature, determinants and dimensionality of political thinking in the United States, or the underlying structure (or lack thereof) that connects constellations of individuals' political issue attitudes. In doing so, I describe and explain the cognitive map that citizens bring to bear to the political world.

This project begins by analyzing the attitudes of political elites, represented by survey responses of delegates to the Democratic and Republican party national conventions from 1980-2004. Although studies show that ideology influences elites' political attitudes, no empirical study has demonstrated that these attitudes share a single structure outside of the context of congressional roll call voting, where agenda setting and party influences potentially conflate behavior with attitudes. I provide evidence that a single underlying dimension, the traditional liberal-conservative continuum, structures elites' issue attitudes. Elites' reliance on "liberal" and "conservative" abstractions to conceptualize the political world produces interrelationships among disparate political issues, reducing attitudes to a single ideological dimension.

Next, I analyze surveys of the mass public over the same time period in order to compare the attitude structure of ordinary citizens to the benchmark of ideological thinking exhibited by elites. Despite elites' pervasive influence on mass attitudes and behavior, only a small percentage of citizens are shown to structure their attitudes similarly to that of the delegates. The consequence of this finding is that intense elite polarization, and, consequently, increasingly

ideologically consistent rhetoric and cues, has not led to increased ideological thinking among most members of the mass public. However, I also demonstrate that the extent of ideological thinking varies widely within the mass public, and that this variation is attributable to differences in individuals' level of political sophistication, which I capture with a new measure combining indicators of political interest, involvement and knowledge. Despite the relative paucity of ideological thinking among the mass public, I identify, contrary to prior work, a segment of the mass public whose attitude structure mirrors that of elites.

Finally, I present and test a model of elite and mass spending preferences. The findings support the hypothesis that elite attitudes toward virtually all items in the federal budget conform to a single dimension, indicating that the concept of government spending is a much broader term for elites than it is for the mass public. I further show that differences in individuals' conception of government spending depend crucially upon their level of political sophistication.

Ultimately, this project uncovers the dimensionality of elite and mass political attitudes, as well as the sources and extent of the variability in ideological thinking within the electorate, over a twenty-four year period. The evidence provides resolution to the debate regarding the relationship between political sophistication and attitudinal constraint, as the attitude structures of elites and the most politically sophisticated members of the mass public are constrained to the unidimensional liberal-conservative continuum. The findings also testify to the relatively limited impact of elite polarization on the ideological thinking and attitudinal constraint of the mass public. The results elucidate the "pictures in the heads" of the American people and have implications for our understanding of public opinion and the all-important two-way relationship between elites and the mass public.

I dedicate this dissertation to my mom and dad, who are simply the two best people I will ever know.

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As I reflect on the final, propitious moment of this dissertation and pause to consider its meaning from the mountaintop of formal education, I am admittedly overwhelmed with emotion because the completion of the project represents not only the conclusion of my graduate school career at Michigan State University, but also what has been a lifelong journey through the public school system. I have stepped onto the grounds of a school campus to signal the auspicious start of an academic year for each of the previous twenty-four falls through the fall of 2013, and in every one of those remarkable years, I benefited immensely from the time, teaching, energy and love of brilliant, kind, generous, wonderful and truly amazing people. This dissertation, then, surely represents a triumph of hard work, belief and dedication, largely exhibited on the part of those incredible people who labored in order to provide me with a chance to succeed, supported me unwaveringly and devoted a significant portion of their lives to improving mine.

There are no two people on the planet who are more responsible for the completion of this project than my parents, Joe and Peggy Lupton. They are extraordinary individuals in every regard, and I have been enriched more as a person from their love, guidance, teaching and wisdom than from all others combined. My mom is the biggest, most consistent supporter imaginable, and she is the kindest, most compassionate soul I have ever known, in addition to being a comedian. Her concern for me through every school event, sports practice, game and social function as a kid, and through every moment—fragile and favorable alike—as an adult is unparalleled and staggering. Her selflessness, strength, courage and perseverance inspire me daily. She has provided me with a beautiful example of humility, generosity, respectfulness and grace. The doctors describe her as a medical miracle, and she is a miracle in my life at every moment. I look forward to laughing and smiling with you throughout all of our future journeys,

mom. My dad is unique in the classical sense of the word, a man from a different era whose knowledge of the world, natural ability to thrive and diverse talents are boundless. His stories of adventure (and misadventure!) offer rare insight into the human condition (as well as occasional paper ideas on the nature of mass opinion given the characters in his some of those tales), and his hilarity always makes me smile. His discipline and personal fortitude motivate me to improve in all facets of life, and the hard work and toughness that I have witnessed him display all day, every day for three decades has taught me in the truest sense that the phrase “anything worth doing is worth doing right” is far more of a useful life maxim than it is a cliché. Indeed, there are no secrets to success. We have traveled many places and experienced much together via planes, trains and automobiles, and our greatest destinations and moments await us. My parents are special role models, and their unyielding love, personal sacrifice and commitment to me have enabled me to pursue my dreams and live a meaningful life.

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My sadness over the loss of my brother, Joe, during this project in 2011 is unending, and three years later I continue to struggle to imagine a lifetime without him. Our friendship was

invaluable, and there is nothing to write, say or accomplish that can ease the burden of losing my brother and best friend. His taught me comedy, a love of sports and the importance of living fully everyday. We graduated together from the University of Michigan on the hollowed grounds of Michigan Stadium on his birthday in 2007, a beautiful sunny day that seemed to evidence the future shared happiness that awaited us. Looking over at him with his trademark goofy grin (exacerbated by the graduation cap) on that afternoon is a moment that I will cherish forever. After the conclusion of his “non-traditional” path to college, he followed me once more to East Lansing to attend law school during my second year of graduate school, and we often spoke of attending each other’s graduation. Events left our family accepting his diploma on his behalf, and he was not there physically when I defended this project publicly some months ago. The only solace that I gain from the unrelenting sorrow of his departure is the knowledge that our friendship will last for all time in the wonderful memories we shared and that we were ultimately proud of each other. I wish that I could catch a glimpse of your smile today, Joe, even if only for a fleeting second. I am thankful for the love and support that you provided me as my big brother, and I will carry you in my heart forever. I miss you, and I love you.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Attitudes are defined as individuals' disposition to evaluate favorably or unfavorably stimulus objects in their environment. Attitude structure refers to the degree to which a common underlying trait connects and organizes these attitudes (multiple underlying traits may serve the same function). The existence—or nonexistence—of structured political attitudes is important in a democratic polity because voting and other expressions of political preferences presumably reflect citizens' positive and negative responses to public policies, which in turn provide elected officials with cues on how best to lead. Unfortunately, the extant literature remains riven with unanswered questions regarding the structure of Americans' political attitudes. For example, do citizens' political attitudes arise idiosyncratically, with different sources generating each attitude, or do attitudes share a common foundation? To what degree does ideology, particularly the liberal-conservative continuum ubiquitous in popular portraits of America political life, underlie citizens' issue attitudes, and does the answer to this question vary among different segments of the electorate? Moreover, are elite and mass public attitudes structured similarly, and, to the extent they are not, are the differences that emerge in degree or in kind? This dissertation aims to answer these questions.

Chapter 2, the first empirical chapter of the dissertation, analyzes survey data to test my hypothesis that elites structure their political attitudes according to the liberal-conservative continuum. The attitudes of elites are the starting point for the empirical analysis because they are expected to provide a benchmark of ideological structure against which the mass public can

be compared. In this context, political “elites” represent delegates to the Democratic and Republican party national conventions in each presidential election year from 1980-2004.¹ These individuals, sometimes called political activists or policy demanders, are considered elites because of their extraordinarily high levels of political knowledge, interest and involvement. Given the delegates’ attention to, and participation in, politics, I expect them to possess political ideologies corresponding to the familiar liberal-conservative continuum in American politics. The words “liberal” and “conservative” are for them abstract concepts imbued with value orientations that provide structure to political attitudes. Thus, the delegates’ attitudes toward taxation, social welfare policy, defense, environmental protection and a host of other political issues are expected to arise from a single shared source, allowing the delegates to hold and articulate consistently coherent attitudes toward a wide range of policy questions. Although studies show that ideological self-identifications (i.e., liberal and conservative labels) influence elites’ individual political attitudes, no empirical study has demonstrated that these attitudes share a single structure. Using data obtained over the course of twenty-four years and six presidential elections, this chapter shows that elite attitudes arise from a single underlying source and provides an empirical test supporting the hypothesis that this source represents the liberal-conservative continuum. Indeed, the rigorous and over time analysis of the structure of elite attitudes empirically assesses what until now only has been assumed.

Chapter 3 systematically compares the findings reported in the previous chapter to survey data capturing mass political attitudes. This chapter demonstrates that ordinary citizens largely do not structure their political attitudes according to the liberal-conservative continuum. Although elites possess crystallized attitudes organized neatly around the terms “liberal” and

¹ The 1996 election year is not included because, unfortunately, no delegate study was conducted in that year.

“conservative”—producing ideologically consistent preferences across many issues—the mass public relies on these terms only limitedly as a mechanism for structuring political attitudes. Although individuals’ liberal and conservative self-identifications correlate with their issue attitudes, the relationship is weaker and exists for a much narrower subset of issues than is the case for elites. Indeed, the evidence in this chapter suggests that the sources of many mass public attitudes are idiosyncratic, contrasting with previous findings that citizens structure their attitudes according to two (or sometimes three) distinct dimensions. This analysis finds no evidence that multiple organizational principles are consistently at work for the mass public. Rather, the results support the argument that the mass public simply does not coherently structure many political attitudes, particularly in the case of abstract issues such as defense and environmental policy.

The final analysis in this chapter illustrates that the most politically sophisticated segment of the electorate—the most knowledgeable, interested and involved citizens—structure their attitudes similarly to elites. This analysis demonstrates that elites are not wholly set apart from the electorate, or elite *qua* elite. Ultimately, the evidence demonstrates that a period of persistent and increasing elite ideological polarization has been reflected in the attitude structure of only politically sophisticated members of the mass public. This chapter thus illuminates important sources of heterogeneity in the structure of political attitudes not only between elites and the mass public, but also within the mass public.

The third and final empirical chapter turns specifically to the question of government spending. The chapter builds upon previous scholarship reporting that the mass public conceives only of social welfare policies when forming and expressing attitudes toward the broad category of government spending in three ways. First, it directly compares these previous findings to an

analysis of elite attitudes toward government spending in order to test whether or not broader differences in the attitude structures of the two groups are evident for spending policies. Second, the examination of the structure of elites' attitudes toward government spending presents and tests a novel model of elite spending preferences. Third, the chapter demonstrates that significant differences exist in the structure of mass public attitudes toward government spending across levels of political sophistication. The evidence both confirms and disconfirms previous findings regarding the mass public's conception of government spending. Namely, consistent with existing literature, non-social welfare issues such as defense, education and environmental spending are not incorporated into individuals' favorable or unfavorable attitudes toward the broad stimulus government spending. The findings also support the hypothesis that elite attitudes toward all spending items conform well to a single scale, indicating that the concept of government spending is a much broader term for elites than it is for the mass public.

Finally, the results suggest once again that individuals' levels of knowledge, interest and involvement, or political sophistication, are important for explaining the attitudinal coherency of mass public attitudes. Consistent with the findings reported in the previous chapter, the most sophisticated members of the mass public structure their spending attitudes similarly to elites. However, contrary to some existing evidence, mass public attitudes toward government spending are shown to incorporate both traditionally race coded and non-race coded programs, and the impact of racial resentment on these attitudes is substantial only among less sophisticated citizens.

The final chapter summarizes the major findings of the dissertation and discusses the project's implications for understanding citizens' responses to the political environment. The chapter begins by situating the above results within the voluminous body of existing scholarship

addressing the structure and content of mass political attitudes. The primary focus of this discussion is to argue that the dissertation contributes significantly to the debate on the dimensionality of citizens' political attitudes, demonstrating that rather than exhibiting ideological coherence on one or more dimensions, the sources of these attitudes are often idiosyncratic. An important caveat to this finding regards the results obtained for the most politically sophisticated citizens, whose attitude structure mirrors that of political elites, indicating that political interest, involvement and knowledge are critical to ideological thinking and developing the connections between ideological self-identifications and issue attitudes.

A period of persistent and acute elite ideological polarization in American politics has increased the attitudinal constraint of the most sophisticated citizens, but the effect of the polarization phenomenon on the structure of other citizens' political attitudes has been limited. I conclude by suggesting what I believe to be fruitful avenues for future research involving the relationships among core values, ideological predispositions and political sophistication in an attempt to understand more fully the factors that underlie the development and maintenance of citizens' belief systems.

CHAPTER 2

The Dimensionality of Elites' Political Attitudes

This chapter empirically examines the attitude structure of political elites over a twenty-four year period. I begin by describing the Convention Delegate Studies (CDS), the survey instrument used in this project to investigate the attitude structure of political elites, as well as defining “political elites” in this context. The discussion will highlight the delegates’ extraordinary involvement in the political process and their role in shaping the major parties’ agendas. Ultimately, the characteristics of the delegates offer insight into the determinants of ideological thinking and attitudinal constraint.

Next, I define the classical conception of ideology offered by the foundational scholarly works in the field of public opinion and voting behavior. Examining theories set forth by the authors of *The American Voter* (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960) and Converse (1964, 1970), as well as their critics, I begin by addressing the debate between scholars who argue that complexity—political sophistication—and constraint are compatible aspects of belief systems, and those who argue that the concepts are irreconcilable. Then, I outline a theory stressing the compatibility of complexity and constraint. As individuals become more politically sophisticated, their attitudes are more likely to be constrained to a single dimension represented by the liberal-conservative continuum in American politics. Any lack of observed constraint is not because citizens are thinking about politics ideologically, but rather because they are not. In this way, ideology serves to simplify the political world for sophisticated citizens. Outlining the nature of ideological thinking and its consequences, attitudinal constraint—or interdependence—

and consistency, provides the basis for the empirical analyses that I will conduct in this project, including the comparison of the structure of elite and mass attitudes. I conclude the section by reviewing previous literature on the dimensionality of congressional behavior and arguing in favor of the need to examine elites' attitudes further.

In Sections 2.4 and 2.5, I introduce the method of empirical analysis used to test the primary hypotheses in this project and provide evidence of the structure of elites' political attitudes. The analysis examines the delegates' attitudes toward seventeen distinct issues across several policy domains measured variously over the course of six presidential election cycles. Results conclusively show that extremely politically sophisticated elites structure their attitudes unidimensionally according to the canonical liberal-conservative continuum in American politics. Ultimately, the analysis demonstrates empirically what heretofore merely has been assumed about the structure of elites' attitudes and serves as a backdrop for the analysis of mass political attitudes that will be conducted in the following chapter. Elites' coherent ideological attitude structure serves as a benchmark of ideological thinking to which mass political attitudes will be compared in Chapter 3.

I then review the capacious literature evidencing elites' influence on mass opinion in order to justify my expectations regarding the impact of political sophistication on the structure of mass public attitudes and the consequence of elite polarization for this structure. The review shows that elite rhetoric and cues exert a pervasive influence on the formation and content of mass public opinion, lending credence to my argument that individuals whose combination of political interest, involvement and knowledge—political sophistication—most resembles elites are also most likely to mirror elites' attitude structure.

2.1 Defining Political Elites

The political elites in this study are delegates to the Democratic and Republican party presidential nominating conventions from 1980 to 2004. Their attitudes are measured using the CDS, a mail-in survey conducted in every presidential year from 1972 to 1992 (with the exception of 1976) by Warren E. Miller and M. Kent Jennings, and continued by Thomas Carsey and Geoffrey Layman for the years 2000 and 2004.² Surprisingly, despite the richness of the CDS data and the survey's impressive time series, few scholarly studies have taken advantage of the data set. However, Jennings (1992) conducted one such study comparing elite and mass attitudes, and his commentary is helpful for introducing the convention delegates who represent the elite sample in this project.

The most important point to stress is that the delegates are considered elites, both in Jennings' study and in this project, because of their extraordinarily high level of involvement in politics. As Jennings writes, "Almost by definition, and most assuredly according to their self-reports, the delegates are superactivists" (1992, 423). Indeed, Layman, Carsey, Green, Herrera, and Cooperman describe convention delegates as the "most active and visible participants in party politics" (2010, 330). Although the delegates are, on average, more highly educated and wealthier than the mass public, previous studies have shown that education alone does not account for differences in political sophistication (Knight 1985; Luskin 1990). Furthermore, Jennings argues, "But the point about such elites is that they occupy a position near the top of a political stratification system that—though obviously connected to it—is surely not coterminous

² In 2004, the survey was conducted via email and a follow-up survey was mailed to Republican delegates. The full methodology of the studies is contained in Miller and Jennings (1986) and Layman et al. (2010).

with the socioeconomic system” (1992, 423). My theory specifies that the defining characteristics of elites are explicitly *political*—namely knowledge, interest and involvement.

Thus, the delegates’ extraordinary involvement in national politics renders them well suited to represent elite opinion.³ Additionally, as I will describe in the next section, although studies of political elites traditionally rely on the attitudes and behaviors of members of Congress or other elected or appointed government officials, the delegates are relevant objects of scholarly inquiry due to their influence on the parties in government. In their impressive panel study using CDS data, Layman et al. (2010) show that the activists’ attitudes toward social welfare, cultural and racial issues have contributed to major party polarization (see also Bawn, Cohen, Karol, Noel, Masket, and Zaller 2012; Noel 2012, 2013). In turn, the parties and their candidates influence considerably the formation and content of mass public attitudes, the evidence for which I will review later in this chapter. However, first reviewing the literature describing elites’ conceptualization of the political world is necessary to provide a backdrop for the empirical analysis conducted in this project.

2.2 Defining Ideology

“But if by a ‘Liberal’ they mean someone who looks ahead and not behind, someone who welcomes new ideas without rigid reactions, someone who cares about the welfare of the people—their health, their housing, their schools, their jobs, their civil rights, and their civil liberties—someone who believes we can break through the stalemate and suspicions that grip us in our policies abroad, if that is what they mean by a ‘Liberal,’ then I’m proud to say I’m a ‘Liberal.’” – John F. Kennedy, 1960

³ Worth noting is that although no direct measures of political interest or knowledge exist in the CDS—which, along with involvement, are components of the political sophistication index used to discriminate ideological thinking and attitudinal constraint among the mass public in Chapter 3—one is very likely safe to assume that the delegates are extremely politically interested and knowledgeable. Indeed, the CDS survey administrators undoubtedly believed that assessing the delegates’ interest in the campaign or knowledge of the major party candidates, for example, was entirely unnecessary!

“Speaker after speaker promised the moon to every narrow, selfish interest group in the country. But they ignored the hopes and aspirations of the largest special interest group of all, free men and free women. So tonight I want to speak about freedom. And let me remind you that extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice.” – Barry Goldwater, 1984

These speeches, delivered by a Democratic presidential candidate in the year of his election victory and the 1964 Republican presidential nominee speaking to a later party nominating convention, typify how we conceptualize “left” (liberal) and “right” (conservative) in American politics and the values that each term embodies. Here, the liberal Democrat espouses progress and support for a host of individual policy priorities and emphasizes improving the lot of the disadvantaged, whereas the conservative Republican underscores the importance of enlarging Americans’ freedom in all of its forms.⁴ Liberals prefer an activist government in the economy, embrace broad notions of social change and promote the value of equality, whereas conservatives prefer a more laissez-faire government, work to protect traditional social arrangements and promote the values of freedom and individualism (e.g., Brewer 2003; Feldman 1988; Feldman and Steenbergen 2001; Feldman and Zaller 1992; Jacoby 2006, forthcoming; Jost, Federico, and Napier 2009; Keele and Wolak 2006; McCann 1997; McCloskey and Zaller 1984; for a comparative assessment of individuals’ value priorities and support for “left” and “right” parties, see Schwartz, Caprara, and Vecchione 2010).⁵ Indeed, elites, defined either as

⁴ Also worth noting about the speeches is that the Democrat’s (Kennedy) emphasis on specific policy goals can be contrasted with the Republican’s (Goldwater) focus on symbolism and small government (on this point, see Grossmann and Hopkins 2014; Stimson 2004). Importantly, these rhetorical differences do not affect the structure of either elites’ issue attitudes or the general role of sophistication in structuring mass attitudes across parties, although the language might reflect differences in the distribution of attitudes within each coalition.

⁵ See Rokeach (1973), Schwartz and Bilsky (1987) and Schwartz (1992) for evidence on the structure of human values. Much subsequent work showing the relevance of values for political choice builds upon these scholars’ foundations, although choosing the most appropriate values to include in empirical analyses has proven to be difficult (e.g., Feldman 2003; Kuklinski 2001).

elected officials or, as in this analysis, party activists serving as convention delegates, are widely believed to approach politics ideologically.

Campbell et al. (1960) define ideology as a broad, coherent organizational framework for structuring individuals' attitudes. Similarly, Converse (1964) characterizes ideology as a set of "capping abstractions" or "crowning postures" that provides a reliable structure to wide-ranging constellations of issue attitudes based on the individual's position on the liberal-conservative continuum. If attitudes are structured meaningfully along the liberal-conservative dimension, then they should exhibit constraint or "functional interdependence" (Converse 1964, 209). Explaining his rationale, Converse writes, "Economy and constraint are companion concepts, for the more highly constrained a system of multiple elements, the more economically it may be described and understood" (1964, 214). That is, if individuals structure their attitudes on the basis of a few abstract principles relating to the liberal-conservative continuum, then one should be able to predict an array of individuals' issue attitudes given knowledge of their attitude on a single issue.

The basis of these foundational works is that attitudinal complexity—political sophistication—implies constraint. In other words, politically interested, involved and knowledgeable individuals use ideology as a simplifying mechanism to organize broad constellations of issue attitudes. The underlying source of attitudinal constraint exhibited by these sophisticated individuals is the liberal-conservative continuum, as they think of the world in abstract, "liberal" and "conservative" terms. This idea is furthered by Jacoby's (1991b, 27) definition of dimensionality as the smallest number of meaningful sources of variation among objects. If almost all of the variation in elites' issue attitudes can be captured by the left-right ideological continuum, then their attitudes can be described properly as unidimensional. The

question becomes, then, can individuals who conceptualize the political world in this fashion be found?

2.3 A Review of the Literature on Elites' Attitudes

Previous empirical studies of elites—overwhelmingly involving the analysis of congressional roll call votes using multidimensional scaling or optimal classification (e.g., Poole and Rosenthal 1997)—confirm that these individuals meet the standard of ideological thinking outlined in Campbell et al. (1960) and Converse (1964). In a series of the most extensive and widely cited analyses of congressional behavior, Poole and Rosenthal (1984, 1991, 1997, 2001) convincingly show that roll call votes can be predicted precisely according to legislators' ideal points along the liberal-conservative continuum. In other words, they demonstrate that the dimension upon which American political party contestation is structured is *ideology*. The authors find that racial issues occasionally have represented a significant and orthogonal second dimension, but that as racial attitudes have become highly correlated with social welfare attitudes, this second dimension has all but disappeared, collapsing onto the predominant ideological dimension (Poole and Rosenthal 1997, 2001).⁶

Their findings are consistent with the theory of issue evolution, which explains how elites incorporated not only race, but also other salient issues such as abortion and the environment,

⁶ That is, the explanatory power of the second dimension has diminished almost entirely, explaining less than one percent of the overall variance in legislators' roll call votes (Poole and Rosenthal 2001). Orthogonality implies that the two dimensions “cross-cut” one another, meaning that a legislator's vote on the first dimension is unrelated to his or her vote on the second dimension. In other words, socioeconomic liberalism (conservatism) is unrelated to racial liberalism (conservatism) when the dimensions are orthogonal. The fact that the dimensions are now so highly correlated as to be indistinguishable from one another is an important point to note. The scientific value of parsimony dictates that one should not retain a dimension that explains very little variance in the phenomenon of interest (in this case, roll call votes).

into the liberal-conservative dimension as these issues emerged onto the national agenda (Adams 1997; Carmines and Stimson 1986, 1989; Lindaman and Haider-Markel 2002; Stimson 2004). Liberal-conservative ideology explains the voting behavior of political elites and, presumably, underlies their issue attitudes.⁷

Still, despite extensive evidence testifying to the unidimensional structure of roll call voting, the question of whether or not the structure of congressional *behavior* corresponds directly to the structure of elites' *attitudes* remains. For example, Potoski and Talbert (2000) and Talbert and Potoski (2002) show that the shape of the legislative agenda reduces from being multidimensional during the debate stage to being unidimensional during the voting stage. Additionally, Crespin and Rohde (2010), focusing on a subset of relevant roll call votes, argue

⁷ The authors also provide evidence that the liberal-conservative continuum underlies roll call voting cross-nationally. Poole and Rosenthal write, "We show that low-dimensional spatial models account for decisions in multiparty or no-party legislatures to about the same degree as they do for Congress" (2001, 6). I analyze attitudes only in the U.S., and although Poole and Rosenthal seem to suggest that my results might generalize, the potential also exists that the structure of both elite and mass attitudes differs in other contexts, particularly in multiparty systems. This caution is warranted by the vibrant debate regarding the dimensionality of the European policy space. For example, some scholars argue that a cultural or "new politics" dimension crosscuts the traditional socioeconomic basis of party competition (Kriesi, Grande, Lachat, Dolezal, Bornschier, and Frey 2006), and others argue that the issue of European integration represents a similarly crosscutting dimension (Gabel and Hix 2002; Hix 1999; Hix, Noury, and Roland 2006). Warwick (2002) finds that these three independent dimensions underlie party positions. However, other evidence suggests that the socioeconomic left-right dimension structures elite competition (van der Brug and van Spanje 2009). Stoll (2010) finds that the dimensionality of European party competition has reduced since the 1970s and is now properly characterized by one or two dimensions. Hooghe, Marks, and Wilson (2002) argue that the left-right dimension capturing both economic and cultural attitudes is correlated with a European integration dimension (see also Marks, Hooghe, Nelson, and Edwards 2006; Marks and Steenbergen 2002), and Gabel and Anderson (2002) find that European mass public attitudes are structured similarly. Singh (2012) finds that less proportional electoral systems, such as the U.S. with its single-member districts, foster a unidimensional political space. Instructively for my purposes, Bakker, Jolly, and Polk (2012) demonstrate that the degree to which all three dimensions—economic left-right, social left-right and European integration—are correlated illustrates the dimensionality of the policy space, and, importantly, that this dimensionality varies across countries.

that votes on appropriations bills are in fact multidimensional, and Jochim and Jones (2013) report that the dimensionality of eighteen selected issues has evolved differently over time. These debates are sufficient to warrant an analysis of the attitude structure of elites using data other than roll call votes.

2.4. Data and Method

I investigate the structure of elites' issue attitudes using the 1980, 1984, 1988, 1992, 2000 and 2004 CDS.⁸ I examine attitudes toward an array of disparate issues that might constitute a political ideology, including government health insurance, unemployment insurance, aid to minorities and public school spending, as well as environmental regulation, defense spending, relations with foreign countries, abortion, the role of women in society and same-sex marriage.⁹ The issues encompass not only core social welfare issues related to the basic "spend-save" dimension in American politics, but also more peripheral issues involving foreign policy and cultural questions (Converse 1964).

I specify two-factor confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) models in each year in order to examine the structure of elites' attitudes.¹⁰ The general form for a CFA is given by the following (Kolenikov 2009):

⁸ I do not utilize the panel nature of the data for this study. Rather, I examine repeated cross sections of the CDS.

⁹ A full list of question wording for the CDS items analyzed in each year is available in the appendix to this chapter.

¹⁰ All CFA models in this project were specified using the Structural Equations Modeling (SEM) package in STATA 12. I also specified ordinal latent trait models using the Generalized Structural Equations Modeling (GSEM) package in STATA 13. The results of the two analyses are substantively identical. The rationale for specifying the ordinal latent trait model, as well as the main results generated from the model, for both the CDS and ANES is reported in the appendix to Chapter 3.

$$y_{ij} = u_j + \sum_{k=1}^m \lambda_{jk} \xi_{jk} + \delta_{ij}, j = 1, \dots, p$$

where i indexes observations, j indexes observed indicators, m is the number of factors that must be specified *a priori*, k indexes latent factors and p_k is the number of observed indicators associated with each latent factor; y_{ij} represents delegate i 's attitude on observed indicator j , λ_{jk} is the factor loading for observed indicator j on latent factor k , u_j are the intercepts, ξ_{jk} are the latent factors and δ_{ij} are the unique, or measurement errors.

In order to identify the models in each year, I must ensure that the degrees of freedom are greater than the number of parameters to be estimated.¹¹ The only year in which establishing model identification could appear to be problematic is 1980, and thus I will now demonstrate that the model is identified in that year. The degrees of freedom in the model are given by the following:

$$DF = \frac{p(p+1)}{2}$$

where p represents the number of observed indicators in the model. The number of observed indicators in 1980 is six (attitudes toward school busing, the environment, defense, Russia, women's role and abortion). Therefore, there are 21 degrees of freedom in the model. The number of parameters to be estimated is 18, which is given by the following: $6 * \mu + 6 * \lambda + 6 * \delta$.¹² One additional parameter must also be estimated because I specify correlated factors, producing a total of 19 parameters to be estimated for the model. Therefore, the model for 1980

¹¹ An additional step taken to ensure identification is to fix the mean and variance of the latent variables to zero and one, respectively (Bollen 1989; Brown 2006).

¹² Of course, the total number of parameters to be estimated is calculated by multiplying the number of observed indicators (6) by the number of intercepts (1), factor loadings (1) and measurement errors (1) for each indicator, and then adding the three products.

is identified, as the degrees of freedom (21) are greater than the number of parameters to be estimated (19). Bollen's (1989) three-indicator rule is sufficient for identifying the model in all other years included in the analysis.¹³ The three-indicator rule states that a model is identified if at least three observed indicators are specified to load on each latent factor, the errors for the observed indicators are uncorrelated and there are no cross-loadings.¹⁴

Items specified to load on the first factor are core social welfare issues plus other spending items representing the socioeconomic foundations of the liberal-conservative continuum.¹⁵ Items specified to load on the second factor are cultural issues such as abortion, the role of women in society and attitudes toward homosexuals, which also are indicators of the liberal-conservative continuum.¹⁶

My expectation for the factor analysis involving the relationship between the individual issue attitudes and the specified factors leads to my first hypothesis.

¹³ The three-indicator rule does not apply in 1980 because only two observed indicators are specified to load on the latent factor representing cultural attitudes. These issues are women's role (operationalized in 1980 as attitudes toward the Equal Rights Amendment) and abortion. All other survey years include at least three observed indicators per latent factor. Additionally, as we will see in Chapter 3, three indicators are specified to load on the latent factor representing cultural attitudes in 1980 for the mass public (and in all subsequent years, as with elites). The issues are the two mentioned above and an additional item that did not appear on the CDS in 1980, attitudes toward school prayer.

¹⁴ Cross-loading refers to the situation in which observed indicators are specified to load on multiple latent factors.

¹⁵ Note that a "factor loading" simply represents the correlation between an observed indicator and a latent factor (Brown 2006).

¹⁶ The factor specification is drawn from previous studies uncovering distinct economic and social dimensions underlying mass public issue attitudes (Feldman and Johnston 2013; Layman and Carsey 2002b; Stimson 2004; Treier and Hillygus 2009), as well as recent popular attention to the role of cultural (or "social") issues in American politics. Specifying two-factor CFA models for elites also provides the best comparison to the structure of mass public attitudes that will be examined in Chapter 3.

Hypothesis 2A: Each of the individual issue attitudes will correlate highly with the specified factors—attitudes toward spending on government services with the socioeconomic factor, and attitudes toward abortion with the cultural factor, for example.

A key expectation for the factor analysis leads to another formal hypothesis, this one involving the correlation between the two factors. A result consistent with a unidimensional structure is one in which the factor correlation is high, indicating ideological constraint—although items are specified to load on separate factors, if the factors are highly correlated, then an underlying, overarching organizational principle exists to connect all of the issue attitudes, and specifying additional factors contributes little to capturing attitude structure.

Hypothesis 2B: The factor correlation should near one for elites, indicating a unidimensional structure.

2.5 Results

I begin by examining the results from a single year, 2000. Below are the factor loadings for each observed indicator and the factor correlations for the 2000 CDS.¹⁷ Table 2.1 shows that each issue attitude is highly correlated with its specified factor, supporting Hypothesis 2A.¹⁸ Attitudes toward the first eight issues in column one—representing core social welfare issues plus environmental and defense spending—correlate highly with the socioeconomic factor. Attitudes toward the remaining three issues—representing cultural issues—correlate highly with the cultural factor. Crucially, however, the factor correlation between the two specified factors, 0.875, approaches one, consistent with a unidimensional attitude structure, supporting

¹⁷ I chose to present the results for 2000, which are consistent with the results for every other year in the analysis. These results can be found in the appendix to Chapter 3, along with the full mass public results.

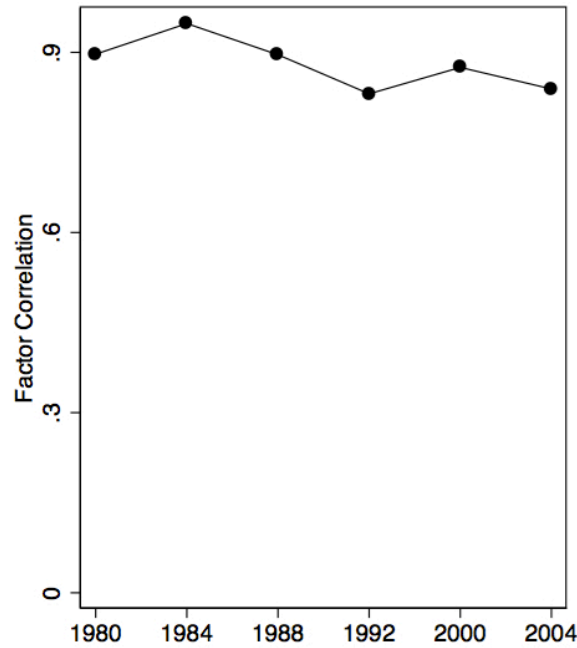
¹⁸ I use “issue attitude” and “indicator” in place of “observed indicator” throughout this section.

Hypothesis 2B. In other words, disparate issue attitudes specified to load on separate factors are in fact a product of, and thus constrained by, a single underlying structure, the canonical left-right dimension representing the basis of contestation in American politics.

Table 2.1: Confirmatory Factor Analysis of 2000 CDS

Variable	Socioeconomic factor	Cultural factor
	CDS	CDS
Services	.879	
Welfare	.778	
Government health insurance	.807	
Child care	.772	
Schools	.757	
Aid to blacks	.714	
Environment	.739	
Defense	.667	
Abortion		.703
Homosexual affect		.802
Homosexual job discrimination		.894
Factor Correlation		CDS .875
Fit Indices		
RMSEA		.093
SRMR		.032
CFI		.949
TFI		.935
CD		.975

Figure 2.1: Factor Correlation for Elites



The results presented for the year 2000 generalize to the other years under consideration. This evidence is provided in Figure 2.1. Consistent with Hypothesis 2B, the factor correlation for elites in each year is extremely high, indicating a unidimensional attitude structure. The results presented in this section are consistent with previous work on the structure of elites' attitudes (Converse 1964; Jennings 1992; Poole and Rosenthal 1997). Highly sophisticated elites conceptualize the political world unidimensionally. In Chapter 3, I will compare the results presented in this chapter to those obtained for the mass public. However, understanding the basis of my theory regarding the importance of political sophistication for the structure of mass public attitudes requires knowledge of the nature of elite-mass linkages in American politics. I review this literature in the next section.

2.6 Elite Influence on Mass Public Opinion

Elites influence how the mass public receives, perceives and processes political information. The field of political communication, dating from the founding of public opinion and voting behavior research (e.g., Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee 1954; Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet 1944), assesses the degree to which elites use words, phrases, images and other tools to present issues for public consumption (e.g., Cobb and Elder 1983; Edelman 1964; Entman 1989; Riker 1986; Scheufele 1999, 2000; Stone 1997). Specifically, framing is the subtle (and sometimes overt) presentation of a political issue designed to alter the considerations that citizens bring to bear on the issue (Druckman 2001a; Gamson and Modigliani 1989).¹⁹ Framing effects, or the degree to which citizens are susceptible to elite influence, are widely cited in the literature (Bartels 1993; Chong and Druckman 2007).²⁰ The frames in which issues are presented can alter individuals' candidate evaluations (Miller and Krosnick 2000), government spending preferences (Jacoby 2000; Schneider and Jacoby 2005), tolerance judgments (Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley 1997; Nelson and Oxley 1999), attitudes toward racial minorities (Kinder

¹⁹ Here, I should note that "framing," although closely related to "priming" and "agenda setting," is defined specifically as the shifting of weights that an individual attaches to particular considerations when forming an attitude toward a stimulus object (Chong and Druckman 2007). Framing does not appear to work through accessibility, or considerations most easily retrievable in memory through repeated exposure to them (Druckman 2001b; Nelson and Oxley 1999; Nelson, Oxley, and Clawson 1997). Accessibility does, however, provide the basis for work on priming (e.g., Iyengar and Kinder 1987). The process of agenda setting similarly centers on accessibility and issue salience, defined as the emphasis or importance that elites place on particular issues at different times (Baumgartner and Jones 1993; McCombs and Shaw 1972). The evidence for all of these closely related constructs documents elites' impact on the formation of mass political attitudes.

²⁰ The definition I provide here refers to frames in communication and their effects on recipients' frames in thought, which can be contrasted with equivalency framing, or the presentation of an issue in a different, but logically equivalent manner. Tversky and Kahneman (1981) show that equivalency framing also can alter citizens' decision making, but this type of framing is more limited in political science. Thus, the research tradition I cite in this section incorporates frames in communication (see Druckman 2001a for an incisive discussion of these concepts).

and Sanders 1996) and other outgroups (Nelson and Kinder 1996) and emotions that produce disparate political responses (Brader 2005, 2006).²¹ The diversity and extent of framing effects testifies to the impact of elite opinion leadership on the formation of mass political attitudes. However, the ability of elites to induce citizens to focus on particular considerations, as opposed to other, potentially equally held considerations, during the process of opinion formation is only one mechanism through which elite messaging influences mass political attitudes and behavior. Indeed, the role of elite cue giving in the form of partisan and ideological labeling is essential for understanding not only the content, but also the structure, of mass political attitudes.

Political parties are “brands,” or known commodities, that bundle issues and signal to their supporters (and potential supporters) where they stand on the major issues of the day (Aldrich 1995).²² The party label provides information for individuals faced with low expertise, a complex decision making environment and a desire to expend minimal cognitive effort formulating political preferences (Eagly and Chaiken 1993; Petty and Cacioppo 1986; Simon 1959). Indeed, party identification is the most widespread heuristic—or cognitive shortcut—

²¹ Of course, despite the pervasive framing effects demonstrated across a host of important questions, limits to framing exist. Competing messages and citizen deliberation, for example, serve to mitigate framing effects (Druckman 2001b, 2004; Sniderman and Theriault 2004). The literature on motivated reasoning and resistance to persuasion also identifies limits to framing, but the very partisan and ideological predispositions that work to limit the influence themselves testify to the strength of elite cues for mass opinion formation (Gaines, Kuklinski, Peyton, and Verkuilen 2007; Kuklinski and Hurley 1994; Kuklinski, Quirk, Jerit, Schweider, and Rich 2000; Lodge and Taber 2000; Nyhan and Reifler 2010; Redlawsk 2002; Taber and Lodge 2006). Redlawsk, Civettini, and Emmerson (2010) provide optimism on this front, noting that citizens reach an affective “tipping point” at which information disconfirming their preexisting beliefs is incorporated into their political attitudes.

²² See Cohen, Karol, Noel, and Zaller (2008) and Bawn et al. (2012) for a provocative argument that parties are coalitions of policy demanders. This view accords with Layman et al.’s (2010) work demonstrating the influence of activists on the major parties’ agendas. This alternative conceptualization of political parties, which I believe is important to understanding the composition and nature of parties in the U.S., does not contradict the commentary in this section on the importance of elite cues for mass public opinion formation.

that individuals employ to determine their issue attitudes (Dancey and Goren 2010; Druckman, Peterson, and Slothuus 2013; Jacoby 1988; Levendusky 2010; Lupia 1994; Sniderman 1993; Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock 1991), candidate evaluations (Conover and Feldman 1989; Goren 2002; Lau and Redlawsk 1997, 2001; Popkin 1991) and vote choice (Bartels 2000; Campbell, Green, and Layman 2011; Miller and Shanks 1996).²³ Individuals develop stereotypes, or perceptions of their party's issue stances, and then adopt those stances (Arceneaux 2008; Bullock 2011; Jacoby 1988; Lenz 2009, 2012; Mondak 1993).²⁴ As Rahn writes regarding the influence of party cues on candidate evaluations, "The cue provided by the party label is simple, direct, and ... consequential in shaping individuals' perception and evaluations of political candidates" (1993, 472). The extensive body of work cited in this section shows that party cues operate similarly for issue attitudes. The evidence demonstrates the substantial role of elite messaging in public opinion formation. However, the question of the degree to which elite cues produce ideological consistency or contribute to a coherent attitude structure among the mass public remains unanswered. This question is the one to which I will turn in Chapter 3.

²³ Brader, Tucker, and Duell (2013) provide recent experimental evidence demonstrating the particular factors—namely, party longevity, incumbency and ideological clarity—that foster elite opinion leadership cross-nationally. Additionally, Goren, Federico, and Kittilson (2009) report that source cues condition the influence of partisanship on political value expressions.

²⁴ Although Arceneaux (2008) emphasizes the role of partisan stereotypes in decision-making, he argues that aware voters do, in fact, punish candidates of their own party who adopt counter-stereotypical positions on salient issues (e.g., a Democratic candidate taking a pro-life position or a Republican candidate taking a pro-choice position). The situation of representatives adopting counter-stereotypical issue positions is increasingly uncommon in an era of intense elite polarization, however. Kam (2005) finds that more politically aware individuals rely less on partisan cues, and more on issue related cues, when formulating their opinions on novel issues.

2.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I defined political elites as extremely political interested, knowledgeable and, most importantly, involved citizens. The convention delegates whose attitudes I examined not only satisfy these criteria, but they also are excellent candidates to represent elite opinion given their influence on the major parties' agendas. I then defined ideology as a framework for organizing constellations of attitudes governed by abstract principles. The CFA results demonstrated that political elites organize their attitudes in precisely this fashion. Among elites, disparate issue attitudes across various policy domains are interrelated and emanate from a common source, the liberal-conservative continuum. Thus, I have provided the first over time evidence demonstrating the unidimensional attitude structure of political elites using data other than roll call votes. That is, rather than offer a behavioral measure of party competition, I have lent insight into how party activists—the drivers of the major parties' agendas—conceptualize issues and structure their attitudes involving enduring questions in American politics.

These results confirm scholars' long suspected, but heretofore never empirically tested, beliefs regarding the structure of elites' issue attitudes. The findings are especially useful because they provide a benchmark against which I will be able to compare the structure of mass public attitudes in Chapter 3. The comparison is warranted not only because of ongoing controversies regarding the fundamental relationship between sophistication and constraint among the mass public, but also because of debates surrounding the extent of ideological thinking present among the mass public in a polarized era.

The findings in this chapter seem to presage a clear resolution to the debate on the first question in favor of my hypothesis. As I will review in Chapter 3, some scholars argue that sophisticates' attitudes should be multidimensional because the latter individuals' cognitive

complexity enables them to formulate and store an array of attitudes across many policy domains. Instead, the evidence in this chapter confirms my expectation that the attitudes of highly knowledgeable, interested and involved elites simplify to a single dimension. These political sophisticates understand and connect the policy implications imbued in each issue to their underlying ideological predispositions, producing attitudinal interrelatedness along the liberal-conservative dimension.²⁵ Individuals' locations along this single underlying dimension are determined by the particular content (i.e., liberal or conservative direction) of their predispositions.

In the conclusion to this project, I will argue that the predispositions that determine ideological self-identifications are core values, but regardless of the accuracy of this speculation, the evidence in this chapter convincingly shows that the attitudes of politically sophisticated elites are structured unidimensionally. However, the true test of whether the variables I operationalize as political sophistication are valid awaits in the analysis of the structure of mass public attitudes in Chapter 3.

The second question, regarding the extent of ideological thinking among the mass public, is even more interesting than the first. My theory is that the attitude structure of elites will be reflected only in the most interested, involved and knowledgeable members of the mass public, or those individuals who are sufficiently both aware of elites' attitudes and sophisticated to connect their own predispositions—namely, liberal-conservative self-identifications—to their issue positions. This argument combines evidence on the role of elite rhetoric in the mass opinion formation process reviewed in this chapter and my beliefs about the relationship of political sophistication to attitudinal constraint. Most importantly, my theory contradicts other

²⁵ In Chapter 3, I will present evidence supporting the hypothesis that the underlying dimension is, in fact, liberal-conservative ideology.

scholars' contention that attitudinal constraint has increased among broader swaths of the mass public than I suggest due to the heightened tenor of elite ideological debate. The test of the degree to which mass public attitudes are structured similarly to elites, if at all, is presented in Chapter 3.

APPENDIX

Full Question Wording for 1980-2004 Convention Delegate Studies (CDS)

Note: An * indicates the variable in the designated year(s) has been reverse coded so that higher values reflect more conservative attitudes. An * next to the variable name indicates that the variable has been similarly reverse coded in each year it is included in the analysis.

- 1.) Ideological self-identifications: 1980-2004 CDS (V0305, V0142, V115, V0087, v2087, q13a): We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. Here is a seven-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal to extremely conservative. Where would you place yourself on this scale? 1 - Extremely liberal 7 - Extremely conservative
- 2.) Assistance to blacks:
 - A. *1980-1988 CDS (V0319, V184, V155): There is much discussion about the best way to deal with racial problems. Some people think letting children go to their neighborhood schools is so important that they oppose busing. Others think achieving racial integration of schools is so important that it justifies busing children to schools out of their own neighborhoods. Where would you place yourself on the following scale? 1 - Busing to achieve integration 7 - Keeping children in neighborhood schools
 - B. 1992-2004 CDS (V0122, v2122, q19): Some people feel that the government in Washington should make every effort to improve the social and economic position of Blacks. Others feel that the government should not make any special effort to help Blacks because they should help themselves. First, where would you place yourself on this scale? 1 - Government should help blacks 7 - Blacks should help themselves
- 3.) Environment:
 - A. *1980 CDS (V0316): Present governmental regulations with regard to pollution and other environmental problems limit full use of some energy sources. Do you think the government should relax environmental protection regulations to increase the use of these energy sources, or should the government keep environmental protection regulations unchanged even though this may delay the production of more energy? 1 - Keep regulations unchanged 2 - Relax regulations, with qualifications 3 - Relax regulations
 - B. *1984-1988 CDS (V0177, V153): Present governmental regulations with regard to pollution and other environmental problems have been altered over the past four years to make greater use of some energy sources. Do you think that government should relax environmental protection regulations further to increase the use of these energy sources, keep governmental regulations as they are or tighten regulations? 1 - Tighten regulations 2 - Tighten regulations with qualifications 3 - Keep regulations unchanged 4 - Relax regulations with qualifications 5 - Relax regulations
 - C. 1992 CDS (V0169): Listed below are some programs that the government currently funds. If you had your say in making up the federal budget this year, indicate for each of the following programs whether you think federal

spending should be increased, kept at the same level, reduced or cut entirely.
Protecting the environment: 1 - Increased 2 - Kept the same 3 - Decreased 4 - Cut out

- D. 2000 CDS (v2430): It is important to protect the environment even if it costs jobs or otherwise reduces our standard of living. 1 - Agree strongly 2 - Agree slightly 3 - Neither agree or disagree 4 - Disagree slightly 5 - Disagree strongly
- E. 2004 CDS (q22e): If you had a say in making up the federal budget, indicate the extent to which you would increase or decrease each of the following programs. Protecting the environment: 1 - Increase a lot 2 - Increase slightly 3 - Kept at the same level 4 - Decrease slightly 5 - Decrease a lot
- 4.) *Defense:
- A. 1980-1984 CDS (V0317, V0182): Some people believe that we should spend much more money for defense. Suppose these people are at one end of the scale at point number "1." Others feel that defense spending should be greatly decreased. Suppose that these people are at the other end, at point "7." And, of course, some other people have opinions somewhere in between. Where would you place yourself on this scale? 1 - Greatly decrease defense spending 7 - Greatly increase defense spending
- B. 1988-2004 CDS (V156, V0121, v2121, q18): Some people believe that we should spend much more money for defense. Others feel that defense spending should be greatly decreased. And, of course, some other people have opinions somewhere in between. Where would you place yourself on this scale? 1 - Greatly decrease defense spending 7 - Greatly increase defense spending
- 5.) *Abortion (Note: The variable is not reversed coded in 2004, as the responses are recorded in the data set differently than they are listed in the codebook in that year):
- A. 1980-1984 CDS (V0321, V1078): There has been much discussion about abortion during recent years. Which of the following opinions listed below agrees with your view? 1 - Abortion should never be forbidden 2 - Abortion should be permitted if, due to personal reasons, the woman would have difficulty in caring for the child 3 - Abortion should be permitted only if the life and health of the woman is in danger 4 - Abortion should never be permitted
- B. 1988 CDS (V150): There has been much discussion about abortion during recent years. Which of the following opinions listed below agrees with your view? 1 - Abortion should never be prohibited 2 - Abortion should be permitted if, due to personal reasons, the woman would have difficulty in caring for the child 3 - Abortion should be permitted only if the life and health of the woman is in danger 4 - Abortion should never be permitted
- C. 1992-2004 CDS (V0106, v2016, q14a): There has been much discussion about abortion during recent years. Which of the following opinions listed below agrees with your view? 1 - By law, a woman should always be able to obtain an abortion as a matter of personal choice 2 - The law should permit abortion for reasons other than rape, incest, or danger to the woman's life, but only after the need for the abortion has been clearly established 3 - The law should permit

abortion only in case of rape, incest or when the woman's life is in danger 4 -
By law, abortion should never be permitted

6.) Foreign policy:

- A. 1980-1988 CDS (V0318, V0183, V161): Some people feel it is important for us to try very hard to get along with Russia. Others feel it is a big mistake to try too hard to get along with Russia. Where would you place yourself on this seven-point scale? 1 - Important to try very hard to get along with Russia 7 - Big mistake to try too hard to get along with Russia
- B. 1992 CDS (V0163): Listed below are some programs that the government currently funds. If you had your say in making up the federal budget this year, indicate for each of the following programs whether you think federal spending should be increased, kept at the same level, reduced or cut entirely. Aid to countries of the former Soviet Union: 1 - Increased 2 - Kept the same 3 - Decreased 4 - Cut out

7.) Women's role in society:

- A. 1980-1988 CDS (V0322, V0179, V154): Do you approve or disapprove of the proposed Equal Rights Amendment to the constitution, sometimes called the ERA Amendment? 1 - Approve strongly 2 - Approve somewhat 3 - Disapprove somewhat 4 - Disapprove strongly
- B. 1992 CDS (V0128): Recently there has been a lot of talk about women's rights. Some people feel women should have an equal role with men in running business, industry, and government. Others feel that women's place is in the home. First, where would you place yourself on this scale? 1 - Women and men should have an equal role 7 - Women's place is in the home

8.) School prayer

- A. *1984-1992 CDS (V0180, V152, V0112): Some people think it is all right for the public schools to start each day with a prayer. Others feel that religion does not belong in the public schools but should be taken care of by the family and the church. What do you think? 1 - Religion does not belong in the schools 2 - Schools should be allowed to start each day with a prayer, provided that the prayer is silent 3 - Schools should be allowed to start each day with a prayer

9.) Public School Spending:

- A. *1984 CDS (V0185): If you had a say in making up the federal budget, which programs would you like to see increased, reduced, or kept at the same level? Federal spending on public schools: 1 - Increased 2 - Kept the same 3 - Reduced
- B. 1988 CDS (V181): If you had a say in making up the federal budget, which programs would you like to see increased, reduced, or kept at the same level? Aid to education: 1 - Increased 2 - Kept the same 3 - Reduced
- C. 1992 CDS (V0160): If you had a say in making up the federal budget, which programs would you like to see increased, kept at the same level, reduced or cut out completely? Aid to public schools: 1 - Increased 2 - Kept the same 3 - Reduced 4 - Cut out

- D. 2000-2004 CDS (v2438, q22a): If you had a say in making up the federal budget, indicate the extent to which you would increase or decrease each of the following program? Aid to public schools: 1 - Increase a lot 2 - Increase slightly 3 - Kept at the same level 4 - Decrease slightly 5 - Decrease a lot
- 10.) Child care spending
- A. 1992 CDS (V0167): Listed below are some programs that the federal government currently funds. If you had a say in making up the federal budget this year, indicate for each of the following programs whether you think federal spending should be increased, kept at the same level, reduced or cut out completely. Child care: 1 - Increased 2 - Kept the same 3 - Reduced 4 - Cut out
- B. 2000-2004 CDS (v2440, q22c): If you had a say in making up the federal budget, indicate the extent to which you would increase or decrease each of the following program? Child care: 1 - Increase a lot 2 - Increase slightly 3 - Kept at the same level 4 - Decrease slightly 5 - Decrease a lot
- 11.) *Government services
- A. *1992 CDS (V0143): Some people think the government should provide fewer services, even in areas such as health and education in order to reduce spending. 1 - Government provide many more services 7 - Government provide many fewer services
- B. *2000-2004 CDS (v2143, q17a): Some people think the government should provide fewer services, even in areas such as health and education in order to reduce spending. Suppose these people are at one end of the scale at point 1. Other people feel it is important for the government to provide many more services even if it means an increase in spending. Suppose these people are at the other end, at point 7. And, of course, some other people have opinions somewhere in between at points 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6. First, where would you place yourself on this scale? 1 - Government provide many more services, increasing spending a lot 7 - Government provide many fewer services, reduce spending a lot
- 12.) Welfare
- A. 1992 CDS (V0168) Listed below are some programs that the federal government currently funds. If you had a say in making up the federal budget this year, indicate for each of the following programs whether you think federal spending should be increased, kept at the same level, reduced or cut out completely. Welfare programs: 1 - Increased 2 - Kept the same 3 - Reduced 4 - Cut out
- B. 2000-2004 CDS (v2441, q22d): If you had a say in making up the federal budget, indicate the extent to which you would increase or decrease each of the following program? Welfare programs: 1 - Increase a lot 2 - Increase slightly 3 - Kept the same 4 - Decrease slightly 5 - Decrease a lot
- 13.) Unemployment
- A. 1992 CDS (V0171): Listed below are some programs that the federal government currently funds. If you had a say in making up the federal budget this year,

indicate for each of the following programs whether you think federal spending should be increased, kept at the same level, reduced or cut out completely. Programs that assist the unemployed: 1 - Increased 2 - Kept the same 3 - Reduced 4 - Cut out

14.) Government insurance

A. 1992-2004 CDS (V0152, v2152, q20): There is much concern about the rapid rise in medical and hospital costs. Some people feel there should be a government insurance plan which would cover all medical and hospital expenses for everyone. Others feel that all medical expenses should be paid by individuals, and through private insurance plans like Blue Cross or other company paid plans. Where would you place yourself on this scale? 1 - Government insurance plan 7 – Private insurance plan

15.) *Feeling thermometer toward homosexuals: 2000-2004 CDS (v2186, q25d): For each of the following groups please indicate your feelings toward them on what we call a “feeling thermometer.” Here’s how it works. If you don’t feel particularly warm or cold toward a group, then you should place them in the middle, at the 50 degree mark. If you have a warm feeling toward a group, or feel favorable toward them you would give them a score somewhere between 50 and 100 degrees, depending how warm your feeling is toward that group. On the other hand, if you don’t feel very favorable toward a group — that is, if you don’t care much for them then you would place them somewhere between 0 and 50 degrees. Remember, 50 degrees means you feel neutral toward a group. Gay men and lesbians. 0 - Warm 100 - Cold

16.) Job discrimination against homosexuals: 2000 CDS (v2415): Recently, there has been a lot of talk about discrimination against gay men and lesbians in hiring and promotion decisions. Some people feel that the government in Washington should make a special effort to protect homosexuals from job discrimination. Others feel that the government should not make any special effort to protect homosexuals in terms of employment. First, where would you place yourself on this scale? 1 - Special effort to protect homosexuals in the workplace 7 - No special effort to protect homosexuals in the workplace

17.) *Same-sex marriage: 2004 CDS (q15): Recently, there has been a good deal of discussion about marriages and other legal relationships between same-sex couples. Which of the following statements comes closest to your view of the proper legal status of marriage? 1 - The law should define marriage as a union of two people regardless of their gender 2 - The law should define marriage as a union between one man and one woman, but recognize legal agreements between same-sex couples 3 - The law should define marriage only as a union between one man and one woman

CHAPTER 3

The Dimensionality of Mass Public Attitudes

In Chapter 2, I defined the convention delegates whose attitudes are examined in this project as political elites based upon their extremely high levels of political interest, involvement and knowledge. I also demonstrated using confirmatory factor analysis that these party activists' attitudes are structured unidimensionally. The key question in this chapter, then, given the importance of elite opinion leadership to the formation and content of mass attitudes, is the degree to which the structure of mass political attitudes, if one exists at all, is similar to that of elites.

The primary argument I make in this chapter is that deviations from a unidimensional attitude structure among the mass public are a result of the public's inability to make the necessary linkages between ideology and issue attitudes—a function of low sophistication—not merely measurement error. In showing that the most sophisticated members of the mass public, like elites, have meaningful attitude structures, I provide evidence that the measures used in surveys to measure political attitudes are not inherently unable to capture mass opinion reliably. The evidence implies that sophistication and constraint are intertwined, because as one variable increases, so too does the other—multidimensional attitude are not more complex, but rather less complex than unidimensional ones.

I also show that elites are not wholly set apart from the mass public, or elite *qua* elite. Rather, elites' ideological thinking and attitudinal constraint results from their extraordinary interest and involvement in, and knowledge about, politics—in other words, from their political

sophistication. These characteristics provide individuals with the necessary cognitive and motivational ingredients to conceptualize the political world in ideological terms. Lastly, and most importantly, this chapter demonstrates that apparent increases in constraint among the mass public in recent years are confined largely to the most sophisticated citizens. This critical conclusion follows directly from the empirical finding regarding the fundamental relationship of political sophistication to attitudinal coherence, and it represents the most useful contribution of the project to contemporary debates on the nature of American public opinion.

Although previous studies have examined the influence of political sophistication on ideological thinking and attitudinal constraint (e.g., Claassen and Highton 2009; Hamill, Lodge, and Blake 1985; Jennings 1992; Knight 1985; Levitin and Miller 1979; Lodge and Hamill 1986; Sniderman et al. 1991; Stimson 1975), the analysis presented in this chapter is the first to test explicitly the influence of sophistication on these critical variables in a direct comparison of the dimensionality of elite and mass political attitudes.

3.1 A Review of the Literature on the Prevalence of Ideology and Constraint among the Mass Public

Recall that ideology represents an organizational framework for structuring individuals' attitudes. I showed in Chapter 2 that elites effectively use ideology as a mechanism to simplify the political world and provide structure to an array of issue attitudes based on a few abstract principles related to liberalism and conservatism.¹ The pattern of reliance on ideology to structure political attitudes is much different among the mass public.

¹ Both the ideologue and the layman confront the same complex political world, but the crucial difference is that the ideologue is able to organize and distil the otherwise dizzying array of information he encounters using a cognitive structure that connects his predispositions to his many individual issue positions, producing highly interrelated political attitudes. In the United

The authors of *The American Voter* (Campbell et al. 1960) discussed the structure (or lack thereof) of mass political attitudes as the “problem of ideology.” They concluded that the vast majority of the public was devoid of an overarching structure that organized citizens’ attitudes toward political objects, which were instead influenced to a greater degree by their views on a handful of issues relevant to their everyday lives (Campbell et al. 1960, 205). Examining correlations across a host of issue attitudes, Converse (1964) found a complete lack of constraint in mass opinion, concluding this nonexistent attitude interdependence to be the result of the paucity of ideological thinking in the electorate.² Converse (1970) later developed a “black-and-white” model positing that a large segment of the electorate holds no coherent attitudes, as their survey responses seemed to fluctuate randomly between opposite sides of an issue.

In the wake of Converse’s assertion that “large portions of the electorate do not have meaningful beliefs” (1964, 245), scholarly attention became sharply focused on issues of

States, this structure is the unidimensional left-right continuum, which is built over time by the ideologue’s interest and involvement in, and knowledge about, elite party competition. The attitudes of the layman, however, in the absence of this structure, are “scattered croutons floating in the undifferentiated cognitive soup” (Luskin 1987, 860). This discussion is not intended to disparage the layman, nor to insinuate that he does not approach the political world reasonably, maintain non-ideological sources of attitudinal constraint or employ useful heuristics to guide his voting behavior. Rather, the commentary is intended only to highlight the sharp distinction in the attitude structure of politically sophisticated ideologues and that of other citizens.

² Similar results were found when the electorate was categorized into different levels of conceptualization, which separate citizens into strata according to their degree of ideological thinking (Campbell et al. 1960; Converse 1964). The measure revealed that citizens evaluate candidates and parties not according to ideological criteria, but rather to these actors’ perceived favorableness or hostility toward certain groups, demonstrating the dearth of liberal-conservative thinking in the mass public and that qualitative differences exist in the ways in which different segments of the electorate structure their political attitudes. Ultimately, the levels of conceptualization highlight that most individuals do not organize their political attitudes ideologically, and that a relative absence of political sophistication is the primary reason for the lack of such a structure in mass opinion. Early critics of this work questioned the validity of the levels of conceptualization (e.g., Smith 1980), but the levels’ validity and reliability as a measure used to understand the nature of ideological thinking in the electorate since has been well-documented (Hagner and Pierce 1982; Knight 1985). See Abramson (1981) for a particularly cogent rebuke to Smith’s (1980) criticism of the levels of conceptualization.

measurement error (Achen 1975; Converse and Markus 1979; Norpoth and Lodge 1985), as well as substantive debates regarding purported increases in ideological thinking among the mass public over time (Bishop, Oldendick, and Tuchfarber 1978; Bishop, Tuchfarber, and Oldendick 1978; Boyd 1972; Field and Anderson 1969; Nie and Andersen 1974; Nie, Verba, and Petrocik 1976; Margolis 1977; Pomper 1972; Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus 1978; for summaries of these debates and reviews of the voluminous literature on conceptualization and constraint in mass opinion, see Abramson 1983; Bartels 2010; Converse 2006; Jacoby 2010; Kinder 1983). In a contemporary test of Converse's "black-and-white" model, Hill and Kriesi (2001) find that the mass public consists of different proportions of stable opinion holders, vacillating changers and durable changers. The weight of the evidence suggests that ideological thinking and attitudinal constraint among the mass public is rather rare (see also Lewis-Beck, Jacoby, Norpoth, and Weisberg 2008).

Many scholars argue that the underlying trait thought to produce attitudinal constraint—ideology—is in fact multidimensional (Feldman and Johnston 2013; Luttbeg 1968; Marcus, Tabb, and Sullivan 1974; Weisberg and Rusk 1970), hierarchical (Peffley and Hurwitz 1985) or even non-dimensional (Conover and Feldman 1981). Treier and Hillygus (2009) argue that two distinct dimensions, encompassing social welfare and cultural issues, respectively, underlie mass opinion. They conclude that individuals are ideologically ambivalent—meaning a sizable portion of the electorate possesses conservative attitudes toward economic issues and liberal attitudes toward social issues (and vice versa)—cross-cutting the unidimensional ideological continuum. Therefore, according to this view, the conception of the mass public as being devoid of constraint can be attributed to the multidimensionality of ideological thinking. Stimson (2004), Ellis (2012) and Ellis and Stimson (2012) argue that the observed inconsistency between

policy preferences and ideological self-identifications among the mass public is a result of “conflicted” individuals simultaneously expressing support for symbolic conservatism and operational economic liberalism.³

How, though, does one reconcile these theories with the results presented earlier for elites? If elite party competition and elites’ attitudes are structured unidimensionally according to the liberal-conservative continuum, and elite cues are important for public opinion formation, then why would one expect mass public attitudes to be structured differently than those of elites? I argue that apparent deviations from this structure in mass opinion are a result of a lack of political sophistication that inhibits ideological thinking. I also argue, crucially, that the attitude structures of all but the most sophisticated citizens have not become any more ideologically coherent than they were in the past, despite evidence documenting the increasingly close connections between ideological self-identifications and issue attitudes among the mass public (e.g., Abramowitz 2010; Bafumi and Shapiro 2009; Levendusky 2009).

3.2 Sophistication and the Structure of Political Attitudes

Although evidence demonstrates that ideological thinking, and hence attitudinal constraint, varies among the mass public as a function of political sophistication, few studies have sought to demonstrate whether further differences exist between political elites and the mass public. A number of studies have shown that elites and masses differ in important ways, however. In a study of the French parliament, Converse and Pierce (1986) report that members of the National

³ “Operational” ideology, as distinct from the “symbolic ideology” thought to be captured by the traditional one-to-seven ideological self-identification scale, is measured using individuals’ attitudes toward a host of policy issues, most of which relate to government intervention in the economy. See Ellis and Stimson (2009, 2012) for a fuller definition of both symbolic and operational ideology, as well as Stimson (1999, 2004) for a description of the “public mood” measure used in this line of research to represent operational ideology.

Assembly possess more structured and constrained political attitudes than the French public.⁴ Elsewhere, scholars have shown that elites are more tolerant than the mass public (Sullivan, Shamir, Barnum, and Gibson 1993) and adhere more fully to democratic norms and values (McCloskey 1964; Prothro and Grigg 1960). One study that does provide a direct comparison of elite and mass attitudes is Jennings' (1992) work that I discussed in Chapter 2. He reports that the delegates' issue attitudes and evaluations of various political and social groups exhibit both greater ideological constraint and over time stability than those of the mass public, a finding he attributes to differences in the two groups' level of political involvement.

This chapter contributes to the literature by testing directly if specific qualities operationalized to represent political sophistication—interest, involvement and knowledge—produce marked differences in ideological thinking and, importantly, dimensionality between elites and the mass public, as well as within the mass public. One of my primary theoretical motivations is previous scholarship investigating the role of sophistication in differentiating between ideological and non-ideological determinants of political attitudes in the mass public.

Recall that the authors of the seminal works on ideology argue that complexity—political sophistication—implies constraint. Sophisticated individuals who orient their attitudes along the liberal-conservative continuum think of the world in abstract, “liberal” and “conservative” terms. As Luskin notes, despite the fact that sophistication does not on its face necessitate reliance on these terms, “sophistication and abstraction are theoretically and empirically entwined” (1987, 862). Indeed, a substantial body of literature shows that for sophisticated citizens, ideological self-identifications are important determinants of candidate evaluations (Stimson 1975), vote

⁴ Of course, one would be sorely remiss to overlook the fact that Converse's seminal 1964 article is a comparison of elite and mass attitude structures. Often lost in the genius of his commentary regarding the nature of mass public opinion is his exposition of the vast differences in attitudinal constraint among his sample of 1958 congressional candidates and ordinary citizens.

choice (Knight 1985), an array of issue attitudes (Jacoby 1991a; Kuklinski, Metlay, and Kay 1982; Sniderman et al. 1991; for a notable exception, see Goren 2004), polarized evaluations of liberals and conservatives (Federico 2007) and coherent value structures (Goren, Federico, and Kittilson 2009; Jacoby 2006; Michaud, Carlisle, and Smith 2009). Politically sophisticated citizens thus both receive elite partisan cues and are able to connect their own issue attitudes to their ideological predispositions (Claassen and Highton 2009; Layman and Carsey 2002a, 2002b; Zaller 1992).⁵ Whether measured in terms of knowledge of political facts (Federico and Schneider 2007; Zaller 1992), education (Sniderman et al. 1991) or a combination of education and conceptualization (Jacoby 1988), education, political interest and knowledge (Knight 1985) or intelligence, political interest and knowledge (Luskin 1990), studies consistently demonstrate that sophisticated citizens are more likely to structure their issue attitudes according to the liberal-conservative continuum than are their peers. Other studies show that this reliance on the liberal-conservative continuum explicitly fosters a unidimensional attitude structure.

For example, Stimson (1975) examines the dimensionality of issue attitudes using factor analysis during a single election and concludes that increased sophistication leads to the reduction of attitudes to a single dimension. Moreover, Jacoby (1995) reports that a cumulative, liberal-conservative scale fits the structure of certain mass attitudes well. Importantly, he argues that although many respondents are able to locate themselves and the parties on the liberal-conservative continuum, they nonetheless are unable to orient other, more specific issue attitudes ideologically. The inability of a wider range of issue attitudes to conform to a single scale is a result of individuals not making connections between their ideological self-identifications and issue attitudes.

⁵ In the conclusion to this project, I consider the role of sophistication in connecting core political predispositions, namely values, to ideology and other subsequent political orientations.

Taken together, prior research on elite attitudes that I reviewed, as well as the evidence that I presented in Chapter 2 and previous work comparing elite and mass attitudes, leads me to hypothesize that sophistication is the key factor in distinguishing the structure of elite and mass issue attitudes. Because elites are highly politically interested, involved and knowledgeable, their attitudes are oriented ideologically and thus constrained by the underlying, unidimensional continuum. In contrast, I expect that the lack of political sophistication among the mass public leads most citizens to structure only certain attitudes ideologically, producing a lack of attitudinal constraint. In other words, much of the mass public does not possess the cognitive and motivational characteristics that connect ideology and issue attitudes. If my argument is correct, then as sophistication and therefore ideological thinking increases, as with the most sophisticated segment of the mass public, individuals' attitude structures should become unidimensional, mirroring the benchmark of attitudinal constraint demonstrated by elites.

3.3 Data and Method

In this chapter, I directly compare the structure of elite and mass issue attitudes at multiple time points using the results obtained in Chapter 2 and an examination of mass attitudes using data from the Center for Political Studies (CPS) American National Elections Studies (ANES) for the same survey years.⁶ An important point of departure between this study and previous ones is that I avoid the problems inherent to correlational analysis—and thus the acrimonious debates of the past that are rife in the literature—by using confirmatory factor analysis to examine the structure of mass issue attitudes.

⁶ Although I do not highlight the use of the 1996 ANES due to the lack of CDS comparison, results for that year are consistent with those presented in this chapter and are available upon request. As with the CDS, I examine repeated cross-sections of the ANES.

In order to examine the structure of mass attitudes and, importantly, compare it to the unidimensional structure of elite attitudes observed in Chapter 2, I again specify two-factor CFA models in each year, and the same items are specified to load on the same factors for the mass public as were specified for elites (i.e., socioeconomic issues on factor one, and cultural issues on factor two).⁷ All results for the mass public will include those obtained for elites in Chapter 2 for the purpose of comparison. Investigating the role of political sophistication in fostering ideological thinking and attitudinal constraint using factor analysis allows me to observe the potentially critical differences that exist in the dimensionality of attitudes not only between elites and the mass public, but also within the mass public.

As in Chapter 2, I first inspect the relationship between the individual attitudes and the specified factors, only this time I do so for the mass public. This relationship leads to my first two hypotheses.

Hypothesis 3A: Issue attitudes for mass public will correlate with the specified factors at much lower levels than those observed for their more politically sophisticated elite counterparts, indicating the often weak interrelationships among mass political attitudes and the idiosyncratic sources underlying many of them.

⁷ Slight differences in question wording exist across the two studies, and in some years different questions are used to assess the same substantive issue attitudes. The number of issues included in the analysis differs across years due to the fact that the number of identical questions appearing on the two studies differs across years. The number of issues examined in each year varies from six to twelve, and the total number of distinct issues examined is seventeen. A full list of issues examined in each year for both the CDS and ANES, as well a full list of question wording for the ANES, is provided in the appendix to this chapter.

Hypothesis 3B: The correlation between each of the individual issue attitudes and the specified factors will be especially low among the least sophisticated segment of the mass public, testifying to these citizens' ideological incoherence.

Hypothesis 3C: The correlation between each of the individual issue attitudes and the specified factor will be high among the most sophisticated segment of the mass public.

The critical piece of evidence remains the correlation between the two factors. Recall that a result consistent with a unidimensional structure is one in which the factor correlation is high, indicating ideological constraint.⁸ My expectations for the factor correlation lead to two further hypotheses.

Hypothesis 3D: The factor correlation for the mass public will be much lower than that for elites, indicating a multidimensional structure. Importantly, the correlation for the full mass public sample will be non-zero, indicating the public's at least limited reliance on the liberal-conservative continuum.

Hypothesis 3E: The factor correlation for the least sophisticated segment of the mass public will be especially low, testifying to the lack of ideological constraint exhibited by these citizens.

Hypothesis 3F: The factor correlation for the most sophisticated segment of the mass public will approach that of elites.

Before proceeding to the comparison between elite and mass attitudes and the empirical test of my hypotheses, I will describe the measure of political sophistication used in this project, as it is

⁸ The two forms of evidence that I examine—the factor correlation and the factor loadings—capture the two forms of attitudinal constraint—horizontal and vertical, respectively—described by Converse (1964). More specifically, issue attitude interdependence evidences “horizontal constraint,” and a high correspondence between ideological self-identifications and issue attitudes evidences “vertical constraint,” both of which are implications of ideological thinking (e.g., Federico 2007).

the variable that I argue plays a central role in distinguishing ideological and non-ideological thinking and attitudinal constraint.

3.4 Measuring Political Sophistication

Political sophistication represents the cognitive and motivational factors that I argue produce ideological thinking and constraint. Previous studies have termed the variable political “awareness,” “expertise” or “knowledge.” In this study, I create a summary index from three variables—political interest, involvement and knowledge—to provide a meaningful test of the hypothesized relationship among political sophistication, ideological thinking and attitudinal constraint. Political interest ranges from 0 to 3 according to the respondent’s self-reported interest in the political campaign (Luskin 1990). Political involvement ranges from 0 to 5 according to the number of campaign-related activities in which the respondent participated (Converse 1975; Judd, Krosnick, and Milburn 1981).⁹ Political knowledge ranges from 0 to 3 according to the ANES interviewer assessment of the respondent’s general level of political information (Luskin 1987; Zaller 1992).¹⁰ Higher values indicate greater levels of political interest, involvement and knowledge, respectively. Table 3.1 below displays the mean value of

⁹ The five variables used to construct the political involvement index are as follows: whether the respondent attended a campaign event, displayed campaign paraphernalia, donated to a political candidate, donated to one of the parties or worked for a political candidate. A full list of question wording for all of the variables used to construct the political sophistication index is available in the appendix to this chapter.

¹⁰ I use interviewer assessments of political information because the ANES batteries of factual knowledge questions are not available prior to 1986. Zaller (1986) argues that interviewer assessments are valid and reliable measures of political information, as well as highly related to other criterion variables, including education and political interest (see also Bartels 1996). Similar results are obtained when the respondent’s knowledge of political facts is used. These results for the year 2000, as well as the correlation between the two operationalizations of political knowledge in each year, are available in the appendix to this chapter.

the sophistication index, as well its components means values, for each year.¹¹ Figure 3.1 below shows the distribution of the index in each year.

Examining each component of the sophistication index—knowledge, interest and involvement—provides useful insight into the overall levels of sophistication among the mass public over the course of twenty-four years. The values for each of the three components are low, stable over time and consistent with previous observations of the American electorate (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Prior 2010). The mean level of sophistication across all six presidential election years is 3.930.

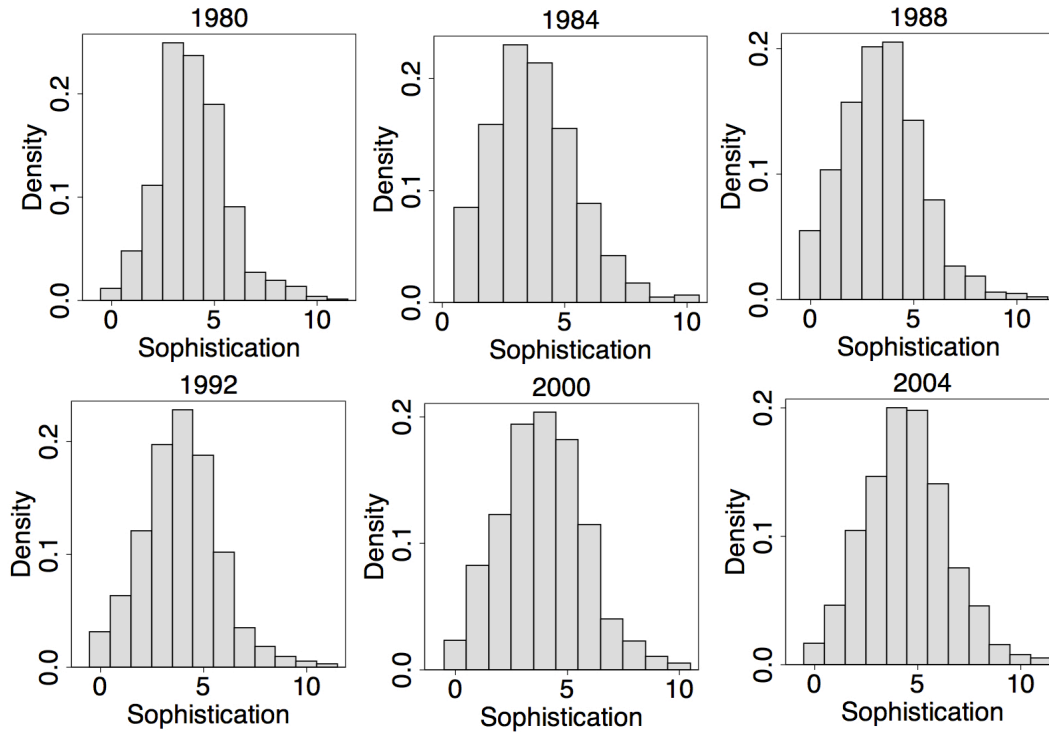
Table 3.1: Summary Statistics for Knowledge, Interest and Involvement Components of Sophistication Index, 1980-2004 ANES: Mean (standard deviation)

Year	Knowledge ¹	Interest ²	Involvement Index ³	Sophistication Index ⁴
1980	2.383 (.926)	1.193 (.699)	.324 (.794)	3.996 (1.711)
1984	2.281 (.932)	1.036 (.728)	.336 (.739)	3.783 (1.753)
1988	2.059 (1.126)	1.028 (.727)	.305 (.786)	3.477 (1.935)
1992	2.349 (1.055)	1.216 (.718)	.322 (.791)	3.913 (1.870)
2000	2.300 (1.145)	1.269 (.697)	.313 (.754)	3.925 (1.897)
2004	2.495 (1.132)	1.432 (.654)	.508 (.936)	4.484 (2.018)

- 1.) Knowledge is a five-point, ordinal variable ranging from “extremely low” (0) to “extremely high” (4).
- 2.) Interest is a three-point, ordinal variable ranging from “not at all interested” (0) to “extremely interested” (2).
- 3.) Involvement index is cumulative and includes five activities: attending a campaign event, working for a campaign, displaying campaign paraphernalia, donating to a political candidate and donating to one of the parties. The scale ranges from 0 to 5 in all years except 1984, when the scale ranges from 0 to 4 because donating to a candidate and donating to one of the parties is offered as a single question.
- 4.) Sophistication index is cumulative, combining the first three measures in the table. The index ranges from 0 to 11 in all years except 1984, when the index ranges from 0 to 10.

¹¹ The index ranges from 0 to 11 in all years except 1984, when the index ranges from 0 to 10 due to the fact that two questions, donating money to a political candidate and donating money to one of the political parties, are combined into a single question.

Figure 3.1: Distribution of Sophistication Index



In order to examine my hypotheses regarding the effect of political sophistication on the structure of mass political attitudes, I stratify the sample into three groups representing the lowest, middle and highest thirds of the mass public based upon individuals' political interest, involvement and knowledge. One observes large and consistent differences in levels of political knowledge and political interest across the three strata. Involvement, though, appears to be the single greatest difference among segments of the mass public. This finding is consistent with previous studies concluding that involvement is an important determinant of sophistication and attitudinal constraint (Federico and Hunt 2013; Granberg and Holmberg 1996; Jennings 1992; Knight 1985; Leighley 1991; Verba and Nie 1972). Stratifying the mass public into three groups thus enables one to see more clearly the variance of political sophistication within the electorate (Converse 1962, 2000). The mean value of the political sophistication index for the lowest third of the mass public is 2.207, compared to 4.372 for the middle third and 6.202 for the highest

third. The summary statistics show that only individuals in the most sophisticated third of the sample score in the top half of the sophistication index. The results from 2004 are worth noting because the mean value of the sophistication index in this year is noticeably higher than in previous years included in the analysis. However, examining the value for each segment of the mass public reveals that the increase is largely attributable to the most sophisticated third, an observation that will become clearer in the next section. Table 3.2 below shows the mean value of the sophistication index for the stratified samples in each year.

Table 3.2: Summary Statistics for Sophistication Index and its Components for 1980-2004 ANES Stratified Samples: Mean (standard deviation)

	Knowledge	Interest	Involvement Index	Sophistication Index
1980				
Low	1.773 (.712) Range = 0 to 4	.636 (.493) Range = 0 to 2	.003 (.053) Range = 0 to 1	2.412 (.826) Range = 0 to 4
Middle	2.728 (.682) Range = 1 to 4	1.559 (.527) Range = 0 to 2	.021 (.144) Range = 0 to 1	4.308 (.589) Range = 3 to 5
High	3.09 (.828) Range = to 4	1.655 (.507) Range = 0 to 2	1.39 (1.133) Range = 0 to 5	6.135 (1.413) Range = 3 to 11
1984				
Low	1.912 (.761) Range = 1 to 4	.700 (.524) Range = 0 to 2	.015 (.120) Range = 0 to 1	2.627 (.964) Range = 1 to 4
Middle	2.783 (.865) Range = 1 to 4	1.668 (.535) Range = 0 to 2	.185 (.389) Range = 0 to 1	4.636 (.789) Range = 3 to 6
High	3.00 (.787) Range = 1 to 4	1.630 (.532) Range = 0 to 2	1.633 (.907) Range = 1 to 4	6.263 (1.324) Range = 3 to 10

Table 3.2 (cont'd)

Table 3.1 (Cont'd)

		1988			
Low	1.067 (.800) Range = 0 to 3	.330 (.471) Range = 0 to 1	0 N/A	1.398 (.828) Range = 0 to 3	
Middle	2.642 (.872) Range = 0 to 4	1.329 (.528) Range = 0 to 2	.036 (.187) Range = 0 to 1	4.007 (.566) Range = 2 to 5	
High	2.951 (.811) Range = 0 to 4	1.697 (.522) Range = 0 to 2	1.057 (1.186) Range = 0 to 5	5.706 (1.396) Range = 3 to 11	
		1992			
Low	1.534 (.816) Range = 0 to 4	.600 (.504) Range = 0 to 2	.003 (.059) Range = 0 to 1	2.138 (.973) Range = 0 to 4	
Middle	2.720 (.741) Range = 0 to 4	1.568 (.519) Range = 0 to 2	.029 (.167) Range = 0 to 1	4.137 (.610) Range = 2 to 5	
High	3.153 (.892) Range = 0 to 4	1.723 (.465) Range = 0 to 2	1.313 (1.149) Range = 0 to 5	6.189 (1.416) Range = 3 to 11	
		2000			
Low	1.445 (.825) Range = 0 to 4	.656 (.499) Range = 0 to 2	0 N/A	2.101 (.948) Range = 0 to 4	
Middle	2.685 (.834) Range = 0 to 4	1.591 (.517) Range = 0 to 2	.031 (.173) Range = 0 to 1	4.306 (.659) Range = 2 to 5	
High	3.241 (.896) Range = 0 to 4	1.759 (.445) Range = 0 to 2	1.185 (1.082) Range = 0 to 5	6.185 (1.321) Range = 3 to 10	
		2004			
Low	1.711 (.944) Range = 0 to 4	.844 (.518) Range = 0 to 2	.008 (.087) Range = 0 to 1	2.563 (1.072) Range = 0 to 4	
Middle	2.989 (.880) Range = 0 to 4	1.769 (.448) Range = 0 to 2	.082 (.273) Range = 0 to 1	4.839 (.777) Range = 2 to 6	
High	3.130 (.870) Range = 0 to 4	1.842 (.375) Range = 0 to 2	1.761 (.991) Range = 1 to 5	6.732 (1.458) Range = 4 to 11	

3.5 Results

Below, I test the hypotheses derived from my theory that differences in political sophistication among various segments of the mass public contribute to observed differences in citizens' attitude structures. I begin the analysis by comparing the structure of attitudes among elites and the full mass public sample. I next investigate the extent to which political sophistication influences ideological thinking and constraint within the mass public. Finally, I examine the relationship between ideological self-identifications and the dimension underlying political attitudes for elites, as well as for various strata of the mass public.

I begin by examining the mass public results from a single year, 2000, the same year for which elite results were presented. Again, I include the results for elites in all tables and figures for comparison purposes. Shown below in Table 3.3 are the factor loadings for each issue attitude and the factor correlations for the 2000 CDS and ANES.¹² I will interpret only the mass public findings in this section given the discussion for those of the elites provided in Chapter 2.

The 2000 ANES results are quite different from those observed for elites. Although a few of the issue attitudes correlate highly with the specified factors, several others do not. The items with the lowest factor loadings—defense spending and abortion—suggest that the respective factors do not explain a high percentage of the variance in these attitudes and that their underlying sources perhaps are different than the dimensions specified in the analysis. Also noteworthy is that the factor loading for each issue attitude is considerably lower than its observed loading for the elite sample, again indicating that the attitudinal constraint exhibited by elites is simply not present among the mass public as a whole. This point is underscored further

¹² The results for the mass public for the year 2000 are consistent with those for every other year in the analysis. Full results for each survey year in the analysis can be found in the appendix to this chapter.

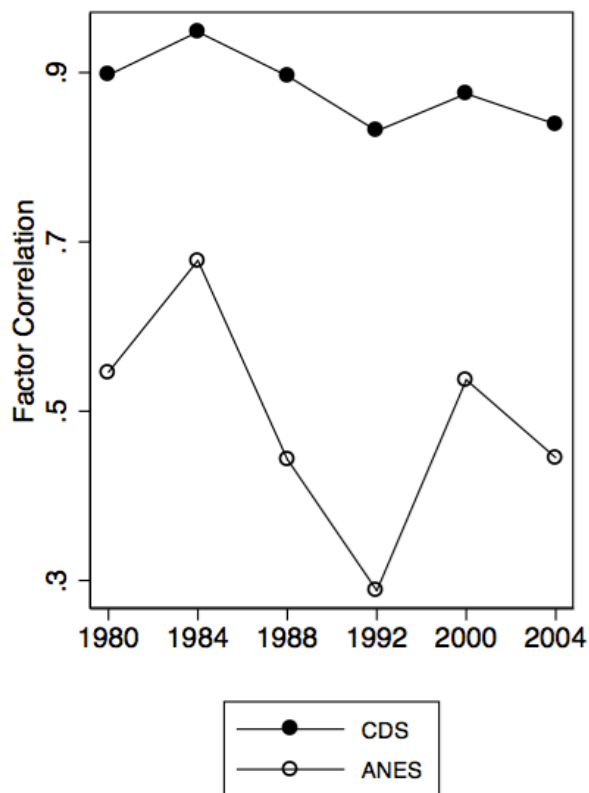
by comparing the factor correlation for the mass public sample, 0.537, to that obtained for elites, 0.875. Despite the existence of some attitudinal constraint, the results provide support to Hypothesis 3A that the mass public relies on ideology only limitedly, rather than as an overarching structure for organizing political attitudes. At least two dimensions underlie mass opinion, and, as evidenced by the low factor loadings for several of the items, idiosyncratic sources unique to various individual issue attitudes seem to underlie a non-trivial portion of mass opinion. Deviations from a unidimensional structure are the result of the public not making necessary connections between ideology and issue attitudes due to a lack of political sophistication.

Table 3.3: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results of 2000 CDS and ANES

Variable	Socioeconomic Factor		Cultural Factor		CDS	ANES
	CDS	ANES	CDS	ANES		
Services	.879	.641				
Welfare	.778	.447				
Government insurance	.807	.472				
Child care	.772	.585				
Schools	.757	.523				
Aid to blacks	.714	.472				
Environment	.739	.473				
Defense	.667	.401				
Abortion			.703	.406		
Homosexual affect			.802	.680		
Job discrimination			.894	.600		
Factor Correlation					.875	.537
Fit Indices						
RMSEA					.093	.054
SRMR					.032	.039
CFI					.949	.922
TFI					.935	.900
CD					.975	.888

The results presented for the year 2000 generalize to the other years under consideration. This evidence is provided in Figure 3.2. Consistent with my argument, the contrast between the elite and mass public results could not be starker. In each year, although the factors correlate moderately—demonstrating the mass public’s limited reliance on the left-right continuum to structure political attitudes—the findings, combined with the low factor loadings for several issue attitudes, evidence a lack of ideological thinking and thus constraint among the mass public. The factor correlations therefore support Hypothesis 3D.

Figure 3.2: Plot of Factor Correlation for Elites and the Mass Public



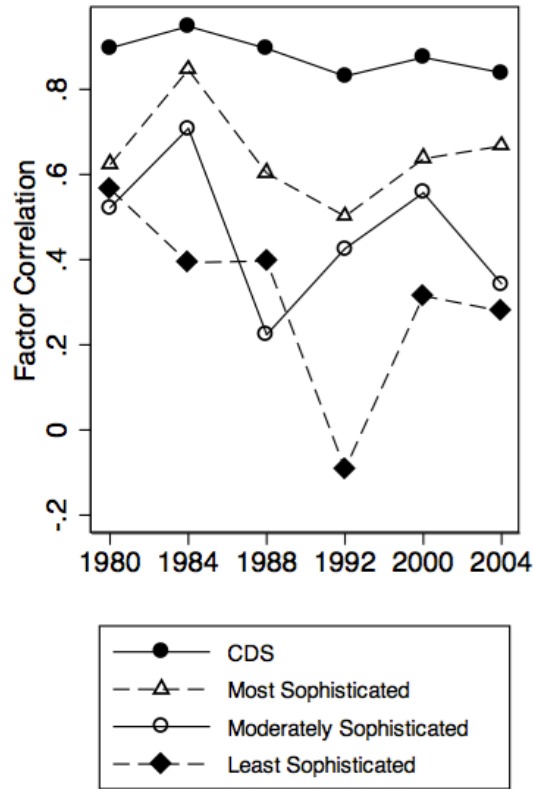
The results presented in this section evidence that issue attitudes are more highly interdependent for the delegates than for the mass public. I argue that this difference arises because elite attitudes are derived from a single abstract dimension, which I further argue is ideology. The mass public's issue attitudes appear to be generated by two or more dimensions. The difference in constraint between elites and the mass public is a result of differences in sophistication. Politically knowledgeable and motivated elites conceptualize politics in liberal-conservative ideological terms, which produces constraint according to the underlying liberal-conservative continuum. In order to demonstrate further the role of political sophistication in structuring political attitudes, I examine in the next section the variable's effect on ideological thinking and constraint among various strata of the mass public.

3.5.1 Variation in Sophistication and Constraint within the Mass Public

I now stratify the samples into thirds based on my measure of sophistication in order to investigate more fully my hypothesis that a lack of sophistication is driving the apparently multidimensional structure of mass opinion.¹³ If my argument is correct, then as sophistication—and thus ideological thinking and constraint—increases, the factor correlation also should increase. The factor correlation for the stratified samples for each year is shown below in Figure 3.3. Again, the factor correlation for elites is also included for the purpose of comparison.

¹³ The alpha reliability coefficient for the sophistication scale in each year is as follows: $\alpha =$ 0.642 in 1980, 0.623 in 1984, 0.664 in 1988 and 0.654 in 1992, 0.631 in 2000 and 0.668 in 2004.

Figure 3.3: Plot of Factor Correlation for Stratified Samples of the Mass Public



The results again conform to my expectations. Turning once more to the specific results for 2000 is useful for highlighting the graphical evidence presented in Figure 3.3. The factor loadings for each issue attitude and the factor correlations for the stratified samples of the mass public are displayed below in Table 3.4. Among the least sophisticated third of the sample, the factor loadings for a couple of core social welfare issues load moderately well on the socioeconomic factor, but a few others do not, and attitudes toward race, the environment, defense and abortion all load very poorly on the specified factors. The loadings testify to the idiosyncratic sources of these issue attitudes among less sophisticated members of the mass public, supporting Hypothesis 3B. Additionally, the factor correlation is 0.315. Given that sophistication is positively related both to the individual factor loadings and the factor

correlation, I argue that this stratum of the mass public is unlikely to be ideologically ambivalent. Rather, this segment of the mass public more likely lacks attitude structure, supporting Hypothesis 3E. Examining the results for more sophisticated citizens, one observes that the factor loadings and factor correlation increase as expected: for example, the factor correlation for those in the middle third is 0.557; and, for citizens occupying the top third of the sophistication scale, the factor correlation is 0.637. These results support Hypotheses 3C and 3F. Moreover, in 2004, as elite attitudes continue to polarize, the differences in constraint across sophistication groups heighten. The factor correlations for the least, moderately and most sophisticated segments of the mass public in that year are 0.312, 0.363 and 0.710, respectively. The evidence presented thus far indicates that my measure of political sophistication effectively discriminates ideological thinking and attitudinal constraint among the mass public.

Table 3.4: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results of 2000 ANES Conditioned on Sophistication

Variable	Socioeconomic Factor 1			Cultural 2			
	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	
Services	.632	.601	.674				
Welfare	.313	.482	.606				
Government insurance	.315	.449	.573				
Child care	.595	.510	.604				
Schools	.511	.418	.563				
Aid to blacks	.268	.493	.652				
Environment	.359	.459	.534				
Defense	.217	.301	.591				
Abortion				.279	.404	.505	
Homosexual affect				.786	.587	.770	
Job discrimination				.441	.611	.661	
Factor correlation							
					Low	Middle	High
					.315	.557	.637
Fit indices							
RMSEA					.031	.053	.076
SRMR					.046	.048	.053
CFI					.950	.905	.913
TFI					.936	.878	.889
CD					.884	.854	.934

3.5.2 Ideology?

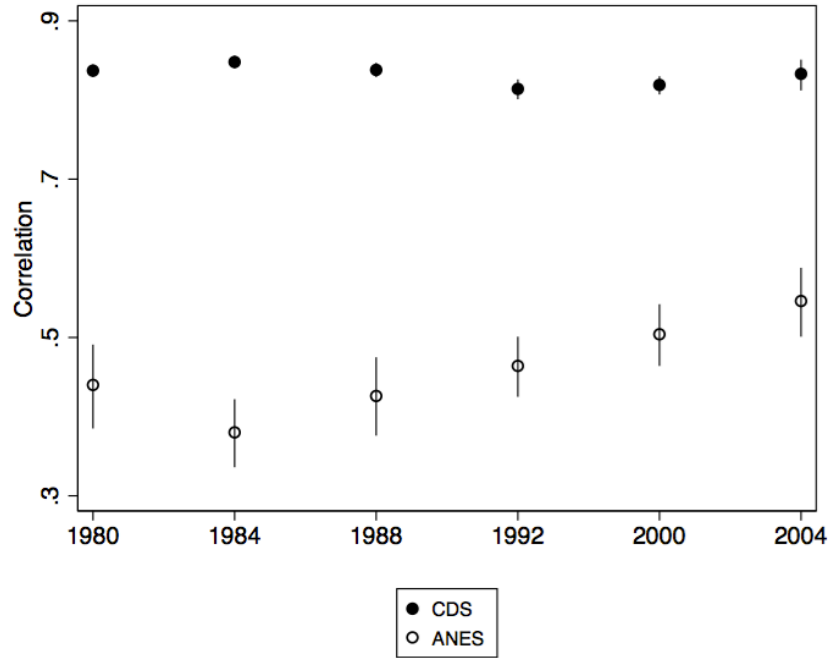
I have illustrated that the attitude structures of political elites and the most sophisticated members of the mass public are unidimensional. I also have provided evidence that less sophisticated members of the mass public use this dimension only limitedly to organize their political attitudes. Thus far, however, I have relied on my *a priori* specification of this dimension as ideology. As an additional piece of evidence to demonstrate that the underlying dimension I am reporting is, in fact, ideology, I present below correlations between individuals' ideological self-identifications and the socioeconomic factor for both elites and the mass public.¹⁴

Recall that ideological self-identifications are an important determinant of issue attitudes for politically sophisticated citizens (e.g., Jacoby 1991a). My theory that the dimension discussed throughout this analysis really is ideology and generates the constraint observed in the previous section among elites and the most politically sophisticated members of the mass public implies one further hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3G: Correlations between the socioeconomic factor and ideological self-identifications should be low for the less sophisticated segments of the mass public, higher for more sophisticated citizens and highest for political elites.

¹⁴ Similar results are obtained from an analysis correlating ideological self-identifications and the cultural factor. These results, as well as the logic underlying my expectations for them, can be found in the appendix to this chapter.

Figure 3.4: Correlation between Ideological Self-identifications and the Socioeconomic Factor for Elites and the Mass Public (vertical lines represent 95% confidence intervals)



The correlations bearing on Hypothesis 3G are presented above in Figure 3.4.¹⁵ Examining the CDS evidence reveals that the correlations are extremely high for elites—approaching one in most years, similar to the high factor correlations reported earlier for the elite sample. Additionally, 95% confidence intervals show very low variance in the estimates. The results provided here and earlier support my argument that the dimension upon which elites’ attitudes are structured is, in fact, ideology. The open circles in Figure 3.4 represent the mass public comparison, and the evidence once again tells a starkly different story than the one observed for elites! On average, the magnitude of the correlations is less than half of that obtained for elites. These results testify to the fact that the mass public relies only limitedly on ideology as an overarching mechanism for structuring political attitudes. Additionally, although

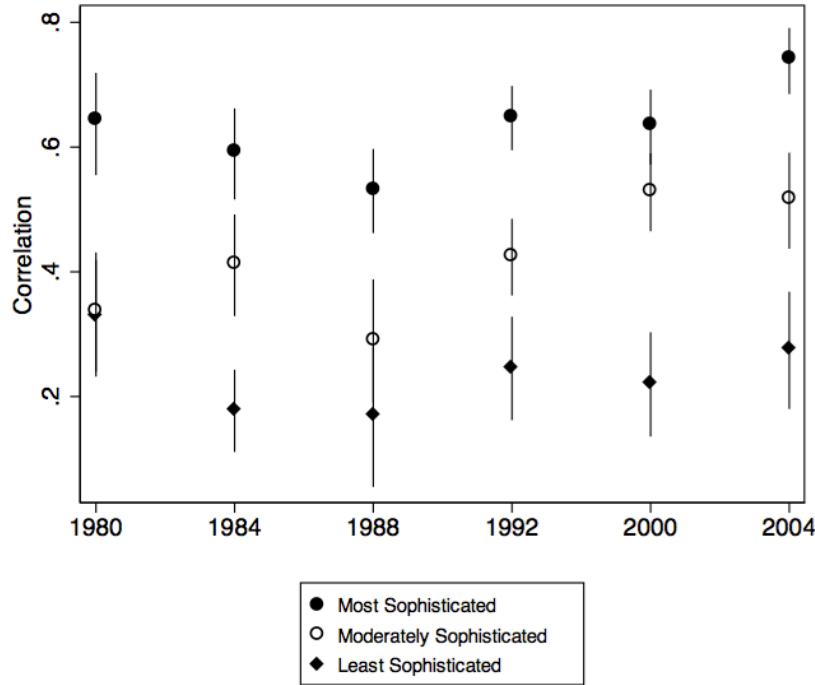
¹⁵ Figures 3.4-3.6 were created by estimating factor scores and then estimating correlations between these factor scores and individuals’ ideological self-identifications.

constraint among the mass public increases markedly over this time period, further analysis will indicate that the increase is driven almost entirely by the most politically sophisticated stratum of the electorate.

The important variation within the mass public is shown below in Figure 3.5, which features results for the ANES stratified samples for each year. In each year, the correlation between ideological identifications and factor one is very low for the least sophisticated third of the sample. The correlation improves for the middle third of the sample, but the genuine difference in ideological constraint appears to lie between these two groups and the most sophisticated citizens in the sample, further supporting Hypothesis 3G. The correlation for these respondents in the top third of the sophistication scale is high and significantly different from the correlation for either of the lower two groups in all years.¹⁶ Importantly, the correlations between ideological self-identifications and the underlying dimension for the stratified samples demonstrate that apparent increases in ideological constraint among the mass public in recent years are largely confined to the most sophisticated citizens, who are highly politically interested, involved and knowledgeable. Over the past two decades, these individuals' attitude structures have become more like those of elites, but the trend does not appear to be occurring among other, less sophisticated segments of the mass public. The heterogeneous response among the mass public to increasing elite polarization is consistent with previous work associating political sophistication and the effectiveness of elite opinion leadership (Claassen and Highton 2009; Layman and Carsey 2002a, 2002b; Zaller 1992).

¹⁶ Although the 95% confidence intervals overlap for the estimated correlations for the moderately and most sophisticated individuals in the year 2000, a formal hypothesis test indicates that the difference in the estimates is statistically distinguishable from zero ($p < .05$).

Figure 3.5: Correlation between Ideological Self-identifications and the Socioeconomic Factor for the Mass Public Conditioned on Political Sophistication (vertical lines represent 95% confidence intervals)



The empirical results presented in this section support my hypotheses regarding the ideological thinking and constraint of the mass public. Much of the mass public’s issue attitudes are not structured coherently according to a single broad, unifying principle, or, in the case of less sophisticated citizens, even two principles. As a result, these citizens’ issue attitudes are not interdependent and bear little relation to their self-identifications as “liberal” or “conservative.” However, an important caveat to this general finding is that ideology does appear to play an important role in structuring the political attitudes of more sophisticated citizens. These politically sophisticated individuals possess the cognitive and motivational characteristics necessary to connect ideological self-identifications and issue attitudes. Moreover, increases in constraint among these more politically sophisticated citizens have been marked in recent years, wholly consistent with theories suggesting that the most politically active individuals are most

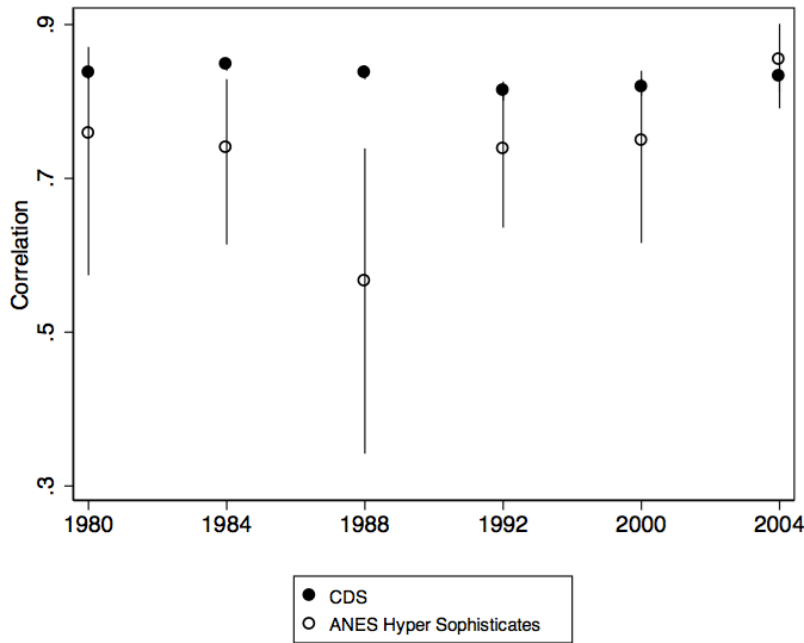
likely to reflect elite polarization (e.g., Abramowitz 2010; Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope 2006). The important flipside to the finding is that less politically sophisticated members of the mass public show virtually no increase in constraint over the time period included in the analysis.

Still, even as the results show important differences in attitude structures within the mass public, I thus far have not demonstrated the origins of the extraordinarily high levels of constraint found among elites. An important aspect of Jennings' (1992) study, for example, is that he did not uncover a level of constraint among any segment of the mass public—even among the most involved citizens—approaching that of elites. I contend that political sophistication is what distinguishes elites from the mass public. However, political elites simply may be qualitatively different from the mass public, or perhaps I am not properly operationalizing sophistication and thus not capturing the variable driving ideological thinking and constraint.

In order to investigate this question more fully, I have stratified the ANES surveys further to obtain the correlation between ideological self-identifications and the underlying dimension for citizens who I term “hyper sophisticates.” These citizens are rated by the ANES interviewer as possessing a “very high” general level of political information and report being “extremely interested” in the year’s political campaign and having participated in at least one campaign event during the survey year. The results for this analysis are displayed below in Figure 3.6. The estimated correlations for these hyper sophisticated members of the mass public are remarkably similar to those obtained for elites in all but one year.¹⁷ The estimates are higher than those obtained for even the top third of the sophistication scale and they are significantly different from the latter stratum in one year.

¹⁷ The exception is 1988, which is due to extreme variability owing to an unfortunately small sample size.

Figure 3.6: Correlation between Ideological Self-identifications and the Socioeconomic Factor for Elites and Mass Public “Hyper Sophisticates” (vertical lines represent 95% confidence intervals)



I conclude that elites are not wholly set apart from the mass public, or elite *qua* elite. Rather, the ideological thinking and constraint of elites is a function of their extraordinary interest and involvement in, and knowledge about, politics. Contra Jennings (1992), I observe levels of constraint approaching, and even equaling, elites among the most interested, involved and knowledgeable members of the mass public. Furthermore, the results lend support to my argument that constraint is, in fact, a result of ideological thinking owing to political sophistication, and not, for example, blind partisanship. If strong partisans, regardless of sophistication, exhibited high levels of constraint, then one could argue that the situation was one of partisans thinking ideologically, as opposed to sophisticates thinking ideologically. However, the results contradict the theory of partisans blindly showcasing an ability to know “what goes with what.” Although strong partisans generally do exhibit greater constraint than other

individuals in the sample, the differences between strong partisans and non-strong partisans are largely insignificant within sophistication categories.¹⁸ Most importantly, at all levels of partisan strength, greater sophistication is associated with dramatic increases in constraint.¹⁹ Of course, noting just how small a percentage of the electorate can be categorized as “hyper sophisticated” is important—no more than five percent in any year included in the analysis. These hyper sophisticated citizens may foster the all-important two-way communication between elites and the rest of the mass public. This question must be left to future research to answer.

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I hoped to explain the structure of mass public attitudes in the U.S. In order to test my theory that deviations from a unidimensional structure are a function of low sophistication, I stratified the mass public according to a measure of political sophistication capturing what I argue are the cognitive and motivational determinants of ideological thinking and constraint. Although I found that one dimension structures a significant amount of mass opinion, a great deal more of mass political attitudes are not explained by the underlying trait, ideology. The results on this point have important implications for the study of American public opinion.

I found that the minimal attitudinal constraint exhibited by the mass public is the result of a lack of political sophistication. The results are consistent with scholars who argue that the apparent lack of constraint among the mass public is not “just measurement error” (e.g.,

¹⁸ This result is consistent with previous literature suggesting that partisanship does, in fact, help individuals connect their issue positions to the liberal-conservative continuum (e.g., Baldassarri and Gelman 2008).

¹⁹ Full tables of results conditioned on partisan strength are available in the appendix to this chapter.

Converse 1970; Knight 1985; Markus and Converse 1979; Norpoth and Lodge 1985; but see Ansolabehere, Rodden, and Snyder, Jr. 2008). Although much of the mass public orients some of its attitudes ideologically (Jessee 2009) and can for the most part place candidates and parties on the proper side of the ideological continuum (e.g., Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde 2007; Jacoby 1995, 2002), most citizens lack the cognitive and motivational characteristics necessary to link ideology and issue attitudes. Precisely because the least sophisticated citizens exhibit multidimensional structures, I argue that observed deviations from a unidimensional structure are a function of attitudinal incoherence. The attitudes of relatively politically unsophisticated citizens arise on many issues from idiosyncratic sources. The results are therefore also consistent with previous work demonstrating the multidimensionality of mass attitudes (Feldman and Johnston 2013; Treier and Hillygus 2009). However, the results presented in this chapter depart considerably from these studies in suggesting that multidimensional attitude structures are less, rather than more, complex than unidimensional ones, a second useful finding of this chapter.

Third, I sought to identify specifically the origins of the extremely high level of ideological thinking and constraint observed among elites. Existing studies identify differences in the reliance on the liberal-conservative continuum among elites and the mass public, but they either stop short of demonstrating, or are unable to demonstrate, why these differences exist. In this chapter, I demystified the source of elite constraint by showing that the degree of ideological thinking and constraint of the most politically interested, involved and knowledgeable—“hyper sophisticated”—members of the mass public is on par with the elites in this study. These results, I argue, demonstrate further that the key distinction between elites and mass public is not that elites are wholly set apart from the electorate and thus unique in their unidimensional conception of the political world. Rather, I argue, the distinction is political sophistication in the form of

knowledge and motivation, which appears to be the link connecting diverse issue attitudes into a coherent structure—characterized by the interdependence of issue attitudes and connection between ideological self-identifications and issue attitudes—producing ideological constraint. Differences in political sophistication explain the variation in the degree to which citizens engage in ideological thinking, and I located one group of citizens in the mass public whose interest and involvement in, and knowledge about, politics enables them to structure their attitudes similarly to elites.

A fourth and final contribution owing to the most recent evidence in this study is that apparent increases in ideological thinking and constraint among the mass public are largely confined to the most sophisticated citizens, contrary to some arguments on the changing nature of the American electorate (e.g., Abramowitz and Saunders 2008; Bafumi and Shapiro 2009). Time will tell whether increasing and prolonged elite polarization eventually will be reflected in broader segments of the mass public in the form of greater attitudinal constraint.

APPENDIX

Below is a list of all issues included in the analysis in each year. Unless otherwise noted, issues listed within years are included on both the CDS and ANES.

Note: Issues included on both the CDS and ANES in all years are aid to blacks, the environment, defense and abortion.

1980: Aid to blacks, environmental regulations, defense spending, relations with Russia, abortion, women's role, school prayer (ANES only)

1984: Education spending, aid to blacks, environmental regulations, defense spending, relations with Russia, abortion, women's role, school prayer

1988: Child care spending, education spending, aid to blacks, environmental regulations, defense spending, relations with Russia, abortion, women's role, school prayer

1992: Services spending, welfare, unemployment insurance, government versus private insurance, child care spending, education spending, aid to blacks, environmental regulations, defense spending, abortion, women's role, school prayer

2000: Services spending, welfare, government versus private insurance, child care spending, education spending, aid to blacks, environmental regulations, importance of U.S. military preeminence, abortion, homosexual affect, job discrimination against homosexuals

2004: Services spending, welfare, government versus private insurance, child care spending, education spending, aid to blacks, environmental regulations, defense spending, abortion, homosexual affect, same-sex marriage

Full Question Wording for the 1980-2004 CPS American National Election Studies (ANES)

Note: An * indicates that the variable in the designated year(s) has been reverse coded so that higher values reflect more conservative attitudes. An * next to the variable name indicates that the variable has been similarly reverse coded in each year it is included in the analysis, and the question wording for the 1996 ANES is not included here due to the lack of a CDS comparison.

- 1.) Ideological self-identifications: 1980-1992 ANES (V800267, V840122, V880228, V923514, V000446, V043086): We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. Here is a seven-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal to extremely conservative. Where would you place yourself on this scale? 1 - Extremely liberal 7 - Extremely conservative
Note: A slightly different question wording is used in 2000.
- 2.) Assistance to blacks:
 - A. 1980-1984 ANES (V801062, V840382): Some people feel the government in Washington should make every effort to improve the social and economic position of blacks and other minority groups, even if it means giving them preferential treatment. Suppose these people are at one end of the scale at point number 1. Others feel that the government should not make any special effort to help minorities because they should help themselves. Suppose these people are at the other end at point 7. And, of course, some people have opinions somewhere in between at points 2, 3, and 4. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this? 1 - Government should help minority groups 7 - Minority groups should help themselves
 - B. 1988-2004 ANES (V880332, V923724, V000645, V043158): Some people feel the government in Washington should make every effort to improve the social and economic position of blacks. Others feel that the government should not make any special effort to help blacks because they should help themselves. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this? 1 - Government should help blacks 7 - Blacks should help themselves
- 3.) Environment:
 - A. *1980 ANES (V801141): Present governmental regulations with regard to pollution and other environmental problems limit full use of some energy sources. Do you think the government should relax environmental protection regulations to increase the use of these energy sources, or should the government keep environmental protection regulations unchanged even though this may delay the production of more energy? 1 - Keep regulations unchanged 2 - Relax regulations, with qualifications 3 - Relax regulations

- B. 1984 and 1992 ANES (V840996, V923814): Should federal spending on improving and protecting the environment be increased, decreased, or kept about the same? 1 – Increased 2 – Same 3 – Decreased
- C. 1988, 2000 ANES (V880377, V000682): Should federal spending on improving and protecting the environment be increased, decreased, or kept about the same? 1 - Increased 2 - Kept about the same 3 - Decreased 4 - Cut out entirely
- D. 2004 ANES (V043182): Some people think it is important to protect the environment even if it costs some jobs or otherwise reduces our standard of living. (Suppose these people are at one end of the scale, at point number 1). Other people think that protecting the environment is not as important as maintaining jobs and our standard of living. (Suppose these people are at the other end of the scale, at point number 7. And of course, some other people have opinions somewhere in between, at points 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6). Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this? 1- Protect environment, even if it costs jobs and standard of living 7 - Jobs and standard of living more important
- 4.) Defense spending:
- 6.) 1980-1992 and 2004 ANES (V800281, V840395, V880310, V923603, V043142): Some people believe that we should spend much less money for defense. Others feel that defense spending should be greatly increased. Where would you place yourself on this scale? 1 - Greatly decrease defense spending 7 - Greatly increase defense spending
Note: In 2004, the question describes the endpoints of the scales and includes an offer of a “don't know” response, as with the environmental protection scale.
- 6.) *2000 ANES (V000587): Some people say the U.S. should maintain its position as the world's strongest military power even if it means continuing high defense spending. Would you say that you agree strongly, agree somewhat, neither agree nor disagree, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly? 1 - Disagree strongly 2 - Disagree somewhat 3 - Neither agree nor disagree 4 - Agree somewhat 5 - Agree strongly
- 5.) *Abortion: 1980-2004 ANES (V800311, V840423, V880395, V932732, V000694, V045132): There has been much discussion about abortion during recent years. Which of the following opinions listed below agrees with your view? 1- By law, a woman should be able to obtain an abortion as a matter of personal choice 2 - The law should permit abortion for reasons other than rape, incest, or danger to the woman's life, but only after the need for the abortion has been clearly established 3 - The law should permit abortion only in cases of rape, incest or when the woman's health is in danger 4 - By law, abortion should never be permitted

- 6.) Foreign policy:
- 6.) 1980-1984 ANES (V801078, V840408): Some people feel it is important for us to try very hard to get along with Russia. Others feel it is a big mistake to try too hard to get along with Russia. Where would you place yourself on this seven-point scale? 1 - Important to try very hard to get along with Russia 7 - Big mistake to try too hard to get along with Russia
- 6.) 1988 ANES (V880368): Some people feel it is important for us to cooperate more with Russia, while others believe we should be much tougher in our dealings with Russia. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this? 1 - Try to cooperate more with Russia 2 - Get much tougher with Russia
- 6.) *1992 ANES (V923605): In the future, how willing should the U.S. be to use military force to solve international problems, extremely willing, very willing, somewhat willing, not very willing, or never willing? 1 - Never willing 2 - Not very willing 3 - Somewhat willing 4 - Very willing 5 - Extremely willing
- 7.) Women's role in society:
- A. 1980-1988 ANES (V801094): Recently there has been a lot of talk about women's rights. Some people feel women should have an equal role with men in running business, industry, and government. Others feel that women's place is in the home. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this? 1 - Equal role 7 - Women's place in home
- B. 1984 ANES (V840250): Recently there has been a lot of talk about women's rights. Some people feel women should have an equal role with men in running business, industry, and government. Suppose these people are at one end of the scale at point number 1. Others feel that women's place is in the home. Suppose these people are at the other end at point 7. And, of course, some people have opinions somewhere in between at points 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this? 1 - Women have equal role 7 - Women's place is in the home
- C. 1988-1992 ANES (V880387, V923801): Recently there has been a lot of talk about women's rights. Some people feel women should have an equal role with men in running business, industry, and government. Others feel that women's place is in the home. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this? 1 - Women and men should have an equal role 7 - Women's place is in the home
- 8.) *School prayer:
- A. 1980 ANES (V801135): Some people think it is all right for the public schools to start each day with a prayer. Others feel that religion does not belong in the public schools but should be taken of by the family and the church. Which do you think -- schools should be allowed to start each day with a prayer, or religion does not belong in the schools? 1 - Religion does not belong in the schools 2 - R volunteers: Prayer acceptable only in

silent prayer/not mandatory for students/general universal statement not tied to any one sect/the particular school has decided it wants to do it; let each school decide on their own 3 - Schools should be allowed to start each day with a prayer

- B. 1984 ANES (V840138): Some people think it is all right for the public schools to start each day with a prayer. Others feel that religion does not belong in the public schools but should be taken of by the family and the church. Which do you think -- schools should be allowed to start each day with a prayer, or religion does not belong in the schools? 1 - Religion does not belong in the schools 2 - Schools should be allowed to start each day with a prayer
- C. 1988-1992 ANES (V880866, V925945): Which of the following views comes closest to your opinion of the issue of school prayer? Just give me the number of your choice. 1 - By law, prayers should not be allowed in schools 2 - The law should allow public schools to schedule time when children can pray silently if they want to 3 - The law should allow public schools to schedule time when children, as a group, can say a general prayer not tied to a particular religious faith 4 - By law, public schools should schedule a time when all children would say a chosen Christian prayer
- 9.) Public School Spending: 1984-2004 ANES (V840998, V880383, V923818, V000683, V043166): Should federal spending on public schools be increased decreased, or kept about the same? 1 - Increased 2 - Kept about the same 3 - Decrease
Note: The question includes respondents who volunteered the response “cut out entirely” in the years 1992-2004.
- 10.) Child care: 1988-2004 ANES (V880382, V923813, V000685, V043170): Should federal spending on child care be increased, decreased, or kept about the same? 1 - Increased 2 - Kept about the same 3 - Decreased 4 - Cut out entirely
- 11.) *Government provision of services: 1992-2004 ANES (V923701, V001385, V045121): Some people think the government should provide fewer services, even in areas such as health and education in order to reduce spending. Suppose these people are at one end of the scale at point 1. Other people feel it is important for the government to provide many more services even if it means an increase in spending. Suppose these people are at the other end, at point 7. And, of course, some other people have opinions somewhere in between at points 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6. First, where would you place yourself on this scale? 1 - Government provide many more services, increasing spending a lot 7 - Government provide many fewer services, reduce spending a lot
- 12.) Welfare: 1992-2004 ANES (V923726, V00676, V043169): Should federal spending on welfare programs be increased, decreased, or kept about the

same?: 1 - Increased 2 - Kept about the same 3 - Decreased 4 - Cut out entirely

- 13.) Unemployment: 1992 ANES (V923816): Should federal spending on government assistance to the unemployed be increased, decreased, or kept about the same?: 1 - Increased 2 - Kept about the same 3 – Decreased 4 - Cut out entirely
- 14.) Government insurance: 1992-2004 ANES (V923816, V000614, V043150): There is much concern about the rapid rise in medical and hospital costs. Some people feel there should be a government insurance plan which would cover all medical and hospital expenses for everyone. Others feel that all medical expenses should be paid by individuals, and through private insurance plans like Blue Cross or other company paid plans. Where would you place yourself on this scale? 1 – Government insurance plan 7 - Private insurance plan
- 15.) *Feeling thermometer toward homosexuals: 2000-2004 ANES (V001321, V045074): I'd like to get your feelings toward some of our political leaders and other people who are in the news these days. I'll read the name of a person and I'd like you to rate that person using something we call the feeling thermometer. Ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm toward the person. Ratings between 0 degrees and 50 degrees mean that you don't feel favorable toward the person and that you don't care too much for that person. You would rate the person at the 50 degree mark if you don't feel particularly warm or cold toward the person. If we come to a person whose name you don't recognize, you don't need to rate that person. Gay men and lesbians, that is, homosexuals: 0 - Warm 100 - Cold
- 16.) Job discrimination against homosexuals: 2000 ANES (V001478): Recently, there has been a lot of talk about discrimination against gay men and lesbians in hiring and promotion decisions. Some people feel that the government in Washington should make a special effort to protect homosexuals from job discrimination. Others feel that the government should not make any special effort to protect homosexuals in terms of employment. First, where would you place yourself on this scale? 1 - Special effort to protect homosexuals in the workplace 7 - No special effort to protect homosexuals in the workplace
- 17.) *Same-sex marriage: 2004 ANES (V043210): Should same-sex couples be allowed to marry, or do you think they should not be allowed to marry 1 - Should be allowed 2 - Should not be allowed to marry but should be allowed to legally form a civil union 3 - Should not be allowed

ANES Sophistication Measures, 1980-2004

Note: An * indicates that the variable in the designated year(s) has been reverse coded so that higher values reflect greater political knowledge, interest or involvement. An * next to the variable name indicates that the variable has been similarly reverse coded in each year it is included in the analysis, and the question wording for the 1996 ANES is not included here due to the lack of a CDS comparison.

- 1.) *Political knowledge: 1980-2004 ANES (V800726, V840713, V880555, V924205, V001033, V043403): Respondents general level of information about politics and public affairs seemed: 0 - Very low 1 - Fairly low 2 - Average 3 - Fairly high 4 - Very high
- 2.) *Political interest: 1980-2004 ANES (V800053, V840075, V880097, V923101, V001201, V045001): Some people don't pay much attention to political campaigns. How about you? Would you say you have been very much interested, somewhat interested, or not much interested in the political campaign so far this year? 0 – Not much interested 1 – Somewhat interested 2 – Very much interested
- 3.) *Attend a political event:
 - A. 1980 ANES (V800795): Did you go to any political meetings, rallies, fundraising dinners, or things like that? 0 - No 1 - Yes
 - B. 1984-2004 ANES (V840821, V880827, V925810, V001227, V045011): Did you go to any meeting, rallies, speeches, dinners or things like that in support of a particular candidate? 0 - No 1 - Yes
- 4.) *Work for a political candidate: 1980-2004 ANES (V800796, V840823, V880828, V925812, V001228, V045013): Did you do any work for one of the parties or candidates? 0 - No 1 - Yes
- 5.) *Display campaign paraphernalia:
 - A. 1980 ANES (V800797): Did you wear a campaign button or put a campaign sticker on your car? 0 - No 1 - Yes
 - B. 1984-2004 ANES (V840819, V880826, V925809, V001226, V045012): Did you wear a campaign button, put a campaign sticker on your car, or place a sign in your window or in front of your house? 0 - No 1 - Yes
- 6.) *Donate to a political Candidate:
 - A. 1980 ANES (V800802): What about other political contributions. Did you give any money this year to a candidate running for public office? 0 - No 1 - Yes
 - B. 1984 ANES (V840825): As you know, during an election year, people are often asked to make a contribution to support campaigns. During the past year did you give any money to an individual candidate, a political party

organization, people supporting a ballot proposition, or to a particular issue or interest group? 0 - No 1 - Yes

C. 1988-2004 ANES (V880830, V925815, V001229, V045014): During an election year, people are often asked to make a contribution to support campaigns. Did you donate money to an individual candidate running for public office? 0 – No 1 - Yes

7.) *Donate to a political party:

6.) 1980 ANES (V800811): Apart from contributions to specific candidates, how about contributions to any of the political parties? Did you give money to a political party during this election year? 0 - No 1 - Yes

6.) 1988-2004 ANES (V880832, V925817, V001231, V045015): Did you donate money to a political party during this election year? 0 - No 1 – Yes
Note: Again, the questions of donating to a political candidate and party are combined into a single question in 1984.

In this section, I present the full confirmatory factor analysis results that were used to produce Figures 3.4 and Figures 3.5. For each year, 1980-2004—except the year 2000, the results for which were presented in this chapter—I compare the factor loadings and factor correlation for elites (CDS) to those for the full mass public sample (ANES). Then, I conduct the same analysis for the mass public stratified sample, which is divided into thirds according to my measure of political sophistication. Specifically, the two factor correlations reported in Tables 3.5, 3.7, 3.9, 3.11 and 3.13 were used to produce Figure 3.2, and the three factor correlations reported in Tables 3.6, 3.8, 3.10, 3.12 and 3.14 were used to produce Figure 3.3.

As I noted in the text of the chapter where I describe the results for the year 2000, readers will notice the consistent pattern that the factor loadings presented below for each item among elites are far higher than are those for the full mass public sample. Indeed, several of the items do not load well on the specified factors among the mass public, especially among less sophisticated citizens, illustrating the idiosyncratic sources that give rise to particular mass attitudes.¹ Most importantly, the factor correlation—a critical measure of horizontal constraint evidencing the degree to which a common underlying dimension structures disparate attitudes—is markedly greater for elites than for the mass public. Similarly, consistent with my argument regarding the importance of the cognitive and motivational factors comprising the political sophistication index to attitudinal constraint, the factor correlation among the three strata of the mass public increases dramatically as sophistication increases.

¹ Note that *italicized* cell entries indicate non-significant factor loadings (i.e., $p > .05$).

Table 3.5: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results of 1980 CDS and ANES

Variable	Factor 1		Factor 2		CDS	ANES
	CDS	ANES	CDS	ANES		
Busing/Aid to blacks	.763	.574				
Environment	.675	.334				
Defense	.743	.458				
Russia	.647	.446				
Abortion			.519	.432		
Women's role			.856	.772		
School prayer			-	.221		
Factor Correlation					.897	.546
Fit Indices						
RMSEA					.042	.053
SRMR					.012	.036
CFI					.993	.926
TFI					.988	.881
CD					.908	.811

Table 3.6: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results of 1980 ANES
Conditioned on Sophistication

Variable	Factor 1			Factor 2			
	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	
Aid to blacks	.431	.568	.707				
Environment	.384	.291	.431				
Defense	.337	.475	.584				
Russia	.344	.399	.593				
Abortion				.386	.509	.356	
Women's role				.861	.733	.778	
School prayer				.122	.291	.250	
Factor correlation							
					Low	Middle	High
					.566	.522	.623
Fit indices							
RMSEA					.053	.045	.064
SRMR					.046	.039	.049
CFI					.892	.945	.938
TFI					.826	.912	.899
CD					.836	.795	.866

Table 3.7: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results of 1984 CDS and ANES

Variable	Factor 1		Factor 2		CDS	ANES
	CDS	ANES	CDS	ANES		
Schools	.678	.250				
Busing/Aid to blacks	.707	.480				
Environment	.723	.315				
Defense	.805	.590				
Russia	.658	.635				
Abortion			.579	.472		
Women's role			.847	.488		
School prayer			.738	.575		
Factor Correlation					.948	.678
Fit Indices						
RMSEA					.055	.058
SRMR					.020	.036
CFI					.984	.920
TFI					.976	.882
CD					.924	.791

Table 3.8: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results of 1984 ANES
Conditioned on Sophistication

Variable	Factor 1			Factor 2			
	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	
Education	.090	.256	.472				
Aid to blacks	.306	.509	.678				
Environment	.185	.425	.413				
Defense	.434	.609	.757				
Russia	.702	.639	.676				
Abortion				.483	.480	.551	
Women's role				.347	.506	.629	
School prayer				.490	.636	.647	
Factor correlation							
					Low	Middle	High
					.393	.708	.846
Fit indices							
RMSEA					.069	.050	.072
SRMR					.049	.039	.046
CFI					.770	.950	.948
TFI					.661	.926	.923
CD					.748	.818	.878

Table 3.9: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results of 1988 CDS and ANES

Variable	Factor 1		Factor 2		CDS	ANES
	CDS	ANES	CDS	ANES		
Child care	.690	.496				
Schools	.663	.428				
Busing/Aid to blacks	.681	.402				
Environment	.638	.474				
Defense	.774	.367				
Russia	.657	.481				
Abortion			.645	.556		
Women's role			.619	.539		
School prayer			.743	.378		
Factor Correlation					.896	.443
Fit Indices						
RMSEA					.077	.083
SRMR					.031	.059
CFI					.954	.774
TFI					.936	.687
CD					.915	.789

Table 3.10: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results of 1988 ANES
Conditioned on Sophistication

Variable	Factor 1			Factor 2			
	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	
Child care	.540	.511	.489				
Education	.584	.467	.377				
Aid to blacks	.165	.372	.636				
Environment	.412	.473	.480				
Defense	.108	.182	.683				
Russia	.414	.247	.671				
Abortion				.569	.501	.536	
Women's role				.495	.790	.525	
School prayer				.514	.214	.466	
Factor correlation							
					Low	Middle	High
					.397	.224	.603
Fit indices							
RMSEA					.081	.060	.093
SRMR					.074	.065	.063
CFI					.740	.817	.853
TFI					.640	.747	.796
CD					.796	.846	.864

Table 3.11: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results of 1992 CDS and ANES

Variable	Factor 1		Factor 2		CDS	ANES
	CDS	ANES	CDS	ANES		
Services	.829	.596				
Welfare	.682	.566				
Unemployment	.704	.535				
Government insurance	.799	.467				
Child care	.757	.573				
Schools	.725	.455				
Aid to blacks	.738	.475				
Environment	.720	.376				
Defense	.601	.352				
Abortion			.729	.602		
Women's role			.539	.578		
School prayer			.683	.316		
Factor Correlation					.831	.288
Fit Indices						
RMSEA					.068	.049
SRMR					.030	.037
CFI					.958	.916
TFI					.948	.895
CD					.956	.882

Table 3.12: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results of 1992 ANES
Conditioned on Sophistication

Variable	Factor 1			Factor 2			
	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	
Services	.446	.601	.703				
Welfare	.601	.495	.615				
Unemployment	.643	.503	.488				
Government insurance	.347	.442	.573				
Child care	.489	.543	.663				
Schools	.336	.465	.500				
Aid to blacks	.419	.447	.596				
Environment	.308	.375	.430				
Defense	.253	.354	.427				
Abortion				.625	.600	.653	
Women's role				.520	.551	.588	
School prayer				.256	.280	.404	
Factor correlation							
					Low	Middle	High
					-.092	.426	.502
Fit indices							
RMSEA					.048	.049	.056
SRMR					.048	.042	.044
CFI					.886	.906	.929
TFI					.859	.883	.911
CD					.862	.861	.916

Table 3.13: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results of 2004 CDS and ANES

Variable	Factor 1		Factor 2		CDS	ANES
	CDS	ANES	CDS	ANES		
Services	.767	.677				
Welfare	.830	.518				
Government insurance	.808	.583				
Child care	.823	.648				
Schools	.790	.590				
Aid to blacks	.661	.558				
Environment	.798	.396				
Defense	.684	.373				
Abortion			.735	.586		
Homosexual affect			.817	.622		
Same-sex marriage			.856	.798		
Factor Correlation					.839	.445
Fit Indices						
RMSEA					.163	.085
SRMR					.069	.054
CFI					.857	.873
TFI					.818	.837
CD					.976	.940

Table 3.14: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results of 2004 ANES
Conditioned on Sophistication

Variable	Factor 1			Factor 2			
	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	
Services	.505	.721	.738				
Welfare	.396	.530	.650				
Government insurance	.233	.664	.674				
Child care	.637	.709	.597				
Schools	.502	.607	.564				
Aid to blacks	.399	.538	.734				
Environment	.151	.361	.582				
Defense	.154	.253	.583				
Abortion				.463	.538	.735	
Homosexual affect				.536	.597	.715	
Same-sex marriage				.740	.838	.835	
Factor correlation							
					Low	Middle	High
					.279	.343	.677
Fit indices							
RMSEA					.073	.089	.086
SRMR					.069	.057	.053
CFI					.750	.866	.921
TFI					.712	.829	.899
CD					.874	.954	.962

Specifying Defense and Environmental Attitudes to Load on Both the Socioeconomic and Cultural Factors

Given the potential concern that individuals' attitudes toward defense and environmental issues might not be expected to load cleanly on the traditional socioeconomic factor—or the cultural factor, for that matter—I investigate the relationship of these two issues to each of the two factors more fully here. Recall that in all models used to generate the empirical results presented in this chapter, both defense and environmental issue attitudes are specified to load on the socioeconomic factor (i.e., factor one). However, again, given that these two issues could be conceptualized differently from core social welfare issues among the mass public, these issues might be related to both factors specified in the analysis, especially across sophistication levels. In order to address this possibility, I specify below models in which defense and environmental issue attitudes are made to load on both factors. These results, presented below in Table 3.15, show that the two indicators load almost exclusively on the first factor—the socioeconomic factor—across all sophistication levels in each year.

Table 3.15: Factor Loadings for the Defense and Environmental Issue Attitude Items from Models in which these Items are Specified to Load on Both Factors (other loadings not shown)

Year	Defense Spending Attitudes						Environmental Attitudes					
	Socioeconomic			Cultural			Socioeconomic			Cultural		
	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High
1980	.378	.318	.584	<i>.013</i>	<i>.003</i>	<i>.104</i>	<i>.109</i>	<i>.106</i>	<i>.373</i>	<i>.299</i>	<i>.202</i>	<i>.104</i>
1984	.395	.803	.755	<i>.054</i>	<i>-.209</i>	<i>.000</i>	<i>.145</i>	<i>.331</i>	<i>.507</i>	<i>.084</i>	<i>.098</i>	<i>-.103</i>
1988	<i>.034</i>	<i>.195</i>	<i>.690</i>	<i>.139</i>	<i>-.047</i>	<i>-.006</i>	<i>.376</i>	<i>.442</i>	<i>.434</i>	<i>.066</i>	<i>.078</i>	<i>.066</i>
1992	.262	.274	.297	<i>.093</i>	<i>.164</i>	<i>.237</i>	<i>.308</i>	<i>.362</i>	<i>.429</i>	-	<i>.027</i>	<i>.000</i>
2000	.340	.223	.465	<i>-.029</i>	<i>.127</i>	<i>.177</i>	<i>.340</i>	<i>.339</i>	<i>.456</i>	<i>.046</i>	<i>.191</i>	<i>.113</i>
2004	<i>.088</i>	<i>.171</i>	<i>.471</i>	<i>.208</i>	<i>.191</i>	<i>.156</i>	<i>.038</i>	<i>.329</i>	<i>.435</i>	<i>.118</i>	<i>.079</i>	<i>.213</i>

Note: *Italicized* numbers indicate non-significant factor loadings (i.e., $p > .05$).

Specifying Generalized Structural Equation Models (GSEM)

A key assumption of CFA models estimated using the method of maximum likelihood is that the indicators are distributed normally. Given that several of the indicators in this analysis are ordinal, rather than continuous, a potential threat to multivariate normality exists.² In response to this concern, I specified generalized structural equations models that are able to account specifically for the presence of ordinal indicators. Table 3.16 below shows the estimated factor correlation for elites, the full mass public sample and the stratified mass public sample for the SEM—replicating the results presented in Tables 3.3 and 3.4—and GSEM, respectively, for the year 2000. The results generated from these models are substantively the same as those presented in this chapter. Namely, the estimated factor correlation for elites is substantially higher than for the mass public, and the estimated factor correlation increases markedly among the mass public as political sophistication increases.

Table 3.16: Comparing Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results Generated from SEM and GSEM for the 2000 CDS and 2000 ANES Full Mass Public Sample and Stratified Sample

Year	CDS		ANES Full Sample		Least Politically Sophisticated		Moderately Politically Sophisticated		Most Politically Sophisticated	
	SEM	GSEM	SEM	GSEM	SEM	GSEM	SEM	GSEM	SEM	GSEM
2000	.875	.870	.537	.458	.315	.262	.557	.495	.637	.616

² The precise number of ordinal indicators varies across years due to the varying number of identical questions included in each year on the CDS and ANES, as well as the specific question wording for each variable in each year. The full question wording for each survey in all years included in the analysis is provided at the outset of this appendix.

Operationalizing Political Knowledge as Respondents' Knowledge of Political Facts

Given ongoing debates regarding the proper measurement of political knowledge and the variable's importance to this project, I considered operationalizing the political knowledge component of the sophistication index using respondents' knowledge of political facts, rather than interviewer assessments of respondents' general level of political information. Before introducing the results generated from models in which political knowledge is operationalized as respondents' knowledge of political facts, I believe that describing why I chose my ultimately preferred operationalization of the concept to generate the main empirical results presented in this project is important.³

First, as I discussed in Footnote 10 in this chapter, given support of the ANES interviewer assessments expressed by Zaller (1986), Delli Carpini and Keeter (1993) and Bartels (1996), I believe that the interviewer assessments are reliable and valid indicators of political knowledge, even as I acknowledge their potential flaws (Jackman and Levendusky, n.d.).

Second, and most importantly, several problems related to the ANES knowledge questions render them undesirable for my purposes. ANES knowledge question batteries were not introduced until 1986, meaning that they are not available for use in the first two survey years I analyze in this study (1980 and 1984). I highlight this concern in the aforementioned Footnote 10 in this chapter. Additionally, a report co-authored by (among others) the then-Principal Investigators of the ANES found that overly strict coding standards may have understated the mass public's political knowledge levels for the period 1986-2000, and other problems regarding incorrect coding instructions arose in

³ I thank Paul Abramson for raising this specific concern during my dissertation defense.

the 2004 survey (Krosnick, Lupia, DeBell, and Donakowski 2008). The potential lack of over time comparability of these measures led me to prefer the interviewer assessments (see also DeBell 20103 and Pietryka and MacIntosh 2013 for further analysis and discussion of the problems with the ANES factual knowledge questions).

Nonetheless, I present in Figure 3.7 below a dot plot showing that the correlation between the two measures in each survey year for which both measures exist is greater than .5 (the survey years are 1988-2004), evidence that I believe assuages any concern that the two operationalizations might yield substantively different results. Additionally, CFA results for the 2000 ANES conditioned by sophistication in which political knowledge is operationalized as respondents' knowledge of political facts are presented below in Table 3.17. These results mirror those presented in Table 3.4.

Figure 3.7: Correlations between Alternative Operationalizations of Political Knowledge: Interviewer Assessment of Respondents' Level of Political Information and Respondents' Knowledge of Political Facts

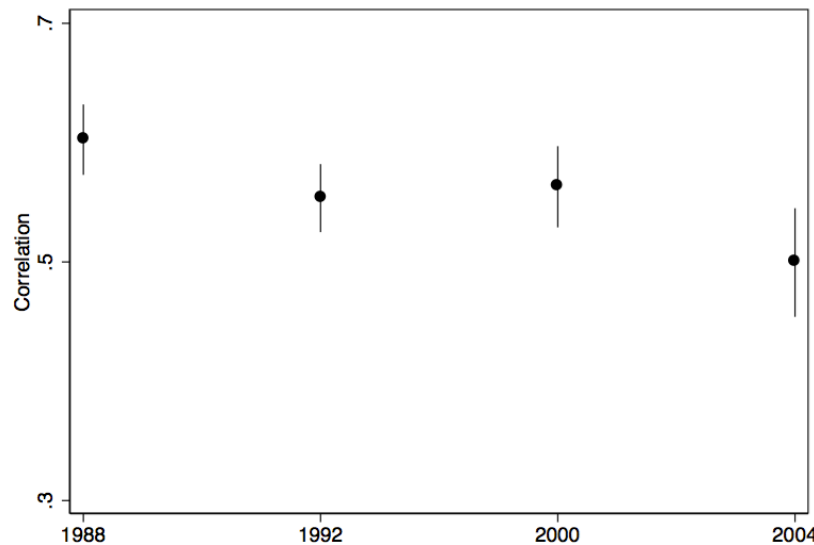


Table 3.17: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results of the 2000 ANES Conditioned on Sophistication: Alternative Operationalization of Political Knowledge

Variable	Socioeconomic Factor			Cultural Factor		
	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High
Services	.596	.577	.683			
Welfare	.338	.502	.568			
Government insurance	.412	.324	.571			
Child care	.525	.554	.586			
Schools	.477	.451	.534			
Aid to blacks	.362	.446	.633			
Environment	.382	.402	.535			
Defense	.220	.330	.560			
Abortion				.284	.513	.448
Homosexual affect				.843	.637	.703
Job discrimination				.446	.555	.660
Factor correlation						
				Low	Middle	High
				.278	.573	.644
Fit indices						
RMSEA				.040	.052	.073
SRMR				.048	.054	.050
CFI				.923	.906	.911
TFI				.901	.879	.886
CD				.907	.855	.919

Correlations between Individuals' Ideological Self-identifications and the Cultural Factor

My emphasis on the factor correlation as a measure of attitudinal constraint implies that both factors are indicators of the underlying dimension, liberal-conservative ideology. I presented evidence in this chapter that the dimension underlying individuals' issue attitudes is, in fact, ideology by correlating individuals' self-identifications with their factors scores on the socioeconomic dimension. The results show that this correlation is demonstrably higher for elites than for the full mass public sample, as well as that the correlation increases among the mass public as sophistication increases. The correlations between individuals' ideological self-identifications and the cultural factor presented below in Figures 3.8 and 3.9 replicate these results.

Again, the factor correlation demonstrates the degree to which disparate indicators specified to load on different factors are constrained by a common, underlying organizing principle. The empirical analysis in this chapter correlating individuals' ideological self-identifications with the socioeconomic factor, as well the analysis here correlating these same ideological self-identifications with the cultural factor, thus investigates whether or not this underlying principle (to the extent one exists) represents ideology, the liberal-conservative continuum in American politics.

Figure 3.8: Correlations between Individuals' Ideological Self-identifications and the Cultural Factor for Elites and the Mass Public

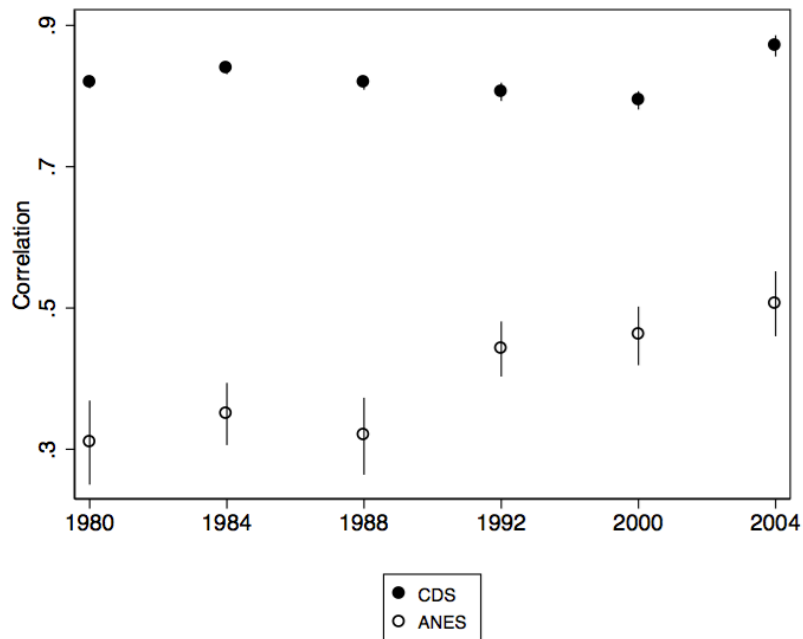
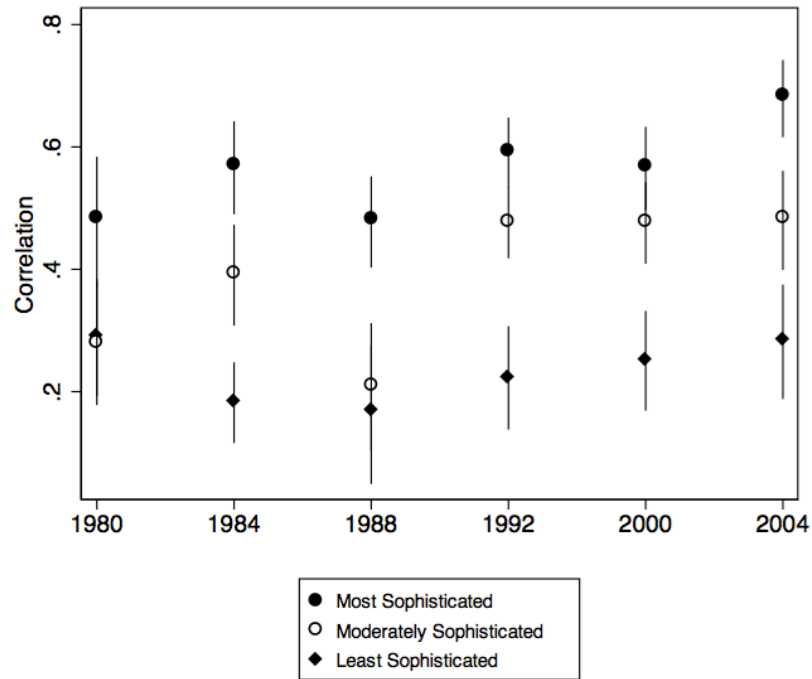


Figure 3.9: Correlations between Individuals' Ideological Self-identifications and the Cultural Factor for the Mass Public Conditioned on Political Sophistication



Correlations between Individuals' Ideological Self-identifications and the Socioeconomic Factor Conditioned on Partisan Strength

One remaining potential concern is that the results presented in this chapter simply illustrate that strong partisans are able to recognize and report “what goes with what” without maintaining a coherent political ideology. In this view, individuals' ability to provide consistent survey responses evidences not genuine attitudinal constraint, but rather merely the echo of partisan opinion leadership (e.g., Zaller 2012). If the results simply are a function of partisans providing consistent survey responses absent ideological thinking, then one would expect strong partisans who score lower on the political sophistication index to demonstrate greater attitudinal constraint than weak partisans who score higher on the index. Additionally, consistent and sizeable differences between strong and weak partisans within sophistication categories would support this view.

Figures 3.10, 3.11 and 3.12 below, which present the correlations between individuals' ideological self-identifications and the socioeconomic factor for each stratum of the mass public, decisively contradict this view. As I note in Footnote 18 in the chapter, the difference in attitudinal constraint among strong and weak partisans within sophistication categories is largely non-significant, although partisans do seem better able to connect their ideological predispositions and issue attitudes (e.g., Baldassarri and Gelman 2008). Most importantly, the correlations increase markedly at all levels of sophistication, as I wrote in Footnote 19, suggesting that political sophistication, rather than blind partisanship, fosters connections between individuals' ideological self-identifications and their issue attitudes. The results support my hypothesis that the cognitive and motivational factors that I specified to represent political sophistication

effectively discriminate between ideological and non-ideological thinking among the mass public.

Figure 3.10: Correlations between Individuals' Ideological Self-identifications and the Socioeconomic Factor for the Least Politically Sophisticated Stratum of the Mass Public Conditioned on Partisan Strength

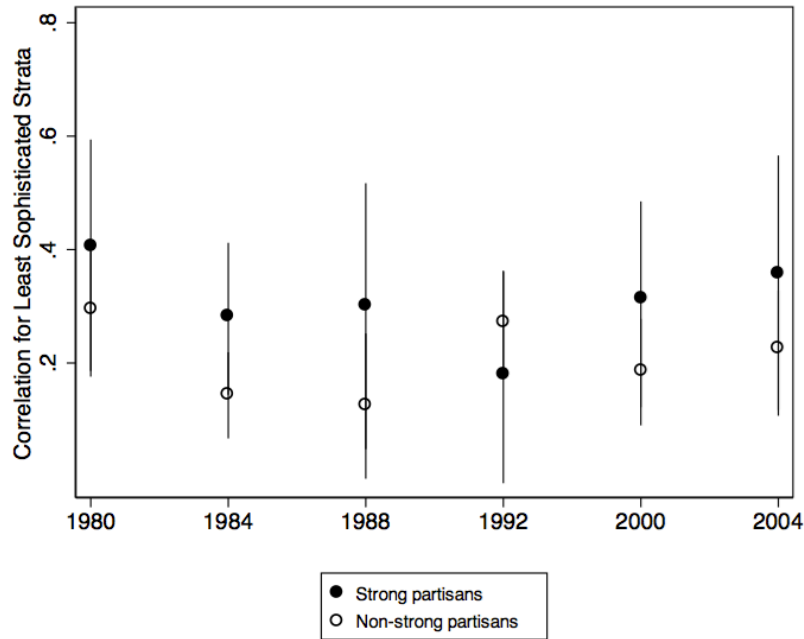


Figure 3.11: Correlations between Individuals' Ideological Self-identifications and the Socioeconomic Factor for the Moderately Politically Sophisticated Stratum of the Mass Public Conditioned on Partisan Strength

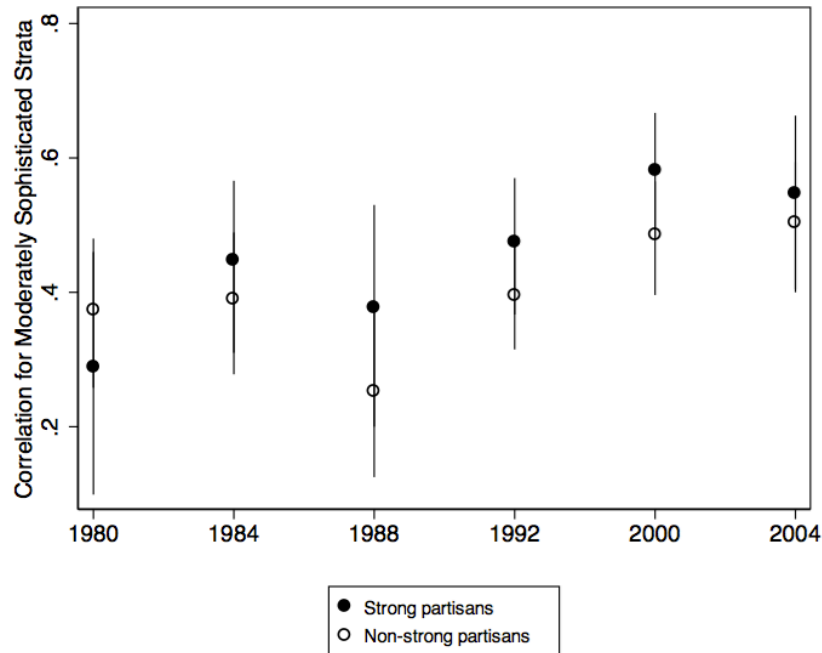
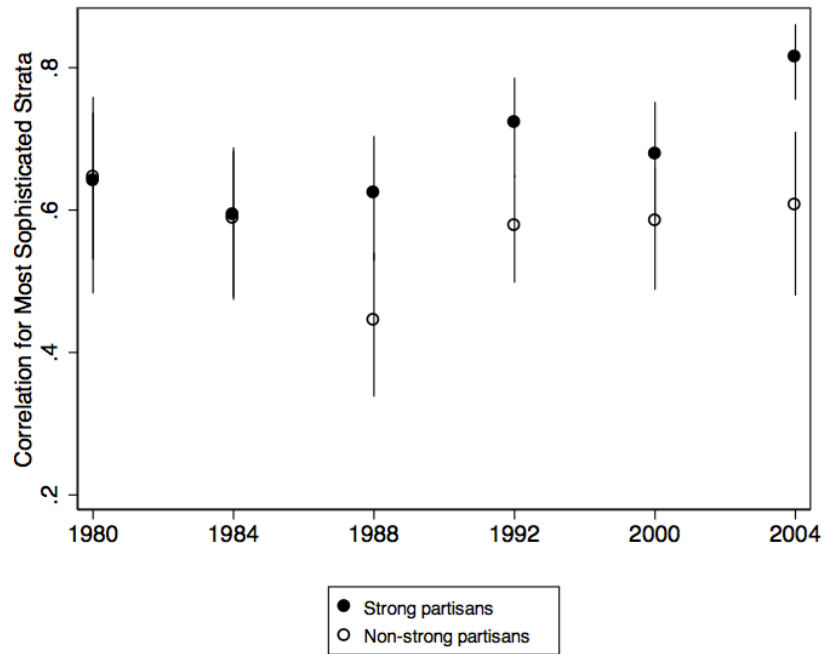


Figure 3.12: Correlations between Individuals' Ideological Self-identifications and the Socioeconomic factor for the Most Politically Sophisticated Stratum of the Mass Public Conditioned on Partisan Strength



CHAPTER 4

A Comparison of the Structure of Elite and Mass Attitudes toward Government Spending

Government spending represents a primary basis of party contestation and arguably the truest reflection of government priorities. Expenditure decisions are the outcome of competition for scarce resources among disparate interests that signal the government's commitment to various policy areas (Garand and Hendrick 1992; Klingemann, Hofferbert, and Budge 1994; Obinger and Wagschal 2010). Given fundamental budget constraints, especially acute in the current "age of austerity," on government operations, spending in one policy area implies that the government places a higher priority on it relative to other areas in which spending is lower (Jacoby and Schneider 2001, 2009). The centrality of expenditures to the business of government has rightfully (and unsurprisingly) rendered the issue of government spending an important object of scholarly inquiry. A large literature in this tradition examines the sources, structure and content of public attitudes toward government spending (e.g. Ellis and Faricy 2011; Gilens 1999; Goren 2003; Jacoby 1994; Kelly and Enns 2010; Page and Jacobs 2009; Rehm 2011; Sanders 1988; Soroka and Wlezien 2010; Stimson 2004; Wlezien 1995). However, no existing study of which I am aware directly compares the underlying structure of elite and mass attitudes toward government spending. A comparison is warranted because potential differences may be relevant for democratic representation, or the translation of citizens' preferences into policy outputs.

My goal in this chapter is to compare the structure of attitudes toward government spending among elites and the mass public. I hypothesize that the structure underlying

elites' spending attitudes toward a broad range of government programs is unidimensional, a consequence of their ideological orientation toward the political world. Consistent with both previous research and the findings that I have presented thus far in the current project, I hypothesize that only core social welfare programs—many of which are “race coded”—are structured coherently among much of the mass public. These particular issues exist at the forefront of citizens' minds when they render judgments about how, or on what programs, the government should allocate its resources. I also test for the role of political sophistication in fostering unidimensional spending structures. I hypothesize that politically sophisticated members of the mass public incorporate more policies, across more issues areas, into their conception of government spending than do their less sophisticated counterparts.

I test these propositions empirically using the same surveys that I utilized for the analyses in Chapters 2 and 3. However, the method I employ is different based upon my hypotheses regarding the particular structure of elite and mass spending preferences. Here, I conduct a Mokken scaling analysis to test the degree to which spending preferences conform to a cumulative structure, a choice reflecting the fact that some programs are generally more popular than others. That is, spending on certain programs, such as Social Security or public schools, is more popular than is spending on others, including, for example, welfare. Programs that conform to the cumulative scale—in other words, those that are mutually “scalable”—share a common underlying trait and can be arrayed along that trait according to the amount of support they enjoy among sample respondents.

I demonstrate using the 2000 CDS that a cumulative structure underlies elite attitudes toward a broad range of government spending programs, and additional evidence (not shown), in line with that featured in Chapter 2, indicates that the common underlying structure of these preferences represents the unidimensional ideological continuum. Indeed, supplemental analyses suggest that the mutually scalable policy programs predict significant variation in elites' responses to the broad question of whether or not the government should allocate more or less money on public services, and that elites' ideological self-identifications influence their attitudes toward the mutually salable programs. Thus, the empirical results demonstrate that the scale does, in fact, represent elites' conception of government spending, as well as that ideology underlies these individuals' spending attitudes that comprise the scale.

A comparative analysis of the mass public using the 2000 ANES demonstrates that a cumulative scale also accurately captures the structure of mass public spending attitudes, but the difference between this structure and that observed for elites is that most citizens conceive of government spending in limited terms, incorporating only attitudes toward core social welfare programs into their judgements regarding the appropriate level of government spending. However, as political sophistication among the mass public increases, so too does the number and diversity of programs included in citizens' conception of government spending.

Additionally, I conduct regression analyses in this chapter to investigate the correlates of government spending attitudes among the mass public across sophistication levels. The results testify to the varying degrees of association between symbolic predispositions, including partisanship, ideology, core values and racial resentment, and

spending attitudes. Perhaps most interestingly, the evidence shows that racial resentment is associated with preferences for lower spending only among the least sophisticated members of the mass public, contrary to some previous evidence suggesting that highly sophisticated citizens are those who bring racial considerations to bear in the formation of attitudes toward ostensibly non-racial policy programs.

4.1 A Review of the Literature on Mass Attitudes toward Government Spending

Converse (1964) described “spend-save” issues as both the basis of contestation in American politics and those on which the mass public is most likely to hold meaningful attitudes. Still, scholars who examine public attitudes toward government spending—focusing primarily on social welfare programs—often find mass opinion to be contradictory. Despite favoring ideological conservatism and limited government in the abstract, citizens tend to express support for greater spending on an array of specific social programs ranging from social security and health care to public education and unemployment (Free and Cantrill 1967; Stimson 1999, 2004). This phenomenon variously is attributed to the existence of so-called “conflicted conservatives” (Ellis and Stimson 2012; Stimson 2004), ambivalence about the role of government in the economy (Feldman and Zaller 1992) and the ways in which particular spending choices are framed (Iyengar 1990; Jacoby 2000; Kellstedt 2000).

Some scholars attribute these seemingly incompatible attitudes to the public’s desire to “want something for nothing” (Sears and Citrin 1985), but more recent evidence shows that for a variety of programs, the public understands and is comfortable with the tradeoff of paying higher taxes in exchange for receiving more services (Page and Jacobs

2009). Moreover, other research evidences predictable shifts in public attitudes toward government spending in response to actual government spending levels (Soroka and Wlezien 2010; Stimson 2004; Wlezien 1995).¹ Jacoby (1994, 2000, 2008; but see Goren 2008) shows that public spending attitudes can be dichotomized into social welfare spending attitudes and other types of spending attitudes (e.g., crime, science and technology and defense). The distinction, he argues, is that public attitudes toward the general concept of “government spending” are based upon attitudes only toward policies belonging to that first category—social welfare. Particularly, Jacoby (1994), building upon existing work, finds that citizens conceptualize government spending as programs designed to assist vulnerable members of the population. Programs targeting these groups include Social Security, assistance to minorities, assistance to the poor, food stamps and traditional welfare. Indeed, understanding the structure of mass public attitudes toward government spending—and the particular programs that evince a structure at all—is aided by previous research examining the effects of citizens’ perceptions about the beneficiaries of government programs on spending attitudes.

Americans are most likely to oppose government spending when groups perceived to be the beneficiaries of such spending are deemed undeserving, particularly in the case of welfare (Sanders 1988). Moreover, Gilens (1996, 1999) shows that

¹ Soroka and Wlezien (2010) find that a dynamic, responsive relationship between government spending and public spending preferences is a feature of democratic governments cross-nationally, but that responsiveness varies considerably across, among other factors, electoral systems and policy domains. Also see Rehm (2009) for a recent study examining the determinants of mass public preferences toward government redistribution outside of the United States. Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson (2002) show that American public opinion responds predictably to presidential performance and other short-term political factors.

attitudes toward welfare are driven by perceptions of the recipients, who the public conceives of as mostly black, lazy and unemployed. Preferences for spending on social welfare programs aimed at improving the lot of minorities and other vulnerable citizens are thus claimed to have been “race coded,” meaning that racial stereotypes influence citizens’ perception of these programs. Evidence shows that racial attitudes are, in fact, a significant predictor of spending attitudes on these specific programs (Gilens 1996; Jacoby 2000; Kinder and Mendelberg 2000; Kinder and Sanders 1996; Mendelberg 2001; Soroka, Harell, and Iyengar 2013), a relationship that is owed significantly to the nature and tone of elite discourse on these issues (Gilens 1999; Schneider and Jacoby 2005; Schram and Soss 2001).²

Taken together, the literature demonstrates that the mass public possesses meaningful attitudes toward government spending on social programs and broadly favors an active government and strong social safety net (Ellis and Stimson 2012; Wlezien 1995). However, negative attitudes—particularly racial resentment—toward the perceived beneficiaries of government spending depress support for welfare programs (Dyck and Hussey 2008; Feldman and Steenbergen 2001; Gilens 1999; Jacoby 2000; Kinder and Sanders 1996; Peffley, Hurwitz, and Sniderman 1997; Virtanen and Huddy 1998). This evidence suggests that spending attitudes should be structured cumulatively, meaning that expressing a preference for greater government spending on the “race coded” policies should be more difficult than doing so for non-race coded programs. In other words, support for increased spending on the former programs should be found only

² Other work highlights the impact of racial attitudes not only on social welfare spending preferences, but also on a wide range of policy attitudes (Kinder and Sanders 1996; Tesler 2012).

if support already exists for other social welfare programs belonging to the latter category, such as Social Security, childcare and public school spending.

Importantly for this study, several major program areas are hypothesized to lie entirely outside of the public's conception of government spending. The sources of attitudes for these policies are different than those for social welfare policies, and their consequences for the question of government provision of services are insignificant.

In the next section, I describe the nature and assumptions of the cumulative scaling model that I will use to test my hypotheses regarding the structure of elite and mass attitudes toward government spending. In Sections 4.3 and 4.4, I proceed with an analysis comparing the structure of elite and mass attitudes, finding support for the idea that elites' conceptualization of government spending includes virtually every major item in the federal budget. The structure of mass attitudes is found to be quite different, although, as was observed in Chapter 3, increased sophistication leads members of the mass public to structure their spending attitudes similarly to elites. In this final section, I provide evidence that this similarity is accounted for by increased ideological thinking among politically sophisticated members of the mass public. I also show in this section that racial resentment is associated with attitudes toward government spending only among the least sophisticated members of the mass public.

These results are consistent with other findings reporting that the public thinks of government spending almost exclusively in terms of social welfare policies, attitudes toward which are predicted by symbolic predispositions such as ideology, partisanship, core values and racial resentment. Notably, the influence of these predispositions on spending attitudes varies across levels of political sophistication. In other words, much

of the mass public does not make the necessary connections between ideology and issue attitudes, which I argue is the reason that attitudes on peripheral spending areas outside of highly visible social welfare programs are not integrated into the public's conception of "government spending." However, the overarching role of ideology bundles elites' spending attitudes together into a comprehensive cognitive framework, a phenomenon that is also apparent among the most sophisticated members of the mass public.

4.2 The Mokken Scaling Model

The method that I use to compare the structure of elite and mass political attitudes in this chapter is a cumulative scaling model known as the Mokken scale, named after its developer (Mokken 1971). The purpose of cumulative scales is to assess the degree to which items are structured along a common underlying dimension. The cumulative pattern here reflects the fact that as individuals score higher on the latent trait (θ)—in this case, an individual's propensity to support greater government spending generally—they will support more spending on a greater number of individual programs than individuals who score lower on the latent trait. Similarly, programs that are "easier" to support, or are supported by more people, receive lower scale scores than programs that are supported by fewer people. Again, the use of this scale is motivated by substantive considerations regarding the nature of Americans' attitudes toward government spending. Namely, prior evidence suggests that programs perceived to benefit undeserving recipients should generally be supported less than other programs, implying that an individual who supports increased spending on food stamps or welfare, for example,

should do so only if the individual also supports increased spending on more popular programs such as Social Security, child care and public schools.

The Mokken, scale is especially useful for my purposes in this chapter because it is a probabilistic version of the traditional Guttman scale that allows for scaling “errors,” or, as Jacoby notes, “deviations from perfectly cumulative patterns” (1994, 340). This model is thus preferred over the Guttman scale due to the reality of survey responses and inherently imperfect model fit. Moreover, the model used in this analysis is a polychotomous extension of the original Mokken scale (Sijtsma, Debets, and Molenaar 1990).³ Four critical assumptions of the Mokken scale must be discussed before proceeding with the analysis (Jacoby 1991b; Sijtsma and Molenaar 2002; van Schuur 2003).

Assumption 1: The Mokken scale enforces a strict requirement of unidimensionality, meaning that scalable items are captured by a single latent trait, θ . This condition is essential for the analysis because I am testing the degree to which the cognitive structure underlying spending attitudes captured in individuals’ item response functions (IRF) to each item is ideology.

Assumption 2: The second assumption is local independence. That is, an individual’s attitude toward any two items is only a function of θ , and not any other quality of either the individual or the item.

Assumption 3: The third assumption is monotonicity, which states that the IRFs are monotonically increasing functions of θ . This assumption is worth elaborating upon because, again, the model assumes that increasing support for spending on

³ Polychotomous refers simply to multicategory items, which are generally ordinal variables with more than two response categories, as in this analysis.

any particular program is related to increases in the underlying trait, an individual's propensity to support government spending generally. As this latent propensity increases, then the individual should support greater spending on a greater number of programs.

Assumption 4: The final assumption is non-intersection, which applies to the ordering of the individual items. The assumption states that items are ordered according to their difficulty, meaning in this analysis that spending items are perceived by all subjects as easier or harder to support. Thus, the IRFs for individuals do not intersect if items are always ordered according to their difficulty (i.e., less likely to be supported).

Assumptions 3 and 4 together imply double monotonicity, a property that allows for the ordering of both individuals and items according to the latent trait. Now that I have explicated the assumptions of the Mokken model, I will now turn toward other important features of it.

The specific procedure employed to create the Mokken scale is known as the automated item selection procedure (AISP). This iterated procedure begins by selecting items that best conform to the underlying trait (van der Ark 2007; van Schuur 2003). The scalability coefficient for an individual item serves as a measure-of-fit statistic describing the degree to which the item is consistent with the other items in the scale, or how well it is integrated into the scale (Sijtsma and Molenaar 2002). The procedure continues to incorporate potentially scalable items if a specified minimum degree of fit is met.⁴

⁴ For a detailed description of the automated item selection procedure, see Hemker et al. (1995). For a detailed description of the R package used to conduct the analysis—Mokken—presented in this section, see van der Ark (2007).

The measure-of-fit for the entire scale is Loevinger's H statistic (1948), which measures the percentage of covariance shared by the items in the scale relative to the maximum possible shared covariance (Sijtsma and Molenaar 2002). The H statistic is thus a scalability coefficient for the entire scale, reporting how well the full set of items hypothesized to measure the underlying trait are integrated. The H statistic is a proportion of reduction in error statistic in that it reports "the number of observed scaling errors relative to the number that would be expected in a null model of statistical independence across the items" (Jacoby 1994, 340). As Sijtsma and Molenaar note (2002, Chapter 4), the original purpose of the H statistic was to describe how well observed data conformed to a perfect "Guttman scalogram," or produced zero Guttman errors.

In this analysis, a Guttman error would be caused by an individual favoring greater spending on a program for which doing so is "more difficult" (i.e., the program is less popular) than a comparative program on which the individual favors less spending. The H statistic is useful for assessing the degree to which items can be arranged meaningfully according to the underlying trait (Sijtsma and Molenaar 2002, Chapter 4). Mokken (1971) proposed the following rule for the H statistic:

$H < .3 = \text{"poor" scale}$

$.3 \leq H < .4 = \text{"weak" scale}$

$.4 \leq H < .5 = \text{"medium" scale}$

$.5 \leq H = \text{"strong" scale}$

This rule also applies to individual items (H_i). Moreover, significance tests exist that enable the researcher to assess whether or not observed individual scalability

coefficients and the *H* statistic differ significantly from zero (Hemker, Sijtsma, and Molenaar 1995; Sijtsma and Molenaar 2002; van Schuur 2003). I will now examine the results of a comparison of the structure of elite and mass attitudes toward government spending, beginning with elites.

4.3 The Structure of Elites' Spending Attitudes

The 2000 CDS asks delegates if they prefer spending to be “decreased a lot,” “decreased,” “kept the same,” “increased” or “increased a lot” for seven items in the federal budget. These programs are child care, public schools, unemployment, welfare, aid to blacks, the environment and defense.⁵ I collapsed the responses on either side of the midpoint to create three-category measures of attitudes toward government spending for each program. My expectations regarding the structure of elite attitudes lead to one formal hypothesis.

Hypothesis 4A: All elite attitudes will conform to a single scale.

The hypothesis reflects my expectation that ideology underlies all elite spending attitudes, as was shown for the other issues that I examined in Chapter 3 (i.e., liberal-conservative self-identifications correlated extremely highly with factors scores estimating elites' issue attitudes). Among elites, the stimulus “government spending” represents all line items in the federal budget, and no government program should reflect a separate consideration.

The results, presented below in Table 4.1, confirm my hypothesis. The scalability coefficients for each item are all extremely high, approaching or exceeding .6, and the

⁵ The full question wording for the government spending batteries appearing on both the 2000 CDS and ANES used in this analysis is included in the appendix to this chapter.

H statistic for the entire scale is .631, indicating a very strong scale.⁶ By comparison, Jacoby (1994) reports an H statistic of .434 for the full mass public, a result that includes only five mutually scalable programs. I will discuss his findings in the next section analyzing the structure of mass spending attitudes, but contrasting the two findings is useful here for illustrating the remarkably coherent structure of elite spending preferences. The results here clearly show that elite attitudes toward government spending conform to a cumulative scale. In the next section, I conduct the same analysis across sophistication levels within the mass public.

Table 4.1: Mokken Scale Analysis of Elite Spending Attitudes

Variable	Scalability Coefficient ($H_{i,j}$)	(Standard Error)
Child care	.683	(.011)
Schools	.664	(.013)
Welfare	.646	(.010)
Environment	.634	(.011)
Aid to blacks	.620	(.010)
Unemployed	.614	(.013)
Defense	.587	(.014)
Full Scale (H)	.635	(.009)

4.4 The Structure of Mass Public Spending Attitudes

The 2000 ANES asks respondents to express how they would adjust spending for several programs if “they had a say in making up the federal budget.” Fortunately, the survey includes nearly all of the same items as the CDS, as well as additional items representing an even greater diversity of issue areas. The fourteen programs are child care, public

⁶ The Z-statistic for the entire scale is 113.926 ($p < .000$).

schools, Social Security, aid to poor people, food stamps, welfare, aid to blacks, crime, highways, immigration, the environment, defense, AIDS research and foreign aid.

Previous studies provide conflicting expectations regarding the cognitive structure of spending attitudes among the mass public. The dispute centers upon the extent to which racial animus drives public opinion toward government spending. A wealth of previous observational and experimental research suggests that spending attitudes are, at least to some extent, “race coded.” That is, preferences are driven in part by racial resentment toward African-Americans, who overwhelmingly are perceived to be the beneficiaries of government spending (Gillen 1996, 1999). Jacoby (1994), analyzing the 1988 ANES, reports that five items are mutually scalable, three of which—welfare, food stamps and aid to the poor—are traditionally “race coded,” and two of which—Social Security and Medicare—are not. He finds that racial resentment significantly predicts attitudes toward all five scalable items.⁷

However, Goren (2003, 2008) uncovers evidence to support his hypothesis that mass spending attitudes are characterized by two-dimensions. He argues that attitudes toward welfare and food stamps are indeed race-coded, but that attitudes toward other potentially theoretically related issues, including aid to poor people, aid to big cities, public school funding and Social Security, are structured distinctly and not influenced by racial stereotypes. Moreover, he reports a conditional effect between political

⁷ Racial resentment, or symbolic racism, can be defined as a blend of conservative value orientations and anti-black affect. The concept is designed to measure the extent to which whites endorse the view that blacks as a social group violate traditional American norms of hard work and individualism, and, consequently, are too demanding of government and society to solve their problems (see Henry and Sears 2002; Kinder and Sanders 1996; Sears and Henry 2003; Sears, Lau, Tyler, and Allen, Jr. 1980; Sears, Van Laar, Carrillo, and Kosterman 1997).

sophistication and the use of racial stereotypes. Specifically, Goren finds that sophistication influences spending attitudes only for politically sophisticated citizens, who are best able to connect their predispositions (i.e., negative racial stereotypes) to spending preferences.⁸

I depart substantially from the latter study because I begin the analysis by identifying empirically the programs that individuals across each sophistication stratum of the mass public incorporate into their conception of government spending. Note that I stratify the mass public according to the sophistication measure that I developed in Chapter 3. I proceed from these findings to assess the basic political predispositions that are (or are not) associated with individuals' attitudes toward government spending. This step allows me to examine the extent of the variation in the structure of mass attitudes toward government spending, as well as continue to investigate the importance of political knowledge, interest and involvement for mass public opinion.

Crucially, using Mokken scaling to determine the mutually scalable programs that will inform further analyses regarding the correlates of spending attitudes allows me to avoid asserting *a priori* the policies that might be (or, again, might not be) associated with particular predispositions, especially racial resentment. The benefit of this approach is that it mitigates the risk of misspecifying individuals' conceptions of government spending, especially if, as I expect, these conceptions differ across levels of political sophistication, enabling me to paint a richer picture of public attitudes toward government spending than is provided by previous studies.

⁸ Federico (2004) similarly finds that racial resentment is a bigger predictor of welfare attitudes among college graduates than among other individuals, as despite the former's comparatively lower levels of racial prejudice, they more closely connect their racial attitudes to their policy attitudes relative to their less educated counterparts.

My hypothesis for the structure of mass public attitudes toward government spending analysis is straightforward.

Hypothesis 4B: As sophistication increases, the number of mutually scalable spending attitudes among the mass public also will increase.

Tables 4.2-4.4 below display the results of the Mokken scale analysis for the least, moderately and most sophisticated third of the sample, respectively.

Table 4.2: Mokken Scale Analysis of Mass Public Spending Attitudes, Least Sophisticated Third

Variable	Scalability Coefficient (H_i)	(Standard Error)
Food stamps	.509	(.038)
Welfare	.479	(.042)
Poor people	.485	(.048)
Aid to blacks	.382	(.051)
Full Scale (H)	.466	(.037)

Table 4.3: Mokken Scale Analysis of Mass Public Spending Attitudes, Moderately Sophisticated Third

Variable	Scalability Coefficient (H_i)	(Standard Error)
Poor people	.516	(.035)
Welfare	.497	(.034)
Food stamps	.495	(.035)
Aid to blacks	.455	(.037)
Child care	.348	(.042)
Schools	.306	(.054)
Full Scale (H)	.440	(.031)

Table 4.4: Mokken Scale Analysis of Mass Public Spending Attitudes,
Most Sophisticated Third

Variable	Scalability Coefficient (H_i)	(Standard Error)
Aid to blacks	.491	(.035)
Aid to the poor	.484	(.034)
Welfare	.470	(.034)
Child care	.449	(.036)
Schools	.437	(.039)
AIDs research	.424	(.036)
Foreign aid	.315	(.045)
Food stamps	.433	(.039)
Environment	.396	(.036)
Social Security	.333	(.044)
Full Scale (H)	.424	(.027)

Let me begin by assessing the results for the least sophisticated third of the stratified sample. First, consistent with Jacoby's (1994) findings, I observe that attitudes toward four items, all core social welfare issues, are mutually scalable.⁹ These issues are welfare, food stamps, aid to blacks and aid to poor people, all of which have been identified in previous literature as race coded.¹⁰ Contra Goren (2003 2008), these results suggest that distinguishing between different types of social welfare spending attitudes is unnecessary.¹¹ The scalability coefficient (H) for the five items is reasonably strong at

⁹ Note that I follow accepted practice and preserve only those items with a scalability coefficient (H_{ij}) greater than .3 (Sijtsma and Molenaar 2002).

¹⁰ The general popularity of the items is consistent with theory and evidence showing that social policies are race coded in the minds of the American public. Namely, support for welfare, assistance to blacks and food stamps are among the least favored programs across all sophistication groups. Results of the item orderings for all three sophistication groups are available from the author upon request.

¹¹ Incredibly to me, Goren writes in Footnote 5 that aid to blacks is not included in his analysis because including an "explicit racial item" in the analysis would run counter to his test of whether or not racial stereotypes influence spending attitudes toward ostensibly non-racial programs (2008, 156). Again, I argue that my analysis improves upon that design because I show empirically the connections that individuals make between

.466. More peripheral issues, including, for example, the environment, defense and scientific research, are not structured similarly to core social welfare issues in the minds of the least sophisticated members of the mass public, to be sure. Additionally, Social Security is notably not scalable, suggesting that perhaps the “third rail in American politics” is an issue unto its own, apart from other spending considerations.

Among moderately sophisticated individuals, the same four attitudes as before, plus child care and aid to public schools, are mutually scalable. The scalability coefficient (H) for these items, .440, is again moderately strong, and as more peripheral spending items are incorporated into citizens’ conception of government spending, the items almost universally considered to be race-coded remain scalable.

The scalable items for the most sophisticated segment of the mass public are the same six items that were scalable for moderately sophisticated individuals, plus Social Security and three items quite peripheral to the core “spend-save” issues that are generally central to debates surrounding taxes and spending, placing into stark relief the findings that were observed for the two other strata. These additional issues are the environment, AIDS research and foreign aid. This finding highlights the role of ideology in fostering citizens’ cognitive connections across issues (i.e., issue interdependence). That is, only elites and the most sophisticated members of the mass public view coherently disparate issues that nonetheless share space in the federal budget.

The results in this section support my key hypothesis regarding the influence of sophistication on the structure of citizens’ spending attitudes. Namely, all three sophistication groups incorporate the same four issues—welfare, food stamps, aid to

government spending programs—both those traditionally considered “race coded” and not—rather than defining *a priori* which items should or should not be analyzed.

blacks and aid to poor people—into their conceptions of government spending. The difference is that politically sophisticated individuals integrate additional, more peripheral issues into their cognitive framework than does the rest of the mass public. The most interesting finding in this section relates to the type of programs that are mutually scalable for all sophistication categories. Attitudes toward explicitly race-coded issues such as welfare and food stamps share the same underlying source as purportedly race-neutral issues such as aid to poor people, even among the least sophisticated citizens. The number of other issues sharing this source increases among more politically sophisticated members of the mass public, testifying to the importance of polarization and elite leadership for the attitude structure of these citizens. In any event, the subset of social welfare issues structured similarly in the minds of citizens is broader than that identified by some recent scholarly work.

Thus far, I have provided a sketch of the structure of mass political attitudes toward government spending, but I have yet to address the question of the determinants of these attitudes. In the next section, I analyze both the explanatory power of the scalable items for all three sophistication groups, as well as the correlates of citizens' attitudes toward the scalable items themselves.

4.5 Validating the Scale of Government Spending Attitudes

In this section, I test for the influence of the scale of program-specific spending preferences on individuals' attitudes toward the broader stimulus of government spending across sophistication groups.¹² If the scale is a meaningful representation of the cognitive

¹² Jacoby (1994) conducts the same analysis for the full mass public sample.

structure that individuals bring to bear when formulating government spending preferences, then the mutually scalable items should predict variation in responses to questions designed to tap more general orientations toward spending.

The dependent variable in this analysis is a question asking respondents to express their preference for more or less government services without reference to any particular program or group. The question explicitly instructs individuals to make a tradeoff between the provision of government services and overall government spending levels.¹³ The general nature of the question and its frame render the item nicely suited for tapping individuals' broad spending preferences.

I regress the government services variable on partisanship, ideological self-identification, the scale of spending attitudes and attitudes toward the individual non-scalable programs using the method of ordinary least squares in order to test the validity of the spending scale as a measure of citizens' attitude toward the concept of government spending. The results of this analysis for all three sophistication groups are displayed below in Tables 4.5-4.7.

¹³ Although the question does mention "health and education," I do not think that these passing references necessary cue citizens to consider those particular programs when answering the services question. The full question wording for the provision of government services question is located in the appendix to this chapter.

Table 4.5: Predicting Mass Public Attitudes toward Government Services,
Least Sophisticated Third

Variable	Coefficient	(Standard Error)
Partisanship	-.226	(.031)
Ideology	-.016	(.666)
Spending Scale	.461*	(.113)
Social Security	.124	(.102)
Child care	.396*	(.104)
Schools	.329*	(.116)
Crime	.008	(.101)
Highways	.126	(.085)
AIDs research	.161	(.090)
Defense	.047	(.076)
Immigration	.038	(.085)
Foreign aid	.012	(.087)
Intercept	1.167*	(.376)
R^2	.302	
N	267	

* $p < .05$

Table 4.6: Predicting Mass Public Attitudes toward Government Services,
Moderately Sophisticated Third

Variable	Coefficient	(Standard Error)
Partisanship	-.054*	(.028)
Ideology	-.052	(.037)
Spending Scale	.691*	(.138)
Crime	.049	(.093)
Highways	-.001	(.082)
AIDS Research	.032	(.079)
Defense	.062	(.086)
Immigration	.057	(.083)
Foreign Aid	.185*	(.086)
Intercept	1.944*	(.371)
R^2	.308	
N	346	

* $p < .05$

Table 4.7: Predicting Mass Public Attitudes toward Government Services, Most Sophisticated Third

Variable	Coefficient	(Standard Error)
Partisanship	-.071*	(.038)
Ideology	-.022	(.044)
Spending Scale	1.266*	(.176)
Crime	-.033	(.097)
Highways	-.071	(.099)
Defense	.144	(.093)
Immigration	.195*	(.087)
Intercept	1.700	(.371)
R^2	.378	
N	277	

* $p < .05$

The first aspect of the tables to note is the statistical significance of the program-specific spending scale for each sophistication group. The expected result demonstrates that the mutuality scalable items do, in fact, provide a basis for citizens' broader government spending attitudes. Additionally, very few non-scalable issues predict variation in general spending preferences across groups. Interestingly, among the least sophisticated citizens, the two issues that fall just outside of the scale, child care and public schools, are significant predictors of general spending preferences. The same is true among moderately and most sophisticated individuals for the issues of Social Security and immigration, respectively.¹⁴

A logical extension of assessing the meaningfulness of the program-specific spending scale for predicting general spending items is to unpack the scale itself to determine what factors underlie it. I have not doubt at this point in the project that the

¹⁴ An interesting speculation is that more sophisticated citizens might view immigration as a cultural issue, meaning that it would load on factor two rather than factor one in Chapter 3, for example. I would still expect more sophisticated citizens to structure this attitude ideologically, however.

organizing principle underlying the array of mutually scalable programs among elites is ideology. In other words, θ is the liberal-conservative continuum among elites. Liberals prefer more spending to promote their belief in the need for an activist government to ameliorate social ills, and conservatives prefer decidedly less spending to achieve their desire for a smaller federal government. However, the situation is not nearly as clear-cut for the mass public. In order to test the extent to which ideology explains variation in individuals' program-specific spending preferences, I specify a statistical model regressing the spending scale on a variety of enduring political predispositions and demographic characteristics for each of the three sophistication groups, again using the method of ordinary least squares.

4.6 Identifying the Correlates of Government Spending Attitudes

The first two predispositions hypothesized to predict variation in individuals' spending attitudes are partisanship and ideology, two bedrock orientations that have been documented elsewhere to influence preferences toward spending items (e.g., Jacoby 1994; Markus and Converse 1979). The measures are coded using the familiar seven-point ANES scales ranging from strong Democrat to strong Republican, and from extremely liberal to extremely conservative, respectively.¹⁵ The measure used to explore the relationship between racial resentment and spending attitudes across sophistication groups is the long-standing, four-item ANES scale capturing individuals' beliefs about African Americans' work ethic and commitment to overcoming previous discrimination

¹⁵ Independent leaners are properly characterized as partisans in this analysis given these individuals' attitudinal and behavioral similarities to self-identified partisans (e.g., Keith, Magleby, Nelson, Orr, and Westlye 1992). The full question wording for the partisanship and ideology variables used in this analysis is located in the appendix to this chapter.

in order to succeed.¹⁶ Scholars consistently have demonstrated that this variable exerts an impact on individuals' policy views (Henry and Sears 2002; Kinder and Sanders 1996; Telser and Sears 2010).

In order to evaluate the independent association between various fundamental political predispositions and spending attitudes, I also include in the model measures of core values, or individuals' normative beliefs about the good life that reflect goal-oriented behavior or opinion (Rokeach 1973; Schwartz 1992). An increasingly rich literature, some of which I reviewed in Chapter 2, testifies to the impact of explicitly political values on an array of Americans' attitudes and behavior (Feldman and Steenbergen 2001; Keele and Wolak 2006; Layman 2001; Lupton, Singh, and Thornton forthcoming), including attitudes toward government spending (Feldman 1988; Goren 2008; Jacoby 2006). The specific values that I analyze are beliefs in equality and limited government, respectively, two principles that are firmly entrenched in American political culture (McCloskey and Zaller 1984) and, theoretically, should relate to spending attitudes if core values truly are critical components of Americans' belief systems.

I measure equality using a scale constructed from a six-item egalitarianism battery that has been asked on each ANES survey since 1984.¹⁷ My expectation is that individuals who value highly equal opportunity and citizens enjoying the same chance to succeed in life, for example, will favor higher levels of government spending than will their less egalitarian counterparts, as much of this spending is aimed at redistributing wealth toward vulnerable populations and investing in public goods (e.g., public schools

¹⁶ The full question wording for the items used to construct the reliable racial resentment scale is located in the appendix to this chapter ($\alpha = .694$).

¹⁷ The full question wording for the items used to construct the reliable egalitarianism scale is located in the appendix to this chapter ($\alpha = .795$).

and child care programs) that theoretically serve to reduce social inequalities. On the other hand, valuing limited government, as measured by a scale constructed from a three-item battery epitomizing the belief that government interference is a cause of, rather than a solution to, most social ills, as well as support for an unfettered market economy, should relate to a preference for less government spending.¹⁸

Also included in the model are demographic controls for income, coded into twenty-two categories; age, measured in years; and gender, where one is female. These controls variables are included because wealthy individuals may oppose government spending due to rational self-interest, as they are less likely than other individuals to be the beneficiaries of this spending. Older individuals, although obviously expected to support Social Security spending, might oppose spending on other government programs relative to other respondents for similar reasons. Finally, previous research suggests that women are more favorable to the welfare state than are men (e.g., Kaufmann and Petrocik 1999).

This analysis includes the same three sophistication groups as before, but it includes only white respondents given my focus on the influence of racial resentment toward African Americans on individuals' spending attitudes. This restriction produces a total sample of 638 respondents. Tables 4.8-4.10 below display the results of the regression results for each of the three sophistication groups.

¹⁸ The full question wording for the items used to construct the reliable limited government scale is located in the appendix to this chapter ($\alpha = .744$).

Table 4.8: Predicting Program-Specific Spending Preferences among the Mass Public,
Least Sophisticated Third

Variable	Social welfare scale	(Standard Error)
Partisanship	.013	(.021)
Ideology	-.048	(.027)
Racial resentment	-.099*	(.045)
Egalitarianism	-.079	(.057)
Limited government	-.212*	(.106)
Income	-.013	(.012)
Age	.001	(.002)
Gender	-.005	(.076)
Intercept	1.596	(.190)
R^2	.135	
N	187	

Table 4.9: Predicting Program-Specific Spending Preferences among the Mass Public,
Moderately Sophisticated Third

Variable	Social welfare scale	(Standard Error)
Partisanship	-.000	(.014)
Ideology	-.021	(.173)
Racial resentment	-.086*	(.027)
Egalitarianism	-.134*	(.033)
Limited government	-.281*	(.068)
Income	.003	(.006)
Age	.001	(.001)
Gender	-.024	(.045)
Intercept	1.678	(.112)
R^2	.348	
N	256	

Table 4.10: Predicting Program-Specific Spending Preferences among the Mass Public, Most Sophisticated Third

Variable	Social welfare scale	(Standard Error)
Partisanship	-.032*	(.014)
Ideology	-.043*	(.016)
Racial resentment	-.025	(.027)
Egalitarianism	-.129*	(.033)
Limited government	-.222*	(.064)
Income	.003	(.006)
Age	.001	(.002)
Gender	.015	(.045)
Intercept	1.800	(.102)
R^2	.530	
N	195	

The evidence further builds the case that I presented in Chapter 3 regarding the role of ideology in structuring mass attitudes. Namely, after controlling for other factors, ideological self-identifications are unrelated to spending attitudes for the lower two sophistication groups, consistent with all of the evidence that I have marshaled in this project testifying to these individuals' extremely limited reliance on ideology in the attitude formation process. Surprisingly, however, partisanship, a cue that I expected to influence spending attitudes for all groups, is not significantly related to individuals' scale positions for the lower two sophistication groups. Of course, both partisanship and ideology are associated with spending attitudes for highly sophisticated individuals. As sophisticated individuals identify more strongly as Republicans and conservatives, respectively, their support for government spending decreases. Worth noting is that the model shows that ideology is in fact a slightly greater predictor of spending attitudes than

partisanship for these individuals.¹⁹ Ideology is a paramount structuring principle for political sophisticates.

Moreover, model fit, measured by the R^2 value, increases dramatically across each level of sophistication, indicating that the predispositions included in the models are increasingly more predictive of variance in spending attitudes as sophistication increases. This result follows directly from my theory that more sophisticated individuals are better able to connect their fundamental predispositions, especially ideological self-identifications, to their issue attitudes relative to their less sophisticated counterparts.

The relationship between racial resentment and spending attitudes across sophistication groups is quite interesting, as the surprising null results observed above for partisanship might be a function of the fact that racial resentment, which is negatively and significantly related to support for government spending among the lower two sophistication groups, allows for little independent effect of partisanship on spending attitudes. This finding squarely contradicts arguments that the impact of racial resentment on social welfare attitudes is meaningful only for political sophisticates. Rather, the relationship between racial resentment and the spending scale is exactly the opposite, as racial resentment exhibits no independent association with spending attitudes once other predispositions are controlled for among more politically sophisticated citizens. Support for government spending decreases as individuals harbor more negative views of the work ethic and determination to succeed of blacks, but this relationship is true only of less sophisticated citizens. I should note that this result does not preclude the possibility, or likelihood, that sophisticates' ideological and value orientations are

¹⁹ The magnitude of the estimated coefficients for these variables can be compared because they are located on the same standard, one-to-seven ANES self-placement scales.

affected by racial considerations. In other words, racial resentment among sophisticates might well work through ideology and core values, but the variable patently does not independently contribute to these individuals' attitudes toward government spending.

The patterns for the relationship among the two core values and spending attitudes are similarly intriguing. Limited government, or the belief that the government has become too large and that individuals are better off solving societal problem without interference from Washington, is negatively and significantly related to preferences for greater government spending across all levels of sophistication, lending support for theories that core values impinge on the attitudes of all citizens and might help less sophisticated citizens, who, as we have witnessed throughout this project, are not guided by ideological cues, choose policy positions consistent with their beliefs and interests (Feldman 1988; Goren 2005, 2012). Note, however, that egalitarianism is significantly related to government spending only for moderately and highly politically sophisticated respondents—individuals in these groups who value social equality prefer greater government spending. The caveat here may be that the goal of providing individuals with an equal chance in life, for example, is more abstractly related to government spending and redistribution than is the straightforward notion that greater government spending means more government involvement in societal affairs generally. Thus, the results for egalitarianism might lend credence to theories that sophistication helps individuals connect core values to subsequent political attitudes (Jacoby 2006).

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter presented a comparison of the structure of attitudes toward government spending among elites and the mass public. The empirical analysis demonstrated that a

unidimensional cumulative scaling model captures the structure of elite spending attitudes extremely well. That is, all seven elite issues examined were found to be mutually scalable, conforming to the underlying trait. This trait, as I established in Chapters 2 and 3, is ideology. Elites' identification as liberals or conservatives predicts their attitudes toward government spending.

The results for the mass public provided an interesting and stark comparison. I found that core social welfare policies—most of which previous literature has shown to be race coded—but not more peripheral or abstract issues such as defense, highway or scientific research spending, are structured similarly in the minds of the mass public. However, in accordance with the empirical results presented earlier in this project, the most sophisticated members of the mass public were in fact shown to incorporate these more peripheral issues into their conceptions of government spending. I argue that these individuals possess the requisite political sophistication to recognize the implications for government spending that are imbued in elite ideological rhetoric. Sophisticated members of the mass public understand that politics is fundamentally a competition over “who gets what, when,” and that ideology sharply divides Democrats and Republicans over nearly every line of the federal budget in the contemporary era of highly polarized partisan politics. The results of the regression analysis in this chapter supported this hypothesis, illustrating that ideology is an important predictor of the spending attitudes of the most sophisticated members of the mass public, whose coherent worldviews integrate a stunningly high number of spending programs across many policy domains.

Importantly, my results diverged from previous studies in that racial resentment was significantly associated with government spending attitudes only among less, as

opposed to more, sophisticated citizens. Although I readily acknowledged that racial prejudice likely influences the spending (and other) attitudes of sophisticated citizens through the former predisposition's relationship with ideology (and values), the analysis in this chapter showed that negative views regarding the work ethic and determination of blacks directly affects spending preferences only for less sophisticated citizens, for whom ideology is of little use. I argued that the reason for the contradictory results vis-à-vis prior studies is that rather than specifying *a priori* the attitudes that might be influenced by racial resentment (and the other independent variables in the model), I determined the structure of spending attitudes across sophistication categories empirically using the nonparametric Mokken scaling model. Ultimately, I argue that the results presented here paint a more accurate picture of the structure of mass spending attitudes, and the determinants of these attitudes, than does existing scholarship.

The regression analysis further supported findings from the burgeoning literature investigating the relationship between core values and public opinion, as a belief in limited government was shown to relate negatively and significantly to preferences for government spending. Additionally, valuing equality was significantly related to a greater demand for spending among moderately and highly politically sophisticated citizens. Certainly, future research is warranted to explore these relationships more fully, a potentially fruitful agenda that I outline in the concluding chapter to this project.

APPENDIX

Full Question Wording for the 2000 CDS Spending Battery

CDS general spending battery introduction:

Listed below are some programs that the federal government currently funds. If you had a say in making up the federal budget this year, indicate the extent to which you would increase or decrease each of the following programs: 1 - Decrease a lot 2 - Decrease slightly 3 - Keep at the same level 4 - Increase slightly 5 - Increase a lot

- 1.) Programs that assist blacks (V2439)
- 2.) Protecting the environment (V2442)
- 3.) Defense (V2121)
- 4.) Aid to public schools (V2438)
- 5.) Child care (V2440)
- 6.) Welfare programs (V2441)
- 7.) Programs that assist the unemployed (V2442)

Full Question Wording for the 2000 CDS Spending Battery

ANES general spending battery introduction (note that the coding for all of these items has been changed to create a natural order to the responses, and the defense spending item is included in a different section but is worded similarly to the other questions):

Next, I am going to read you a list of federal programs. For each one, I would like you to tell me whether you would like see spending increased or decreased: 1 - Decrease or cut out entirely 2 - Kept the same 3 - Increased

- 1.) Programs that assist blacks (V000687)
- 2.) Protecting the environment (V000682)
- 3.) Defense (V000587)
- 4.) Aid to public schools (V000683)
- 5.) Child care (V000685)
- 6.) Welfare programs (V000676)
- 7.) Social Security (V000681)
- 8.) Aid to poor people (V000680)
- 9.) Food stamps (V000679)
- 10.) Dealing with crime (V000684)
- 11.) Building and repairing highways (V000675)
- 12.) Preventing illegal immigration (V000686)
- 13.) AIDS research (V000677)
- 14.) Foreign aid (V000678)

Full Question Wording for the 2000 ANES (regression analysis)

Note: An * indicates that the variable has been reverse coded so that higher values reflect more conservative attitudes. The following variables are those included in the regression analysis, except for the race variable, which I list here because the attitudes of only white respondents are included in the model given, again, my emphasis on the importance of racial resentment toward blacks on Americans' attitudes toward government spending.

- 1.) Partisanship (V00523): Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, and Independent, or what? Would you call yourself a strong Democrat/Republican or a not very strong Democrat/Republican? Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or to the Democratic Party? 1 - Strong Democrat 2 - Weak Democrat 3 - Independent-Democrat 4 - Independent-Independent 5 - Independent-Republican 6 - Weak Republican 7 - Strong Republican
- 2.) Ideological self-identification (V000446): We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. Here is a seven-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal to extremely conservative. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you heard much about this? 1 - Extremely liberal 7 - Extremely conservative
- 3.) Racial resentment battery:
 - A. *Blacks must work their way up without any special favors (V001508): Irish, Italians, Jewish and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors. Do you agree strongly, agree somewhat, neither agree nor disagree, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly with this statement? 1 - Disagree strongly 2 - Disagree somewhat 3 - Neither agree nor disagree 4 - Agree somewhat 5 - Agree strongly
 - B. Blacks have gotten less than they deserve (V001509): Over the past few years, blacks have gotten less than they deserve. Do you agree strongly, agree somewhat, neither agree nor disagree, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly with this statement? 1 - Agree strongly 2 - Agree somewhat 3 - Neither agree nor disagree 4 - Disagree somewhat 5 - Disagree strongly
 - C. *Blacks need to try harder (V001510): It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as whites. Do you agree strongly, agree somewhat, neither agree nor disagree, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly with this statement? 1 - Disagree strongly 2 - Disagree somewhat 3 - Neither agree nor disagree 4 - Agree somewhat 5 - Agree strongly
 - D. Past discrimination affects blacks today (V001511): Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for blacks to work their way out of the lower class. Do you agree strongly, agree somewhat, neither agree nor disagree, disagree

somewhat, or disagree strongly with this statement? 1 - Agree strongly
2 - Agree somewhat 3 - Neither agree nor disagree 4 - Disagree
somewhat 5 - Disagree strongly

- 4.) Egalitarianism battery: Next, I'd like to ask you about equal rights. I am going to read several more statements. After each one, I would like you to tell me how strongly you agree or disagree.
- A. Do whatever is necessary to ensure an equal chance at success (V001521): Our society should do whatever is necessary to make sure that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed. Do you agree strongly, agree somewhat, neither agree nor disagree, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly with this statement? 1 - Agree strongly 2 - Agree somewhat 3 - Neither agree nor disagree 4 - Disagree somewhat 5 - Disagree strongly
 - B. *Too far at pushing equal rights (V001522): We have gone too far in pushing equal rights in this country. Do you agree strongly, agree somewhat, neither agree nor disagree, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly with this statement? 1 - Disagree strongly 2 - Disagree somewhat 3 - Neither agree nor disagree 4 - Agree somewhat 5 - Agree strongly
 - C. Equal chance in life (V001523): One of the big problems in this country is that we don't give everyone an equal chance. Do you agree strongly, agree somewhat, neither agree nor disagree, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly with this statement? 1 - Agree strongly 2 - Agree somewhat 3 - Neither agree nor disagree 4 - Disagree somewhat 5 - Disagree strongly
 - D. *Worry less about how equal people are (V001524): This country would be better off if we worried less about how equal people are. Do you agree strongly, agree somewhat, neither agree nor disagree, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly with this statement? 1 - Disagree strongly 2 - Disagree somewhat 3 - Neither agree nor disagree 4 - Agree somewhat 5 - Agree strongly
 - E. *Not a big problem if some people have a better chance in life (V001525): It is not really a big problem if some people have more of a chance in life than others. 1 - Disagree strongly 2 - Disagree somewhat 3 - Neither agree nor disagree 4 - Agree somewhat 5 - Agree strongly
 - F. Fewer problems if people were treated more equally (V001526): If people were treated more equally in this country we would have many fewer problems. 1 - Agree strongly 2 - Agree somewhat 3 - Neither agree nor disagree 4 - Disagree somewhat 5 - Disagree strongly
- 5.) Limited government battery: Next, I am going to ask you to choose which of the two statements I read comes closer to your own opinion. You might agree to some extent with both, but we want to know which one is closer to your own views:
- A. *Number of things that the government should be doing (V001420): ONE, the less government, the better; OR TWO, there are more things

that government should be doing? 1 - More things government should be doing 2 - The less government the better

- B. The need for a strong government (V001421): ONE, we need a strong government to handle today's complex economic problems; OR TWO, the free market can handle these problems without government being involved. 1 - Need a strong government to handle complex economic problems. 2 – Free market can handle without government involvement
- C. *Reason for bigger government (V001422): ONE, the main reason government has become bigger over the years is because it has gotten involved in things that people should do for themselves; OR TWO, government has become bigger because the problems we face have become bigger. 1 - Government bigger because problems bigger 2 - Government bigger because it's involved in things people should handle themselves

- 6.) Race (V001006a): What racial or ethnic group best describes you?
Note: Only respondents who answered "White" (category 10) are included in the regression analysis.

7.) Income (V000994)

8.) Age (V000908)

9.) Gender (V001029)

CHAPTER 5

Discussion, Conclusion and Future Research

This dissertation endeavored to identify the existence (or lack thereof) and nature of the cognitive structures that organize individuals' political attitudes. My primary investigation was not the distribution of opinion on particular issues, but rather the linkages that connect individuals' attitudes toward disparate issues ranging from social welfare spending to environmental regulation and cultural questions. I hoped that my inquiry would elucidate citizens' mental maps of the political world.

The starting point for my analysis into the sources of these attitudinal connections was the unidimensional liberal-conservative continuum, anchored on one end by a belief in the need for an activist government to regulate the market and alleviate social inequalities, as well as inclusive social policy, and on the other by a commitment to limited government, laissez faire economic policy and moral traditionalism. Given the ubiquitous language of "left and "right," or "liberal and conservative," in political discourse, and the predictive power of these ideological identifications in models of congressional behavior, I resolved to explain the degree to which ideology underlies party activists', as well as ordinary citizens', political issue attitudes.

Chapter 2 presented and tested the widely accepted, but heretofore never demonstrated empirically, theory that elites—specifically, delegates to the Democratic and Republican national party conventions—conceptualize the political world according to the unidimensional liberal-conservative continuum. In other words, I found, consistent

with the congressional voting behavior literature, that a single structure underlies elites' political attitudes. I argued that this structure is a function of the delegates' extraordinary political knowledge, interest and, above all, involvement, characteristics that capture the cognitive and motivational factors necessary to produce ideological thinking.

The unambiguously unidimensional structure of elites' attitudes was merely the first stage of the project, however. The primary analysis conducted in this dissertation, and in my view the greatest contribution of the project, was the systematic comparison of the structure of elite and mass public political attitudes conducted in Chapter 3. I believe that the direct comparison of the benchmark of ideological thinking exhibited by elites to the structure of mass public issue attitudes over the course of twenty-four years and six presidential election cycles provided five significant contributions to our understanding of American public opinion.

5.1 Dimensionality and American Public Opinion

The first significant contribution of this project to the public opinion literature is that I was able to offer what I believe is a good deal of resolution to the ongoing scholarly controversy regarding the structure of mass political attitudes. Contrary to some arguments that the mass public overall has become more ideological in the current era of intense elite polarization, leading to a more coherent attitude structure, I provided evidence that much of the mass public still relies on ideology only limitedly as a mechanism for organizing political attitudes. Indeed, although ideology underlies several mass attitudes, a good deal more of them are the product of idiosyncratic sources. The interrelatedness of most attitudes remains fairly low.

Moreover, measurement error is most likely ruled out as a primary culprit for this observed attitudinal incoherence. Rather, because, in accordance with my theory, more knowledgeable, interested and involved members of the mass public do exhibit unidimensional attitude structures, the weight of the evidence suggests strongly that deviations from this ideological structure are a function of low sophistication. Systematically testing the measurement error and attitudinal coherence theories of mass public opinion across sophistication strata and across time against the benchmark of ideological thinking offered by elites is an important aspect of the analysis that illustrated the dimensionality of contemporary mass political attitudes.

Before I proceed to what I believe to be the other meaningful contributions of the project, I should pause to note that the factor analysis results for the full mass public sample in each year did show that citizens might maintain a semblance of a two-dimensional attitude structure loosely organized by social welfare preferences—or attitudes toward the role of government in the economy and, as recent work on contemporary policy struggles finds, preferences for redistribution (e.g., Kelly and Enns 2010; Lutteg 2013; Margalit 2013)—and cultural questions, respectively. I would not concede, however, that the mass public fully incorporates relevant issue attitudes into each of those separate structures, especially among less politically sophisticated respondents.

For example, in Chapter 3, I defended the theoretical claim that the correlation between the two dimensions represents evidence of attitude interrelatedness, or the degree to which a common dimension underlies those attitudes specified in the analysis to arise from separate structures. The dimensions were never completely orthogonal for

any segment of the mass public, again suggesting that individuals for whom the correlation between dimensions is low miss the connections across issues and policy areas. Of course, two orthogonal dimensions alone would not evince low political sophistication or attitudinal incoherence, but precisely the same individuals who exhibit a low correlation across the social welfare and cultural policy domains are also the least likely members of the mass public to structure coherently a high number of attitudes within policy domains.

Ultimately, I certainly disagree that a two-dimensional (or higher!) attitude structure can, or should, be described as more “complex” than a lower dimensional structure. The theoretical and empirical evidence that I marshaled in this project contradicts such an interpretation, as does the reality of the limits of human cognition. Furthermore, the existence, or even possibility, of an organic attitudinal complexity existing among the mass public seems to me to be difficult to imagine. Given that the “what goes with what” of party politics is understood quite clearly to be processed and offered by elites as policy packages for mass consumption, a separate and ornate attitude structure emerging from the mass public belies a wealth of existing evidence on the nature of the attitude formation process.

Then again, as I will argue later in my concluding remarks to this opus, core values underlie these well-known policy packages in American politics. All of us public opinion and voting behavior scholars might simply be constrained political scientists attempting to impose upon the mass public an ideological structure built upon values that the vast majority of the mass public does not share. If, for example, the values of the mass public differ fundamentally from those of elites, then perhaps the missing

connections between issues across diverse policy areas are owed not to low sophistication or a lack of awareness of, or attention to, elite policy debates, but rather to different values that produce divergent attitude structures. Still, the lack of any regularly identifiable attitude structure among less sophisticated citizens leads me to worry less about this possibility. Additionally, the fact that some core political values (i.e., limited government) were related to individuals' spending issues that I examined in Chapter 4 across all sophistication categories, consistent with previous evidence, demonstrates that values, as expressions of political culture, are shared by, and salient for, everyone in society (and note that equality was significantly related to spending attitudes for moderately and highly sophisticated citizens). These findings similarly reduce the likelihood that individuals of varying levels of sophistication maintain different values, even if the structure and emphasis that each group places on the particular shared values differs.

Creating a new political sophistication scale combining the cognitive and motivational factors hypothesized to produce ideological thinking was a useful part of this project, and I hope that future scholars employ it in their American public opinion and voting behavior research. The scale effectively discriminated ideological and non-ideological thinking among the mass public, and the evidence that I provided regarding the importance of knowledge, interest and involvement to the presence or absence of coherent attitude structures represents the second meaningful contribution of this project, in my view. Appreciation for heterogeneity thankfully has become the norm, rather than the exception to the rule, in American politics research, and I was able to show the

critical role of political sophistication in generating the observed heterogeneous responses to increasingly polarized elites.

Of course, much of the ingredients of the scale that I celebrate here admittedly remain to be explored. For example, what personality predispositions cause individuals to become enamored with politics in the first instance? What is the basis of general political interest, and what is its relationship to self-interest versus symbolic considerations? Under what circumstances, and to what extent, can involvement outperform other predictors of ideological thinking, an especially relevant query given the role of political involvement to this project? These questions are but a few of many that necessarily must be left to future research to explore.

A third contribution of this project is that I discovered, for the first time to my knowledge, that a segment of the mass public rivals the ideological constraint of elites, showing that the party activists are not elite *qua* elite. Rather, citizens who match the extraordinary level of interest and involvement in, and knowledge about, politics of elites also reflect elites' attitude structure. I referred to these individuals as "hyper sophisticates," and I speculated that they hold the key to understanding the linkages between elites and the remainder of the mass public.

The fourth contribution of this project is that I extended a cumulative scaling model of mass spending preferences to an analysis accounting for differences in the structure of these attitudes across sophistication levels. The most interesting result of this analysis is that the mass public's conception of government spending comprises at least some of the same social welfare programs across all levels of sophistication, suggesting that policy debates over these issues are understood and integrated into the

belief system of most citizens. One key component of this shared structure is so-called race coded programs, toward which individuals' attitudes are determined heavily by racial resentment. Importantly, however, the results revealed that racial resentment does not directly affect the most sophisticated citizens' spending preferences. On the other hand, anti-black attitudes do significantly explain variation in the spending attitudes of the majority of the mass public, and the indirect relationships among values, ideology and racial resentment in the belief systems of sophisticates are nonetheless real. Obviously, the evidence provided for this last point is quite tentative, but given recent work testifying to the depth and breadth of racial polarization in this country (Tesler 2012), the findings here should be pursued further to understand better when, and why, racial resentment continues to plague Americans' issue attitudes.

Before I venture further into speculative territory and point toward my future research, or, perhaps most appropriately, as a segue toward it, I should note that the twenty-four year period covered in my analysis is ideal for assessing the degree to which the structure of mass public attitudes reflects the unidimensional attitude structure of elites. One interpretation of the evidence might be that neither elite nor mass public attitudes are reliably unidimensional or multidimensional. Instead, the dimensionality might be a product of party coalitions and the particular opportunities afforded party activists to shape political conflict (e.g., Noel 2012, 2013). Still, one should not take the argument too far, as the activists' attitudes unambiguously have been unidimensional throughout the generation that I investigated.

One seeming reality that I identified is that political sophistication is responsible for the extent to which the mass public mirrors the attitude structure of elites.

Importantly, despite a period of prolonged and intense elite polarization in which activists, elected officials and media commentators have been sending, and continue to send, ever clearer ideological cues to party followers, increases in attitudinal constraint among the mass public over the past several decades have been confined to the most politically sophisticated citizens. This fifth and final contribution might be the most relevant one for our understanding of contemporary American public opinion.

Accordingly, the remainder of this chapter situates the findings in this dissertation within existing literature on elite polarization, elite opinion leadership and sophistication and American democracy, discusses their implications for the study of human belief systems and suggests avenues for future research with the goal of improving our understanding of the sources and nature of individuals' orientations toward the political world.

5.2 Elite Opinion Leadership, Political Sophistication and Values

A wide-ranging and captivating essay recently penned by Zaller (2012) as part of a twenty-year retrospective on his classic work, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion* (1992), provides a useful starting point for situating the findings in this dissertation within the broader literature on belief systems, particularly ideological constraint.

However, returning to a discussion of key concepts is important before addressing Zaller's specific commentary. As I noted in Chapter 2, *constraint*, in my reading of the literature, is perhaps the most critical and contested concept in the canon of ideology scholarship. In the Conversian (1964) sense, attitudinal constraint does not represent ideology, but is rather the observed implication of ideological thinking. In other words,

constraint is a consequence of individuals structuring their political attitudes according to the liberal-conservative continuum. Conceptual clarity has been elusive because constraint, often termed “ideological consistency” and measured as answering issues questions all in one direction or the other (i.e., liberal or conservative), is occasionally purported to represent ideology itself (e.g., Treier and Hillygus 2009).

Now, both theoretically and as this dissertation demonstrated empirically, constraint is most likely to be observed among individuals who conceptualize the world in ideological terms.¹ However, again, ideology and constraint are not synonymous. Ideological thinking—as I observed for elites and the most politically knowledgeable, interested and involved members of the mass public—is a mechanism for simplifying a large number of disparate attitudes into a coherent whole for political sophisticates. These individuals are sufficiently politically aware and motivated to connect their ideological predispositions and issue attitudes, and, as a result, their identifications as liberal or conservative produces highly interrelated attitudes across an array of issues and substantive policy domains.

This relationship between political sophistication, ideological identifications and observed attitudinal constraint evidences the importance of abstractions for ideological thinking. More specifically, establishing and maintaining a complex belief system of congruent political attitudes requires that one adopt an exceedingly limited number of abstract principles, or what Converse (1964) calls “crowning postures,” in order to

¹ Recall that the correlation between individuals’ ideological self-identifications and factor scores was used as evidence to demonstrate that the dimension underlying issue attitudes is, in fact, liberal-conservative ideology.

incorporate efficiently the full spectrum of attitudes into a unidimensional ideological structure.

This relationship, though, requires us to examine one step earlier in the causal chain in order to explain the content of the ideological labels that underlie issue attitudes. In other words, if ideology underlies issue attitudes, then what values, beliefs and other higher order principles supply the building blocks for the organizational structure itself? At this point, let us return to the central focus of the concluding essay and connect this discussion regarding the relationship among ideological thinking, attitudinal constraint (ideological consistency) and the sources of ideological identification to Zaller (2012).

Zaller (2012) questions the very existence of the higher order abstractions—values, beliefs and other predispositions—purported to produce ideological thinking. Instead of principled ideological thinking underlying the issue attitudes of political sophisticates, Zaller argues that observed levels of attitudinal constraint are “almost embarrassingly great” (2012, 577). He reaches this conclusion by showing that the partisan differences between Democrats and Republicans on several economic and social policy questions are too polarized to evidence genuine constraint.² I agree with Zaller that elite polarization and partisan sorting has exaggerated the extent of ideological thinking among the mass public overall. Indeed, my results do not evidence widespread levels of ideological thinking in the electorate, a key result given the polarized political context in which the data were obtained. Thus, consistent with work on partisan sorting, increasingly closer relationships between individuals’ partisanship and issue attitudes,

² He shows that the percentage of informed partisans providing consistent opinions to various questions in Table 1 on page 578. In addition to the theoretical questions I raise in the main body of text, his decision to label “don’t know” responses “no” for the purpose of creating his consistency scores is questionable, in my view.

and between their partisanship and ideology, is a function of increasingly clear elite cue giving, as opposed to increases in ideological thinking (e.g., Carsey and Layman 2006; Levendusky 2009).

However, the differences in constraint that I identified within the mass public in Chapter 2 were remarkable and undeniable, and, as I noted above in this chapter, my measure of political sophistication successfully discriminated between constrained and unconstrained opinion. Importantly, as I showed in the appendix to Chapter 2, strong partisans are no more likely than weak partisans to exhibit attitudinal constraint within sophistication categories. This result bolsters my confidence in the correctness of my argument that ideological constraint, or consistency, is more than a question of individuals knowing “what goes with what.” Rather, constraint is a product of ideological thinking that involves an answer to the question of “why?” In other words, although partisans surely parrot the preferences of opinion leaders and adopt issue attitudes to match their own party labels, ideology is real. The contribution of the word “ideal” to “ideology” is not just a clever name for more sophisticated citizens. Ideology is a genuine structure built upon individuals’ principled beliefs toward what constitutes the best society.

A further question that is imperative for subsequent scholars to explore is the origins and transformations of party ideologies. I specifically examined the attitude structure of convention delegates in this dissertation not only because survey data capturing their issue positions exist that align closely to nationally representative survey instruments, but also, and primarily, because the activist delegates shape the major parties’ platforms (e.g., Layman et al. 2010; Noel 2013). That is, the party activists, who

invest a disproportionate amount of time, energy and (often exorbitant) financial resources into advancing their preferred agendas, heavily influence the values expressed and policy proposals offered by elected officials.

Understanding the diversity of these coalitions and the nature of the agreements that they forge in both major parties should help unlock the causes of party stances across issue domains. Further, the shifting makeup of the coalitions, as well as the jockeying for influence within them over time, should relate to party transformations. Indeed, evidence suggests that activist coalitions predated party shifts on the momentous issue of civil rights, for example (Noel 2012; Shickler, Pearson, and Feinstein 2010). I wish to make the crucial point that I strenuously disagree with any notion that activist networks are devoid of ideological content, or that party coalitions and elected officials operate strategically in pursuit of self-interest. Evidence, including a great deal presented in this dissertation, demonstrates that elites structure their political attitudes unidimensionally along the liberal-conservative continuum. Still, future researchers should look to the construction of coalitions and the shared values and policy goals that unite (and divide) Democratic and Republican activists, elected officials and party followers in the electorate over time and across issues, all the while examining the potential for party platform changes and intraparty diversity.

I conclude this dissertation by urging scholars to move beyond the questions of ideological constraint in order to begin to understand the values and predispositions that relate to a belief system, including those less “elaborate, close-woven” ones described as ideologies in *The American Voter* (Campbell et al. 1960; this call is echoed by Carmines and D’Amico 2015). We should examine the role that core values have in structuring

attitudes and exacerbating ongoing polarization because values and other predispositions should serve as non-ideological sources of constraint for most citizens.

If we wish to understand why, for example, citizens report increasing levels of disdain and mistrust for adherents to the opposite party, but most citizens do not possess coherent ideologies akin to party platforms, then what factors explain the observed out-party animosity? Certainly, race, social class and other demographic predictors play a role, but I think that scholars would be best served to look toward core value differences across individuals in order to gain leverage upon, and hopefully soon solve, the problems causing, and resulting from, contemporary political clashes. Additionally, unlike some previous work, I am convinced that sophistication and the use (and abuse) of core values are inextricably intertwined. I look forward to contemplating these important issues well into the future.

Let us hope that, much like the protagonist A. Square in Edwin Abbott's timeless 1884 satire of Victorian culture, *Flatland* (2006), who realizes the beauty and wonder of the world outside when he shifts from two-dimensional Squareland to three-dimensional Sphereland, we might soon identify new, heretofore unexplored dimensions that structure political thinking. Ultimately, doing so will help illuminate the causes and consequences of Americans' political attitudes and allow us to understand better the pictures in the heads of our fellow citizens, producing greater representation and a healthier democracy.

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