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The Motivated Formation of Economic Preferences

A Dissertation Presented
by
Christopher David Johnston

to
The Graduate School
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements
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in

Political Science

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Abstract of the Dissertation

The Motivated Formation of Economic Preferences

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Recent research has argued that ideological orientations in the American mass public are, to a large extent, rooted in psychological dispositions related to differential needs for social order, epistemic certainty, and existential security. Citizens high in such needs tend to be conservative in their political outlook, as conservative policies offer institutional stability and a justification of the status quo, while those low in such needs, in their comfort with ambiguity and change, find liberalism appealing. In its focus on a single ideological dimension, however, such work fails to provide a full account of ideology in the American mass public, which, despite the polarization of elites over the last thirty years, remains multidimensional. In particular, work has largely failed to provide an account of economic preferences within a dispositional framework.

The present dissertation considers in greater depth the relationship between psychological needs for order, certainty and security and economic conservatism. I argue that the economic domain is unique, relative to the social and foreign policy domains, in that such issues are prototypically “hard,” or in other words, technical and non-symbolic. Citizens do not, by default, represent such issues in abstract terms related to institutional stability and change; rather, such representations develop in the context of citizen engagement with political elites, and the cues and frames which these more sophisticated political actors provide. This dynamic creates an asymmetry in how preferences are formed between the engaged and unengaged with important implications for the ways in which needs for order, certainty and security are translated into economic preferences, and thus for the structure of mass ideology.

Utilizing diverse methods and data across many years of American politics, including both experimental and survey-based designs, I show empirically that needs for order, certainty and security do indeed provide an important structuring force to preferences in the economic domain, but in heterogeneous ways across citizens, and across political time. For the highly engaged, such needs drive economic conservatism, while for the unengaged they drive economic liberalism. In addition, I find that the connection between needs and economic preferences amongst the engaged emerged in the context of the rise of cultural politics in the early 1990s, suggesting that the qualitative nature of psychological constraint is time-bound.

To my mom, Eileen, for making it possible.

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All errors, omissions, and failures in the following pages are my own.

Chapter 1

Background and Overview

American politics seems different relative to any time in the recent past. Citizens seem more divided by partisanship and ideology, discourse seems more vitriolic, and the possibility of compromise across lines of conflict seems more unlikely. To some extent this is surely a reflection of elite polarization over the last three decades (McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal 2008). As the parties have become increasingly homogenous and divided ideologically, citizens have become better at recognizing such distinctions (Hetherington 2001), and have become better sorted in terms of their partisanship and policy preferences (Abramowitz 2010; Levendusky 2009). In some sense then, the nature of contemporary American politics is a result of sharp divisions between the two anchors of mass political behavior: the Democratic and Republican parties (Sniderman 2000; Sniderman and Bullock 2004).

Recent research, however, suggests that there is something more to these divisions which is particularly prone to ignite the tensions that we observe. Specifically, several lines of research in both political science and psychology have argued that mass political orientations in contemporary American politics are, to a large extent at least, rooted in basic *psychological dispositions*, personality traits, needs and motives, which are so fundamental to people's self-understanding, that political divisions, even if they are not reflective of polarization in its strict, policy-based sense (Fiorina, Abrams and Pope 2005), are seen as derivative of irreconcilable differences in "worldviews." As Hetherington and Weiler (2009) argue, "People come to perceive that their views of right and wrong and good and bad are diametrically opposed to those of their opponents, making it difficult to understand (or perhaps even respect) the worldview that makes those preferences possible."

Research within this paradigm has been quite diverse, utilizing concepts from biology and genetics (e.g. Alford, Funk and Hibbing 2005; Amodio et al. 2007; Settle et al. 2010), personality psychology (e.g. Carney et al. 2008; Gerber et al. 2010; Jost et al. 2003a; Mondak 2010), and core values (e.g. Smith et al. 2011; Thorisdottir et al. 2007). Most of this work, however, despite the diversity of language, converges on a common understanding of the psychology underlying political orientations and ideology. This conceptual convergence is made explicit by John Jost and his colleagues within their theory of political ideology as motivated social cognition (Jost et al. 2003a; Jost, Federico and Napier 2009). They argue that political conservatism (as opposed to liberalism), in its emphasis on institutional stability, and in its provision of a justification for the socioeconomic status quo, is palliative for citizens with psychological needs for social order, epistemic certainty, and existential security. As Jost and Hunyady (2002) argue, "There is a good match between needs to reduce uncertainty and threat and system justification, because preserving the status quo allows one to maintain what is familiar while rejecting the uncertain prospect of social change. For many people, the devil they know seems less threatening and more legitimate than the devil they don't" (p. 262).

This general hypothesis finds empirical support in a number of studies. Jost et al. (2003a), in a meta-analysis of over eighty studies on the topic, find that psychological indicators related to needs for order, certainty and security (e.g. intolerance of ambiguity, need for cognitive closure) are associated with several indicators of political conservatism (e.g. Right-

Wing Authoritarianism; Altemeyer 1981). More recent work also shows converging evidence. Hetherington and Weiler (2009) find that needs for order and certainty (which they conceptualize as authoritarianism; see also Feldman 2003; Stenner 2005) are strongly related to preferences over social and foreign policy, and have become an increasingly important predictor of partisan orientations in the American mass public since 2000. Political scientists working within the “Big Five” personality framework have found strong and consistent relationships between the traits of openness to experience and conscientiousness and political ideology (Gerber et al. 2010; Mondak 2010), which is notable as these traits are similar conceptually to the needs identified by Jost and colleagues (see also Carney et al. 2008; Thorisdottir et al. 2007). Work within biology and politics also largely converges theoretically. Alford, Funk and Hibbing (2005) demonstrate a substantial heritable component to political ideology, and suggest that two political “phenotypes” can be defined, one emphasizing tolerance of out-groups, an optimistic view of human nature, opposition to hierarchy and authority, high empathy, and low punitiveness, and the other support for rigid moral rules, acceptance of inequality in society, high punitiveness, and an emphasis on in-group unity. Settle et al. (2010) even identify a specific gene variant associated with novelty seeking, and show that citizens with many friendships in adolescence who possess this variant are more likely to be politically liberal.

Broadly speaking, there is thus a good deal of empirical support for the proposition that indicators related to general needs for order, certainty and security are associated with conservative political orientations. Nonetheless, recent work fails to provide a full account of political ideology in the contemporary American public. Of particular importance is the tendency of this research to ignore the multidimensionality of ideology (Feldman and Johnston 2009), or in other words, the observation that political preferences across ideological domains (e.g. economic, social) are only moderately related to one another. While such ideological “constraint” has increased in recent years (Abramowitz 2010; Levendusky 2009), it has not achieved a level where a single, left-right continuum constitutes an accurate representation of mass preferences. Feldman and Johnston (2009) find only moderate associations between latent economic and social ideology in the 2000 and 2004 Presidential elections (.21 and .36, respectively). Consistent with these modest correlations, they find six distinct ideological groups in the 2000 election, defined by heterogeneous collections of preferences within each of these two domains (see also Treier and Hillygus 2009).

The finding that different dimensions of preferences can be statistically distinguished does not, in itself, refute the hypothesis that orientations along each dimension are influenced similarly by the same basic psychological dispositions. While the statistical associations between dimensions are not huge, they are of a reasonable magnitude, and it is possible that this tendency toward unidimensional structure is rooted in such individual differences. As Jost, Federico and Napier (2009) ask, “where does ideological structure come from (when it comes)?” (p. 313). Empirical research that *has* explicitly distinguished ideological domains in investigations of dispositional antecedents, however, has generally shown an asymmetry in support for expectations. More specifically, while a great deal of work finds strong associations between needs for order, certainty and security and social preferences (see Jost et al. 2003a for a review; for a more recent example, see Hetherington and Weiler 2009), and in more recent years, preferences over foreign policy (Hetherington and Weiler 2009; Sargent 2004), such needs show little association with conservatism in the economic domain (e.g. Carney et al. 2008; Chirumbolo et al. 2004; Van Hiel, Pandelaere and Duriez 2004), or show associations in the opposite direction expected by theory (Golec 2001; Thorisdottir et al. 2007).

This asymmetry suggests one of two possibilities. First, the psychological dispositions thought to underlie conservatism generally, may be relevant to only a subset of the overall issue space. In other words, economic issues, for whatever reason, may simply be independent of the dispositions which structure preferences in the social and foreign domains. A second, and more interesting possibility is that the processes through which these needs influence economic preferences are more complex than for other domains. This added complexity could suggest heterogeneity in the extent or nature of the influence of needs on economic preferences, heterogeneity which, when ignored, manifests as a null relationship in statistical tests. If it is the latter, this would be a particularly important finding, as the importance of the psychological perspective on ideology, to some extent at least, hinges on its ability to account for preferences in the economic domain. Economic issues, and the economy more generally, have been, and remain, the focus of most political debate, and the most pressing concern of most citizens (Smith 2007). In addition, recent work in political science has questioned the importance of the “culture war,” broadly defined, on the basis of empirical findings that economic issues remain the most important predictors of voting behavior in the American public (Ansolabehere et al. 2006; Bartels 2006; 2008; Gelman 2008). This is obviously only more true in the present context of economic turmoil.

For the psychological perspective, and its offshoots in biology and genetics, to demonstrate its utility, it must move beyond examinations of mere political identification, unidimensional ideological continua, and sociocultural preferences, and develop a framework for understanding preference formation more broadly, and for understanding economic preference formation in particular. The present dissertation is concerned with this task. In the next section, I provide a brief overview of the theory which I develop more fully in the next chapter, explaining how needs for order, certainty and security may actually be highly influential predictors of economic preferences, but in different ways for different citizens. I then provide a summary of the chapters to come.

1.1. A Brief Overview of the Theory

Why do we observe an asymmetry in the influence of needs for order, certainty and security across ideological domains? What makes the economic domain different? I propose that the key distinction for understanding this asymmetry is the difficulty of issues across domains. Carmines and Stimson (1980) distinguish two broad categories of issues: easy and hard. Easy issues are those for which abstract or symbolic elements are readily apparent to all citizens. They are non-technical, concern ends rather than means, and are often long on the political agenda. In contrast, hard issues are typically technical, and do not, by default, evoke symbolic referents. For the latter, citizens tend to be open to elite influence, both in terms of simple “cue-taking” (i.e. the adoption of policy preferences preferred by trusted elite actors), and in terms of the construction of the meaning of specific issues with respect to broader ideological ideas. This suggests an immediate divide in how preferences are formed between the politically engaged and the politically unengaged when issues are difficult. The former are susceptible to elite influence through cues and frames, while the latter, lacking exposure to elite politics, are not.

Importantly, however, citizens, when they choose to engage with the elite space, do so selectively, and most often on the basis of partisan affiliations. Consistent with recent work (Hetherington and Weiler 2009), I argue that needs for order, certainty and security are a primary force driving partisan sorting in the contemporary American electorate, with those high in such needs sorting into the Republican Party, and those low sorting into the Democratic Party. This implies an *indirect* relationship of such needs on economic preferences for politically engaged citizens. In other words, engaged citizens select into information environments as a function of needs, and subsequently receive and accept cues and frames over economic issues which shape both their understanding and preferences over such issues. This, in turn, implies a positive relationship between needs for order, certainty and security and economic conservatism (as expected by past research), but only amongst politically engaged citizens.

We can also ask, however, to what extent such needs might influence economic preferences amongst the politically *unengaged*, but in unique ways. Lacking exposure to elite-level politics such citizens should tend to understand economic issues in terms of considerations which are most accessible to them, in the worlds of Converse (1964), those “close to home.” This might, on the one hand, simply imply *no* association between psychological dispositions and economic preferences. For example, citizens viewing economic issues in such terms may simply form their preferences on the basis of their income level (Meltzer and Richard 1981). Alternatively, we can consider the possible resonance of economic liberalism and conservatism with needs for order, certainty and security when seen through “personalized” representations.

Consider that the government provision of social welfare serves not only to redistribute wealth contemporaneously, but also to reduce risks to income over the longer term; put another way, social welfare serves not only a redistributive, but also a *social insurance function* (Sinn 1995). As Moene and Wallerstein (2001) note, “In the second view, the essence of welfare policy is the public provision of insurance, and self-interested voters support welfare policy to obtain protection against risks that private insurance markets fail to cover” (p. 859-860). Policies such as unemployment insurance serve to reduce risks to the individual which are intrinsic to free market capitalism. Technological change (Iversen 2005; Iversen and Soskice 2001), globalization (Ehrlich and Maestas 2010; Scheve and Slaughter 2004), or just bad luck can negatively impact a given worker’s income, and thus potential future losses may engender a preference for publically provided insurance today. As Iversen (2005) states, “workers...do not know with certainty how they will fare in terms of future employment and income. In this situation, risk-averse people will demand insurance against loss of employment and income.”

This latter point concerning risk aversion is, however, critical. Iversen (2005), in this passage, is assuming a homogenous level of risk aversion throughout the public. But there is little reason to assume that this is the case; indeed, the very needs for order, certainty and security discussed above are highly similar conceptually to “dispositional risk aversion” (see, e.g. Ehrlich and Maestas 2010; Kam and Simas 2010), and vary considerably in the mass public. Consider some example dispositional constructs, highlighted by Jost et al. (2003a) which illustrate this relationship. The need for nonspecific cognitive closure is defined as a “desire for a firm answer to a question and an aversion to ambiguity” (Kruglanski and Webster 1996; p. 264). Individuals high in this need should be more averse to risk, for example, in terms of a distaste for probabilistic outcomes (Kahneman and Tversky 1979; Kam and Simas 2010), than those low in the need for the simple reason that risk, by its very nature, implies uncertainty. Similar points can be made regarding other, related constructs such as intolerance of ambiguity (Frenkel-Brunswik 1949), valuing security over excitement and stimulation (Schwartz 1992), or

possessing a prevention rather than promotion focus (Higgins 1998), all of which can be identified within a more general framework of needs for order, certainty and security (Jost et al. 2003a). There is thus good reason to believe that liberal policy in the economic domain will resonate with citizens high in needs for order, certainty and security *to the extent that they see this domain in concrete, personalized terms*.

Importantly, these considerations have the capacity to explain the lack of support for recent theorizing within the economic domain. If the relationship between needs for order, certainty and security and economic conservatism *is opposite in sign* across levels of political engagement, then analyses which fail to explicitly model this heterogeneity will find no association between these variables, because the signs cancel. In other words, even if there are large average differences in economic conservatism across motivational orientations for subgroups of citizens, the average association for the public taken as a whole may still be zero. The present theoretical analysis thus offers an elegant potential solution to this asymmetry in empirical support, and a more nuanced analysis of the role that psychological dispositions may play in political preference formation.

1.2. Implications for Contemporary American Politics

As mentioned above, recent empirical work in political science has been skeptical of the importance of the “culture war” to American politics, and more specifically, the extent to which the rise of cultural divisions at the elite level have implications for economic policy, social welfare, and redistribution, as claimed by popular commentators and journalists (e.g. Frank 2004). This skepticism arises as a result of the rejection of the “displacement” hypothesis, the idea that the increasing importance of cultural issues has decreased the importance of economic issues to the mass public. This hypothesis argues that the mass public now votes on the basis of their cultural preferences, which, for low income citizens, comes at the expense of their material interests. In this way, the Republican Party has opened a line of conflict with the ability to break up the traditional New Deal coalition long enjoyed by the Democratic Party.

As Bartels (2006; 2008) and others (Ansolabehere et al. 2006; Gelman 2008; Smith 2007) have demonstrated, however, economic preferences have *not* decreased in importance with respect to their connection to mass voting behavior. Indeed, while cultural issues have, to some extent, become more important over the last several decades, this rise does not come at the expense of the economic domain. Citizens, it seems, are simply better able to connect *all* of their preferences to their voting behavior and partisanship (Abramowitz 2010; Hetherington 2001; Levendusky 2009). On this basis, the importance of the culture war has been questioned. Given the economic developments of the past several years, this perspective takes on an added plausibility.

The present dissertation, however, offers an alternative perspective on how the rise of cultural divisions at the elite level may affect economic policymaking. Rather than *displacing* economic issues, I argue that cultural divisions *shape* economic preferences in the mass public by altering the bases of partisan sorting, and thus altering the underlying bases of preferences over difficult, and thus economic issues. Put more simply, if citizens turn to trusted partisan

actors for information when issues are hard, and trust itself is derivative of the interaction of underlying psychological needs for order, certainty and security with symbolic party imagery related to cultural conflict, then such needs provide an *indirect basis* for economic preferences, regardless of their logical relationship to such issues. Given the strong associations of such needs with socioeconomic status, with citizens at the lower end of the income and human capital distribution scoring higher on such dispositions, these processes suggest a more nuanced pathway by which cultural conflict alters the distribution of preferences for social welfare in the mass public. In this sense, popular commentators may be right about the importance of the culture war to economic policy, but for the wrong reasons.

1.3. Overview of the Dissertation

In Chapter 2 I expand on the basic ideas presented in this chapter. I first provide an in-depth review of the literature on the dispositional foundations of political ideology, with a particular focus on the lack of attention to multidimensionality in mass preferences, and the asymmetry in empirical support for expectations across ideological domains. I then present my own theory of the influence of needs for order, certainty and security on economic preferences which takes the idea of the hard-easy issue distinction as its starting point.

In Chapter 3 I first provide a basic demonstration of heterogeneity in the influence of dispositions across ideological domains. Using data from the 2004 American National Elections Study, I show that needs for order, certainty and security strongly predict preferences in the social and foreign policy domains, consistent with recent work (Hetherington and Weiler 2009), yet show no (unconditional) association with economic preferences. In the second part of the chapter, I provide an experimental demonstration of the influence of elite cues on the connection between needs and preferences in the economic domain. I show that the relationship expected by recent theorizing *can* emerge for economic issues in the context of citizen interactions with political elites. When elite cues are present (i.e. partisan labels attached to specific policies), there is a strong influence of such needs on economic conservatism.

In Chapter 4 I turn to an examination of the differential use of abstract/symbolic and concrete/personal considerations in the formation of economic preferences. Consistent with the notion that use of the former requires exposure to elite discourse, and thus political engagement, I show that symbolic considerations (e.g. market fairness) show a strong association with economic policy preferences only for the highly engaged. Conversely, I show that politically unengaged citizens rely extensively on personal considerations (e.g. concerns about one's financial situation) in the generation of their economic policy preferences, but minimally on symbolic considerations. Importantly, however, and consistent with the idea that citizens develop symbolic representations of economic issues in the context of exposure to elite discourse, I demonstrate that even unengaged citizens rely on symbolic considerations when the connection of these to economic policy is made explicit.

In Chapter 5 I demonstrate the implications of these empirical findings for the relationship of needs for order, certainty and security to economic conservatism. Using three distinct datasets from the 2000, 2004 and 2008 Presidential elections, I show that the relationship

is conditional on political engagement in the specific way theorized. For the politically unengaged, needs for order, certainty and security predict economic liberalism. For the highly engaged, in contrast, such needs predict political conservatism. Finally, I explore the implications of these findings for the structure of political ideology in the contemporary American public, with particular attention to libertarians, who would seem to be an outlier within the context of my theoretical model. I discuss the unique characteristics of libertarians relative to prototypical liberals and conservatives, and examine possible reasons for these patterns.

In Chapter 6 I move beyond contemporary American politics to examine the past and future of American ideology in the context of a motivational analysis. Drawing on the theoretical considerations developed in Chapter 2, I suggest that the nature of the relationship between needs for order, certainty and security and economic preferences is time-bound, and conditional on the nature of symbolic party conflict at the elite level. First, I show that the relationship uncovered in Chapter 5 emerged in the early 1990s in concert with the emergence of cultural conflict at the elite level. These developments also coincide with the rise of ideological constraint between the economic and social dimensions of mass preferences.

In the second part of the chapter, I explore the future of the connection between needs and economic preferences through an examination of the influence of such needs for policy in the international sphere. I theorize that the international domain represents an emerging, but unique locus of conflict for economic policymaking. Specifically, globalization and the decline of American hegemony in the economic and cultural spheres should be threatening to individuals high in needs for order, certainty and security, but appealing to those low in such needs, as these motivational profiles are strongly related to self-representations of global citizenship and cosmopolitanism. I show that these needs are strongly related to a preference for protectionism in the form of import restrictions and government intervention in the free market to prevent outsourcing. These findings imply that there is no *intrinsic* relationship of this motivational continuum to free market conservatism, but rather, this relationship, observed amongst engaged citizens in the contemporary era, is a result of the unique way in which the idea of the free market is constructed by political elites. To the extent it is *not* necessary, this implies the potential for a change in the relationship of dispositions to economic preferences in a future not characterized by culture war politics. Chapter 7 summarizes and concludes the dissertation.

Chapter 2

The Motivated Formation of Economic Preferences

In the previous chapter I argued that the asymmetry in support for the expectations of recent research on the dispositional foundations of political preferences across ideological domains, and more specifically, the failure to find support within the economic domain, is rooted in a failure to consider the unique aspects of this latter domain with respect to the process by which preferences are formed. The present chapter is thus concerned with these asymmetries, and in particular, the antecedents of economic preferences in psychological dispositions related to needs for order, certainty and security, and the dynamic interplay of these needs with elite competition and discourse. The upshot of this chapter is that economic conservatism and liberalism are derivative of the same basic dispositions which structure orientations in the sociocultural domain, and, in recent times, the foreign policy domain (Jost et al. 2003a; Hetherington and Weiler 2009). Importantly, however, the nature of this relationship is heterogeneous across citizens and across political contexts.

To understand these dynamics, I turn to a more in-depth review of the literature in political psychology and political science on the dispositional foundations of political ideology. The first part of this review will highlight what has been learned regarding the key psychological constructs which structure left-right orientations in mass politics. The second part of this review will address the failures of this literature to confirm theoretical expectations within the economic domain. In the context of such failures, I then seek a more complex model of preference formation in the economic domain which highlights the interaction (and non-interaction) of citizens with political elites, and the role of such interaction (and non-interaction) for the ways in which citizens understand economic issues, and how heterogeneity in attention and understanding moderates the translation of motivational variables into economic preferences.

2.1. Research on the Dispositional Foundations of Political Ideology

Work on the dispositional foundations of political ideology, while a long-running concern of psychologists in the context of conservatism qua prejudice, intolerance, and moral traditionalism (e.g. Adorno et al. 1960; Altemeyer 1981; 1988; 1996; Duckitt 2001; Duckitt et al. 2002; Rokeach 1960; Wilson 1973), has emerged in mainstream political science, for the most part, only within the last decade or so (for a discussion of the reemergence of interest in ideology writ large, and the psychological perspective in particular, see Jost 2006). It is reasonable to see this as a result of political changes occurring first at the elite level, and subsequently at the level of the mass public. The last thirty years of American politics have seen substantial polarization of elite actors along a single ideological dimension (McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal 2008). As the parties have clarified their positions ideologically, we have witnessed growing ideological “sophistication” within the mass public, including the ability of citizens to identify ideological

differences between the parties (Hetherington 2001), and greater constraint in preferences across domains of policy (Abramowitz 2010; Levendusky 2009), specifically with respect to social and economic preferences. Politically engaged citizens in contemporary American politics are much more likely than their predecessors to possess consistently liberal or conservative preferences with respect to these domains.

The latter development in particular engenders a sense in political observers, pundits, journalists and political scientists alike (e.g. Frank 2004; Hetherington and Weiler 2009; Jost et al. 2003a), that liberals and conservatives are cut from fundamentally different cloth, psychologically speaking. This perception is exacerbated by a mass media which finds such polarization to be an intriguing story line. Few will forget coverage of the 2000 and 2004 elections in which the media rode the storyline of the “Red State-Blue State” divide, and the subsequent popular treatments to which it gave birth (e.g. Frank 2004). While prone to sensationalism, such storylines nonetheless contain some truth. In the first pages of their (more scientifically rigorous) treatment of contemporary divisions between left and right in America, for instance, Hetherington and Weiler (2009) show a strikingly strong correlation between beliefs about the acceptability of mild to moderate physical punishment in the context of childrearing and the Presidential vote in 2004. In such an environment, it is easy to see why the psychological approach to understanding political conflict has reemerged as a focus of research.

The overarching question guiding recent research concerns the psychological underpinnings of the constraint we observe across domains of public policy. Why are some citizens consistently liberal or conservative across social, economic and foreign policy domains? What psychological factors provide the foundational “glue” which bonds preferences together across these seemingly distinct arenas of political conflict? This research has taken different forms with respect to theory and conceptualization, but taken as a whole the literature shows great convergence in how left-right divisions are understood psychologically.

In political science (Gerber et al. 2010; Mondak 2010; Mondak and Halperin 2008), recent work has focused on the construct of personality, and more specifically, the “Big Five” framework of core personality traits (McCrae and Costa 1995; McCrae and Costa 2003; McCrae and John 1992). Within the “Big Five” framework, personality traits are hypothetical cognitive structures which filter responses to stimuli in the environment in systematic ways (McCrae and Costa 1995; 2003), thus giving rise to relatively consistent patterns of attitudes and behavior. For example, people high in “openness to experience” tend to display attitudes and behaviors which can be characterized in terms of a “willingness to seek new paths, and a corresponding weak attachment to familiar ways” (Mondak 2010, p. 51). This framework can thus be characterized as “top-down” in that consistency across time and space in terms of nominally defined behavior is assumed to be derivative of an underlying psychological tendency which can be conceptualized as a latent dimension of sorts (Shoda 1999; Zelli and Dodge 1999). As Zelli and Dodge (1999) explain, “In top-down phenomena, a single overarching force exerts uniform pressure on multiple individual events, possibly with some error or additional forces also exerting pressure on those events” (p. 99).

For the most part, research within this paradigm has found strong associations between the traits of openness to experience and conscientiousness with left-right orientations, and with partisan affiliations in the United States (Carney et al. 2008; Gerber et al. 2010; McCrae 1996; Mondak 2010). The basic logic behind these findings is that left and right are largely defined by their relative openness to change (i.e. liberalism) versus their affinity for traditional values and institutional stability (i.e. conservatism). As Gerber et al. (2010) argue, openness to experience

implies a positive response to “unconventional and complex stimuli,” and thus, “It follows that this attraction to novelty and tolerance for complexity encourage not only overall liberalism, but also support for liberal social and economic policies, which typically involve new programs or interventions that overturn existing practices” (p. 116). Similarly, with respect to conscientiousness, which involves “socially prescribed impulse control,” there should be a connection with conservatism as “identifying as conservative involves supporting traditional norms in both the economic and social policy domains” (p. 115). Gerber et al. (2010) do indeed find fairly strong associations of both personality traits with political ideology.

Mondak (2010) makes similar arguments in the context of an examination of ideological and partisan self-identifications. He argues that “the openness and conscientiousness hypotheses are best understood in terms of traditional views in which liberalism corresponds with a willingness to see government tackle new and varied problems, while conservatism implies a more cautious approach in which presumption favors the status quo” (p. 127). While he does not find any influence of these traits on partisanship in a dataset from 1998, he finds strong effects in both 2005 and 2006. He also finds some support for the connection between these two traits and specific policy preferences, such as legalized abortion.

Carney et al. (2008) also examined the connection between the “Big Five” and liberalism-conservatism using six convenience samples (five of which were undergraduate samples). They found strong and consistent evidence of a connection between openness to experience and left-right placements, with less consistent, yet still substantial evidence in favor of a connection of ideology with conscientiousness, thus providing additional support for the importance of these two personality traits in the realm of political preferences.

A key assumption of the “Big Five,” and trait frameworks more generally, is that these constructs represent largely stable aspects of a person’s character which, once developed, change little over the lifespan. One of the key reasons for this expectation of stability is that such traits are presumed to have genetic origins (see Caplan 2011; McCrae and Costa 1995; Mondak 2010; Smith et al. 2011). In other words, the genetic makeup of the individual drives the development, not wholly independent of the environment, of stable cognitive and emotional structures which manifest as consistent patterns of behavior which we group qualitatively and understand and express linguistically as “traits.”

This theoretical understanding of personality suggests that genes may be linked to higher-order attitudes and behaviors such as political preferences and ideology. Indeed, to the extent that genes influence personality, and personality influences ideology, then we should see evidence of the heritability of the latter. Recent work in political science has explored this possibility, and found strong support. In their seminal piece on the topic, Alford, Funk and Hibbing (2005) draw on twin studies to show that over 30% of the variance in conservatism may be due to genetic factors. Some individual “policy” items show even greater levels of heritability. For example, responses (support or oppose) to the stimulus “school prayer” showed a heritability estimate of .41, or in other words, 41% of the variance in this item could be accounted for by genes. They argue that genes influence ideology by giving rise to two political “phenotypes.” The first, the contextualist orientation, is defined by tolerance of out-groups, an optimistic view of human nature, opposition to hierarchy and authority, high empathy, and low punitiveness. Conversely, the absolutist phenotype is defined by support for rigid moral rules, acceptance of inequality in society, high punitiveness, and an emphasis on in-group unity (see also Smith et al. 2011). These phenotypes are quite similar in content to the traits identified by

personality researchers, and again provide a basis for ideological constraint across policy domains.

Settle et al. (2010) examined the role of genetics on an even finer scale. They hypothesized, on the basis of the personality and politics literature, that a variant of the dopamine D4 receptor gene, a variant associated with novelty seeking, would be associated with liberalism, but only amongst individuals “embedded within a social context that provides them with multiple points of view” (p. 1189). They found that this gene predicted liberal identification amongst individuals with many friendships in adolescence, but not amongst those with few friendships.

Despite being intermediate between genes and political orientations, traits remain a high-level construct. Additional work within the biology and politics paradigm has thus sought to understand the neurological and physiological factors which differ across individuals and can help explain ideological divides in ways consistent with our understanding of these more abstract traits, and thus provide a lower level link from genes to political orientations. Amodio et al. (2007), for example, extending the idea that conservatism is associated with rigid and dogmatic cognitive styles (see Jost et al. 2003a for a review), found that conservatives were more likely to display persistence in a neurocognitive task. Smith et al. (2008) examined the association between physiological reactions to “disgusting stimuli” (e.g. human feces) and political attitudes. They found that subjects who displayed stronger reactions to these stimuli (measured by skin conductance levels) were more likely to espouse conservative attitudes in the context of gay rights. Presumably, they conclude, political attitudes and the underlying physiology which shapes one’s conscious reactions to stimuli cannot be separated.

There is thus a great deal of convergence in the constructs utilized across the research programs reviewed above. This convergence has been recognized, and more fully developed within psychology. Indeed, John Jost and his colleagues have sought to provide a unified theoretical framework for understanding the psychology of political ideology which ties together over sixty years of empirical research (Bonnano and Jost 2006; Jost et al. 2003a; Jost et al. 2003b; Jost, Federico and Napier 2009; Thorisdottir et al. 2007). In their seminal article, Jost et al. (2003a) argue that research within this subfield can be subsumed within a more general framework which sees political preference formation as a form of *motivated social cognition*.

The key idea is that the formation of all social attitudes is a motivated process in the sense that human beings are intentional creatures, not merely “cold” cognitive processors, and possess chronic goals which drive their behavior and attitudes, goals which are not always, if even often, purely material in nature, as much political economic analysis of preferences assumes (Higgins and Kruglanski 1996; Katz 1960; Kunda 1990; Mercier and Sperber 2011; Sorrentino and Higgins 1986). As these authors state, “In the post-Freudian world, the ancient dichotomy between reason and passion is blurred, and nearly everyone is aware of the possibility that people are capable of believing what they want to believe, at least within certain limits” (p. 340). Thus, we must expand the range of “interests” which we are willing to cede as antecedents of political preferences and behavior, recognizing that these may often conflict with what we typically consider to be “rational.”

Jost et al. (2003a) suggest that the myriad studies which have examined the psychological foundations of political orientations can be understood as tapping into a smaller set of core psychological needs and motives, which they conceptualize in terms of epistemic and existential *needs for order, certainty and security*. Citizens high in such needs flock to conservatism for its two “core components”: resistance to change and acceptance of inequality. In their own words,

“Theoretical and empirical considerations lead us to conclude that virtually all of the above motives originate in psychological attempts to manage uncertainty and fear. These, in turn, are inherently related to the two core aspects of conservative thought... The management of uncertainty is served by resistance to change insofar as change (by its very nature) upsets existing realities and is fraught with epistemic uncertainty” (p. 351). Those averse to uncertainty and change in general should thus be more likely to adhere to traditional norms and values, and thus be socially conservative. Similarly, with respect to the economic domain, “acceptance of inequality reduces uncertainty and threat “insofar as preserving the [inegalitarian] status quo allows one to maintain what is familiar and known while rejecting the risky, uncertain prospect of social change” (Jost et al. 2007, p. 990).

This paradigm thus unites a very large body of work within a single theoretical framework. For example, early constructs in this field such as anti-intraception (Adorno et al. 1950), intolerance of ambiguity (Frenkel-Brunswik 1949), and dogmatism (Rokeach 1960) are all conceptually related to more general epistemic needs for cognitive closure (Kruglanski 1989; Kruglanski and Webster 1996). The recent work examining the “Big Five” can also be subsumed within this paradigm. If needs for order, certainty and security are the major motivational factors underlying political orientations, then it should be no surprise that we find the strongest and most consistent associations between ideology and the two traits of openness to experience and conscientiousness. Openness entails a general comfort, if not preference, for novelty and new experiences, and thus a tolerance of ambiguity, risk and uncertainty. Conscientiousness, by contrast, is characterized by attitudes and behaviors related to ordering one’s environment, and adherence to established customs, norms and routines, in other words, stability and predictability (see Carney et al. 2008; Van Hiel and Mervielde 2004). Similarly, work on the genetic and biological bases of ideology has argued for political phenotypes which mirror these general dispositions. Alford, Funk and Hibbing’s (2005) absolutist and contextualist orientations, for example, can be seen in terms of relative openness to epistemic uncertainty and ambiguity on the moral dimension. Similarly, the gene variant identified by Settle et al (2010) concerns novelty seeking, and thus openness to new (and potentially risky) experiences, versus a preference for the known, ordered, and safe.

Jost and colleagues’ framework is also notable for its attempt at more explicitly delineating the psychological foundations of ideological constraint across policy domains, in particular, the domains of economic and social policy. From this perspective, economic and social conservatism do not tend to go together merely because elites have “packaged” such issues together for reasons of electoral expediency (Converse 1964; Sniderman 2000), rather, there are “bottom-up” factors which make these associations, in a sense, psychologically natural (Jost, Federico and Napier 2009). Jost and colleagues argue that while specific issues may come and go (i.e. the “peripheral” features of left and right orientations), there are “core” aspects of liberalism and conservatism that transcend time and place, and through which motivational orientations exert their influence on ideological structure within a given context. To the extent that this is empirically the case, it provides an interesting contrast to the more common “top-down,” elite-driven paradigm which dominates public opinion research in political science (e.g. Berinsky 2007; Cohen 2003; Sniderman 2000; Sniderman and Bullock 2004; Zaller 1992).

2.2. Asymmetries in Empirical Support across Ideological Domains

While most of the research within this paradigm has examined ideological self-identifications, measures of authoritarianism, or composite scales of preferences (and thus a unidimensional ideological continuum), some work has disentangled domains of public policy to examine the extent to which the hypothesis of an underlying, *psychological* structure to ideology holds water. If Jost and colleagues (as well as others in political science; Gerber et al. 2010; Mondak 2010) are correct, then we should observe similar relationships between indicators of psychological needs for order, certainty and security and preferences across domains of public policy, in particular, across the economic and social domains. As we will see, this work largely fails to find support for the idea that epistemic and existential motives operate similarly across policy domains.

We can begin by simply examining the results of Jost et al.'s (2003a) meta-analysis of previous work on the psychology of ideology, which shows major asymmetries between the social and economic domains. First, there is simply an asymmetry of focus. Most of the historical work on the topic has been concerned with the sociocultural rather than the economic. Using a broad categorization of what constitutes an “economic” dependent variable, I find that, of the 151 individual tests of a relationship between epistemic and existential needs and conservatism, only 35 (23%) were concerned with the economic domain as an independent strand of conservatism. It is also important to note that, given my broad categorization scheme, of these 35 instances of an explicit test of economic preferences, 22 of these (63%) utilized Social Dominance Orientation (SDO; Sidanius and Pratto 1999) as the operationalization of choice. While some work has suggested that SDO may be the “economic” analogue of Right-Wing Authoritarianism (e.g. Altemeyer 1998; Van Hiel, Pandalaere and Duriez 2004), this construct is likely multidimensional, with one factor corresponding with attitudes towards economic equality, and the other concerned with “group-based dominance” per se (Jost and Thompson 2000). It is thus unclear the extent to which any associations found with this measure are due to economic preferences in the sense we typically understand them in political science, as opposed to prejudice, or a mix of the two. In general, there is simply a dearth of studies directly examining explicitly economic content.

In addition to the asymmetry of empirical focus, there is also an asymmetry of empirical *support* for theoretical expectations within these data. In terms of statistical significance, only 18 of the 35 tests (51%) for economic preferences were significant at the .10 level or better.¹ The effect sizes for epistemic and existential needs on economic preferences are also meaningfully smaller than their general and sociocultural counterparts. To compare effect sizes, I utilized Jost et al.'s (2003a) conceptual framework, instantiated in the presentation of their results. Each table in this article contains tests which can be grouped according to a set of related psychological constructs as predictors. I calculated the mean effect size (the reported Pearson's *r*) for the economic items in each table, and compare these with the mean effect size for all other tests

¹ Two of these significant effects were actually in the “wrong” direction as well (Golec 2001). In these cases, greater need for cognitive closure predicted greater economic *liberalism*. Thus, the percentage of significant and *theoretically consistent* tests is actually 46%.

within that same table, as well as the reported mean of all items taken together. These are shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1. Mean Effect Sizes for Needs on Preferences, from Jost et al. (2003a)

<u>Psychological Category (# of Economic Items)</u>	<u>Economic</u>	<u>All Other</u>	<u>Overall</u>
Dogmatism-Intolerance of Ambiguity (5)	.16	.48	.37
Integrative Complexity (2)	-.34	-.20	-.20
Openness to Experience (2)	-.24	-.37	-.35
Uncertainty Tolerance (0)	-	-.28	-.28
Order, Structure, and Closure (6)	.13	.35	.30
Self-Esteem (11)	-.06	-.12	-.07
Fear of Threat or Loss (9)	.10	.25	.16
Morality Salience (0)	-	.52	.52
System Instability (0)	-	.47	.47

Notes: Each row corresponds with a single table in Jost et al. (2003a), and represents the mean value of Pearson’s *r* for that group for the category of items indicated. Values in parentheses represent the number of tests used to calculate the mean for the economic items.

The asymmetry in support is apparent in the size of the average correlation between psychological factors and conservatism across the three columns, even when including SDO as an economic indicator. In five out of the six cases where a comparison with explicitly economic items was possible, the average association with economic preferences was substantially lower than for the other measures of conservatism. For dogmatism-intolerance of ambiguity, the association with economic preferences was one-third that of other measures (.16 versus .48). For openness to experience, the association with economic items was about two-thirds that of other measures (-.24 versus -.37), while for the latter three, it was less than one-half the size. The only psychological domain within which the economic items showed a stronger average correlation was integrative complexity (-.34 versus -.20), but this itself is tenuous evidence at best. There were only two tests for the economic domain in this category, and one of these concerned the voting records of U.S. Supreme Court justices on “economic issues.” The association of integrative complexity with SDO in a student sample was a meaningful and significant, but much smaller, -.19.

Overall, these results suggest both a dearth of research directly exploring interdomain heterogeneity, and the possibility that epistemic and existential needs do not operate equivalently across dimensions. More recent work speaks directly to the latter possibility. Using an Italian student sample, Chirumbolo et al. (2004) examined the (bivariate) associations between the need for nonspecific cognitive closure (Kruglanski 1989; Kruglanski and Webster 1996) and a variety of political and social attitudes. They found significant associations of this indicator with anti-immigration, nationalism, support for autocratic leadership, pluralism, and multiculturalism.

Consistent with other work examining political identification, they also find that need for closure is higher amongst supporters of right-wing parties compared to supporters of left-wing parties. In contrast, they find no associations with either support for free enterprise or the welfare state.

Van Hiel, Pandalaere and Duriez (2004) also examined the relationship of need for nonspecific closure with social and economic preferences. Specifying a more rigorous theoretical and empirical model, they examined how the need for nonspecific closure translated into policy preferences through the two more abstract and ideological dimensions (see Duckitt 2001; Duckitt et al. 2002) of Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA; Altemeyer 1981) and Social Dominance Orientation (SDO; Sidanius and Pratto 1999). First, the effect of need for closure was much larger for RWA than SDO. Indeed, the effect size for RWA ranged from two to three times the effect size for SDO. In examinations of the total effects (the sum of direct effects and indirect effects through RWA and SDO) of the need for closure on cultural and economic preferences, these authors find substantial effect sizes for cultural conservatism, ranging from .48 to .55 in standardized values. In contrast, the total effects for economic conservatism never attained significance, and were substantially smaller (.17 and .16).

Using a snowball sample of family members and friends derived from undergraduates, Van Hiel and Mervielde (2004) examined the association of both the “Big Five” traits, and a construct related to the need for nonspecific closure called “boundaries of the mind” (Hartmann 1991), with cultural and economic conservatism. As these authors describe, this latter construct was developed “as a measure of individual differences in the permeability of Boundaries in the mind. For some people there are rather fuzzy or *thin* boundaries between experiences, whereas for others, the mind is tightly organized, and experiences are isolated by *thick* boundaries” (p. 660; emphases in original). The construct is thus related conceptually to intolerance of ambiguity, needs for order and structure, and uncertainty avoidance. These authors found that their boundaries of the mind operationalization was related to cultural but not economic conservatism. In addition, they found associations of openness, conscientiousness, and agreeableness with cultural conservatism, but only agreeableness was associated with economic conservatism.

Consistent with this asymmetry in influence across domains within the “Big Five” framework, Carney et al. (2008) found associations of openness to experience, extraversion and conscientiousness with self-identification as a social conservative, but not self-identification as an economic conservative. Using a more representative sample, Gerber et al. (2010) do find associations between all the “Big Five” traits and economic conservatism, however. With respect to openness to experience and conscientiousness, the two key analogues of needs for order, certainty and security, they find substantial effects, although the effect sizes for regressions examining overall ideological self-identification and social conservatism were somewhat larger. Nonetheless, this study, using one of the best samples available in the literature, does indeed find associations of economic conservatism with these traits; an important, if singular, exception to the overall pattern.

Feldman and Johnston (2009) examined the relationship of three motivational indicators with social and economic policy preferences separately using nationally representative data from the American National Elections Studies. More specifically, they looked at the associations of preferences with the need for cognition (a variable measuring one’s preference for thinking deeply; see Cacioppo and Petty 1982), the need for nonspecific cognitive closure, and authoritarianism, the latter operationalized consistent with Hetherington and Weiler (2009; see also Feldman and Stenner 1997; Stenner 2005), and their treatment of the construct in terms of

needs for order, certainty and security. These authors found strong and significant associations between all three psychological indicators and social conservatism in a fully specified regression model, yet no significant associations of any of these indicators with economic preferences. Indeed, the effect of need for cognitive closure was in the opposite direction expected by theory, which mirrors the results from other studies of this construct (Golec 2001). Moreover, Feldman and Johnston (2009) found that authoritarianism and the need for cognition were only related to ideological self-placements amongst citizens who represented the continuum in terms of social issues. For citizens who understood left-right distinctions *only* in terms of economic issues there was no relationship of either variable with self-placements as liberal or conservative.

Similarly asymmetric results were found by Thorisdottir et al. (2007) in an examination of preferences in Western Europe. In a fully specified path model, “rule-following,” a variable related to needs for order, structure and closure (see Schwartz 1992), strongly and significantly predicted both general left-right orientations ($B=.23$) and value traditionalism ($B=.61$), but only weakly, though significantly, predicted acceptance of inequality ($B=.05$). Similarly, the need for security significantly predicted left-right orientations ($B=.11$) and value traditionalism ($B=.22$). Contrary to expectations, however, the need for security substantially and significantly predicted economic *liberalism* ($B=-.37$). In other words, citizens with dispositional security needs were *less* accepting of inequality, not more. The authors note that “Presumably, this is due to the fact that socialist governments in Europe have traditionally provided social and economic security by pursuing egalitarian policies,” and that, “Against this backdrop, *which appears to be quite different from the American context*, a preference for inequality seems motivated more by acceptance of risk than by needs for security” (emphasis mine; p. 196). As we will see below, this pattern is not limited to Europe, but is extant in the American case as well, and holds for the economic dimension more broadly, not simply preferences surrounding inequality in the abstract.

Overall, this review of the literature strongly suggests that dispositional indicators related to needs for security, certainty and order do not operate equivalently across ideological domains. In only one study do I find tests which are strongly supportive of theoretical expectations in the economic domain (i.e. Gerber et al. 2010). In all other cases, large asymmetries were found in the size and significance of the influence of dispositions on political preferences, with strong effects on sociocultural preferences, foreign policy preferences (Hetherington and Weiler 2009), and general ideology, but weak to non-existent effects on economic preferences and attitudes towards equality.

2.3. The Economic Domain is Different

To understand the asymmetry in support for theoretical expectations across ideological domains, we must consider the ways in which these domains differ conceptually and in practice. I propose that the key relevant distinction between the economic and social (and in contemporary politics, foreign) policy domains is one of issue “difficulty.” Carmines and Stimson (1980) distinguish two broad categories of issues: easy and hard. Easy issues are those for which a “gut response [is] elicited equally well from well-informed and ill-informed, from interested and uninterested, from active and apathetic voters” (p. 80). These issues are symbolic in content,

non-technical, and thus typically revolve around ends versus means. Hard issues, in contrast, are means-oriented, often quite technical and/or may be unfamiliar to citizens.

Social issues are prototypical easy issues: they are readily understood by most all citizens in terms of conflicts over abstract values. Gay marriage, for example, immediately evokes “gut” reactions to the basic morality of homosexuality. In the last decade or so, foreign policy issues have also taken on the character of easy issues. In the wake of the September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks, foreign policy issues prime conflicts over symbolic referents such as religion, ethnicity, patriotism, and the best approaches to dealing with national security in an insecure and increasingly globalized world (e.g. militarism versus diplomacy).

Most economic issues, in contrast, are prototypical hard issues. They are almost universally technical in the sense that a full understanding of the implications of specific policies is beyond the grasp of most in the mass public, if not most people generally (see, e.g., Caplan 2008). This is largely a result of the means-oriented nature of such issues, and thus the necessity of specialized knowledge in the domain of economics to make sense of expected policy outcomes. For example, while the ultimate implications of banning gay marriage are clear, this is much less the case for, say, instituting a government-run health insurance exchange, or moving to a voucher program for Medicare or the education system in the United States.

This is not to say that hard issues cannot attain a symbolic, ends-oriented character; indeed, they often do, particularly when they become central foci of political debate. Importantly, however, and this is the key distinction, the abstract content of hard issues is *constructed* by political elites and opinion leaders. As Pollock, Lilie and Vittes (1993) explain, easy issues “have literal referents that directly evoke moralistic or economic values,” and “are rooted in everyday experience so they require only minimal political attentiveness to be understood by ordinary citizens” (p. 30). For hard issues, however, the extent to which citizens utilize abstract representations of policy conflict to form their preferences, as well as the nature of the abstract content applied, “will depend on whether opportunistic ‘cultural entrepreneurs’ can successfully frame the issue as a battle over core values and whether individuals are alert to what these social agents are saying” (p. 31). Thus, for economic issues, and in contrast to social and foreign policy issues (again, in contemporary politics at least for the latter), *citizens rely to a large extent on information disseminated from the elite space to form their preferences.*

These considerations thus drive an important wedge between the politically engaged and unengaged in terms of the processes by which preferences are formed in the economic domain, with the former attentive to elite discourse, and the latter failing to receive the messages disseminated from elites. To understand how needs for order, certainty and security are translated into preferences (or not translated at all) we must consider these processes in greater detail. In the following section, I consider the translation of needs into preferences for politically engaged citizens in the context of their interactions with political elites. I then turn to a consideration of how such needs might influence preferences even amongst the unengaged, but in a unique fashion.

2.4. Preference Formation amongst the Politically Engaged

In this section I argue that when issues are difficult, and thus, generally speaking, for issues in the economic domain, the translation of needs for order, certainty and security into preferences amongst engaged citizens occurs through two, complementary pathways. The first pathway involves the selection of trusted partisan actors at the elite level on the basis of needs, and the subsequent reception of *cues* to the “correct” positions on economic issues which generates an indirect influence of needs on preferences. The second pathway involves the reception and assimilation of issue *frames* from these trusted elites which shape citizen understandings of the issues in more abstract terms, and differentially resonate with the underlying dispositions of citizens, thus reinforcing the cue-taking process. I take these points in turn.

2.4.1. Partisan Cue-Taking

Much theorizing and empirical research in political science suggests that partisanship provides an anchor by which citizens orient themselves in American politics (Berinsky 2007; Campbell et al. 1960; Cohen 2003; Goren 2005; Goren, Federico and Kittilson 2009; Green, Palmquist and Schickler 2002; Lau and Redlawsk 2006; Levendusky 2009; Rahn 1993; Sniderman 2000; Sniderman and Bullock 2004; Zaller 1992). Citizens, in most circumstances, have little incentive to expend resources in the service of political judgment as they have little influence over eventual outcomes (Downs 1957). Given this fact, citizens will tend towards efficiency maximizing judgment strategies, those which offer the potential for reasonably accurate judgments derived from minimal effort (e.g. Lavine, Johnston and Steenbergen forthcoming; Lupia 1994; Lupia and McCubbins 1998; Popkin 1991; Sniderman, Brody and Tetlock 1991).

Of the strategies available to the typical American citizen, partisanship often serves as the most useful. By restricting the potential policy space to a choice set of only two options, and by identifying these options with highly accessible “brands” (i.e. Democrats and Republicans), partisan political conflict facilitates the acquisition of preferences with only a small expenditure of resources (Sniderman 2000; Sniderman and Bullock 2004; Tomz and Sniderman 2005). In effect, citizens, when issues are difficult, can simply look to members of the in-party for cues regarding the “correct” position to adopt on a given policy, and adopt this position as their own, often with little additional thought or consideration.

Much research attests to the influence of partisan cues on preference formation in American politics, particularly for issues in the economic domain. For example, Cohen (2003) examined the correspondence between party, ideology and specific preferences over welfare spending in an experimental context. The “trick” to this experiment was to present subjects with counter-stereotypical partisan cues (e.g. Democrats supporting conservative policies), and then observe whether subjects followed the party or their own ideology. He found strong evidence

that citizens simply adopt the party position when such a cue is available, even when the content of the position is in direct conflict with their own stated ideological orientation. Similarly, Levendusky (2009) shows that much “sorting” over the previous two decades involved citizens bringing their preferences into line with their partisanship, not the other way around. In other words, the increasing constraint between partisanship and preferences observed in recent years is a result of partisans changing their preferences, not ideologues changing their partisanship. Goren (2005) finds evidence that this occurs even in the domain of abstract values, with the influence of partisanship on value change across time substantially larger for economic values than for cultural values. Similarly, Goren, Federico and Kittilson (2009) examined the influence of party cues on core political values within an experimental context, and found a meaningful influence of such cues for the degree of constraint observed between party identifications and value orientations. Their results are also suggestive of a larger influence of such cues in the economic relative to the cultural domain. Such empirical findings are consistent with the general stability of partisan orientations as an anchor to political judgment in American politics (Green, Palmquist and Schickler 2002; Sniderman 2000; Sniderman and Bullock 2004), and suggest that the influence of such cues is particularly potent for the economic domain.

Importantly, however, this work takes partisanship as a primitive of the model. In other words, partisan identities are assumed exogenous, and the origins of these identities play no role in the analysis. This is fine for the purpose of these studies. For the present analysis, however, the origins of partisan affiliations in the mass public are of critical importance; more specifically, their origins in basic needs for order, certainty and security. As Hetherington and Weiler (2009) argue and demonstrate, such needs are now an important basis of party identification in the American mass public. With the rise of cultural conflict in the early 1990s (Layman 2001), and of security concerns in the 2000s, the basic psychological dimension represented by these needs provides a basis for the labels which citizens choose to attach to themselves politically, with those high in such needs flocking to the Republican Party, and those low in such needs flocking to the Democratic Party. As a simple demonstration of this point, consider the correlation between Hetherington and Weiler’s (2009) operationalization of needs for order, certainty and security (i.e. “authoritarianism) and partisanship in the American National Elections Studies across time for politically sophisticated citizens.² The correlations for 1992, 2000, 2004 and 2008 were, respectively, .09, .19, .24, and .27. The size of this association thus tripled between 1992 and 2008.

This point is critical because the bases of partisan sorting will serve as *indirect bases* for any preferences formed through processes of elite cue-taking. Put another way, if partisan information sorting is driven by underlying needs for order, certainty and security, then these same needs will indirectly constrain preferences in the economic domain as a function of the differential trust afforded to elite partisans as a function of these needs, *even when such considerations are irrelevant to that dimension from a purely logical perspective.*

Political engagement provides the critical moderating factor determining the extent to which this indirect pathway will operate, however. First, engagement with elite level politics promotes the strength with which citizens attach themselves to political parties, and the strength

² I define “politically sophisticated” as the top 40% of citizens on a scale of political knowledge in 1992, 2000, and 2004, and as the top 40% of citizens on a scale which averages the respondent’s political interest with the interviewer’s subjective rating of the respondent’s knowledge in 2008. These correlations are for white Americans only.

of such attachments influences the nature of information acquisition. In 2004, the correlation between expressed interest in politics and partisan identity strength was .26. The correlation between political knowledge and strength was about .19. Political engagement and identity strength covary because engagement, by definition, involves an investment of the self in politics in the sense that one's political self occupies a large portion of one's overall self-representation. Critically, the stronger one's partisan attachment, the more likely one is to strongly differentiate the trustworthiness of in and out-partisans, and thus to engage in biased reception and assimilation of cues from one party over the other (e.g. Lavine, Johnston and Steenbergen forthcoming). This is one reason why we observe greater partisan biases amongst politically "sophisticated" citizens relative to the unsophisticated (e.g. Lavine et al. forthcoming; Taber and Lodge 2006; Zaller 2004). Second, and more simply, the politically engaged are more likely to actually receive the cues disseminated from the elite space because they pay more attention to politics generally (Zaller 1992). If one does not engage with political media, then there is little reason to expect that such cues will be received at all. These considerations generate a first set of specific hypotheses:

- (1) The influence of needs for order, certainty and security on economic issue preferences will be moderated by the presence of partisan cues on such issues such that high needs citizens will adopt the Republican position on the issue when it is available, and low needs citizens will adopt the Democratic position.
- (2) On average, positive associations between needs for order, certainty and security and economic conservatism will be seen for the politically engaged, but not the politically unengaged.

The first of these hypotheses is simply derived from the fact that needs for order, certainty and security structure partisan attachments and the differential trust afforded to partisan actors, and such trust structures elite cue-taking. The second hypothesis derives from the fact that politically engaged citizens are both more likely to receive cues from the elite space, and more likely to engage in selective acquisition of information from one party over the other because of their higher average level of identity strength. The "on average" qualification to this second hypothesis is important for two reasons. First, in conditions where *all* citizens, engaged and unengaged, are exposed to partisan cues, the importance of engagement should decline. Thus, there are conditions under which the gap between the engaged and unengaged in terms of the indirect influence of needs on economic preferences should be smaller. Second, on the basis of this indirect process, the association of needs with economic conservatism will only be positive, on average. In other words, there are cases where this process should generate liberal preferences amongst high needs citizens (and vice versa). Consider, for example, the Republican support for Medicare Part D during the George W. Bush administration. This extension to Medicare, representing a massive increase in entitlements, is anything but traditionally "conservative." This model, however, predicts that we would have observed a *positive* relationship between needs for order, certainty and security and support for Medicare Part D. We can look to Cohen's (2003) "party over policy" experiments for empirical support for such an expectation (see also Lavine, Johnston and Steenbergen forthcoming).

2.4.2. Issue Frames

Citizens, however, do not merely receive cues over specific policies from elite actors; they also receive *frames* which tie the positions on specific policies to broader ideas concerning values and the good. Republicans do not simply state that you should oppose Democratic reform plans for healthcare, they state that such plans represent a violation of traditional American values, and constitute a move towards socialism, thus evoking symbolic, affect-laden referents. Democrats do not simply state that the minimum wage should be increased, they argue that the other side doesn't care about the little guy, and suggest that Republicans are in the pocket of big business.

Importantly, these frames differentially resonate with the motivational profiles of citizens. As recent theorists have argued (e.g. Gerber et al. 2010; Jost et al. 2003a; Mondak 2010), elite level representations of economic issues in contemporary politics highlight the implications of such policies for institutional stability and change, both in terms of traditional American values (e.g. "government healthcare is socialism") and in terms of the existing socioeconomic hierarchy (e.g. Alesina and Glaeser 2004; Gilens 1999). To the extent that such change is intrinsically uncertain, risky, and threatening to the status quo economic arrangements, citizens high in needs for order, certainty and security should find Republican emphases on institutional stability palliative, while those low in such needs should find an affinity with the institutional innovation of Democratic policy (Jost et al. 2003a; Jost, Federico and Napier 2009). Such frames thus reinforce the basic processes of cue-taking highlighted above.

Once again, however, the extent to which economic issues are represented in such terms will be conditional on the reception and assimilation of these frames. These considerations lead to additional hypotheses which complement those for cue-taking above:

- (3) On average, the use of abstract/symbolic considerations in the generation of economic preferences will be observed for engaged citizens, but not for unengaged citizens.
- (4) On average, the positive association between needs for order, certainty and security and economic conservatism will be seen for the politically engaged, but not the politically unengaged.

The first hypothesis follows directly from the notion that hard issues are not represented in abstract terms by default, and that such representations develop in the context of citizen interactions with elite frames of such issues which aid in the development of "ideological capital." The "on average" qualification is again important for this first hypothesis, as we would expect that the gap between engaged and unengaged will decline under conditions where *all* citizens are exposed to a symbolic frame of an issue. The second hypothesis follows from the theoretical expectation that conservative economic positions in the abstract resonate with needs for order, certainty and security, and vice versa, thus generating a positive association between such needs and the specific policy preferences of citizens. Again, however, this association should be observed, on average, for the engaged but not for the unengaged who fail to receive such frames from the elite space. In this way, the two processes, cue-taking and framing, generate complementary predictions regarding the influence of needs on economic conservatism across levels of political engagement.

There is, however, an important question of whether such frames are epiphenomenal. Do frames matter above and beyond simple cues? If citizens simply adopt the positions of their trusted elites, then why *should* frames matter? There are two primary reasons why they matter. First, research in psychology suggests that persuasive attempts accompanied by messages which resonate with the individual characteristics of citizens are both better remembered (e.g. Higgins 1999) and more positively evaluated (e.g. Lavine and Snyder 1996; Lavine et al. 1999). There is thus a *functional matching effect* (Lavine and Snyder 1996) which facilitates persuasion whereby messages, in addition to specifying the desired direction, specify reasons for that position which match the function that the attitude serves for the target of persuasion. Elites are thus incentivized to accompany cues with frames which find resonance with the psychological traits of their co-partisans to maximize the influence of their persuasive attempts. As Smith (2007) notes, in his analysis of elite rhetoric on economic policy, “Fully understanding the political importance of framing requires considering the two-way street of mutual interaction and influence among elites and mass publics. The common understanding of framing as a top-down, elite-driven process should be replaced with a more complex view whereby the beliefs and experiences of citizens affect what will resonate with them.”

Second, these dynamics suggest that citizens, in a very real sense, are agents of elite actors. In other words, elites have policy goals, derivative of some form of self-interest, which they wish to pursue. To the extent that they are constrained by public opinion (Stimson, MacKuen and Erikson 1995), they wish to ensure that citizens, when given an opportunity, whether in the context of a public opinion survey or simply a conversation with friends, will report a position in line with their interests. In this sense, elites attempt to “simulate representation” through the construction of mass opinion, which they subsequently utilize as a tool for policy-making (Jacobs and Shapiro 2000; Shapiro and Jacobs 2010), claiming responsiveness to the will of the electorate; a will, however, which they impute. Simple cues will only be partially effective in this regard. Cues require the transmission of information on a policy to policy basis. If elites can instill in their agents a sense of *ideology*, however, they can be more confident that desired opinions will be expressed across a range of issues, even in the absence of explicit cues. Ideologies which find strong resonance with underlying psychological needs may also evoke more emotional responses from co-partisans, leading to greater activism on behalf of the preferred policy as the perceived gap between parties in terms of what is at stake grows (Hetherington and Weiler 2009).

In this way, both cues and frames matter, and the relative influence of each on political preference formation is difficult, if not impossible in most circumstances, to disentangle. Frames accompany cues, and sustained exposure to cues and frames promotes the development of ideologies which subsequently constrain preference formation independently of elite discourse, and further solidify the bond between citizen and party, and, over time, even place bounds on the range of positions and frames which elites may utilize successfully to appeal to their own bases in the electorate. Consider, for example, the difficulty Republicans have had in recent years with their seemingly contradictory opinions on Democratic health reform and Medicare in light of their portrayal of the former as socialism. There is, in this sense, dynamic constraint between party images at the elite level, the bases of partisan sorting at the mass level, and the content of the discourse we observe over economic issues at any given time (Smith 2007).

2.4.3. Summary

The rise of cultural conflict at the elite level has driven partisan sorting on the basis of motivational orientations related to needs for order, certainty and security. In turn, politically engaged citizens receive cues on the economic dimension from trusted co-partisans which shape their preferences over such issues, and generate an indirect relationship between needs and preferences, such that citizens high in needs for order, certainty and security are likely to adopt conservative positions on specific economic issues, while those low in such needs are likely to adopt liberal positions. Moreover, elites are incentivized to frame economic issues in ways which correspond with the underlying psychological bases of partisan sorting, driving the development of ideologies which complement these psychological divisions in the mass public. In the contemporary period, where partisan attachments are driven to a large extent by differential needs for order, certainty and security, such frames are likely to portray conflict over economic issues as battles over institutional stability, traditional American values, and status quo socioeconomic arrangements. These frames, in their resonance with needs for order, certainty and security, reinforce the dynamics of partisan sorting and cue-taking, and drive further polarization of economic preferences along this motivational dimension, but only amongst the attentive in the mass public who receive the messages disseminated by political elites, and thus develop the ideological abstractions which connect the specific to the general.

2.5. Preference Formation amongst the Politically Unengaged

The considerations above could, on the one hand, merely suggest that the influence of needs for order, certainty and security is *limited* by political engagement. Recent work has highlighted this possibility. Jost, Federico and Napier (2009) distinguish between “bottom-up,” psychological approaches to preference formation and “top-down,” discursive, elite-driven approaches. They suggest that neither can be considered in isolation, and that the influence of dispositions on preferences is conditional on citizen exposure to the ideas extant in the elite space, such that connections between such dispositions and left-right orientations should be observed for the politically sophisticated, but not necessarily for the unsophisticated. Federico and Goren (2009) make a similar argument, and provide an empirical test of the hypothesis. Specifically, they examine the relationship between the need for nonspecific cognitive closure (Kruglanski 1989; Kruglanski and Webster 1996) and ideology, and find that this need is more strongly associated with liberal-conservative self-placements among politically sophisticated citizens. This general position, however, not only ignores heterogeneity across issues and issue domains in the extent to which this is the case, it also fails to consider the possibility that engagement is not a *limiting* factor, but a *conditioning* factor.

This latter distinction is important. If engagement is merely limiting, then this implies that there is only one systematic relationship of needs to preferences, and the existence of this relationship should be observed only for those who have developed the ideological capital

necessary to connect their dispositions to specific issues. If engagement is conditioning, however, this leaves open the possibility that needs influence preferences across *all* citizens, but in heterogeneous ways. To consider the possibility that needs for order, certainty and security may be influential even for the unengaged, we must consider more closely the nature of the representations which such citizens bring to bear on economic issues, and the *functional purpose* that positions within such representations may serve for these needs (Mischel and Shoda 1995; Shoda 1999).

Political science has, more often than not, treated the preferences of the “unsophisticated” as incoherent, or in the words of Converse (1970), as “non-attitudes.” From this perspective, ideological reasoning is normatively desirable, and divergence from such ideological constraint is a sign of political ignorance. Are there, however, reasons to expect that preferences over economic issues amongst the unengaged in the citizenry are systematic? If so, in what ways might this manifest?

Despite Converse’s (1964) generally pessimistic conclusions, he nonetheless recognized that the unsophisticated may have systematic bases for their preferences, even if he questioned the normative desirability of the underlying considerations utilized. He states, “At the same time, moving from top to bottom of this information dimension, the character of objects that are central in a belief system undergoes systematic change. These objects shift from the remote, generic, and abstract to the increasingly simple, concrete, or ‘close to home.’ Where potential political objects are concerned, this progression tends to be from abstract, ‘ideological’ principles to the more obviously recognizable social groupings or charismatic leaders and finally to such objects of immediate experience as family, job, and immediate associates” (p. 213). In other words, absent politicizing forces which seek to draw out the broader associations of difficult issues with abstract ideas and symbolic referents, citizens will rely on those considerations which *are* readily available to them, which, in most cases, will be considerations close to the self.

The idea that political reasoning about difficult issues, when conducted in the absence of exposure to abstract frames, defaults to a “personalized” perspective finds additional support from psychological theory. *Construal-Level Theory* (CLT; Ledgerwood, Trope and Chaiken 2010; Trope and Liberman 2010; Trope, Liberman and Wakslak 2007) argues that there is a direct correspondence between the level of abstraction at which an object is understood and the “psychological distance” at which that object is perceived. Psychological distance is simply the perceived distance from the self, but such distance can manifest in terms of removal on spatial, temporal, probabilistic, or social (e.g. group identity) dimensions. According to CLT, the further the psychological distance, the more abstract the representation of the object. Thus, objects which are seen to be “near” to the individual will be represented in terms of many, idiosyncratic, and peripheral features; while those at a distance will be reduced to their core features. For example, when we think about what we want to have achieved ten years from now, we tend to think in broad, value-based terms, considering things like overall financial success, having a good marriage and a healthy family, and the like. In contrast, in considering achievement at temporal proximity, we focus on the ins and outs of the task at hand, features which are highly idiosyncratic, and confined to a specific time and place.

In terms of the formation of economic preferences, we can consider this process in terms of both level of abstraction and psychological distance. Political engagement, through exposure to elite discourse, promotes abstract representations of issue objects, and thus promotes the removal of concerns from the self (abstraction to psychological distance). Similarly, the intensely partisan conflicts which we see at the elite level involve a “depersonalization” of

preference formation as citizens take on their political identity (Tajfel and Turner 1979; Turner 1987), invoking more abstract representations of issue objects (psychological distance to abstraction). There is thus a sense in which political engagement inherently drives the depersonalization and abstraction of politics. On the other hand, lack of engagement implies lack of exposure to such discourse, and relatively weak political identities, undeveloped as a function of lack of political interest. This suggests an understanding characterized by concrete representations which concern the self. *Citizens with low levels of political engagement should thus be more likely to see politics through the lens of the personal and immediate, rather than the depersonalized and transcendent.*³

While political psychologists have often been skeptical of such “self-interest” hypotheses (see, e.g., Sears and Funk 1991), the political economy literature suggests that such factors do indeed matter. The classic model of preferences in the economic domain interprets such preferences in terms of their redistributive implications. Meltzer and Richard’s (1981) seminal argument sees the preference for redistribution as a function of one’s place in the income distribution. Citizens below the mean of income prefer redistribution up to the point where their benefits are “outweighed by the efficiency costs of taxation” (Rhem 2009; p. 858). There is clearly some truth to this model. As a simple demonstration, the correlation between income and social welfare preferences in 2004 and 2008 (using the American National Elections Studies) was .19 and .24, respectively. Nonetheless, the model is overly simplistic with respect to its interpretation of what constitutes a self-interested motive for the provision of social welfare. The model itself implies that greater pre-tax income inequality at the national level will be associated with higher levels of redistribution, as such skewed distributions evince a greater distance between the income of the median voter and the mean of the income distribution. The observation that countries with higher levels of pre-tax income inequality have *lower* levels of social welfare spending, on average, has generated alternative theoretical frameworks for understanding citizens’ economic preferences.

A key observation is that social welfare in general serves *both* redistributive *and* social insurance functions (Moene and Wallerstein 2001; Sinn 1995; Varian 1980). Social welfare, by redistributing wealth from the rich to the poor, smooths the income distribution, which reduces the variance in income and thus serves as a form of insurance. As Sinn (1995) argues, “Every insurance contract involves a redistribution of resources from the lucky to the unlucky, and most of the redistributive measures of the state can be interpreted as insurance if the time space between judging and taking these measures is sufficiently long” (p. 495-496). While this may be

³ Support for this contention may also be seen in a precursor theory to CLT, namely, Wegner and Vallacher’s *Action Identification Theory* (AIT; Wegner and Vallacher 1986; Vallacher and Wegner 1987). AIT suggests that “what people are doing” can be identified at multiple levels of abstraction. The level at which a given act is identified will be conditional on both the action’s level of difficulty, and the individual’s skill or familiarity with that action. More difficult acts, such as driving for example, will, as a default, be identified at highly concrete levels, and a focus will be on the immediate features of the act. As skill develops, however, the act will be identified at higher levels of abstraction which focus on core features, and seek broader meaning for the act, with the peripheral features pushed to the background. Applied to present concerns, hard issues should, as a default, be construed at a low level, but as citizens develop “ideological capital,” such “acts” begin to be readily understood in terms of their more abstract associations and broader implications for, say, core values.

harder to see in the context of pure redistribution, in the form of many social welfare programs, it is straightforward. Programs such as unemployment insurance or government provided health insurance, in addition to their contemporaneous redistributive function, serve to reduce the risks associated with the free market by reducing the degree of lost income as a function of adverse labor market conditions, the devaluation of skills through technological advance, or structural adjustments in the composition of the labor market due, for example, to international trade (e.g. Ehrlich and Maestas 2010; Iversen 2005; Iversen and Soskice 2001; Rhem 2009; Scheve and Slaughter 2004). As Moene and Wallerstein (2001) explain, “In the second view, the essence of welfare policy is the public provision of insurance, and self-interested voters support welfare policy to obtain protection against risks that private insurance markets fail to cover” (p. 860).

There is empirical evidence that the social insurance motive is operative, at least to some extent, within the mass public. Iversen (2005; Iversen and Soskice 2001), for example, demonstrates that citizens with highly specific human capital (specific to industry, occupation or firm) prefer higher levels of social welfare. The higher the proportion of a person’s skills that are specific, the larger the risk of substantial income loss in the event of a weak labor market, or, especially, in the case of technological advance which makes their skills obsolete. This is simply because a larger portion of the individual’s income is derivative of these specific (relative to general) skills, and thus their labor is devalued under such conditions. Rhem (2009) finds converging evidence for the importance of skill specificity, but additionally finds that the rate of unemployment within an individual’s occupation increases the demand for redistribution. The individual faces greater economic risk in occupations with higher rates of unemployment, and thus the demand for forms of publically provided social insurance is higher in such occupations (see also Cusack, Iversen and Rhem 2006).

If both “pure” redistribution and social welfare programs serve social insurance functions, as they surely do, then there is at least the potential for a straightforward connection between needs for order, certainty and security and economic preferences amongst the politically unengaged. Put simply, citizens most averse to uncertainty and insecurity generally should prefer programs designed to reduce such uncertainty and insecurity in the economic domain. As Iversen (2005) states, “workers...do not know with certainty how they will fare in terms of future employment and income. In this situation, *risk-averse people will demand insurance against loss of employment and income*” (emphasis mine). While Iversen (2005) considers risk aversion as a general disposition of the public, in the present context we can consider variability across these psychological needs.

There is empirical evidence that is suggestive of this possibility at the individual level. In a study of more general judgments, Kam and Simas (2010) find that dispositional risk aversion affects the extent of people’s preference for certain over probabilistic outcomes in Prospect Theory games (Kahneman and Tversky 1979). In a more politics-specific study, Alesina and La Ferrara (2005) find that two proxies for risk aversion increase preferences for redistribution. First, self-employment *decreases* the preference for redistribution, as, presumably, such individuals are more prone, dispositionally speaking, to take risks. Second, they find that having experienced unemployment within the last five years (controlling for other sociodemographic characteristics) increases the demand for redistribution.

In a recent study, Ehrlich and Maestas (2010) examined the relationship between exposure to risks associated with the outsourcing of labor, risk aversion, and preferences over free trade policies. They found that “at risk” citizens (i.e. low skill citizens) were less supportive of free trade than citizens not at risk (i.e. high skill citizens), but only to the extent that they were

risk averse. In an examination of preferences over citizenship for illegal immigrants, they also found that the influence of believing one's job to be threatened by immigration was influential only for the risk averse. For risk acceptant individuals, this belief has no effect on immigration preferences at all.

Finally, recall Thorisdottir et al.'s (2007) study of economic preferences in Western Europe. They found, contrary to expectations derived from the theorizing of Jost et al. (2003a), that dispositional needs for security predicted economic *liberalism*. They suggest that this finding is limited to European states with a history of larger welfare states. Within the present framework, however, this result is not unexpected, and should be observed even in the United States amongst citizens who represent economic issues in personalized terms.

Theory and evidence thus point to straightforward hypotheses regarding the dynamics of economic preference formation amongst the politically unengaged:

- (5) Politically unengaged citizens will rely on concrete/personal considerations, but not abstract/symbolic considerations, in the generation of their preferences over economic policy
- (6) Politically unengaged citizens will show a negative relationship between needs for order, certainty and security and economic policy conservatism.

The first hypothesis follows from the lack of exposure to elite discourse amongst unengaged citizens, and the implications of this removal from elite-level politics for construal level. The second follows from the fact that, when viewed from the perspective of personal costs and benefits, those most desirous of certainty and security generally should support policies designed to reduce uncertainty, and enhance security in the economic domain specifically.

One of the most interesting aspects of these two hypotheses is that they offer a potential explanation for the weak to null findings of recent research which has explicitly examined the economic domain in the context of dispositional influences. Specifically, as illustrated in Figure 2.1, a failure to account for heterogeneity across levels of political engagement, to the extent that the effects are of opposite sign for the engaged and unengaged, would result in marginal effects of zero as a result of such aggregation. This hypothesis thus offers an elegant solution to the problem of null findings in recent work within the economic domain: needs for order, certainty and security are actually highly influential factors influencing the economic preferences of citizens, but in unique ways conditional on how these issues are understood, and thus on political engagement.

2.6. The Specific Nature of the Interaction between Engagement and Needs

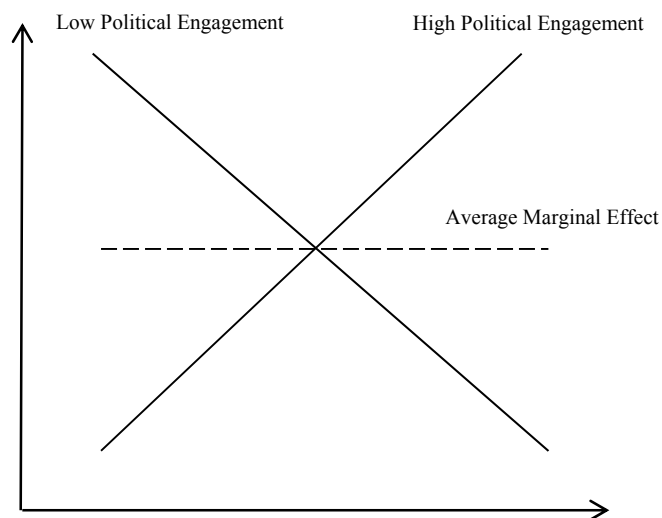
Figure 2.1 provides a coarse hypothesis for the relationship between needs for order, certainty and security and economic conservatism conditional on political engagement. If we think solely in terms of the signs of coefficients, we would expect a negative marginal effect of needs for unengaged citizens, and a positive marginal effect for highly engaged citizens. In terms of an equation, the hypothesis entails something like the following:

$$(1) \text{ Marginal Effect of Needs} = -\beta_1 + \beta_2(\text{Engagement}),$$

Where β_1 is the coefficient estimate for the constituent needs term in the equation predicting economic conservatism, and political engagement is scaled from zero to one.

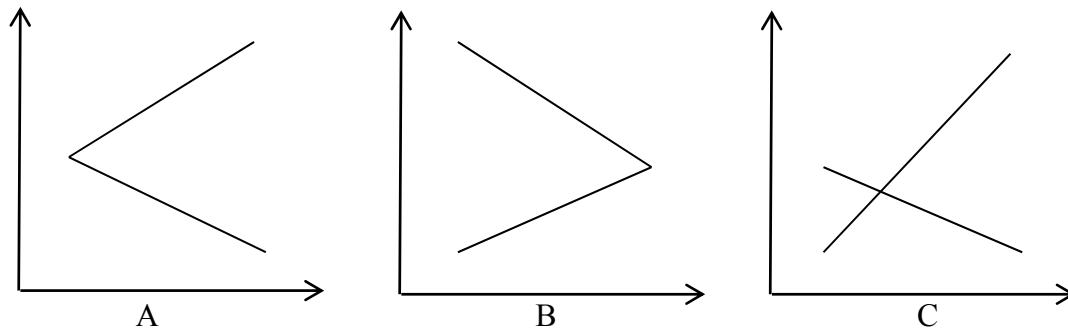
This is the basic dynamic, and a pattern akin to Equation (1) should be found in the empirical models of the following chapters. The general pattern (i.e. negative and positive; reversal as a function of engagement), however can take on more than one qualitative form.

Figure 2.1. The Theoretical Relationship between Needs for Order, Certainty and Security and Economic Conservatism



Consider Figure 2.2. Here I display three possibilities (beyond that of Figure 2.1) for the interaction of needs with engagement which would generate the general reversal pattern above. In each case the marginal effect for low engaged citizens is negative, and that for high engaged citizens is positive. But the substantive interpretation in each is quite different with respect to the influence of motivation on preferences.

Figure 2.2. Additional Theorized Interaction Types



Consider Panel A of Figure 2.2. In this case, citizens with low needs for order, certainty and security are moderate in their economic conservatism, on average (i.e. for average values of all additional characteristics), regardless of political engagement. In contrast, there is substantial polarization of opinion by engagement for those with high needs for order, certainty and security. In this sense, increasing needs drive increasing liberalism amongst the unengaged, and increasing conservatism amongst the engaged, but this is *not* due to resonance of economic policy for citizens at the low end of this psychological spectrum. We can thus say that such needs are “active” only at the upper end: liberal policy meets personal security goals for unengaged citizens, and conservative policy meets institutional stability goals for the highly engaged.

This possibility suggests that such needs are simply not influential at the low end. Another possibility, however, is that there is additional heterogeneity in *how* they are influential which is not captured by the political engagement dimension. For example, if there are multiple representations of the economic domain at high levels of political engagement for low needs citizens, and these representations are differentially matched to these needs with respect to ideological direction, then these dynamics would cancel in a way similar to the above. One possibility (considered in depth in Chapter 5) is that low needs for order, certainty and security are consistent, in contemporary American politics, with both liberal and libertarian positions on economic issues. While I will expand on this possibility later on in the dissertation, there are good reasons to expect this may be the case. First, individual freedom as an abstract value, not only in the social but also in the economic domain, should resonate with citizens of this motivational orientation (Feldman 2003; Schwartz 1992). Moreover, there is nothing particularly “certain” or “secure” about free market institutions. Indeed, using the free market as a means of creating social order, rather than an imposition of social order from the top down, *could be* quite appealing to those open to uncertainty and risk generally. Consider, for example, Alesina and La Ferrara’s (2005) argument that owning a business is a proxy for risk acceptance.

Panel B shows just the opposite case. Here the “action” is all at the lower end. How might we interpret this possibility? Those with low needs for order, certainty and security tend to be open to new ideas, change and diversity, and tend towards individualism over adherence to socially prescribed norms and traditions. For the low engaged, this could imply a focus on personal achievement goals (Higgins 1998; Schwartz 1992), and thus a tendency to oppose a paternalistic government. Self-interest amongst citizens with low levels of security needs (and thus higher levels of risk acceptance) might imply a tendency to prefer keeping one’s money, and betting on one’s own abilities or the free market (again, e.g., Alesina and La Ferrara 2005). Recall Thorisdottir et al.’s (2007) conclusion regarding the negative influence of needs for security on acceptance of inequality: “a preference for inequality seems motivated more by acceptance of risk than by needs for security” (p. 196). We can translate this to the present context by observing that a preference for the free market is rooted in acceptance of personal risks. Amongst the highly engaged in this example, the dynamic is just what we expect on the basis of my own theorizing above, as well as recent theorizing by others, namely, the development of a liberal ideological position in the economic domain as a function of engagement with the elite space, the extant party images contained therein, and the complementary cues and frames disseminated down.

Finally, consider Panel C of Figure 2.3. This example shows a possibility which evinces a different type of asymmetry between the dynamics at the low and high ends of the motivational continuum. At the high end, things look identical to Panel A, as well as Figure 2.1: polarization of opinion by political engagement amongst those high in needs for order, certainty and security. At the low end, however, the dynamic differs. Specifically, increases in political engagement drive greater liberalism, as would be expected on the basis of the theoretical considerations above, but there is no counter-tendency for the low engaged to be conservative, on average, when low in such needs.

Why might this be? One possibility concerns the potentially offsetting effects of interpretations of economic issues amongst such citizens. Those with high needs for order, certainty and security tend to interpret stimuli in terms of their implications for losses versus non-losses (i.e. risk aversion). Those low in such needs, by contrast, tend to see things in terms of their potential gains versus non-gains (i.e. risk acceptance). But amongst the majority of citizens who would benefit from government redistribution of income, the latter focus could imply one of two things. First, as above, a rejection of government paternalism in the name of making one’s own way; or two, a *preference* for redistribution in the name of pure personal gain. As a majority of citizens fall below the mean of income, a majority of citizens would benefit from pure redistribution (Meltzer and Richard 1981). Consider, however, that this asymmetry does not occur at the upper end of the motivational continuum. In that case, needs for order, certainty and security should always imply a preference for social insurance in the name of mitigating the risks of income loss associated with the free market (see, e.g., Moene and Wallerstein 2001). The former case, in averaging over this additional heterogeneity of interpretation across citizens, results in a moderate average for low engagement citizens, while the latter results in economic liberalism.⁴

⁴ These discussions raise interesting questions regarding the “level” at which analysis should proceed in the political psychology literature on ideology. How idiographic should we get as we seek connections between dispositions and preferences? Can we derive a larger, yet still

A second possibility is more basic: economic policy alternatives, for low engaged citizens with low needs for order, certainty and security, simply do not differentially resonate with their psychological profiles within the context of a personal representation of such issues. While this is less satisfying theoretically, there is no reason to *assume* that such needs are always and for everyone relevant to economic preference formation.

These three panels obviously do not exhaust the potential patterns for the interaction of engagement with needs. They do, however, provide a nice representation of the various issues which will ultimately structure the patterns we *do* observe, and thus provide a basis for thinking about these patterns in a substantive fashion when we confront them later on in the empirical chapters of this dissertation.

2.7. Party Competition and Time-Boundedness

A key insight of the theoretical discussions above is that the nature of the relationship between needs for order, certainty and security, or psychological dispositions more generally, and economic preferences amongst the politically engaged is conditional on the nature of extant party cleavages, and thus on the specific nature of partisan sorting with respect to these needs. This is a key distinction between the present work and other recent theorizing. One potential interpretation of the influence of needs on economic conservatism is that, despite being conditional on political engagement, this conditional relationship is itself *unconditional* with respect to political time. In other words, there is heterogeneity across *citizens* with respect to the nature of the relationship, but not across *context*. This context-homogeneity assumption is the often implicit (e.g. Gerber et al. 2010; Mondak 2010), but sometimes explicit (Jost et al. 2003a; Smith et al. 2011), position of recent research. This work seeks transcendent relationships between dispositions and “core” features of political conflict. While specific issues, and their content, may change, the broad outlines of political debate remain constant, and thus the influence of needs on preferences should remain constant as well. If preference formation over economic issues occurs in the context of partisan sorting, however, then it is conditional on the nature of extant party conflict, and by extension, the imagery projected by the parties which drives the nature of sorting with respect to these basic needs, and, ultimately, the content of elite rhetoric over economic issues.

First, as argued above, partisan sorting as a function of needs for order, certainty and security is conditional on party images which resonate with these needs. In the contemporary political context, such images are highly visible in the form of cultural conflict, and more recently, conflict over national security policy. Such images have a strong and direct connection with these needs, and have thus driven sorting along this dispositional dimension in the last two decades (Hetherington and Weiler 2009). In this context, citizens high in needs for order, certainty and security, and who pay attention to elite level politics, will sort into the Republican

manageable set of representations which will allow for a categorization of citizens by both motivational orientation and policy interpretation?

Party, and subsequently develop ideologies which themselves resonate with their motivational orientation (and vice versa for those low in such needs). This, however, suggests that the emergence of the relationship between these needs and economic conservatism amongst the engaged should have only emerged in the context of the rise of the culture war. The latter only filtered down to the mass public in the early 1990s suggesting, contrary to the claims of other theorists, that this relationship is an idiosyncrasy of the present, highly polarized and “culturalized,” instantiation of conflict between Democrats and Republicans.

Prior to the emergence of cultural conflict, sorting into the parties on the basis of needs for order, certainty and security should have been minimal, and thus the extent to which citizens across this psychological spectrum differentially received cues and frames from the parties, and thus differentially developed liberal and conservative economic ideologies as a function of this engagement with the elite space, should have been muted as well. Interestingly, this suggests the possibility, unformulated to date (to my knowledge), that the driving force behind the rise of ideological constraint over the last three decades is not elite polarization per se, but elite divisions along the cultural dimension which have downstream consequences for the structure of mass beliefs. Importantly, these considerations also suggest the potential for the relationship to be altered in the future. To the extent that the culture war, in its current form at least, dissipates, the dynamics of preference formation in the economic domain with respect to needs for order, certainty and security may also change as a function of changing party images and/or rhetoric in the economic domain.

These are interesting considerations, and, perhaps, suggest that the reemergence of interest in political ideology, and its psychological foundations, in the last decade is itself a result of the emergence of the very processes it seeks to explain. In other words, our belief in the roots of ideological constraint across social and economic preferences in these same basic needs has grown because contemporary politics behaves like this is the case. Looking toward the future, as I will address in depth in Chapter 6, I believe that the theoretical considerations examined above suggest the potential for an ideological “realignment” along this motivational continuum in response to an emerging set of issues related to economic and cultural globalization, and the corresponding decline in American hegemony which is a result of these processes.

2.8. Racial and Ethnic Heterogeneity

Before turning to a summary of the empirical chapters to come, I must address one final issue, namely, the potential for racial and ethnic heterogeneity in the influence of needs for order, certainty and security on economic preferences. As partisan sorting on the basis of such needs plays a key role in the hypotheses above, there is good reason to expect that these dynamics will be stronger amongst white Americans, and perhaps will be operative *only* for white Americans. For example, black Americans identify with the Democratic Party at exceptionally high rates. This suggests little to no influence of needs for order, certainty and security on partisanship as there is little variation to be explained. This implies no substantively meaningful influence of such needs on economic preferences *through* partisan sorting. Similarly, as suggested by Gerber et al. (2010), the unique experiences of minority groups in the United States likely engender

distinct representations of economic issues which may or may not be relevant to the dispositions examined below. These researchers find no meaningful influence of the “Big Five” personality traits on economic preferences for black Americans.

On the basis of these considerations, in the analyses to come, I examine separate models for the full sample of respondents and for white Americans only. To the extent that the dynamics expected are more operative, or only operative, for white Americans, we should observe a “dilution” of effect sizes in models which include minority groups. In addition, in Chapter 5, I address this question head-on, leveraging the 2008 American National Elections Study’s oversample of black and Latino Americans. In this analysis, I estimate separate models for whites, blacks and Latinos, and compare the dynamics across these three groups. An in-depth theoretical and empirical examination of racial and ethnic heterogeneity in the influence of dispositions on preferences is beyond the scope of this study, but hopefully the findings reported below will spur additional research on this topic.

2.9. Outline of the Empirical Chapters

Before ending this chapter, I briefly outline the empirical chapters to come so the reader may consider each as it fits into the broader picture. The empirical sections of this dissertation are constructed to mirror the linear argument developed above. I begin in Chapter 3 by considering the unconditional relationship of needs for order, certainty and security to economic preferences, specifically, relative to two other domains of public policy: social and foreign. Consistent with the notion that the difficulty of the issue domain moderates the translation of needs into preferences, I show that these dispositions are unconditionally related to social and foreign policy preferences, but not to economic preferences. This provides an impetus for the further analyses to come, and provides a basic replication of the accumulated research reviewed in this chapter with a nationally representative sample of Americans. I then turn to an experimental test of the idea that the relationship between needs and economic issues is conditional on citizen interactions with the elite space. I show that needs for order, certainty and security *can* be influential in the economic domain in the ways predicted by past research (i.e. an increase in conservatism), but this occurs through elite delegation and partisan cue-taking derivative of dispositionally-derived identification with relevant political groups. This chapter thus established both issue heterogeneity and the importance of citizen interactions with elites in understanding political preference formation and its relationship to psychological dispositions.

In Chapter 4, I turn to an examination of heterogeneity across *citizens* in the level of abstraction through which the economic domain is represented. Consistent with the notion that political engagement entails exposure to elite discourse, and the depersonalization of preference formation that this entails, I show that highly engaged citizens rely extensively on abstract/symbolic dimensions of economic conflict in the generation of their policy preferences, specifically, considerations related to institutional stability, traditional American values, and minority group attitudes. Conversely, and consistent with the idea that *lack* of exposure to the elite space entails a personal/concrete representation of economic issues, I demonstrate that

politically unengaged citizens rely on considerations relevant to their own economic security in deciding whether to support or oppose government-provided social welfare. In addition, I demonstrate experimentally the idea that abstract representations of the economic domain develop through exposure to elite discourse, and that citizens tend toward abstractions *when they are able* (Wegner and Vallacher 1986). I show that citizens with low political engagement will use abstractions in the formation of their preferences over economic policy when elite frames make the connection between the abstract and the specific explicit.

In Chapter 5, I bring these theoretical considerations together to demonstrate the expected dynamic between needs for order, certainty and security and economic preferences. I show that the relationship between needs and conservatism is *negative* for the unengaged and *positive* for the engaged, consistent with theory. I additionally demonstrate that the related goals of personal security and societal order are both influential in determining preferences on economic issues, but in opposite ways, and for different citizens. Specifically, they exert effects in opposing directions, with the former leading to economic liberalism, and the latter leading to economic conservatism. Consistent with heterogeneity in the level of abstraction through which economic issues are understood across engagement, I show that the politically unengaged show a strong relationship of personal security needs to preferences, but no relationship of order needs, while the highly engaged show the opposite pattern. I additionally examine the more subtle aspects of the key expected interaction between needs and engagement, interpreting these in light of the discussion in the previous section. Finally, on the basis of these examinations, I consider the psychological composites of libertarians, liberals, conservatives and populists in a latent class analysis of the structure of American political ideology.

Finally, in Chapter 6, I turn my attention to the time-bound nature of both the relationship between needs and economic preferences, and the structure of political ideology which is derivative of these needs in the contemporary era. I first show that the expected relationship only emerged in the context of the culture war's emergence in the early 1990s, and that the emergence of ideological structure between social and economic preferences was a concomitant of this dynamic. Second, I shift the focus of discussion to the future, considering the role of needs for order, certainty and security in the context of emerging issues of globalization and the decline of American hegemony in the economic, cultural and foreign policy spheres. I show that this motivational dimension is highly related to "cosmopolitanism," or the extent to which a given citizen is worldly rather than nationalistic in their political orientation (and general behavior). I then show that these needs strongly influence preferences over issues related to international trade, specifically, that these needs increase the protectionist impulse. These findings fit nicely within the overall theoretical framework, as such policy positions should resonate strongly with these needs regardless of the level of abstraction upon which they are viewed. At the personal level, such policies serve as a form of employment and income protection, while at the abstract level, they serve national identifications in the context of global economic and cultural competition. Finally, I consider the potential implications of these relationships with internationalism for the future of the structure of American ideology.

Chapter 3

The Influence of Needs across Hard and Easy Issues

The goals of this first empirical chapter are two. First, I wish to demonstrate heterogeneity in the influence of needs for order, certainty and security on political preferences across policy domains. Consistent with the theoretical distinction between hard and easy issues discussed in the previous chapter, and with the recent work reviewed which *has* examined this issue, I expect such needs to be strong predictors of social and foreign policy preferences (e.g. Hetherington and Weiler 2009), but weak predictors of economic preferences. More specifically, those high in such needs should be, on average, substantially more conservative in the former two domains, but not in the latter. For this first demonstration, I will be examining the *unconditional* relationships expected by recent theorizing in a nationally representative sample of Americans. Given the importance of political engagement for hard issues, we should, generally speaking, only expect unconditional relationships for easy issues.

Second, I wish to demonstrate that the expected relationship between needs for order, certainty and security and preferences over hard issues generally, and economic issues specifically, *can* emerge, but only in the context of citizen interactions with elite political actors, specifically, through processes of partisan cue-taking as a function of needs-based sorting. To demonstrate this dynamic, I report the results of an experimental study which randomly assigned respondents from a national survey to two conditions. The first simply presents issues in the social, foreign and economic policy domains, while the second presents these issues with associated partisan labels indicating Republican and Democratic support for one side versus the other. Consistent with the theoretical considerations of Chapter 2, I expect that such cues will play a minimal role in the translation of needs into social and foreign policy preferences. In contrast, I expect the relationship between needs and economic preferences to emerge only in the presence of partisan cues. More specifically, due to partisan sorting on the basis of needs for order, certainty and security, citizens high in such needs should readily adopt the Republican position, while those low in such needs should adopt the Democratic position, thus demonstrating elite-driven polarization along this motivational continuum.

3.1. Study 1 – Heterogeneity across Issue Domains

3.1.1. Data

To examine the influence of needs for order, certainty and security (hereafter NOCS) across issue domains, I turn to the 2004 American National Elections Study (ANES) which

contains several items useful for operationalizing preferences over social, foreign and economic policy. The 2004 ANES surveyed a national probability sample of 1212 respondents using face-to-face interviews from September 7th through November 1st.

3.1.2. Variables

Needs for Order, Certainty and Security. I operationalize needs for order, certainty and security with four items which have been utilized by past researchers to measure the concept of authoritarianism (Feldman and Stenner 1997; Hetherington and Weiler 2009; Stenner 2005). Each item presents the respondent with a pairwise comparison of characteristics, and the individual is asked to choose the one which is more important for a child to possess. The comparisons include, “Independent or Respect for Elders,” “Curiosity or Good Manners,” “Obedience or Self-Reliance,” and “Considerate or Well-Behaved.” The concept of authoritarianism in general is strongly related to the psychological needs of interest to the present study (Feldman 2003; Hetherington and Weiler 2009; Jost et al. 2003a; Stenner 2005), and the specific items utilized for this operationalization have face validity as measures tapping these needs. Qualities such as “obedience” or “well-behaved” imply an affinity for rule and norm-following, and are thus values which promote stability and social order, and should thus be attractive to individuals high in NOCS. Conversely, characteristics such as “curiosity” and “independence” imply individual self-determination and non-conformity, and should thus be experienced as threatening to individuals high in such needs (Feldman and Stenner 1997; Stenner 2005). In addition, Hetherington and Weiler (2009) have conducted tests of convergent validity for this measure, and find that it is strongly related to other measures tapping epistemic and existential needs.

As a further examination of its validity, I estimated the correlation between this operationalization and three additional measures of psychological needs contained in the 2004/2006 American National Elections Study panel file. These data contain responses from individuals who participated in both the 2004 study and the 2006 pilot study. In 2004, the correlation between the childrearing measure and the need for cognition (Cacioppo and Petty 1982) was .23. This latter construct taps the individual’s affinity for thinking deeply in general, and is thus related to the need for epistemic certainty. Presumably, those high in needs for certainty will tend to dislike deep and complex thought, as such thought impedes the attainment of closure on any given topic (Kruglanski 1989). Using the merged 2004/2006 data, the correlation between the childrearing operationalization and the need for nonspecific cognitive closure (Kruglanski and Webster 1996) was .21. Finally, using these same data, the correlation between this operationalization and Schwartz’s conservation versus openness to change motivational continuum was .29. According to Schwartz (1992), the latter “arrays values in terms of the extent to which they motivate people to follow their own intellectual and emotional interests in *unpredictable and uncertain* directions versus to *preserve the status quo and the certainty it provides* in relationships with close others, institutions, and traditions” (emphases mine; p. 43). This dimension is defined by the opposing values of conformity, security and tradition versus self-direction and stimulation, and is thus highly related to the basic needs of

interest here (see, e.g., Feldman 2003). Finally, I examined the correlation between the childrearing measure and a single item tapping the need for closure in the 2008 ANES (i.e. how often one can see “both sides” of an argument). The estimated association was .23.⁵ These correlations provide good evidence that this operationalization is tapping the basic NOCS of interest here.

I coded each item in the direction of greater NOCS, and then summed the four items to create a single scale. The variable was then recoded to range from zero to one.

Social Policy Preferences. I created a social preferences scale using three individual items. The first asked respondents about their preferences over abortion, and offered four options ranging from “By law, abortion should never be permitted,” to “By law, a women should always be able to obtain an abortion as a matter of personal choice.” The second and third asked about gay rights. The first of these concerned the legality of gay marriage (support or oppose), and was dichotomous. The second of these concerned the legality of gay adoption, and again was dichotomous. All three variables were coded such that higher values corresponded with more conservative preferences, and were averaged to form a scale ($\alpha=.73$).⁶

Foreign Policy Preferences. I constructed a foreign policy preferences scale from three items. The first asked respondents to place themselves on a seven-point scale, where “1” corresponded with the statement, “we should spend much less money for defense,” and “7” corresponded with the statement, “defense spending should be greatly increased.” The second item asked, “How important is it for the U.S. to have a strong military force in order to be effective in dealing with our enemies?” There were four response options ranging from “Not at all important” to “Extremely important.” Finally, respondents were asked to place themselves on a seven-point scale where “1” corresponded with, “the United States should solve international problems by using diplomacy and other forms of international pressure and use military force only if absolutely necessary,” and “7” corresponded with the statement, “diplomacy and pressure often fail and the U.S. must be ready to use military force.” Each item was recoded such that higher values indicated a more militaristic foreign policy stance, and placed on a zero to one scale. I then averaged the three to form a single scale ($\alpha=.66$).

Economic Policy Preferences. I measure economic policy preferences with three items. Each item was measured on a seven-point scale in an identical manner to the two foreign policy items above. The first contrasted the statement “the government should provide fewer services even in areas such as health and education in order to reduce spending,” with, “it is important for the government to provide many more services even if it means an increase in spending.” The second contrasted “there should be a government insurance plan which would cover all medical and hospital expenses for everyone,” with, “all medical expenses should be paid by individuals through private insurance plans like Blue Cross or other company paid plans.” Finally, the third contrasted, “the government in Washington should see to it that every person has a job and a good standard of living,” with, “the government should just let each person get ahead on their own.” These items were recoded so that higher values indicate more conservative preferences, and averaged to form a single scale ($\alpha=.70$). This scale was recoded from zero to one prior to analysis.

Controls. I control for several additional variables in all models, including age, gender (male=1), race (black=1), education (5-category, nominal operationalization), income,

⁵ This estimate is for white Americans only.

⁶ The abortion item was recoded to range from zero to one prior to averaging.

employment status (unemployed=1), and religiosity. The latter variable was constructed from four items: the extent to which religion provides guidance in the respondent's day to day life, frequency of prayer, frequency of religious service attendance, and belief (or non-belief) that the Bible is the actual word of God ($\alpha=.79$). All controls were recoded to range from zero to one prior to analysis.

3.1.3. Hypotheses

In line with the theoretical considerations of the previous chapter, I expect NOCS to be a strong and significant predictor of both social and foreign policy preferences. Increases in such needs should be associated with increases in adherence to traditional values, and thus opposition to gay marriage, adoption, and abortion rights. Similarly, such changes should be associated with an emphasis on a strong, and militaristic approach to dealing with foreign threats. In contrast, for this analysis at least (predictions will be quite different in subsequent chapters), I expect little to no association of needs with policy preferences in the economic domain.

3.1.4. Analysis and Results

I estimated six ordinary least squares regressions with robust standard errors, two for each of the three policy domains. The first set of three utilized all respondents, while the second set examined the whites only subsample. The estimates for these are shown in Table 3.1. The results are basically identical across samples, and in both cases expectations are strongly confirmed. NOCS is a strong and significant predictor of both social conservatism ($B=.27$, $p<.05$, and $B=.31$, $p<.05$, for full and subsamples respectively) and foreign policy conservatism ($B=.14$, $p<.05$, and $B=.18$, $p<.05$, for full and subsamples respectively). A change from low to high on this variable entails a predicted change in social conservatism of 27 percentage points in the full sample, and 31 percentage points in the whites only sample. A similar change in the foreign policy domain entails a smaller, yet substantively meaningful change of 14 and 18 percentage points, respectively. In contrast, there is no significant influence of needs on preferences in the economic domain in either model, and the estimated difference between those high and low on this variable is minimal ($B=.04$, and $B=.05$, respectively).⁷

⁷ While these analyses control for religiosity, a strong argument could be made that this specification obscures the extent of the influence of needs on social and foreign policy conservatism. If religiosity is an *outcome* of epistemic and existential insecurities, which seems likely, then it mediates part of the relationship of needs on preferences. I reestimated these two models excluding religiosity and found support for this possibility. With religiosity excluded, the coefficient for needs is a substantial .44 in the social domain for the full sample and .46 for

3.1.5. Discussion

The first analysis of this chapter provided a minimal test of the relationship between NOCS and policy preferences across three domains of public policy: social, foreign and economic. On the basis of the “easy-hard” distinction, and its implications for the importance of citizen-elite interactions in preference formation, it was predicted that NOCS would be a strong predictor of conservatism in both of the former domains, but not in the latter. These expectations found strong support in the data. High levels of such needs predict social and foreign policy conservatism, but have no statistically significant relationship with economic conservatism. It is important to remember, however, that this represents a first cut at these data, and these estimates for the influence of needs average over all individual-level heterogeneity. As we will see moving forward, the relationship between needs and economic conservatism is more complex than implied by the unconditional model.

the whites only subsample. In the foreign policy domain, these estimates were .18 and .22, respectively. The estimates reported in Table 3.1 should be considered lower bounds on the effect size of this variable. Excluding religiosity in the economic domain brings the coefficient on needs into the range of statistical significance, but the effect remains minimal compared to the other two domains ($B=.07, p<.05$, and $B=.08, p<.05$, for the full and subsamples respectively).

Table 3.1. The Influence of Needs for Order, Certainty and Security across Issue Domains, 2004 ANES

Variable	Social		Foreign		Economic	
	All	Whites	All	Whites	All	Whites
Needs	.27 (.04)*	.31 (.04)*	.14 (.03)*	.18 (.03)*	.04 (.03)	.05 (.03)
Age	.14 (.04)*	.14 (.04)*	.02 (.03)	-.01 (.03)	.09 (.03)*	.07 (.04)*
Male	.12 (.02)*	.14 (.02)*	.04 (.01)*	.04 (.02)*	.04 (.02)*	.04 (.02)*
Black	-.10 (.03)*	-	-.09 (.02)*	-	-.13 (.02)*	-
HS Degree	-.03 (.03)	-.06 (.04)	.06 (.03)*	.00 (.03)	.06 (.03)*	.05 (.04)
Some College	-.06 (.04)^	-.10 (.04)*	.03 (.03)	-.03 (.03)	.08 (.03)*	.07 (.04)^
College Degree	-.10 (.04)*	-.14 (.05)*	.02 (.03)	-.02 (.03)	.10 (.03)*	.11 (.04)*
Post-Graduate	-.14 (.05)*	-.16 (.05)*	-.07 (.03)*	-.11 (.04)*	.05 (.04)	.05 (.05)
Income	-.03 (.04)	-.02 (.05)	.01 (.03)	.02 (.03)	.11 (.03)*	.14 (.04)*
Unemployed	-.01 (.04)	-.06 (.05)	-.03 (.03)	-.05 (.03)	-.10 (.03)*	-.12 (.03)*
Religiosity	.57 (.03)*	.56 (.04)*	.13 (.03)*	.14 (.03)*	.09 (.03)*	.12 (.03)*
Constant	-.01 (.05)	.00 (.05)	.45 (.04)*	.49 (.04)*	.24 (.04)*	.23 (.05)*
R ²	.39	.41	.14	.18	.12	.11
N	1033	761	971	733	1023	757

Notes: Entries are OLS regression coefficients and robust standard errors. All variables are coded on a zero to one scale. * $p < .05$; ^ $p < .10$.

3.2. Study 2 – The Moderating Role of Partisan Cues

3.2.1. Data

A national (non-probability) sample of 1200 respondents was collected by the survey firm YouGov Polimetrix from March 4th to March 9th, 2011. This survey contained multiple survey items, as well as two embedded, between-subjects experiments, the first of which is discussed here.

3.2.2. Treatment

Respondents for this study were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: control or party cue. All respondents first completed a survey containing information pertaining to demographics, political attitudes, and NOCS. They were then presented with a set of policy issues, and asked to give their own opinions. Each item was structured such that both sides of the issue were presented at opposite ends of a seven-point scale. In the control condition, respondents received the typical ANES format where the first side of the issue is attributed to “Some people,” and the opposing side is attributed to “Others.” In the party cue condition, the liberal side was attributed to “Democrats,” and the conservative side was attributed to “Republicans.”

3.2.3. Variables

Needs for Order, Certainty and Security. To measure needs for order, certainty, and security I rely on five items operationalizing the key aspects of this motivational continuum. Each item contained two statements at the opposite ends of a ten-point scale. The lead to each question read, “How would you place your views on this scale? 1 means you agree completely with the statement on the left; 10 means you agree completely with the statement on the right; and if your views fall somewhere in between, you can choose any number in between.” An example paired comparison contrasted the statement, “To have a good life one must be willing to pursue adventures and take risks,” with, “A safe and secure environment is the best foundation for a good life.” A second item contrasted the statement, “People should not try to understand how society works but just accept the way it is,” with, “People should constantly try to question why things are the way they are.” Full wordings for all items are shown in the Appendix A.

Statements were adapted from Feldman's (2003) social conformity versus autonomy scale, and Schwartz's (1992) conservation versus openness dimension. The scale had reasonable reliability ($\alpha=.62$). As the effective range of the resulting scale was quite a bit narrower than the full range, I recoded the variable to have a mean of zero and a standard deviation of .5. The coefficients for needs in the models estimated below thus represent the expected change in the dependent variable for a two standard deviation change in needs. To get a sense of the maximal size of its practical influence, simply multiply the coefficient by two. This approximately entails a change from 5% to 95% of the scale.

Social Policy Preferences. Two items were included in the survey measuring social policy preferences. The first contrasted the statements, "[Some people/Republicans] strongly oppose legalizing gay marriage," with "[Others/Democrats] strongly support legalizing gay marriage." The second contrasted, "[Some people/Democrats] believe that women should always be able to get an abortion for any reason," with, "[Others/Republicans] believe that abortions should always be illegal no matter what the reason." The two items were highly correlated ($r=-.53$) and were averaged to form a scale after recoding the gay marriage item to range from liberal to conservative. The scale was then recoded to range from zero to one.

Foreign Policy Preferences. A single item was used to operationalize foreign policy preferences. The item contrasted the statement, "[Some people/Republicans] believe that the government should be allowed to hold suspected terrorists indefinitely without charging them with a crime," with, "[Others/Democrats] believe that suspected terrorists should be afforded the same rights as regular suspected criminals." The scale was recoded to range from liberal to conservative, and then placed on a zero to one scale.

Economic Policy Preferences. Economic preferences were operationalized with four items. The first contrasted the statement, "[Some people/Democrats] believe there should be a government insurance plan which would cover all medical expenses for everyone," with, "[Others/Republicans] believe that all medical expenses should be paid by individuals through private insurance plans." The second contrasted, "[Some people/Republicans] believe that we should get rid of government provided unemployment insurance altogether," with, "[Others/Democrats] believe that we should greatly increase unemployment insurance." The third item contrasted, "[Some people/Democrats] believe that we should greatly increase government regulation of the financial industry," with, "[Others/Republicans] believe that we should get rid of financial regulations altogether." Finally, the last item contrasted, "[Some people/Republicans] believe that we should allow people to invest all of their Social Security benefits in the private markets," with, "[Others/Democrats] believe that all Social Security benefits should be handled by the government." These items formed a reliable scale ($\alpha=.80$) and were averaged after recoding such that they all ranged from liberal to conservative. The overall scale was then recoded to range from zero to one.

Controls. I control for several additional variables, including age, gender (male=1), race (black=1), education (six categories, nominal operationalization), income, employment status (unemployed=1), and religiosity. The latter was a scale constructed from three items: the importance of religion to the individual, their frequency of religious service attendance, and their frequency of prayer ($\alpha=.87$). All controls were recoded to range from zero to one prior to analysis.

3.2.4. Hypotheses

Consistent with both theoretical expectations, and the results from Study 1 above, I expect NOCS to be a strong and significant predictor of both social and foreign policy conservatism. In addition, I expect that this influence will be similar regardless of treatment condition. In other words, given the “easy” nature of these issues, citizens should connect their motivational orientations to their specific policy preferences with or without partisan cues. In this sense, the information provided by the party cues in the treatment condition is superfluous to preference formation. In contrast, I expect that motivational orientations will show a minimal relationship to economic preferences in the control condition, but a meaningful and significant association in the party cues condition. In the latter case, I expect that an increase from low to high needs will be associated with an increase in economic conservatism, as citizens at the former end of the dimension rely on the Democratic cue for information about the policies, while those at the latter end rely on the Republican cue.

3.2.5. Analysis and Results

Twelve ordinary least squares models were estimated, two each for the three issue domains, and one set each for the full sample and for a whites only subsample. The first model for each domain in each sample was estimated for respondents randomly assigned to the control condition, and the second was estimated for respondents randomly assigned to the party cues condition. All models were estimated with robust standard errors. The results of this analysis are shown in Tables 3.2 (full sample) and 3.3 (whites only). Looking first at the full sample, the estimates again show strong support for expectations. In the social policy domain, there is a substantively strong and statistically significant influence of NOCS in *both* the control and cue conditions, and the magnitude of the influence of this variable is similar across the two conditions ($B=.13, p<.05$, and $B=.15, p<.05$, respectively). Given the scaling of NOCS, the effect of moving from about 5% to about 95% in the control condition is .26, or about 26% of the scale of the dependent variable, while the effect in the cues condition is about 30 percentage points. This effect is comparable to the estimates derived from the 2004 ANES in Study 1 above.

With respect to foreign policy preferences, I find similar results. In the control condition, the effect of NOCS is significant and meaningful ($B=.09, p<.05$). A change from high to low entails an expected change in foreign policy conservatism of about 18 percentage points. The estimate for the party cues condition is slightly larger and statistically significant ($B=.10, p<.05$). A change from low to high in this condition entails a predicted change in foreign policy conservatism of about 20 percentage points.

The results for the economic dimension are entirely distinct, as expected. In the control condition, there is no estimated influence of NOCS on economic conservatism ($B=.00$). In the party cues condition, by contrast, there is a substantively large and statistically significant effect

($B=.10$, $p<.05$). An increase from low NOCS to high entails an expected change in the dependent variable of about 20% of the scale. The size of the effect in the party cues condition is thus comparable to the influence of NOCS on social and foreign policy conservatism.

The results for the whites only subsample are quite similar in pattern. The effect of NOCS in the social domain is nearly equivalent across the control and cue conditions ($B=.13$, $p<.05$, and $B=.12$, $p<.05$, respectively). Changes from low to high entail predict changes in social conservatism of about 26% and 24% of the dependent variable. The foreign policy domain shows some differences from the full sample models, however. In the control condition, the results are similar ($B=.09$, $p<.05$): a marginal effect of about 18 percentage points. In the cue condition, however, this effect becomes insignificant, despite being of a similar magnitude ($B=.07$, $p>.20$). This appears to be due to the substantial drop in model fit in the cue condition ($R^2=.08$, versus $R^2=.20$ for the control condition). The drop in overall explained variance increases the standard errors of all coefficients. This drop in fit itself appears to be due to the decreased influence of education on preferences in the cue condition. In the control condition, educated respondents are far less conservative than their uneducated counterparts, but this is not the case in the cue condition. To some extent then, education may be driving party cue-taking in the foreign policy context, which decreases the extent to which any given educational group is homogeneously conservative or liberal on this dimension. In any case, the estimates for NOCS are of a roughly similar magnitude, and the basic expectation of an effect *without* the party cue is strongly confirmed.

Finally, the results for the economic dimension in the whites only subsample are nearly identical to those of the full sample. In the control condition, there is no effect of NOCS on economic preferences ($B=-.01$). In the cue condition, by contrast, the effect is substantively meaningful and highly significant ($B=.09$, $p<.05$). A change from low to high entails an expected increase in economic conservatism of about 18 percentage points.

3.2.6. Discussion

The experimental study above provides additional support for the asymmetry in the process by which NOCS influences political preferences across issue domains. It was hypothesized that such needs would influence social and foreign policy conservatism regardless of the presence or absence of elite cues, and that these cues would have little moderating impact in these two domains. In contrast, it was expected that NOCS would have little impact on economic preferences in the absence of elite cues, but a strong impact in their presence. Expectations were strongly confirmed by the data. Indeed, the influence of NOCS was substantial, and nearly identical, in both the control and cue conditions for social and foreign policy preferences. For economic preferences, there was no effect at all in the control condition, but a substantial influence in the party cues condition. In the latter, the difference in conservatism between those high and low in such needs was comparable to that observed in the two other domains. This study thus provides strong evidence that the translation of motivational orientations into political preferences varies across the difficulty of issues, and more specifically, is conditional on interaction with political elites within the economic domain, but much less so in the social and foreign policy domains.

Table 3.2. The Influence of Needs for Order, Certainty and Security across Domains in the Presence and Absence of Party Cues, All Respondents

Variable	Social		Foreign		Economic	
	Control	Cues	Control	Cues	Control	Cues
Needs	.13 (.03)*	.15 (.04)*	.09 (.04)*	.11 (.05)*	.00 (.03)	.10 (.03)*
Age	-.03 (.08)	.07 (.09)	.20 (.10)*	.10 (.10)	-.06 (.07)	-.05 (.06)
Male	.14 (.03)*	.15 (.04)*	-.11 (.07)	-.23 (.06)*	.00 (.03)	.06 (.03)^
Black	-.01 (.05)	-.03 (.06)	.01 (.04)	.07 (.04)	-.11 (.03)*	-.08 (.04)*
HS Degree	-.06 (.07)	.13 (.07)^	-.06 (.07)	-.10 (.09)	.02 (.05)	.02 (.06)
Some College	-.14 (.07)^	.08 (.08)	-.09 (.08)	-.10 (.09)	.04 (.06)	.02 (.07)
2-Year Degree	-.12 (.09)	.25 (.10)*	-.14 (.09)	.03 (.10)	-.01 (.07)	.17 (.08)*
4-Year Degree	-.06 (.08)	.08 (.08)	-.17 (.08)*	-.18 (.10)^	.07 (.06)	-.01 (.07)
Post-Graduate	-.13 (.08)	.03 (.09)	-.32 (.09)*	-.03 (.11)	-.05 (.06)	.07 (.08)
Income	-.06 (.06)	-.01 (.07)	.06 (.07)	-.03 (.08)	.02 (.04)	.07 (.06)
Unemployed	-.01 (.05)	-.06 (.05)	-.04 (.06)	.03 (.07)	-.08 (.03)	-.04 (.04)
Religiosity	.50 (.05)*	.38 (.06)*	.18 (.06)*	.11 (.07)^	.19 (.04)*	.11 (.04)*
Constant	.24 (.08)*	.13 (.08)	.54 (.09)*	.63 (.10)*	.43 (.07)*	.44 (.07)*
R ²	.37	.31	.17	.12	.14	.16
N	245	247	246	245	246	247

Notes: Entries are OLS regression coefficients and robust standard errors. “Needs” has a mean of zero and a standard deviation of .5. All other variables are coded on a zero to one scale. * $p < .05$; ^ $p < .10$.

Table 3.3. The Influence of Needs for Order, Certainty and Security across Domains in the Presence and Absence of Party Cues, White Respondents

Variable	Social		Foreign		Economic	
	Control	Cues	Control	Cues	Control	Cues
Needs	.13 (.04)*	.12 (.05)*	.09 (.04)*	.07 (.06)	-.01 (.04)	.09 (.03)*
Age	-.05 (.11)	.09 (.10)	.11 (.12)	.07 (.13)	-.04 (.09)	-.09 (.07)
Male	.15 (.04)*	.13 (.04)*	.04 (.05)	.06 (.05)	.01 (.03)	.04 (.03)
HS Degree	.13 (.08)^	.20 (.09)*	-.12 (.11)	-.12 (.12)	.14 (.04)*	.10 (.08)
Some College	.03 (.08)	.13 (.10)	-.17 (.12)	-.13 (.13)	.12 (.05)*	.09 (.09)
2-Year Degree	.05 (.10)	.33 (.11)*	-.28 (.13)*	.02 (.13)	.08 (.06)	.24 (.11)*
4-Year Degree	.13 (.09)	.16 (.10)	-.27 (.12)*	-.21 (.14)	.16 (.05)*	.07 (.09)
Post-Graduate	.07 (.09)	.15 (.11)	-.35 (.13)*	-.06 (.15)	.07 (.05)	.12 (.10)
Income	-.13 (.07)*	-.04 (.09)	.13 (.08)	.00 (.11)	.02 (.05)	.09 (.07)
Unemployed	.01 (.06)	-.07 (.06)	-.01 (.06)	.04 (.08)	-.06 (.04)^	-.03 (.04)
Religiosity	.54 (.06)*	.44 (.06)*	.25 (.07)*	.13 (.08)^	.20 (.04)*	.18 (.05)*
Constant	.07 (.10)	.04 (.10)	.58 (.13)*	.63 (.14)*	.32 (.06)*	.36 (.10)*
R ²	.41	.34	.20	.08	.13	.21
N	178	181	178	181	178	181

Notes: Entries are OLS regression coefficients and robust standard errors. “Needs” has a mean of zero and a standard deviation of .5. All other variables are coded on a zero to one scale. * $p < .05$; ^ $p < .10$.

3.3. Chapter Conclusion

This first empirical chapter provided two tests of the most basic expectations derived from the theoretical considerations of Chapter 2, namely, that the process by which citizens form their preferences is conditional on the difficulty of the issues under consideration. When issues are easy, citizens readily translate their motivational orientations into preferences. In contrast, hard issues are highly responsive to elite influence. Thus, the influence of motivational orientations over such issues should be *conditional on* elite influence.

In Study 1, I demonstrated that NOCS has a meaningful influence on preferences in the two “easy” issue domains of social and foreign policy. In both cases, there were strong average differences in conservatism between citizens high and low in these epistemic and existential needs. In the case of economic policy, such differences were not found. In Study 2, I demonstrated that the influence of NOCS in the latter domain is important, but is conditional on citizen interactions with the elite space. *Given extant party images in American politics, NOCS shapes trust in elite actors, and thus the propensity to accept cues and information from some sources over others.* This allows for an indirect influence of this motivational dimension when such cues are present.

The present chapter is intended as a basic demonstration of asymmetry in preference formation on the basis of motivational orientations across policy domains, and one pathway through which NOCS may influence economic preferences, despite their difficulty. I have executed two very simple tests to this end. It is important to emphasize, however, that in pursuing this goal, I have ignored a great deal of heterogeneity. The estimates for NOCS in Studies 1 and 2 are highly aggregated differences. Having provided initial empirical support for this asymmetry, however, the goal of the following chapters is to delve more deeply into the complexity which characterizes preference formation in the economic domain. As we will see, the story is much more interesting than implied by the basic models above.

Chapter 4

Political Engagement and the Depersonalization of Preferences

In the previous chapter I demonstrated that the connection between needs for order, certainty and security (hereafter NOCS) and preferences in the economic domain is not straightforward, as it is with respect to “easier” issues domains. I also demonstrated that the relationship expected by recent research *can* emerge in the context of citizen interactions with elite actors and the cues which they provide over such hard issues. The present chapter begins to extend this logic in the context of the theoretical discussions from Chapter 2. Specifically, I argued that economic issues are not, by default, represented in abstract or symbolic terms, as previous research has assumed (e.g. Gerber et al. 2010; Jost et al. 2003a; Mondak 2010). Rather, associations between specific policies and more abstract values and beliefs are conditional on exposure to elite cues and the abstract frames which accompany such cues, and are thus conditional on political engagement. This is critical because such representations reinforce the process of partisan sorting and cue-taking examined above, leading to the development of ideologies which resonate with the underlying dispositions structuring partisan attachments.

I also argued in Chapter 2 that in the absence of exposure to elite politics, citizens default to representations of economic issues which coincide with considerations “closest to home” (Converse 1964), namely, their personal economic circumstances. They see issues in terms of relative benefits for the self and those closest to them. As suggested by work in psychology (Wegner and Vallacher 1986), however, human beings have a general tendency to seek greater levels of abstraction in understanding actions and objects when possible. Consistent reception of frames emphasizing abstract considerations relevant to a given issue domain should thus drive a tendency to see such issues in symbolic rather than personal terms. In addition, engagement with politics leads citizens to develop political identities which, when politics is salient, they readily take on, leading to a tendency to view issues in terms of conflict between broad political groups and ideologies, rather than in terms of implications for the self (Tajfel and Turner 1979; Turner et al. 1987). These considerations suggest that personal construals of economic issues are a “default” position which is altered by exposure to, and engagement with, elite-level politics.

In the present chapter I provide empirical evidence of the critical importance of political engagement and exposure to elite discourse for the ways in which citizens represent economic issues. In the first two studies of this chapter, I examine national survey data to show, consistent with theoretical expectations, that the unengaged rely strongly on personal considerations in forming their economic preferences, but minimally on abstract considerations. In contrast, I show that the highly engaged rely not at all on personal considerations, but very strongly on abstractions in the preference formation process. In the third study of this chapter, I demonstrate experimentally that all citizens show a tendency to move up to more abstract representations when these are made explicit. More specifically, I show that when exposed to abstract frames of economic issues, unengaged citizens look, in terms of the antecedents of their economic preferences, much more like the highly engaged. This latter study thus provides additional evidence for the importance of exposure to elite-level politics in the development of abstract ideologies. As I have argued, the relative importance of the personal and the symbolic to

economic preferences has important implications for the qualitative nature of the influence of NOCS on such preferences. These implications are addressed in Chapter 5.

4.1. Study 1 – Antecedents of Economic Preferences, 2010 ANES

4.1.1. Data

In June 2010, the American National Elections Studies recontacted all individuals who had participated in at least one wave of the previous six-wave panel study during the 2008 election year. Of these, 1,561 individuals agreed to participate.⁸ The 2010 ANES is advantageous for the present purposes as it includes, in addition to economic policy items, items which operationalize both personal economic insecurity as well as abstract economic orientations.

4.1.2. Variables

Economic Policy Preferences. I utilize three items to operationalize economic preferences in the 2010 study. The first item described the recent passage of the healthcare reform plan championed by Democrats in Congress. The item read, “A new law passed in March will change the way we pay for health insurance in two ways, [it will] require all Americans to buy health insurance, with the government helping to pay for those who can’t afford it, [and it will] require health insurance companies to cover anyone who applies for insurance, no matter what pre-existing medical condition they may have. Taken together, do you favor, oppose, or neither favor nor oppose these changes?” Respondents were then asked about their degree of support or opposition, forming a seven-point scale. The second item also concerned healthcare, and read, “Do you favor, oppose, or neither favor nor oppose a public, government-run health insurance plan to compete with plans offered by private health insurance companies?” Once again, the resulting scale was seven-points. The final item concerned government spending and services and read, “Do you think the government should provide more services than it does now, fewer services than it does now, or about the same number of services as it does now?” The branching format resulted in a seven-point scale ranging from “A lot more” to “A lot less.” The three items were highly intercorrelated and were averaged to form a single scale with higher values indicating more conservative economic preferences ($\alpha=.81$). This scale was recoded to range from zero to one prior to analysis.

⁸ The estimated response rate (AAPOR RR3) was 16% at the recontact stage.

Personal Economic Insecurity. I rely on two items to assess personal economic insecurity. The first item read, “So far as you and your family are concerned, how worried are you about your current financial situation?” Response options ranged on a five-point scale from “Not at all worried” to “Extremely worried.” The second item read, “How worried are you about losing your health insurance during the next 12 months?” Once again, responses were given on a five-point scale. The two items were highly correlated, and were averaged to form a single scale ($r=.46$). The scale was recoded to range from zero to one prior to analysis.

Abstract Economic Orientations. To operationalize abstract economic orientations, I rely on four items measuring the concept of racial resentment (Kinder and Sander 1996). Racial resentment taps a mix of anti-black affect or prejudice, support for traditional American values such as individualism, and the justification of free market institutions, and is thus consistent with previous work on the symbolic roots of economic policy preferences (Alesina and Glaeser 2004; Gilens 1996; 1999). For each of the four items, respondents were asked about the extent of their agreement or disagreement with a statement. The first statement read, “Irish, Italians, Jewish and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors.” The second read, “Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for blacks to work their way out of the lower class.” The third read, “Over the past few years, Blacks have gotten less than they deserve.” Finally, the fourth item read, “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.” The four items formed a highly reliable scale ($\alpha=.83$). The scale was recoded to range from zero to one prior to analysis.

Before moving on, it is important to point out that this measure has a controversial history with respect to what exactly it measures, namely, covert racism or ideological principles, or a mix of both (e.g. Feldman and Huddy 2005; Schuman 2000; Sniderman et al. 2000). In my view, this debate generates an unnecessary either/or, because it is clear that the measure taps both prejudice and ideology when aggregated across citizens, with heterogeneity in the extent to which it is purely prejudice versus purely ideology (see, e.g., Feldman and Huddy 2005 for a demonstration of such heterogeneity of meaning). For example, a hypothetical citizen who is not “prejudiced” against black Americans, but believes strongly in the ability of individuals to escape poverty without government intervention will obviously score higher on this measure than someone who does not believe that such economic mobility is possible. On the other hand, a prejudiced individual will almost surely score higher on this measure than a non-prejudiced individual.

From a more pragmatic standpoint, however, within the context of the present analysis, it simply does not matter very much. First, whether the measure is a measure of prejudice or a more benign measure of free market fairness, the expectations for its influence across levels of political engagement are identical. Both measures tap abstract/symbolic orientations in the economic domain, and, on the basis of my theory, should thus be utilized more among the engaged than the non-engaged. As this demonstration is the core purpose of the analysis, I am relatively indifferent to the underlying content.

Second, the association between NOCS and both prejudice *and* economic system justification is expected to be positive and strong. Higher NOCS is associated with a tendency to more strongly divide the world into in-groups and out-groups (e.g. Altemeyer 1981; Hetherington and Weiler 2009; Jost et al. 2003a; Stapel and Lindenberg 2011), as well as a tendency to engage in the justification of free market institutions (Jost et al. 2003b). Thus, regardless of which view is correct, my expectations regarding the influence of NOCS through

abstract economic orientations for politically engaged individuals is equivalent. Finally, the measure is useful in providing evidence for the generality of the dynamic expected. By the end of Chapter 5, I will have executed four distinct tests of the proposition that the highly engaged rely on abstract orientations and the unengaged rely on personal considerations; tests which span three unique datasets, over four years of American politics, and four unique operationalizations of personal and abstract. If the results converge across these heterogeneous analyses and operationalizations, this will only entail stronger support for the theory.

Political Engagement. Consistent with the theoretical considerations of Chapter 2 regarding the antecedents of abstract representations, I rely on two variables to operationalize political engagement. To tap the strength of one's partisan identity, I fold the traditional ANES, seven-point partisanship scale about its midpoint which results in a four-point scale ranging from "pure independent" to "strong partisan." No knowledge items were included in the 2010 study, however, so in lieu of knowledge I rely on a single item measuring interest in politics. The item read, "How interested are you in information about what's going on in government and politics?" Response options were recorded on a five point scale ranging from "Not at all interested" to "Extremely interested." The variable was recoded to range from zero to one.

Controls. I control for several additional factors, including age, gender (male=1), race (black=1), education (five categories, nominal operationalization), income, and employment status (unemployed=1). The current status of the 2010 study (in preliminary form) did not allow for an operationalization of religiosity.

4.1.3. Hypotheses

Consistent with theory, I expect that politically unengaged citizens will rely on personal considerations, while engaged citizens will rely on abstract considerations in the generation of their economic policy preferences. This implies a strong, significant and *negative* influence of personal economic insecurity on economic conservatism, and no influence of racial resentment for citizens with low engagement. Conversely, I expect no influence of personal economic insecurity on preferences for the highly engaged, but a strong, significant and *positive* influence of racial resentment on economic conservatism.

4.1.4. Analysis and Results

I estimated two ordinary least squares regressions, one each for the full sample and for whites only. Each model regressed economic policy conservatism on personal economic insecurity (PEI), racial resentment (RR), and the interactions of both of these indicators with political interest and partisan strength, as well as all controls. The estimates for these models are shown in Table 4.1. The results show strong support for expectations, and are nearly identical

across the two models. There are few observed differences across the two models, but to stay consistent with the studies reported below, I interpret the results for the whites only subsample. First, the constituent term on PEI is in the expected negative direction, and highly significant, indicating that low engaged citizens utilize these personal economic considerations in the generation of their economic preferences ($B=-.27, p<.05$). Also as expected, the marginal effect of RR is minimal and insignificant, indeed, it is estimated to be zero for the least engaged. Importantly, the influence of PEI and RR are moderated by political engagement. The interactions of both indicators with political interest are large, in the expected direction, and statistically significant ($B=.33, p<.05$, and $B=.62, p<.05$, respectively). This indicates that political interest attenuates the marginal effect of PEI and increases the marginal effect of abstract/symbolic considerations on economic preferences. In addition, I find a statistically significant and substantively meaningful moderating effect of partisan strength on the marginal effect of RR ($B=.22, p<.05$). As partisan strength increases, the influence of this abstract dimension on economic preferences increases.

To better interpret these findings, I plot the marginal effects of PEI and RR on economic conservatism for whites only across levels of political engagement in Figure 4.1. I define low engagement as uninterested, independent citizens, and high engagement as very interested, strong partisans. Looking first at low engaged respondents, there is a substantively meaningful and statistically significant effect of PEI on economic preferences ($B=-.27, p<.05$). A change from low to high on insecurity entails an expected increase in economic *liberalism* of about 27% of the entire scale. We see, for a segment of citizens at least, personal concerns matter greatly for economic preferences. In contrast, RR has no effect whatsoever on economic conservatism for low engagement citizens ($B=.00$).

The pattern for the highly engaged is quite different, as expected. The influence of PEI for these citizens is small and insignificant ($B=.08, p>.10$). In contrast, the marginal influence of RR is simply massive ($B=.84, p<.05$). A move from the lowest to the highest values of RR for high sophisticates entails an increase in economic conservatism of over 80% of the scale. This maximum effect corresponds with a move from about 1% to about 99% of RR, so a 5-95% move would entail a slightly smaller marginal effect, but huge nonetheless. The size of this effect strongly suggests that the RR dimension taps broader beliefs about the free market in addition to anti-black affect. While racism surely plays some role in the generation of economic preferences in the American case, it is hard to believe that racism *alone* would generate effect sizes of this magnitude. In either case, it is clear that the highly engaged rely substantially on abstract considerations in the formation of their economic preferences.

4.1.5. Discussion

This first study has provided strong evidence for the asymmetry in preference formation between engaged and unengaged citizens. The contrast between the dynamics of economic preference formation between such citizens could not be starker. Those with low political interest and weak political identities show a substantial relationship between personal economic insecurity and economic liberalism, but no relationship of racial resentment with those same

Table 4.1. Model Results for 2010 American National Elections Study

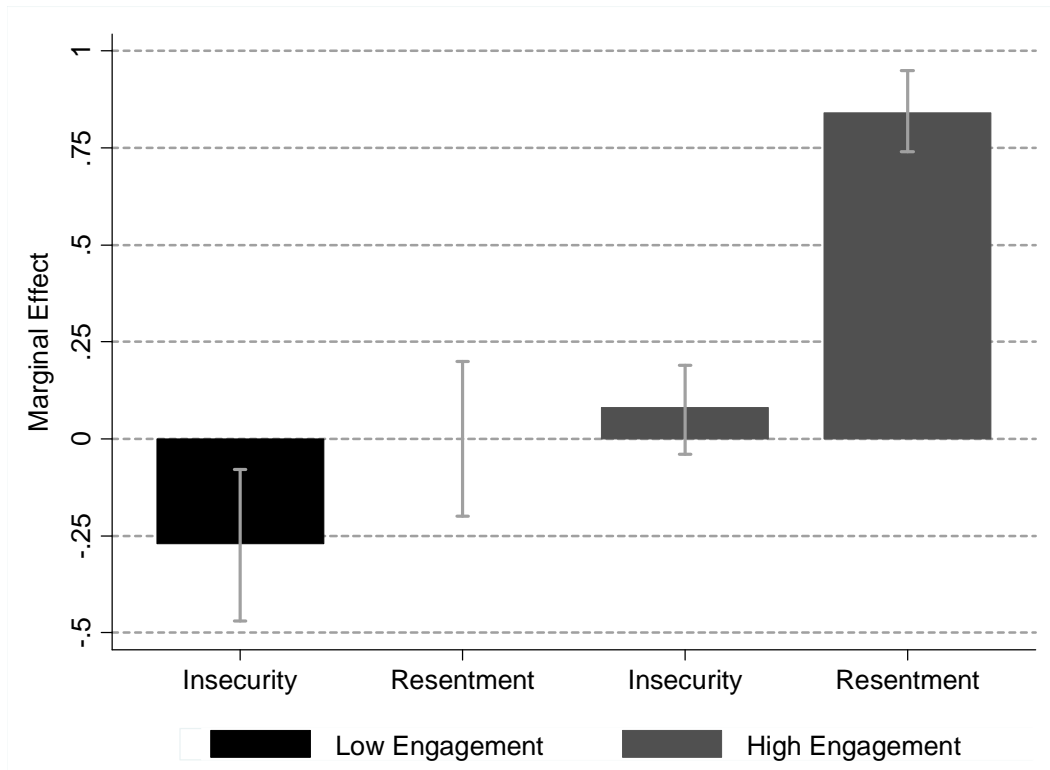
Variable	All Respondents	Whites Only
Personal Economic Insecurity	-.25 (.09)*	-.27 (.09)*
Racial Resentment	.01 (.09)	.00 (.09)
PEI X Interest	.34 (.10)*	.33 (.11)*
Resent X Interest	.58 (.09)*	.62 (.10)*
PEI X Partisan Strength	-.04 (.09)	.02 (.09)
Resent X Partisan Strength	.24 (.08)*	.22 (.08)*
Political Interest	-.29 (.06)*	-.34 (.07)*
Partisan Strength	-.16 (.05)*	-.16 (.05)*
Age	.05 (.04)	.06 (.04)
Male	.07 (.01)*	.08 (.01)*
Black	-.06 (.02)*	-
HS Degree	.04 (.05)	.06 (.05)
Some College	.08 (.05)^	.09 (.05)^
College Degree	.08 (.05)^	.10 (.05)^
Post-Graduate	.06 (.05)	.07 (.05)
Income	.16 (.03)*	.19 (.04)*
Unemployed	.04 (.03)^	.06 (.03)*
Constant	.31 (.07)*	.30 (.08)*
R ²	.36	.35
N	1394	1198

Notes: Entries are OLS coefficients and robust standard errors.

* $p < .05$; ^ $p < .10$.

preferences. In contrast, the highly engaged show no relationship of PEI with economic preferences, but a very large association between their abstract economic orientations and their specific economic policy preferences. These results demonstrate that the use of abstract considerations in preference formation over hard issues is conditional on exposure to symbolic elite discourse and the development of depersonalizing political identities which occurs in this context.

Figure 4.1. The Effects of Personal and Abstract Considerations on Economic Preferences across Political Engagement, 2010 ANES



4.2. Study 2 – Antecedents of Economic Preferences, 2006 WVS

4.2.1. Data

For this second study, I rely on the 2006 U.S. wave of the World Values Survey. This survey was in the field from September 19th to September 29th, and interviewed a nationally representative sample of 1201 individuals through the survey research firm Knowledge Networks.⁹ The study included unique items operationalizing both personal and abstract economic orientations, as well as economic policy preferences, and thus provides a replication of the basic dynamic identified above with a distinct set of measures in a different time period.

⁹ AAPOR RR3 = 29.3%.

4.2.2. Variables

Economic Policy Preferences. I measure economic policy conservatism using two items. Each item was part of a battery which began by stating, “Many things may be desirable, but not all of them are essential characteristics of democracy. Please indicate for each of the following things how essential you think it is as a characteristic of democracy.” Responses were recorded on a ten-point scale where “1” meant “not at all an essential characteristic of democracy,” and “10” meant “it definitely is an essential characteristic of democracy.” The first item corresponded with “Governments tax the rich and subsidize the poor.” The second item corresponded with “People receive state aid for unemployment.” Thus, the first item is largely redistributive in content, while the second has strong social insurance aspects. The structure of these items is not ideal, as they reference their essentiality for democracy, which is obviously not the same as mere support or opposition to the policy itself. Nonetheless, these items should strongly tap into support and opposition to the policies themselves. The two were highly correlated ($r=.45$), and were averaged to form a scale with higher values indicating more conservative economic preferences. The scale was recoded to range from zero to one prior to analysis.

Personal Economic Insecurity. I utilize a single item to tap into personal economic considerations which differs slightly in concept from what was utilized in Study 1 above. The item read, “Now we would like to ask you something about the things which would seem to you, personally, most important if you were looking for a job. Here are some of the things many people take into account in relation to their work. Regardless of whether you're actually looking for a job, which one would you, personally, place first if you were looking for a job?” Response options included, “A good income so that you do not have any worries about money,” “A safe job with no risk of closing down or unemployment,” “Working with people you like,” and “Doing an important job that gives you a feeling of accomplishment.” Respondents were asked to choose their most important characteristic, and their second most important characteristic. The first two options involve economic risk aversion, while the latter two involve post-materialist concerns. I create a four-point scale from the respondent’s two selections which is coded “0” for individuals who chose no risk averse responses, “1” for those who chose one risk averse response as their second most important, “2” for those who chose one risk averse response as their most important, and “3” for those who chose two risk averse responses. Responses were well-distributed across the possible values, with 13% in the first category, 28% in the second, 29% in the third, and 30% in the fourth. I recoded this variable to range from zero to one prior to analysis.

Abstract Economic Orientations. I operationalized abstract economic orientations with six items, all of the same format. The introduction to these read, “Now please indicate your views on various issues. How would you place your views on this scale? 1 means you agree completely with the statement on the left; 10 means you agree completely with the statement on the right; and if your views fall somewhere in between, you can choose any number in between.” The first item contrasted the statement “Incomes should be made more equal,” with, “We need larger income differences as incentives for individual effort.” The second contrasted “Private ownership of business and industry should be increased,” with, “Government ownership of business and industry should be increased.” The third contrasted “The government should take

more responsibility to ensure that everyone is provided for,” with, “People should take more responsibility to provide for themselves.” The fourth contrasted “Competition is good. It stimulates people to work hard and develop new ideas,” with, “Competition is harmful. It brings out the worst in people.” The fifth contrasted “In the long run, hard work usually brings a better life,” with, “Hard work doesn’t generally bring success – it’s more a matter of luck and connections.” Finally, the sixth item contrasted the statement “People can only get rich at the expense of others,” with, “Wealth can grow so there’s enough for everyone.” Thus, these items tap into beliefs about meritocracy and other legitimizing myths about free market capitalism.¹⁰ The scale formed from these items had a reasonable reliability ($\alpha=.63$). Higher values of this scale represent greater economic system justification (ESJ; Jost et al. 2003b). As the effective range of the scale was less than the full range by a substantial margin, I recoded the variable to have a mean of zero and a standard deviation of .5. Thus, regression estimates for the variable represent the expected change in the dependent variable for a two standard deviation change in ESJ. To get a sense of the effective range of the impact of ESJ, simply multiply the coefficient by two.

Political Engagement. I measure political engagement with a single item asking about the respondent’s interest in politics.¹¹ The item read, “How interested would you say you are in politics?” Response options included “Not at all interested,” “Not very interested,” “Somewhat interested,” and “Very interested.” The variable was recoded from zero to one prior to analysis. The 2006 WVS did not offer a measure suitable for assessing strength of political identification.

Controls. I control for several additional variables, including age, gender (male=1), race (1=black), education (seven categories, nominal operationalization),¹² income, employment status (1=unemployed), and religiosity. The latter variable was constructed from two items: frequency of religious service attendance and the importance of God in the respondent’s life ($r=.44$). All controls were recoded to range from zero to one prior to analysis.

4.2.3. Hypotheses

My hypotheses for the present study are identical to those of Study 1. I expect that personal economic risk aversion will be a strong, significant and negative predictor of economic conservatism for those with low political interest, but will show no influence for those with high political interest. Conversely, I expect no influence of economic system justification on conservatism for the unengaged, but a strong, significant and positive influence for the highly engaged.

¹⁰ Myth is used here in its broader sense as a widely held belief that may or may not be true.

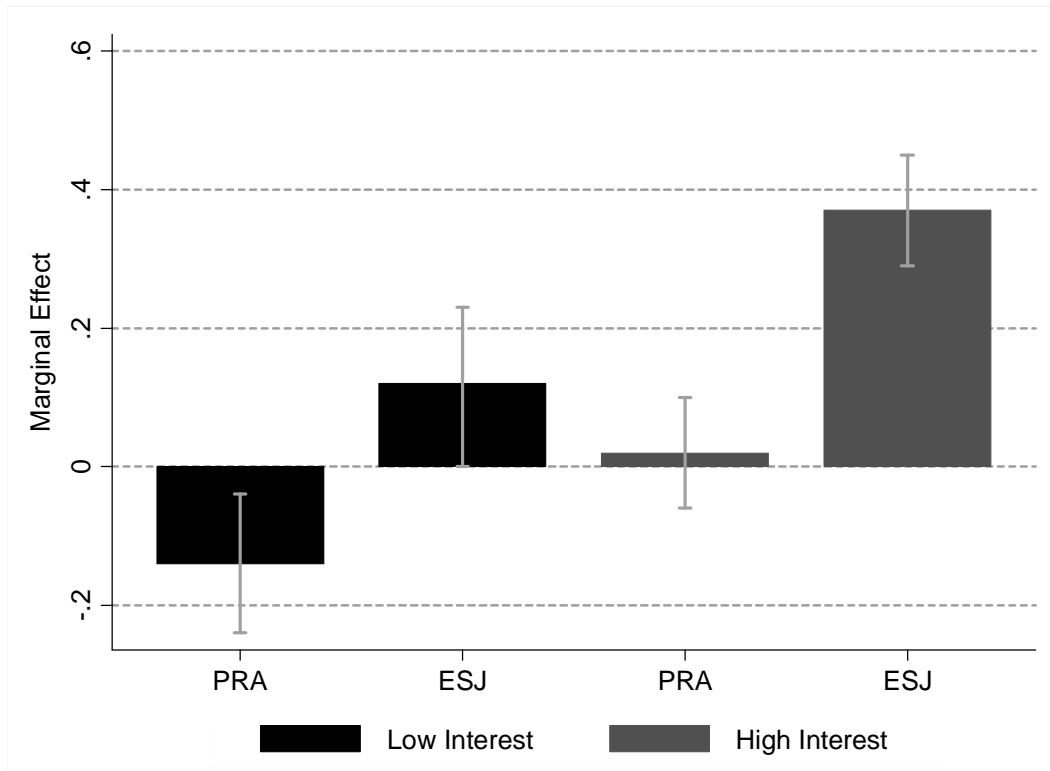
¹¹ No knowledge items were included in this survey.

¹² The 2006 WVS codebook is unclear as what exactly the seven categories represent with respect to educational achievement, but do appear to be in ascending order.

4.2.4. Analysis and Results

I estimated two ordinary least squares regressions with robust standard errors, one each for the entire sample and one for a whites only subsample, as above. Each model regressed economic policy conservatism on personal and abstract economic considerations, and their interactions with political interest, as well as all controls. The results of these estimations are shown in Table 4.2. The estimates again show support for expectations, but are stronger for the white subsample than for the overall sample. I thus interpret the whites only model here. To better see the resulting patterns, I have plotted the marginal effects of the two key independent variables across levels of political interest in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2. The Effects of Personal and Abstract Considerations on Economic Preferences across Political Engagement, 2006 WVS



Notes: PRA = Personal Economic Risk Aversion; ESJ = Economic System Justification.

Table 4.2. Model Results for 2006 World Values Survey

Variable	All Respondents	Whites Only
Personal Risk Aversion	-.09 (.05) [^]	-.14 (.05)*
Economic System Justification	.04 (.03)	.07 (.04) [^]
PRA X Interest	.10 (.08)	.16 (.09) [^]
ESJ X Interest	.18 (.05)*	.16 (.06)*
Political Interest	-.06 (.05)	-.08 (.05)
Age	-.05 (.03)	-.05 (.03)
Male	.02 (.01)	.00 (.02)
Black	-.04 (.02) [^]	-
HS Degree	.05 (.05)	.06 (.07)
Some College	-.02 (.05)	.00 (.06)
2-Year Degree	.00 (.05)	.03 (.06)
4-Year Degree	-.01 (.05)	.01 (.06)
educ6	.03 (.05)	.06 (.07)
educ7	.03 (.07)	.03 (.08)
Income	.01 (.04)	.05 (.05)
Unemployed	-.08 (.04)*	-.10 (.07)
Religiosity	-.02 (.02)	-.02 (.03)
Constant	.58 (.07)*	.58 (.08)*
R ²	.12	.14
N	1176	876

Notes: Entries are OLS coefficients and robust standard errors.

* $p < .05$; [^] $p < .10$.

A similar pattern to the one found in Study 1 emerges, albeit with weaker effects. Looking first at low interest respondents, there is a statistically significant effect of personal economic risk aversion (PRA) on economic preferences ($B = -.14, p < .05$). A change from no security related responses to two security related responses to the “job importance” item entails a predicted increase in economic liberalism of about 14% of the scale. While not nearly as large as that found in Study 1, this remains a sizeable effect. In addition, however, the effect of economic system justification (ESJ) is about the same size, although only approaches significance ($B = .12, p < .15$). The results for the very interested are again quite different. There is no significant effect of PRA for this group ($B = .02$). There is, however, a large and statistically significant influence of ESJ, as expected ($B = .37, p < .05$). A change from about the 5th percentile

of ESJ to about the 95th percentile entails an expected increase in economic conservatism of about 37% of the scale.

4.2.5. Discussion

The results for this second study largely converge with the findings above, albeit with weaker support for theoretical expectations. The politically uninterested show a substantively meaningful relationship between personal economic considerations and their economic preferences, while the highly interested do not. In addition, the highly interested strongly connect their more abstract economic beliefs to their specific preferences. In the present data, I also find a moderate relationship of abstract considerations and specific preferences for the lesser interested, but the effect does not attain significance at traditional levels.

The differences between this analysis and the one from Study 1 may lie in any one of a few facets of the data. First, this wave of the World Values Survey was conducted within a very different economic climate than the ANES survey of Study 1, which may alter the relative influence of personal and abstract considerations (see the next chapter for more on this possibility). Second, the operationalization of personal considerations was weaker in the present case than for the first study. Third, I was forced to utilize an inferior operationalization of political engagement relative to Study 1, which may have limited the extent of moderation observed. Finally, the items utilized to tap economic policy conservatism likely contained substantially more error variance due to the odd lead in to the items, specifically, the phrase “essential for democracy.” Overall, however, the basic pattern replicates even under these non-ideal conditions, providing additional support for the expectation of an asymmetry in economic preference formation across levels of political engagement.

4.3. Study 3 – The Influence of Elite Frames

4.3.1. Data

A national (non-probability) sample of 1200 respondents was collected by the survey firm YouGov Polimetrix from March 4th to March 9th, 2011. This survey contained multiple survey items, as well as two embedded, between-subjects experiments, the second of which is discussed here.

4.3.2. Treatment

Respondents for this study were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: control or abstract/symbolic frame. All respondents first completed a survey containing information pertaining to demographics, political attitudes, and motivational orientations. They were then presented with a set of four economic policy issues, two of which are relevant to the present study: one on health insurance and one on unemployment insurance, and asked to give their own opinions.¹³ Each item was structured in an ANES format, whereby both sides of the issue are presented at opposite ends of a seven-point scale. In the control condition, respondents simply received the two basic positions defining the issue conflict. In the symbolic frame condition, the conservative side of the issue was accompanied by an additional statement which framed the issue as a symbolic conflict over traditional American values related to individualism and the free market, mirroring the recent political discourse coming from the Republican Party and conservative elite actors and groups. The symbolic frames were modeled after recent examples of such discourse.

4.3.3. Variables

Economic Policy Preferences. In the control condition, the wording for each economic item was identical to that in Study 2 of Chapter 3. In the symbolic frame condition, however, each item contained an additional statement. The health insurance item contrasted the statement, “Some people believe there should be a government insurance plan which would cover all medical expenses for everyone,” with, “Others believe that all medical expenses should be paid by individuals through private insurance plans, because government insurance is socialism and a take-over of the free market.” The unemployment insurance item contrasted the statement, “Some people believe that we should get rid of government provided unemployment insurance altogether, because jobless Americans get so used to being unproductive that they are willing to accept welfare indefinitely instead of taking a job,” with, “Other believe that we should greatly increase unemployment insurance.” As in Chapter 3, respondents were asked to place themselves on a seven-point scale. The two items were highly correlated ($r=-.45$). The unemployment item was thus recoded to range from liberal to conservative, and the two items were averaged to form a scale.¹⁴

Personal Economic Insecurity. Two items were included in the survey (prior to treatment) which measured citizens’ issue-specific economic insecurities. Each of the two items first contained the following: “How would you place your views on this scale? 1 means you are not worried at all; 10 means you are extremely worried; and if your views fall somewhere in

¹³ I examine these two issues as I have measures of self-interest which are directly related to each.

¹⁴ Analyses examining the issues separately displayed substantively similar results.

between, you can choose any number in between.” For health insurance, the next statement read, “So far as you and/or your family are concerned, how worried are you about your health insurance situation?” For unemployment, the next statement read “So far as you and/or your family are concerned, how worried are you about your employment situation?” Scores on these two scales were highly dispersed across the various response options. There is thus a great deal of variability in economic insecurity in the public, as would be expected. The two items were highly correlated ($r=.48$), and were averaged to form a single scale.

Abstract/Symbolic Economic Orientations. To operationalize citizens’ abstract/symbolic orientations toward economic issues, I relied on three items which tap perceptions of market fairness and economic system justification. The lead in to these items was as follows: “How would you place your views on this scale? 1 means you agree completely with the statement on the left; 10 means you agree completely with the statement on the right; and if your views fall somewhere in between, you can choose any number in between.” Each item then contrasted two statements at opposite ends of the ten-point scale. The first item contrasted the statement, “In the long run, hard work usually brings a better life,” with, “Hard work doesn’t usually bring success – it’s more a matter of luck and connections.” The second item contrasted, “The free market system is a fair system,” with, “Economic markets do not fairly reward people.” Finally, the last item contrasted the statement, “Most people’s place in society is purely a matter of the circumstances into which they were born,” with, “Most people who don’t get ahead in our society have only themselves to blame.” These three items were highly intercorrelated ($\alpha=.70$), and were averaged to form a single scale with higher values indicating higher levels of free market fairness and economic system justification. These items were modeled after those in Jost et al. (2003b). Given the restriction in the effective range of this variable, I recoded it to have a mean of zero and a standard deviation of .5 prior to analysis. Coefficients thus represent the expected change in the dependent variable for a two standard deviation change in conservatism. To estimate the effective range of this variable’s effect, simply multiply the coefficient by two.

Political Engagement. Political engagement was operationalized with two variables: objective political knowledge and partisan strength. Political knowledge was measured with six items, the exact wordings of which are contained in the Appendix to this chapter. Partisan strength was operationalized by folding the traditional seven-point partisan identification measure about its midpoint, generating a four-point scale ranging from “pure” independent to “strong partisan.” Both variables were recoded to range from zero to one prior to analysis.

Controls. I control for several additional variables in all analyses, including age, gender (male=1), education (six categories, nominal operationalization), income, employment status (1=unemployed), race (black=1), and religiosity. The latter variable was operationalized in the same fashion as for Chapter 3.

4.3.4. Hypotheses

In line with theoretical considerations, I expect that the use of personal versus symbolic considerations in the generation of economic preferences will vary across levels of political engagement as in Studies 1 and 2. In the control condition, we should thus observe a strong

influence of personal considerations for low engagement citizens such that an increase in personal economic insecurity predicts an increase in economic *liberalism*. For such citizens, we should observe no influence of economic system justification. Conversely, we should see no influence of personal considerations for high engagement citizens, but a strong influence of economic system justification, such that higher values of this variable predict greater economic *conservatism*.

In the treatment condition, however, we should observe few differences across levels of political engagement. Exposure to a symbolic issue frame should provide the explicit connection between specific policies and abstract ideas which low engagement citizens typically lack, thus inducing a strong influence of economic system justification on preferences in this condition. Put another way, low engagement citizens should be influenced by the treatment, showing asymmetric results across the two experimental conditions, while high engagement citizens should be unaffected by the treatment given their tendency to construe economic issues in abstract terms by default as a result of sustained exposure to elite-level discourse. This pattern would thus provide a demonstration of the process hypothesized to occur amongst engaged citizens in day-to-day politics.

4.3.5. Analysis and Results

I estimated four ordinary least squares regressions with robust standard errors, two using the entire sample, and two examining only whites. The first model for each group was estimated for the control condition, and the second was estimated for the abstract/symbolic frame condition. Each model regressed economic policy conservatism on personal economic insecurity (PEI), economic system justification (ESJ), and the interactions of each with the two variables operationalizing political engagement, in addition to all controls. The results for these four models are shown in Table 4.3. The first two columns display results for the control condition across the two sample groups, and the second two columns display the results for the treatment condition.

The coefficient estimates show strong support for theoretical expectations. The results are very similar in pattern across the two subsamples, but larger in terms of magnitude for the whites only subsample. I thus focus on the whites only model for purposes of interpretation.

First, looking at the control condition for the whites only subsample, the constituent term for personal economic insecurity (PEI) is in the expected direction and marginally significant ($B=-.22, p<.10$). This coefficient represents the expected change in economic conservatism for low knowledge, independent citizens. The constituent term for economic system justification (ESJ), however, is in the *wrong* direction, and does not approach statistical significance ($B=-.09, p>.30$). Thus, as expected, the least engaged in the citizenry, in the absence of any elite cues, show a pattern consistent with the use of self-interested considerations in the generation of their economic preferences.

Table 4.3. Model Results for Polimetrix Experiment

Variable	Control		Symbolic Frame	
	All	Whites	All	Whites
Personal Economic Insecurity	-.16 (.12)	-.22 (.13) [^]	-.05 (.11)	.02 (.13)
Economic System Justification	-.02 (.09)	-.09 (.09)	.10 (.09)	.15 (.12)
PEI X Interest	.21 (.15)	.35 (.17)*	.07 (.17)	-.04 (.18)
ESJ X Interest	.38 (.09)	.45 (.10)*	.26 (.09)*	.22 (.10)*
PEI X Partisan Strength	-.06 (.13)	-.13 (.16)	.02 (.11)	-.05 (.15)
ESJ X Partisan Strength	.09 (.07)	.12 (.08)	.13 (.07) [^]	.11 (.10)
Political Interest	.03 (.08)	.08 (.08)	-.07 (.07)	-.05 (.08)
Partisan Strength	-.09 (.09)	-.19 (.10) [^]	.01 (.09)	.01 (.10)
Age	-.12 (.07) [^]	-.07 (.08)	-.06 (.07)	-.01 (.08)
Male	.00 (.03)	-.02 (.03)	.00 (.03)	.01 (.04)
Black	-.10 (.05) [^]	-	-.09 (.04)*	-
HS Degree	.02 (.05)	-.04 (.09)	.18 (.06)*	.23 (.05)*
Some College	.08 (.06)	.03 (.09)	.18 (.07)*	.25 (.06)*
2-Year Degree	-.02 (.06)	-.10 (.10)	.19 (.09)*	.21 (.09)*
4-Year Degree	.09 (.06)	.02 (.09)	.17 (.07)*	.21 (.07)*
Post-Graduate	-.01 (.06)	-.09 (.10)	.13 (.09)	.15 (.09) [^]
Income	.01 (.05)	.08 (.07)	.09 (.06)	.11 (.06) [^]
Unemployed	-.05 (.05)	-.07 (.05)	-.02 (.04)	-.02 (.05)
Religiosity	.10 (.04)*	.11 (.05)*	.04 (.05)	.06 (.05)
Constant	.51 (.10)*	.56 (.14)*	.35 (.10)*	.24 (.11)*
R ²	.45	.48	.57	.65
N	234	170	205	141

Notes: Entries are OLS coefficients and robust standard errors. * $p < .05$; [^] $p < .10$.

As expected, this pattern is conditioned by political engagement. Looking at this same column, the interactions of PEI and ESJ with political sophistication are both in the expected positive direction, and statistically significant ($B = .35$, $p < .05$, and $B = .45$, $p < .05$, respectively). With respect to the former, this implies an *attenuation* of the marginal impact of PEI on economic preferences amongst politically knowledgeable citizens. With respect to the latter, it implies an *enhancement* of the marginal effect. Substantively, this means that politically

knowledgeable citizens rely less on personal considerations and more on abstract considerations than the less knowledgeable. I do not, however, find any moderating impact of partisan strength on the marginal effect of either variable. In this context, at least, political knowledge appears to do most of the moderating work.

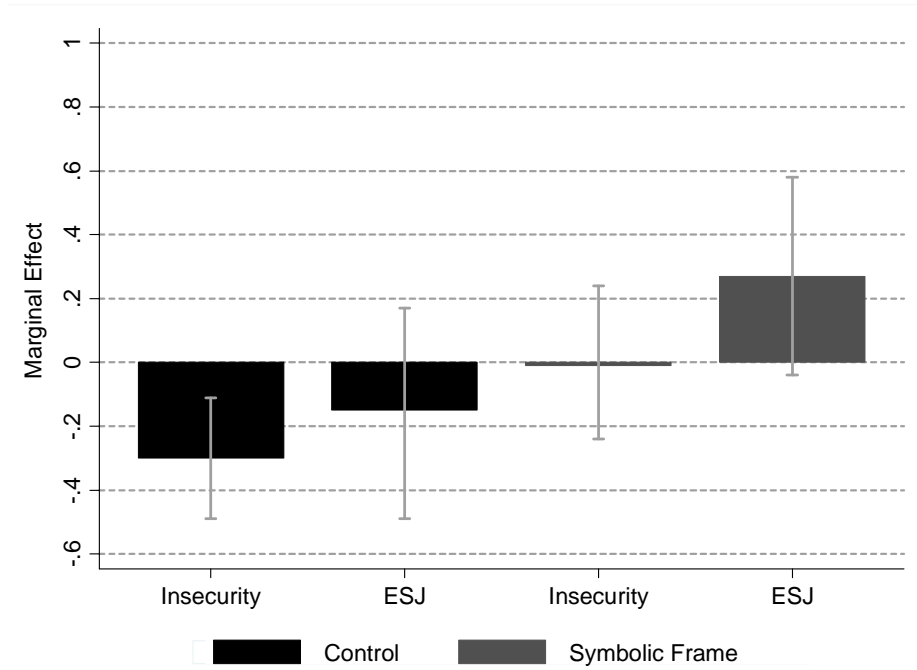
Turning now to the treatment condition for the whites only subsample, results are again consistent with expectations. First, the constituent term on PEI is now minimal and insignificant, implying no influence of PEI on preferences for the unengaged when economic issues are accompanied by a symbolic frame ($B=.02$). The constituent term on ESJ, however, increases by 24 points, from $-.09$ to $.15$, although it is not significant. As we will see in the next section below, however, this significance level is a bit deceiving given the multiple interactions. Given the lack of influence of personal considerations amongst the unengaged, I find no interaction of PEI with political sophistication in the treatment condition ($B=-.04$). Once again, there is no evidence that sophisticates rely on personal considerations in the generation of their economic preferences. There is, however, a moderate and significant interaction of ESJ with sophistication, indicating an enhancement of the marginal effect ($B=.22, p<.05$). Note, however, that the magnitude of this conditioning effect is less than half the size of that within the control condition. Thus, as expected, the abstract frame decreased the relative importance of political engagement as a moderator of the use of such considerations. As with the control condition, I find no moderating influence of partisan strength on the marginal effect of either PEI or ESJ.

Given the multiple interactions, and to better interpret the more subtle aspects of the results, I generated the marginal effects of PEI and ESJ for low and high knowledge citizens, holding all other variables at their central tendencies, and display these in Figure 4.3. Looking first at the graph for low sophisticates, the pattern conforms to expectations. In the control condition, the influence of PEI is strong, significant and *negative*, implying an increase in economic liberalism as a function of personal economic insecurity ($B=-.30, p<.05$). The size of the effect is impressive given the general skepticism regarding “self-interest” effects in preference formation generally among political psychologists (e.g. Sears and Funk 1991). A change from low to high in PEI entails an expected increase in liberalism of 30% of the entire scale. In contrast, the marginal effect of ESJ is in the wrong substantive direction, and does not approach significance ($B=-.15$). The pattern *exactly reverses* in the symbolic frame condition for low sophisticates. For those exposed to the frame, the marginal influence of PEI is minimal and insignificant ($B=-.01$), while the marginal effect of ESJ is substantively large and marginally significant ($B=.27, p<.10$). In the latter case, a change from about the 5th percentile of ESJ to the 95th percentile entails an expected increase in economic conservatism of almost 30 percentage points, a meaningful effect, and all the more impressive given the estimate for ESJ in the control condition. Indeed, the change in the marginal effect of ESJ for low sophisticates between the control and symbolic frame conditions is a substantial $.42$.¹⁵

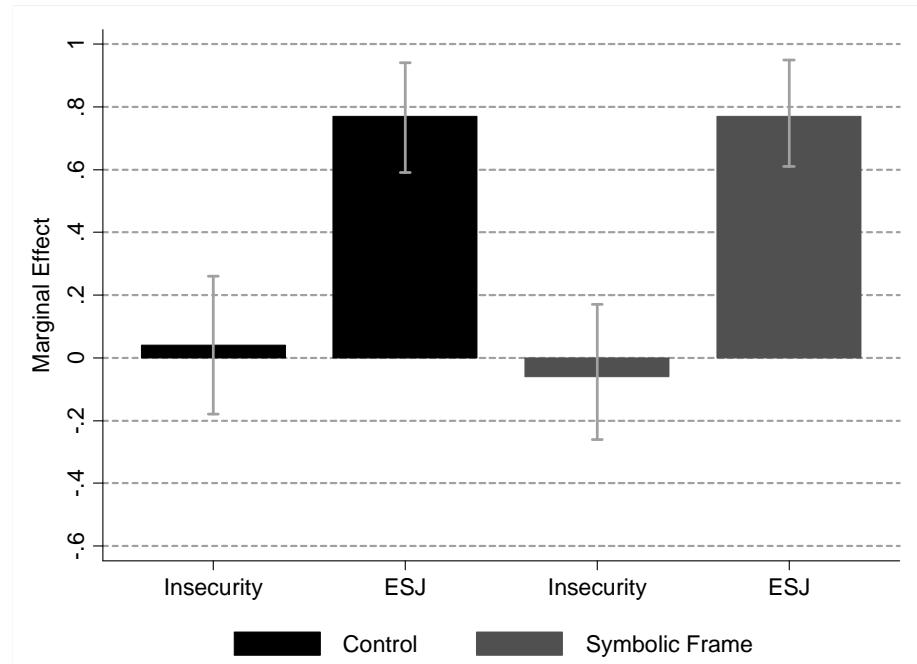
¹⁵ Given that partisan strength demonstrated no moderating influence in these analyses, I reran this model excluding this moderator. Utilizing only political knowledge as a proxy for political engagement, the marginal effect of ESJ in the treatment condition for low sophistication citizens was highly significant and quite a bit larger ($B=.39, p<.05$).

Figure 4.3. The Effects of Personal and Abstract Considerations on Economic Preferences, Polimetrix Experiment

Panel A. Low Engagement



Panel B. High Engagement



Notes: “ESJ” = Economic System Justification.

The pattern for high sophisticates is much different, and conforms to theoretical expectations. Effectively, high sophisticates are unaffected by the symbolic frame, because they *already* think in abstract terms about economic policy as a result of their political engagement with the elite space (Pollock, Lillie and Vittes 1993). In both the control and frame conditions the marginal effect of PEI is small and insignificant ($B=.04$ and $B=-.06$, respectively). In contrast, the marginal effect of ESJ in each condition is very large, and highly significant ($B=.77$, $p<.05$ for both conditions). In each condition, for high sophisticates, a change from low to high on ESJ implies an expected change in economic conservatism of about 77 percentage points.

4.3.6. Discussion

This last study examined the extent to which citizens utilize personal versus abstract considerations in the generation of their economic policy preferences in the presence and absence of explicit frames linking economic issues to broader ideological ideas. On the basis of the theoretical discussions above, I expected that the influence of personal economic insecurity and economic system justification would be conditional on (1) political engagement, and (2) the presence of a symbolic frame to prime abstract orientations. Importantly, however, this frame should matter only for low engaged citizens. The logic, as discussed above, is that exposure to such abstract representations of economic issues over time, and the development of political identity, leads to a depersonalization of one's general approach to such issues. Highly engaged citizens, as a result of their high levels of political exposure, should have already gone through this process, and should thus utilize abstract considerations (mostly) regardless of context. In contrast, low engaged citizens, lacking such exposure, should default to a personal construal of issues, but should readily move to the abstract when such considerations are made explicit in their connection to specific issues. In this sense, there is a tendency for *all* citizens to move to the abstract level (Wegner and Vallacher 1986), but this move requires exposure to frames which connect the abstract to the specific.

I found strong evidence in this study for these expectations with political sophistication as a proxy for political engagement. I did not, however, find any evidence for a moderating role of partisan strength, which contrasts with the results of Study 1.

4.4. Chapter Conclusion

The present chapter has provided a more in-depth look into the dynamics of preference formation in the economic domain. Consistent with the idea that economic issues are “hard,” I have argued that abstract representations of such issues are not utilized by default, but must be developed in the context of citizen interactions with the elite political space. To the extent that citizens have *not* developed abstract representations of such issues, they are likely to fall back on

what they *do* know to form their preferences, namely, their own personal economic situation. Citizens who are economically insecure should thus prefer liberal policies in the economic sphere to mitigate future risks associated with the loss of income and benefits. In all three studies of this chapter, I have shown that politically unengaged citizens do indeed draw on “self-interest” factors to generate their preferences, and rely minimally, if at all, on abstract factors. In contrast, the highly engaged do not utilize personal factors at all, instead relying on abstract beliefs about market fairness and group-related concerns.

With respect to the two key components of political engagement identified in the theorizing above, I find strong support for the moderating influence of political knowledge and political interest, and some support for the moderating role of strength of political identification. In Study 3, only knowledge played a significant moderating role, while in Study 1, partisan strength also moderated the use of abstract/symbolic considerations in economic preference formation. We might take this latter study as a more reliable look at the moderating influence of identity strength, as this study contained both a larger and more representative sample of Americans. On the other hand, given the mixed results, confirmation of the importance of identity strength awaits further testing.

Importantly, however, as I demonstrate through the framing experiment of Study 3, citizens are, in a sense, “at the ready” to move to a higher level of construal when connections between such ideas and specific policies are made explicit. Even the politically unengaged relied on abstract (and not personal) considerations when a simple phrase emphasizing symbolic conflict was inserted into the issue items of interest. This is consistent with a broad reading of Action Identification Theory (Wegner and Vallacher 1986) which posits that people, in general, seek greater levels of abstraction in their understanding of actions, and Construal-Level Theory (Trope and Liberman 2010) which posits the removal of objects from the self when representations of these objects are given abstract frames. To the extent that this theory carries into preference formation within the political sphere, it would explain the complete lack of influence of personal considerations for the highly engaged, and the very large substantive effects of abstract considerations for this group. Such citizens, in their consistent exposure to elite level discourse, show evidence of depersonalization in their representations of economic issues.

It is also worth emphasizing that these results show that self-interest and symbolic politics are *both* influential in the determination of political preferences, but to different extents conditional on characteristics of individual citizens. Work which pits these theoretical paradigms against one another is not productive. It is clear that symbolic conflict drives much of contemporary politics, but literatures outside of psychology consistently demonstrate associations between personal economic situations and preferences, and cannot be ignored. The present work provides a framework for thinking more deeply about these dynamics in future research.

Chapter 5

Needs and Economic Policy Preferences

The previous two empirical chapters have laid the foundations for the present chapter. In Chapter 3 I demonstrated that the economic domain is unique relative to other domains of American political conflict in that these issues are “hard.” Being difficult, citizens rely to a large extent on elite cues to both find their own positions on issues, and to develop broader, ideological understandings, and thus to translate their motivational orientations into political preferences. In Chapter 4 I demonstrated that this dynamic drives heterogeneity in how economic issues are represented across levels of political engagement. Citizens who choose to engage with the elite political space come to view economic issues in the depersonalized terms identified by previous researchers (e.g. Gerber et al. 2010; Jost et al. 2003a). In contrast, lacking such exposure, low engaged citizens represent such issues in terms of the implications of policy for the self.

The present chapter seeks the implications of these analyses for the translation of motivational orientations into economic preferences. The considerations above lead to the hypothesis that NOCS will strongly determine economic preferences, but in qualitatively distinct ways across levels of political engagement. For low engaged citizens, high NOCS citizens should be economically *liberal* relative to their low NOCS counterparts. In contrast, for the highly engaged, NOCS should drive economic *conservatism*. To empirically test these claims, I first draw on data from the 2006 World Values Survey to show how dispositional needs for personal security and order influence economic preferences. Importantly, I show that citizens with low political interest utilize personal security goals in the formation of their economic preferences, and that these goals lead to economic liberalism. In contrast, I show that highly interested citizens use societal order goals in the formation of their preferences, goals which lead to greater economic conservatism. Despite being positively correlated, as one would expect if these goals are derivative of the same motivational continuum, they lead to exactly opposite relationships with economic preferences, consistent with the theoretical considerations of Chapter 2, and the analyses of Chapters 3 and 4.

Second, I turn to three years of data from the American National Elections Studies, namely, the 2000, 2004 and 2008 elections. Utilizing the same operationalization of NOCS examined in Chapter 3, I show that the relationship between needs and economic preferences is opposite in sign conditional on political engagement. For low engaged citizens, an increase in NOCS elicits an increase in economic liberalism, while for highly engaged citizens the same increase drives economic conservatism.

Finally, I consider the relationship between motivation, engagement and preferences in the context of an analysis of the two dimensional structure of belief systems in the American mass public, examining social and economic preferences simultaneously. Consistent with both theory and evidence presented to this point, I find four ideological classes of citizens. I examine the average motivational orientations of each group, and their relative levels of engagement with American politics. In addition, I consider in some theoretical depth the differences between “constrained liberals” and “libertarians,” two groups which, perhaps surprisingly, have nearly

identical motivational profiles. I provide potential explanations for this finding, and suggest the need for future research on this topic.

5.1. Study 1 – Common Dispositions, Different Goals

5.1.1. Data

As outlined in the theory chapter, my model sees the influence of NOCS as conditional on levels of political engagement. More specifically, I have hypothesized that this motivational dimension would translate into economic *liberalism* for low engaged citizens through the relative salience of personal economic security goals, while it would translate into economic *conservatism* for high engaged citizens through the relative salience of institutional stability goals, consistent with the differential levels of abstraction through which these groups construe the economic dimension.

The 2006 World Values Survey offers the opportunity to directly test this possibility. In addition to containing the same two economic preference items utilized in Chapter 4, this study also contains items which separately tap these two related goal orientations. See Chapter 4 for a description of these data.

5.1.2. Variables

Economic Preferences. I rely on the same two economic preference items utilized in Chapter 4: attitudes concerning redistribution and unemployment insurance. See the variables section of this chapter for a description of their operationalizations.

Order-Related Goals. I measure the goal of achieving order and structure in one's environment using two items. The first item read, "If you had to choose, which one of the following things below would you say is most important?" Choices included, "Maintaining order in the nation," "Giving people more say in important government decisions," "Fighting rising prices," and "Protecting freedom of speech." Respondents first chose the most important thing, and then were allowed to choose a second most important. I code the variable zero for respondents who did not choose "Maintaining order" for either response, one for those who chose order as their second most important, and two for those who chose order as the most important thing. Responses were fairly evenly distributed amongst the three categories (45%, 24% and 31%, respectively).

The second item read, "Here is a list of various changes in our way of life that might take place in the near future. Please indicate for each one, if it were to happen, whether you think it

would be a good thing, a bad thing, or don't you mind?" One of the items read, "Greater respect for authority." I code this variable zero for those who think it would be bad, one for those who don't mind, and two for those who think it would be a good thing. Very few people said it would be a bad thing (7%), 33% said they wouldn't mind, and 60% said it would be a good thing. The correlation between these items was a robust .31. I averaged the two to form a single scale with higher values indicating a greater importance placed on the goal of societal order. I then recoded the variable to range from zero to one prior to analysis.

Security-Related Goals. I measure the goal of achieving personal security with two items derived from Schwartz's (1992) portrait values survey, also included in the 2006 WVS. For both items, the lead in read, "Here are some brief descriptions of people. Please indicate for each description whether that person is very much like you, somewhat like you, not like you, or not at all like you." The first item then read, "Living in secure surroundings is important to this person; to avoid anything that might be dangerous." The second item read, "Adventure and taking risks are important to this person; to have an exciting life." Following Schwartz's (1992) recommendations, I calculated the mean for each respondent across all ten of the value items, and then subtracted this mean from each of the two security-related items above. This removes variance in responses due to idiosyncratic usage of the question format across respondents. The correlation between the mean-deviated items was very high ($r=-.51$). I subtracted the latter item from the former to form a scale measuring the relative importance of security goals to the individual. The scale was then recoded to range from zero to one prior to analysis.

Political Engagement. Political engagement was measured in the same way as for Chapter 4 using the single interest in politics item.¹⁶

Controls. I utilize the same set of controls as in Chapter 4.

5.1.3. Hypotheses

The relative importance of order and security goals should be significantly correlated if they are derivative of a basic underlying motivational continuum, and indeed they are ($r=.21$, $p<.05$). The key for the present analysis is their relative influence in determining economic preferences, and the qualitative nature of that influence. If the theoretical ideas I have posited above are correct, then citizens who are not engaged in politics should rely to a greater extent on personal security goals in forming their economic preferences, and these goals should drive greater economic *liberalism*. In contrast, the highly engaged should rely to a greater extent on order and structure goals, and these goals should lead to greater economic *conservatism*.

¹⁶ The remainder of the chapter will additionally consider the role of partisan strength as a measure of political engagement. The 2006 WVS did not ask about strength of identification.

5.1.4. Analysis and Results

I estimated two ordinary least squares regressions with robust standard errors utilizing the full sample of respondents, and a whites only subsample in the 2006 WVS. Each model regressed economic conservatism on security goals, order goals, and their interactions with political interest, in addition to all controls. The estimates are shown in Table 5.1. An initial look at these estimates shows support for expectations in the pattern of coefficients, but to a larger degree for the whites only subsample of respondents. To better interpret these results, I generated the predicted marginal effects of security and order goals on economic conservatism across levels of political interest for the whites only subsample. These estimates are shown in Figure 5.1.

The pattern of estimates strongly supports theoretical expectations. For low interest respondents, the marginal effect of security goals is substantively meaningful, negative, and marginally significant ($B=-.15, p<.10$). The marginal effect for the second category of interest was also meaningful, and statistically significant in the expected direction ($B=-.10, p<.05$). For the least interested, a change from low to high on security goals entails an expected decrease in economic conservatism of about 15 percentage points. In contrast, for these individuals, the marginal effect of order goals is effectively zero ($B=-.01$). For high interest respondents, by contrast, the marginal effect of security goals is effectively zero ($B=-.02$), while the marginal effect of order goals is positive, meaningful, and statistically significant ($B=.17, p<.05$). A change from low to high on order goals for these respondents entails a predicted *increase* in economic conservatism of about 17 percentage points.

5.1.5. Discussion

The present analysis sought to provide support for the proposed theory by examining the differential use of goals derivative of the NOCS motivational continuum in the formation of preferences over redistribution and the provision of social welfare. It was expected that low interest citizens, utilizing a low level of construal, would rely on personal security goals, and would show increased liberalism as such goals became more important. In contrast, it was predicted that highly interested citizens would rely on order and structure goals, and would show increased conservatism as these goals became more important. These predictions were supported by the data from the 2006 WVS.

The present analysis provides a particularly strong test of the proposed theory, particularly given the moderate, positive correlation between the operationalizations of security and order goals. These goal orientations are presumably derivative of a single underlying motivational continuum (Jost et al. 2003a; Schwartz 1992) but imply very different consequences for economic preferences. The fact that they demonstrate these divergent dynamics, despite their positive association, and in a way explicitly predicted by theory, provides

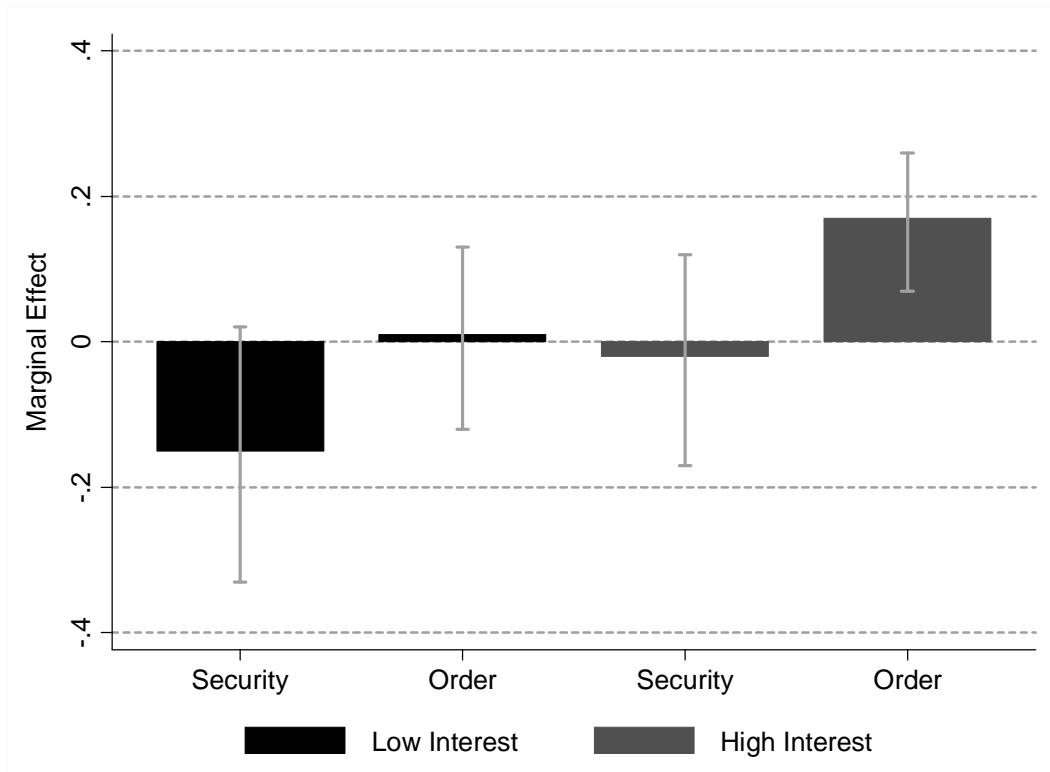
strong evidence that NOCS matters greatly for economic preferences, but in heterogeneous ways across levels of abstraction in the economic domain, and thus across political engagement.

Table 5.1. The Influence of Security and Order Goals on Economic Preferences across Political Engagement, 2006 WVS

Variable	All Respondents	Whites Only
Security Goals	-.10 (.07)	-.15 (.09)^
Order Goals	.01 (.05)	.01 (.06)
Security X Interest	.11 (.13)	.13 (.15)
Order X Interest	.13 (.09)	.16 (.10)^
Political Interest	-.13 (.09)	-.15 (.10)
Age	-.01 (.03)	-.03 (.04)
Male	.02 (.02)	.00 (.02)
Education (2)	.04 (.05)	.06 (.07)
Education (3)	-.01 (.05)	.03 (.06)
Education (4)	.03 (.05)	.07 (.07)
Education (5)	.03 (.05)	.06 (.07)
Education (6)	.06 (.06)	.10 (.07)
Education (7)	.07 (.08)	.08 (.08)
Income	.06 (.04)	.10 (.05)*
Unemployed	-.09 (.04)*	-.10 (.06)
Religiosity	.01 (.03)	.02 (.03)
Constant	.51 (.08)*	.50 (.09)*
R ²	.03	.05
N	1132	843

Notes: Entries are OLS regression coefficients and robust standard errors. * $p < .05$; ^ $p < .10$.

Figure 5.1. The Relative Influence of Security and Order Goals on Economic Preferences across Political Engagement, 2006 WVS



5.2. Study 2 – Needs, Political Engagement and Economic Preferences

5.2.1. Data

I turn now to broader tests of the theoretical model utilizing a common operationalization of the motivational continuum of interest. I rely on data from the 2000, 2004 and 2008 American National Elections Studies, which contain items operationalizing economic policy preferences, in addition to NOCS. All three studies interviewed a national random sample of adults using a face-to-face interview format. The 2008 study, however, also conducted an oversample of black and latino Americans. I leverage this survey design to examine differences in model dynamics across whites and minority groups.

5.2.2. Variables

Needs for Order, Certainty and Security. I operationalize NOCS identically to Chapter 3 utilizing the four childrearing items. All three ANES studies contain identical versions of these items. In addition, I consider an alternative operationalization in 2008 using a single item measuring the need for nonspecific cognitive closure. This item read, “Of the situations when you see two people disagreeing with one another, in how many of them can you see how both people could be right?” Responses options ranged from zero (“All of them”) to four (“None of them”). Higher values imply a greater need for closure.

Political Engagement. I operationalize political engagement with two variables: partisan strength and political sophistication. Partisan strength is operationalized by folding the seven-point partisanship scale about its midpoint, and is thus a four-category variable ranging from “pure” independent to “strong partisan.” Political sophistication is measured in two distinct ways. In 2000 and 2004, I operationalize sophistication with six political knowledge items, consistent with much past work (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Zaller 1992). At the time of this writing, the knowledge items in the 2008 ANES had yet to be coded and released. To measure political sophistication in this study, I rely on two other items: the interviewer’s subjective assessment of the respondent’s knowledge, and the respondent’s self-reported interest in politics. These two items were highly correlated ($r=.42$) and were combined to form a single scale. To check the validity of this operationalization, I generated an identical variable in the 2004 ANES, and correlated this scale with the political sophistication operationalization constructed from the six knowledge items in that study. The correlation was very large, indicating that the former provides a reasonable proxy for this indicator ($r=.54$). Both variables were recoded to range from zero to one prior to analysis.

Controls. I control for several additional variables including age, gender (male=1), race (black=1), education (operationalized as a set of dummy variables), income, employment status (unemployed=1), and religiosity. Religiosity is operationalized identically to Chapter 3 in all three studies.

5.2.3. Hypotheses

Consistent with theory, I expect that NOCS will strongly determine economic preferences, but in ways conditional on political engagement. Specifically, for low engaged citizens, I expect that changes from low to high will entail increases in economic liberalism. In contrast, for highly engaged citizens, I expect that increases from low to high will entail increases in economic conservatism.

5.2.4. Analysis

I examine the three studies individually in turn. For 2000 and 2004, I estimate models for both the full sample of respondents and a whites only subsample. In 2008, I examine separate models for whites, blacks and latinos. In each case, I regressed economic conservatism on NOCS and its interactions with partisan strength and political sophistication, in addition to all controls. All models are ordinary least squares regressions with robust standard errors.

5.2.5. Results: 2000 ANES

The estimates for the 2000 ANES study are shown in the first two columns of Table 5.2. The first column shows estimates for the full sample of respondents, and the second for the whites only subsample. Both models show support for theoretical expectations. In both cases the interaction of NOCS and political sophistication is meaningful and statistically significant ($B=.24, p<.05$, and $B=.25, p<.05$, respectively). The interaction of NOCS and partisan strength, however, fails to attain significance in either model. In addition, the constituent term on NOCS is in the expected negative direction in both models, although fails to attain significance for the full sample, and is only marginally significant in the white subsample ($B=-.08, p>.10$, and $B=-.10, p<.10$, respectively).

To better interpret these results, I generated predicted values of economic conservatism across NOCS for low and high engaged citizens separately. I restrict attention to the white subsample, as the results are clearly stronger for this group. Low engagement was defined as independents at the 5th percentile of sophistication, and high engagement was defined as strong partisans at the 95th percentile. The slopes for NOCS, as defined here, thus constitute the lower and upper bounds of the influence of this variable. These estimates are shown in Figure 5.2. The pattern fits theoretical expectations. At low levels of political engagement, increases in NOCS entail increased economic *liberalism* ($B=-.10, p<.10$), while at high levels of engagement increases in NOCS entail increased economic *conservatism* ($B=.18, p<.05$). Both effects are of a meaningful magnitude. At low levels of engagement, a change from low to high predicts a change in the dependent variable of 10 percentage points, while at high levels the effect is even larger, approaching 20% of the entire scale of the dependent variable. The effect of NOCS, at high levels of engagement, exceeds the impact of every other variable in the model, including income ($B=.16, p<.05$), religiosity ($B=.11, p<.05$), and black self-identification (from the first model, $B=-.16, p<.05$).

There are subtleties to these results, however, which are worth exploring. Importantly, the dynamic itself is driven almost entirely by the upper end of the NOCS continuum. This can be seen by looking at the marginal effect of political engagement separately at each end of the scale. At the low end there is no significant marginal effect of political engagement ($B=-.05, p>.10$), despite being in the expected negative direction. Citizens at this end, regardless of engagement, and all else constant, are expected to be moderate in their economic preferences. In

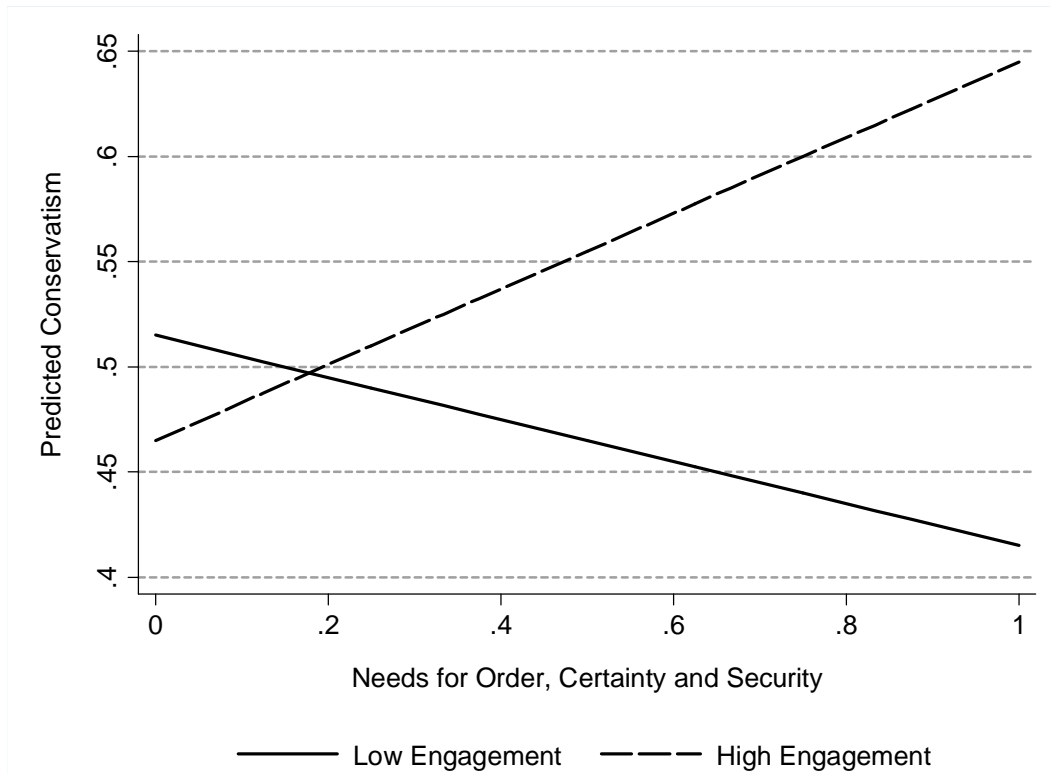
contrast, at the high end of the spectrum, the marginal effect of engagement is substantively large and statistically significant ($B=.22, p<.05$). An increase from low to high engagement entails an expected increase in economic conservatism of about 22 percentage points. At low levels of engagement, high NOCS citizens are more liberal than the average citizen, while at the upper end of engagement, such citizens are more conservative than average. This first study thus shows initial support for Panel A of Figure 2.2.

Table 5.2. NOCS and Economic Preferences, 2000 and 2004 ANES

Variable	2000 ANES		2004 ANES	
	All	Whites	All	Whites
NOCS	-.08 (.05)	-.10 (.06) [^]	-.18 (.07)*	-.32 (.08)*
NOCS X Soph	.24 (.08)*	.25 (.08)*	.22 (.09)*	.31 (.11)*
NOCS X Strength	.01 (.07)	.03 (.08)	.19 (.08)*	.34 (.09)*
Sophistication	-.05 (.05)	-.07 (.05)	-.03 (.06)	-.09 (.07)
Partisan Strength	.00 (.04)	.02 (.05)	-.08 (.05) [^]	-.11 (.06) [^]
Age	.04 (.03)	.04 (.03)	.06 (.03) [^]	.03 (.04)
Male	.04 (.01)*	.05 (.01)*	.03 (.02) [^]	.03 (.02) [^]
Black	-.16 (.02)*	-	-.11 (.02)*	-
HS Degree	.03 (.03)	.04 (.03)	.04 (.03)	.03 (.04)
Some College	.06 (.03)*	.09 (.03)*	.05 (.03)	.04 (.04)
2-Year Degree	.06 (.03)*	.06 (.04)	-	-
4-Year Degree	.05 (.03) [^]	.06 (.03) [^]	-	-
College Degree	-	-	.05 (.03) [^]	.06 (.04)
Post-Graduate	.04 (.03)	.06 (.04) [^]	.01 (.04)	.01 (.05)
Income	.18 (.04)*	.16 (.04)*	.10 (.03)*	.13 (.04)*
Unemployed	-.07 (.03)*	-.05 (.04)	-.11 (.03)*	-.12 (.03)*
Religiosity	.11 (.02)*	.11 (.03)*	.08 (.03)*	.10 (.03)*
Constant	.36 (.05)*	.36 (.05)*	.37 (.05)*	.41 (.06)*
R ²	0.12	.09	.14	.16
N	1477	1189	1009	748

Notes: Entries are OLS regression coefficients and robust standard errors; * $p<.05$, [^] $p<.10$.

Figure 5.2. NOCS and Economic Preferences, 2000 ANES



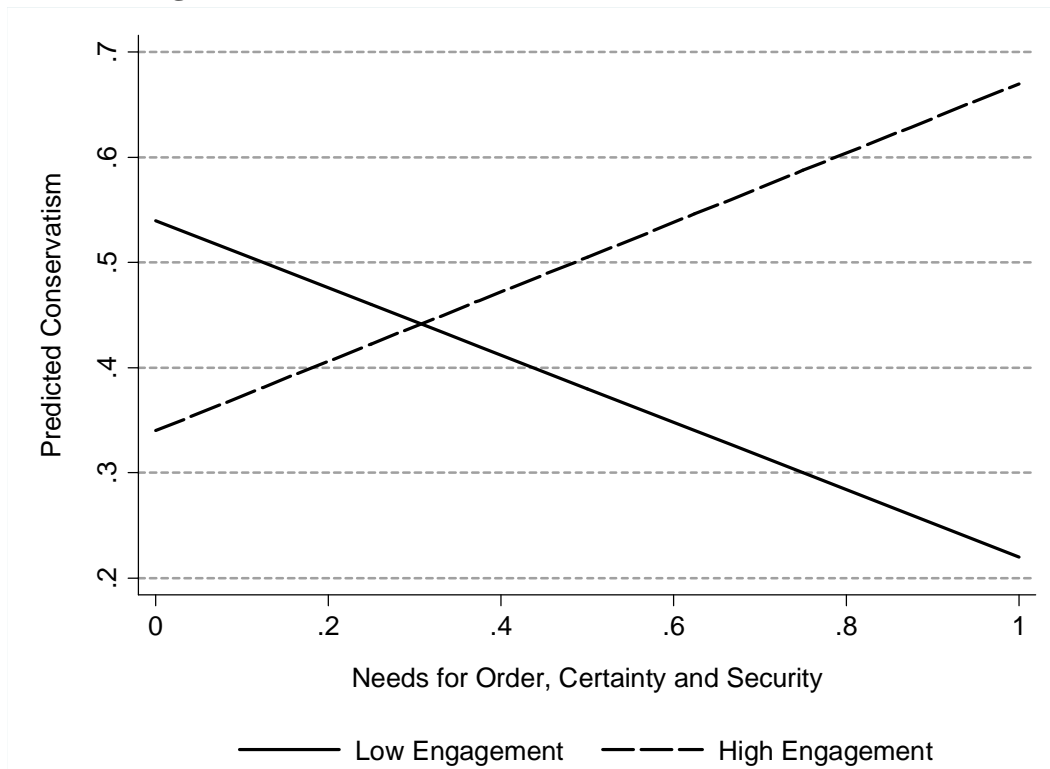
5.2.6. Results: 2004 ANES

I turn now to the results for the 2004 ANES. These are contained in the second two columns of Table 5.2. While the general pattern of results for this study mirrors the 2000 analysis, the estimates are a great deal stronger in terms of the magnitude of the effect of NOCS at low and high engagement. Once again, the interaction of needs with political sophistication is large and statistically significant in both models ($B=.22, p<.05$, and $B=.31, p<.05$, respectively). In the 2004 case, however, the expected interactions of needs with partisan strength are also large and significant ($B=.19, p<.05$, and $B=.34, p<.05$). In addition, the constituent terms on NOCS are both quite large, in the expected negative direction, and significant ($B=-.18, p<.05$, and $B=-.32, p<.05$, respectively). Comparing the two models, we also see again that the magnitude of the effects increases when moving from the full sample to the whites only subsample.

To better interpret these estimates, I generated predicted values of economic conservatism across NOCS for low and high engagement, as in the 2000 study. I again focus on the white subsample for interpretation. These estimates are shown in Figure 5.3. The overall pattern is similar to 2000, and shows strong support for theoretical expectations. The marginal effect of NOCS for low engaged citizens is substantively large, and in the expected negative direction ($B=-.32, p<.05$). A move from low to high at low levels of engagement entails an

expected increase in economic liberalism of 32 percentage points, or almost one-third of the entire scale of the dependent variable. In an opposite fashion, a change from low to high for the highly engaged entails an expected increase in economic *conservatism* of about 33%, which is a highly significant change. Thus, NOCS is influential in determining economic preferences, but in exactly opposite ways for those engaged and not engaged with the elite political space. Importantly, this analysis also shows support for the importance of identity strength as a moderator, above and beyond the influence of political knowledge, suggesting, along with Study 1 of the previous chapter, that increases in identity strength may have a depersonalizing effect on preference formation.

Figure 5.3. NOCS and Economic Preferences, 2004 ANES



We can once again consider the more subtle aspects of these findings as well. Similar to 2000, there is an asymmetry in the extent to which the effect of NOCS is driven by the upper compared to the lower end of the spectrum. The marginal effect of political engagement amongst those low in NOCS is meaningful and significant ($B=-.20, p<.05$), but substantially smaller than for those high in NOCS ($B=.45, p<.05$). For the latter group, the effect is simply huge, constituting close to 50% of the entire scale of economic conservatism. A second asymmetry lies in the predicted values at combinations of NOCS and political engagement. At the lower end, unengaged citizens are moderate in their preferences, and engagement results in a move towards economic liberalism, as expected. The effect of engagement amongst those low in NOCS is thus rather one-sided: engagement drives liberalism, but non-engagement does not

necessarily entail conservatism. In contrast, amongst those high in such needs, political engagement drives a polarization of preferences. The lesser engaged become increasingly liberal relative to the average citizen, while the highly engaged become increasingly conservative relative to the average. These estimates suggest that NOCS exerts “action” on three groups of citizens: engaged/low needs, engaged/high needs, and unengaged/high needs. In addition, the degree of such action is larger for the upper end of the spectrum than the lower end. This analysis thus suggests support for Panel C of Figure 2.2.

5.2.7. Results: 2008 ANES

Whites. The results for the 2008 ANES are shown in Table 5.3. I examine first the results for white Americans. Once again, I find strong support for theoretical expectations. The interactions of NOCS with political sophistication and partisan strength are substantively large and statistically significant ($B=.40, p<.05$, and $B=.23, p<.05$, respectively). In addition, the constituent term on NOCS is very large, highly significant, and in the expected negative direction ($B=-.39, p<.05$). I once again generate predicted values of economic conservatism to explore these results further. These estimates are shown in Figure 5.4.

The pattern largely mirrors the results from 2004, although shows a few interesting differences. First, the marginal effect of NOCS at low levels of engagement is large, negative, and statistically significant ($B=-.34, p<.05$). A change from low to high entails a decrease in economic conservatism of about 34% of the scale. At high levels of engagement, the effect is also large and significant, but again in the positive direction, implying an *increase* in economic conservatism as NOCS increases ($B=.23, p<.05$). This effect is about 23 percentage points. We also see once again an asymmetry between upper and lower ends of this motivational continuum. The marginal effect of engagement amongst citizens with low NOCS is 19 percentage points and statistically significant ($B=-.19, p<.05$), while its effect is about 37 percentage points amongst citizens with high NOCS ($B=.37, p<.05$).

Two important differences from 2004 are worthy of note, however. First, while in 2004 the effects of NOCS at the upper and lower ends of engagement were relatively equal, in 2008 the effect is substantially larger in absolute terms for unengaged citizens. Second, it appears that this difference is largely due to the *decrease* in the exerted effect of NOCS on economic conservatism amongst the highly engaged at the upper end of the spectrum. I noted in the 2000 and 2004 studies that political engagement entailed a polarization of preferences from the average at the upper end of NOCS, with the highly engaged more conservative, and the lesser engaged more liberal. In 2008, by contrast, highly engaged, high NOCS citizens are *moderate* in their preferences, not conservative.

What explains this asymmetry between the two studies? Clearly, 2008 was a unique year with respect to economic issues, in that the economy had just collapsed under a Republican president. It is reasonable, then, to expect that economic concerns, on average, would be more personalized in 2008 relative to other years, or in other words, more concerned with personal economic security rather than the maintenance of the institutional status quo. To the extent this is the case, what we may be observing in these data is the aggregate pattern consistent with a

shift of some highly engaged citizens at the high NOCS end of the spectrum to a personal/concrete level of construal of economic issues, resulting in an average conservatism for such individuals which is less than it otherwise would be. The increase in the marginal effect of NOCS for low engaged citizens is also consistent with this interpretation of the 2008 context. Overall, the results suggest converging evidence for Panel C of Figure 2.3, albeit with some caveats.

Table 5.3. NOCS and Economic Preferences by Race and Ethnicity, 2008 ANES

Variable	Whites	Blacks	Latinos
NOCS	-.39 (.10)*	.33 (.17)*	.14 (.20)
NOCS X Soph	.40 (.13)*	-.33 (.21)	.15 (.28)
NOCS X Strength	.23 (.09)*	-.24 (.16)	-.37 (.19)*
Sophistication	-.13 (.09)	.18 (.17)	-.12 (.21)
Partisan Strength	-.09 (.06)	.09 (.13)	.25 (.15)^
Age	.14 (.04)*	.14 (.06)*	.05 (.06)
Male	.10 (.02)*	.04 (.02)^	-.03 (.03)
HS Degree	.06 (.03)^	.03 (.03)	.08 (.04)*
Some College	.10 (.03)*	.01 (.04)	.09 (.04)*
College Degree	.09 (.04)*	.10 (.05)^	.07 (.06)
Post-Graduate	.02 (.04)	-.01 (.06)	.04 (.06)
Income	.21 (.04)*	-.02 (.05)	.20 (.06)*
Unemployed	.02 (.04)	-.05 (.04)	.00 (.06)
Religiosity	.10 (.03)*	.01 (.05)	-.06 (.06)
Constant	.28 (.07)*	.07 (.15)	.12 (.16)
R ²	.17	.07	.09
N	938	456	328

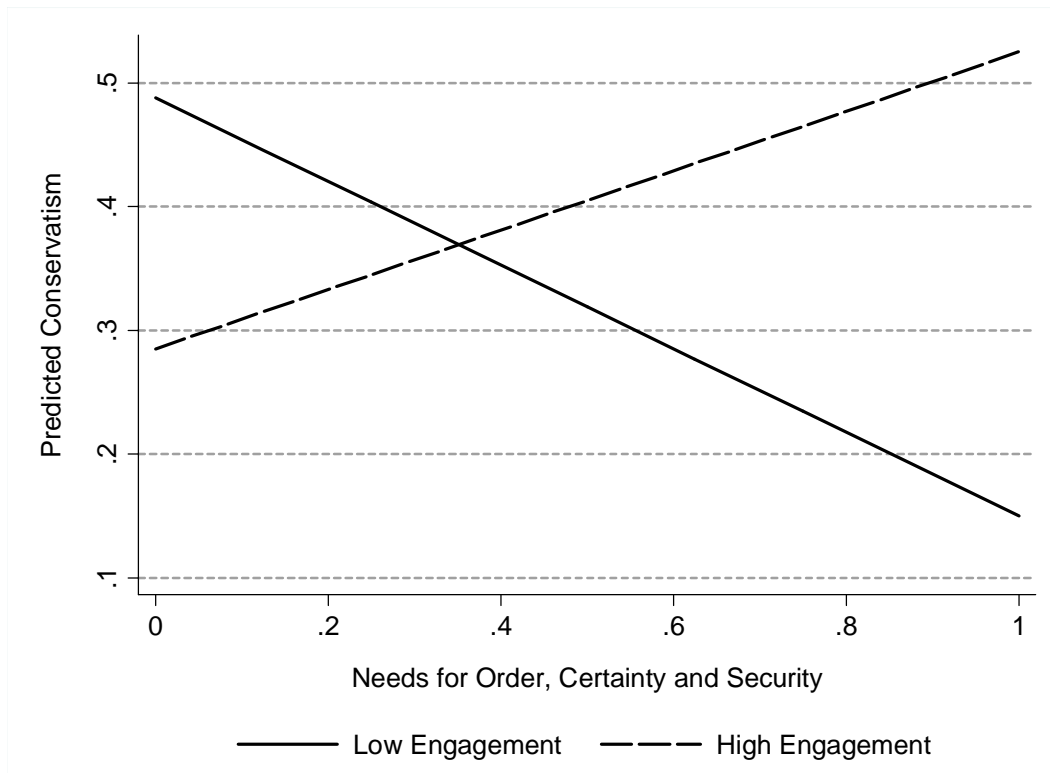
Notes: Entries are OLS coefficients and robust standard errors; * $p < .05$, ^ $p < .10$.

Blacks and Latinos. The results for black and latino Americans are shown in the second and third columns of Table 5.3, respectively. The results for both groups, while similar to one another, are highly inconsistent with the results for white Americans above. Indeed, while inefficiently estimated, the coefficients for both groups are effectively exactly *opposite* that for whites with respect to the pattern of signs. For blacks, the interactions of NOCS with sophistication and partisan strength are substantively large, and in the *negative* direction, although only approach statistical significance ($B = -.33$, $p > .10$, and $B = -.24$, $p > .10$). The constituent term on NOCS is, in contrast, in the positive direction, and statistically significant

($B=.33, p<.05$). It should be noted, however, that in the 2008 ANES, the lowest value of political sophistication (i.e. “0”) is less than the 5th percentile. Thus, less engaged black citizens show increasing political conservatism as NOCS increases ($B=.30, p<.10$), while engaged black citizens show increased economic liberalism ($B=-.24, p<.05$). Latinos show a similar pattern, with a statistically significant interaction of NOCS and political sophistication in the negative direction ($B=-.37, p<.05$). The interaction with partisan strength is positive and non-significant, however, and the constituent term for NOCS does not approach significance, despite being in the positive direction.

It is hard to know what to make of these results as they are entirely unexpected. While some recent work has suggested that personality traits may operate differently across racial lines (Gerber et al. 2010), and the expectation for the present study was a reduced or minimal influence for non-white Americans, a dynamic in the opposite direction does not fit with theory. Further explorations of this asymmetry are beyond the scope of this study, but, needless to say, further work on racial and ethnic differences in the influence of psychological dispositions on preferences is sorely needed.

Figure 5.4. NOCS and Economic Preferences, 2008 ANES



5.2.8. An Alternative Operationalization

Finally, I consider one further analysis in the 2008 ANES, taking advantage of the inclusion of a distinct item which operationalizes a related motivational dimension to the one of interest here, namely, the need for nonspecific cognitive closure. The results for this analysis are shown in Table 5.4. Despite using only a single (and fairly innocuous) item, the results largely mirror those of the childrearing operationalization of NOCS above. The interaction of the need for nonspecific closure with sophistication is in the expected direction, significant and substantively large ($B=.39, p<.05$). The interaction with partisan strength, while meaningful and in the expected direction, fails to attain significance, however ($B=.14, p>.20$). In addition, and consistent with the above, the constituent term on need for closure is in the expected negative direction and highly significant ($B=-.35, p<.05$). Thus, overall, the dynamic is largely replicated with this distinct operationalization.

I once again plot predicted values of economic conservatism in Figure 5.5. The estimates show a basic replication of the above. At low levels of engagement, a move from low need for closure to high need for closure entails an expected increase in economic liberalism of about 29% of the scale ($B=-.29, p<.05$). At the upper ends of engagement, by contrast, the marginal effect entails an increase in conservatism of about 17 percentage points ($B=.17, p<.05$). Thus, the basic dynamic is replicated, and the relative magnitudes at the upper and lower ends of engagement for the 2008 study are also consistent with the childrearing measure, as above. This analysis also replicates the finding from above concerning the lack of polarization to the conservative end of the dependent variable amongst highly engaged citizens with high NOCS (in this case, a high need for closure). Such individuals are no more conservative than the average in this analysis. One important difference, however, between the present analysis and that using the childrearing items concerns the effect of engagement at the lower end of the motivational continuum. While this effect was meaningful and significant for NOCS, it is substantially smaller and insignificant in the present analysis ($B=-.09, p>.10$), thus suggesting support for Panel A of Figure 2.2.

5.2.9. Discussion

In Study 2 I have explored the theorized dynamic between NOCS and economic preferences across levels of political engagement using three separate data sets, spanning eight years of American politics, and utilizing two entirely distinct measure of the key motivational continuum of interest. In all three cases I find support for expectations. Specifically, the effect of NOCS is exactly opposite in its qualitative character across levels of engagement. For low engaged citizens, high NOCS citizens are significantly more liberal in their economic preferences than low NOCS citizens. Conversely, for high engaged citizens, such needs entail greater economic conservatism. This pattern is again in line with the notion that NOCS may manifest in terms of distinct goals conditional on the level of construal through which citizens

represent the economic domain. When seen in personal terms, NOCS implies the salience of personal economic security goals, which then translate into greater support for social welfare, and economic liberalism more generally. When seen in abstract, depersonalized terms, however, NOCS suggests the salience of goals related to the maintenance of societal order and structure, and thus a preference for the institutional and socioeconomic status quo. The strong moderating influence of political sophistication in all three studies speaks to this dynamic, as highlighted in Chapter 4. I also find substantial moderating influences of partisan strength on the effect of NOCS in both 2004 and 2008, providing support for this additional dynamic of identity development and depersonalization.

Table 5.4. Need for Cognitive Closure and Economic Preferences, 2008 ANES

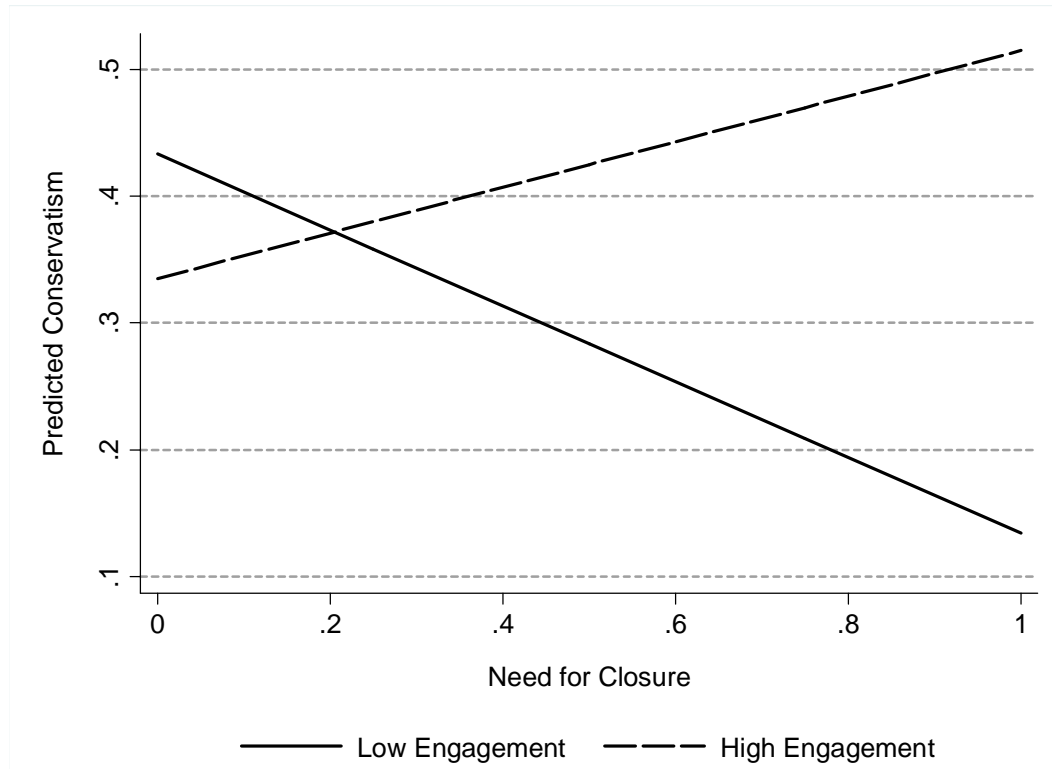
Variable	Whites Only
Need for Closure	-.35 (.11)*
Closure X Soph	.39 (.16)*
Closure X Strength	.14 (.12)
Sophistication	-.09 (.08)
Partisan Strength	-.02 (.06)
Age	.14 (.04)*
Male	.10 (.02)*
HS Degree	.05 (.03)^
Some College	.09 (.03)*
College Degree	.08 (.04)*
Post-Graduate	.01 (.04)
Income	.21 (.04)*
Unemployed	.03 (.04)
Religiosity	.10 (.03)*
Constant	.22 (.07)*
R ²	.15
N	1025

Notes: Entries are OLS coefficients and robust standard errors. * $p < .05$; ^ $p < .10$.

It is important to note, however, that the analyses in this study appear limited to white Americans. In 2000 and 2004, the magnitude of the effects of NOCS, whether at the upper or lower ends of political engagement, were much stronger when examining the whites only

subsample of respondents than when examining the full sample. This suggests heterogeneity in the dynamics of preference formation across ethnic and racial lines, and thus the dilution of the effect of NOCS upon the inclusion of these additional groups. In 2008 I was able to explicitly assess this possibility, leveraging the black and latino oversample of respondents in this ANES study. The results for white Americans were again very strong, mirroring those of 2004. The results for blacks and latinos, however, were substantially different. Indeed, the pattern of coefficients, while inefficiently estimated, was in the *opposite direction* to those for whites. This is an unexpected result. I theorized above that the nature of partisanship and elite conflict in the American case suggests that the connection between NOCS and economic preferences would be limited to white Americans in the sense that there should be a minimal influence for minority groups, consistent with some recent work (Gerber et al. 2010). I have no explanation for the reversal of the pattern observed in 2008. This is an area which warrants further study.

Figure 5.5. Need for Cognitive Closure and Economic Preferences, 2008 ANES



The results above are also interesting for the more subtle dynamics emerging from the interaction of NOCS with political engagement. First, the dynamic itself is driven to a larger extent by citizens at the upper end of the spectrum. Put another way, the difference in economic conservatism across levels of political engagement is much larger for high NOCS citizens than low. At the upper end, highly engaged citizens are typically more conservative than average, while low engaged citizens are more liberal. At the lower end, however, we do not witness polarization, but rather an asymmetry in the effect of engagement relative to the average citizen.

Highly engaged, low NOCS citizens tend towards increased liberalism relative to the average, but low engaged citizens remain about average. Even this dynamic appears to be conditional, however. I find no effect of engagement for low NOCS citizens in 2000, and no effect of engagement for low need for closure citizens in 2008. Overall, then, I find mixed support for two hypothesized interaction patterns from Chapter 2: Panel A and Panel C. I address this issue further below.

In addition, I also observed temporal effects across the three studies. The size of the effect was substantially smaller in 2000 than in 2004 and 2008. This is consistent with the observation, noted by others (Hetherington and Weiler 2009), that the relationship between this motivational continuum and partisanship emerged more strongly in the post-9/11 era, and the concerns with terrorism and security which characterize this period. The dynamic *is*, however, observed and meaningful in 2000, as would be expected given the emergence of the culture war as a party cleavage in the previous decade (Adams 1997; Layman 2001).

Moreover, I find differences in the character of the relationship between 2000 and 2004 and 2008. The 2008 election was obviously unique in the sense that it occurred within a massive economic collapse. Under such conditions, we might expect a context effect such that even some highly engaged citizens construe the economic dimension in personal rather than abstract terms. In 2008, and in contrast to 2000 and 2004, I find that highly engaged citizens with high NOCS are no more conservative than the average citizen, despite the fact that low engaged and high NOCS citizens are much more liberal than average. This is consistent with the possibility of movement from high to low construal for some engaged citizens under conditions of economic insecurity. The fact that there is still a large gap between these two groups of citizens suggests, however, that level of construal, on average, still differs substantially across levels of political engagement, even in such a context.

Finally, the fact that engagement has a smaller effect amongst low NOCS citizens is worth further exploration. Specifically, as I have noted in Chapter 2, low NOCS combined with an abstract representation of economic issues, as we expect amongst the highly engaged, does not *necessarily* imply goals related to socioeconomic equality. Low NOCS and an abstract construal of the economic domain is also consistent with goals related to individualism, economic freedom, and the potential for the free market to generate increases in total wealth which raise the welfare of all citizens, despite, perhaps, leading to greater relative socioeconomic inequality. This suggests the possibility that the asymmetry in the moderating effect of engagement between the upper and lower ends of the NOCs continuum could be due to heterogeneity within this group of engaged citizens at the lower end. Put differently, such citizens may actually consist of two distinct subgroups, one liberal and one libertarian. If this were the case, it would account for the decreased effect of engagement, as the liberal and libertarian groups would have divergent economic preferences, averaging out to moderate in the aggregated analyses above. I explore this possibility further below in the context of an analysis of belief structure in the American mass public.

5.3. Study 3 – Needs, Engagement and the Structure of Mass Preferences

5.3.1. Data

For the final analyses of this chapter, I return to the 2004 ANES which contains an array of items in the social and economic domains to examine extant ideologies in the mass public and the relationship of these to both NOCS and political engagement. Given the results of previous analyses, I focus here on white Americans only, but note that the results are nearly identical including or excluding minority groups. I rely on three indicators of each dimension in the analysis. In the social dimension, I examine preferences over gay marriage, gay adoption, and abortion rights. In the economic domain, I rely on preferences over government spending and services, government guaranteed jobs and income, and government provided health insurance. The items themselves have been described above. To ease estimation, I trichotomized the seven-point economic items into categories representing liberal, moderate and conservative preferences. The social items were left unaltered.

5.3.2. Analytic Strategy

To examine the qualitative nature of belief systems in the American mass public, I rely on the statistical technique of latent class analysis (LCA; McCutcheon 1989). LCA is similar to factor analysis in that individual indicators are modeled as a function of a latent variable, but it differs in that this latent variable is treated as nominal rather than continuous. In other words, rather than being assigned a score on a continuous latent variable, respondents are classified into categories on the basis of shared patterns of responses across the various items under investigation. The output of the LCA includes both probabilities of class membership for each individual respondent, as well as response probabilities for each observed item within a given latent class. Also similar to the more typical confirmatory factor analysis, the number of latent classes to be estimated must be specified a priori by the analyst. I follow the advice of Nylund, Asparouhov, and Muthen (2007) with respect to model selection, and retain the model which minimizes the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC). I estimated a series of models with an increasing number of latent classes. The lowest BIC was found for the four-class solution, and I retain this model for further analysis in the discussion below.

5.3.3. Results

Latent Class Analysis. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 5.5. First, respondents are fairly well classified, indicating good model fit. The average probability that an individual is a member of the latent class for which they had the highest probability of classification is around .80 for all four classes. In other words, most respondents had a high probability of being classified in one class, and a low probability of being classified in the three other classes. A very poor fitting model would show more equal probabilities of classification across the four classes. Second, the proportion of respondents falling into each of the four classes is relatively equal. No class contains less than one-fifth of the sample, and the largest proportion is held by Class 1, at about 30%. In other words, there is a good reason why the unidimensional model fails as a representation of ideology in the American case: the proportion of citizens who adhere to that model is less than 50% (see also Feldman and Johnston 2009).¹⁷

Each of the entries in the table represents the estimated probability of an individual in the respective class responding to each item within the specified category. For example, there is a .87 probability that a member of Class 1 opposes gay adoption. The patterns of these probabilities across both items and classes can thus be used to determine the qualitative nature of each class. Substantively speaking, all four classes should be very recognizable. The first class is clearly a group of “constrained conservatives,” possessing conservative beliefs in both the economic and social domains. Class 2 fits the typical description of a libertarian, combining social liberalism with (relative) economic conservatism. These individuals are not *as* conservative economically as Class 1. They are more likely than the latter group to report moderate preferences, but reject liberalism to about the same degree, and show majority support for conservatism in the jobs and insurance items (an estimated 71% and 56%, respectively). In contrast, Class 3 shows similar social preferences to Class 2, but combines these with very liberal economic preferences. This group thus fits a “constrained liberal” profile. Finally, Class 4 shows social conservatism and economic liberalism. Such a combination fits a typical “populist” mold, with support for both traditional institutions and government provided social welfare.

¹⁷ It is interesting to note that the present analysis finds only four classes, while Feldman and Johnston (2009) find six. This “shrinking” of the ideological space from 2000 to 2004 is, however, consistent with the idea that the rise of cultural and security concerns in the past two decades has driven engaged citizens to sort their economic preferences into line with their political identifications, and thus their motivational orientations. Indeed, the two classes which are *not* found in 2004, but are extant in 2000, are citizens with moderate economic preferences but either highly conservative or liberal sociocultural preferences. An interesting explanation is that such citizens have now become better “sorted” ideologically (Levendusky 2009) as a function of the dynamics specified in the present dissertation.

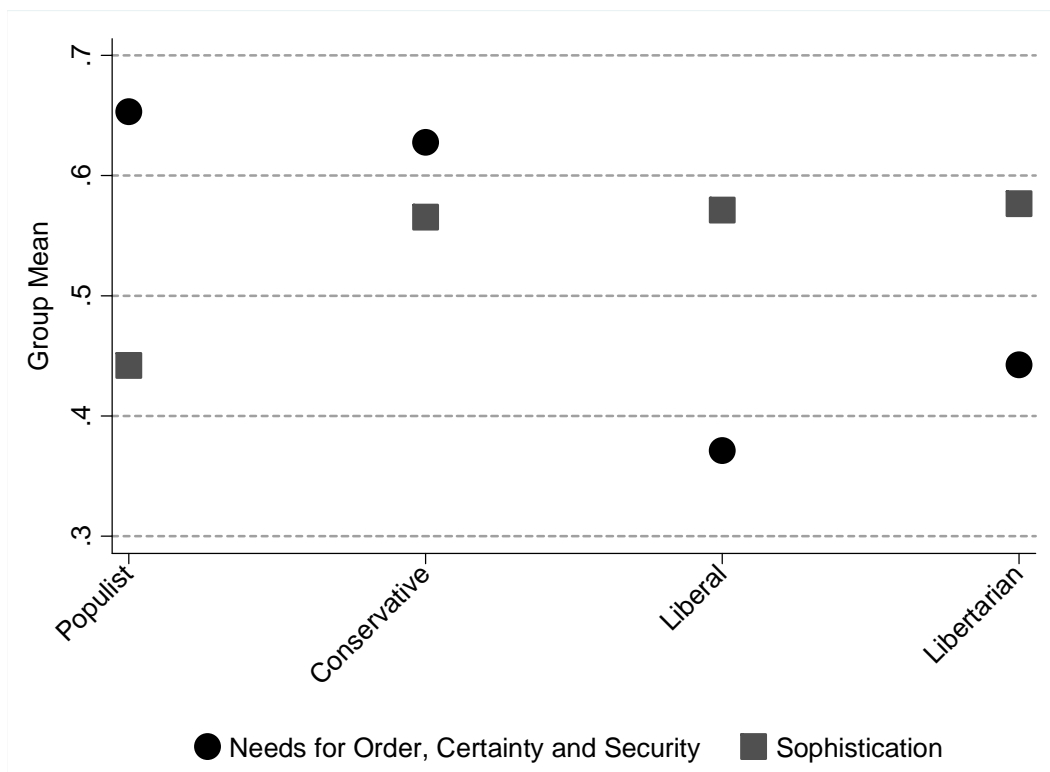
Table 5.5. Latent Ideological Classes, 2004 ANES

		<u>Conservatives</u>	<u>Libertarians</u>	<u>Liberals</u>	<u>Populists</u>
Gay Adoption					
	Support	.13	.87	.98	.27
	Oppose	.87	.13	.02	.73
Abortion					
	Always	.14	.63	.73	.18
	Good Reason	.19	.13	.16	.23
	Rape, etc.	.41	.23	.11	.42
	Never	.27	.01	.00	.18
Gay Marriage					
	Support	.01	.63	.97	.11
	Oppose	.99	.37	.03	.89
Govt. Spending					
	Liberal	.21	.23	.82	.64
	Moderate	.28	.40	.16	.24
	Conservative	.51	.38	.02	.12
Govt. Insurance					
	Liberal	.06	.16	.83	.74
	Moderate	.17	.28	.11	.22
	Conservative	.78	.56	.06	.04
Govt. Jobs					
	Liberal	.03	.09	.65	.41
	Moderate	.16	.20	.22	.24
	Conservative	.82	.71	.13	.35
Proportion in Class		.31	.20	.22	.27
Avg. Pr(In Class)		.83	.77	.88	.82

Characteristics of the Classes. I turn now to an examination of the characteristics of these four classes with respect to both motivation and political engagement. On the basis of the previous analyses, we should expect that constrained conservatives and populists will tend towards the high end of the NOCS spectrum, yet differ substantially in their levels of political engagement. Conversely, on the basis of the findings from Study 2 above, I have hypothesized that constrained liberals and libertarians would show similarly low levels of NOCS, and, perhaps, similar levels of political engagement, suggesting high-level construals for both, but of a qualitatively distinct nature. This pattern would explain the asymmetry in the dynamics of the relationship between NOCS and economic preferences seen in the analyses above.

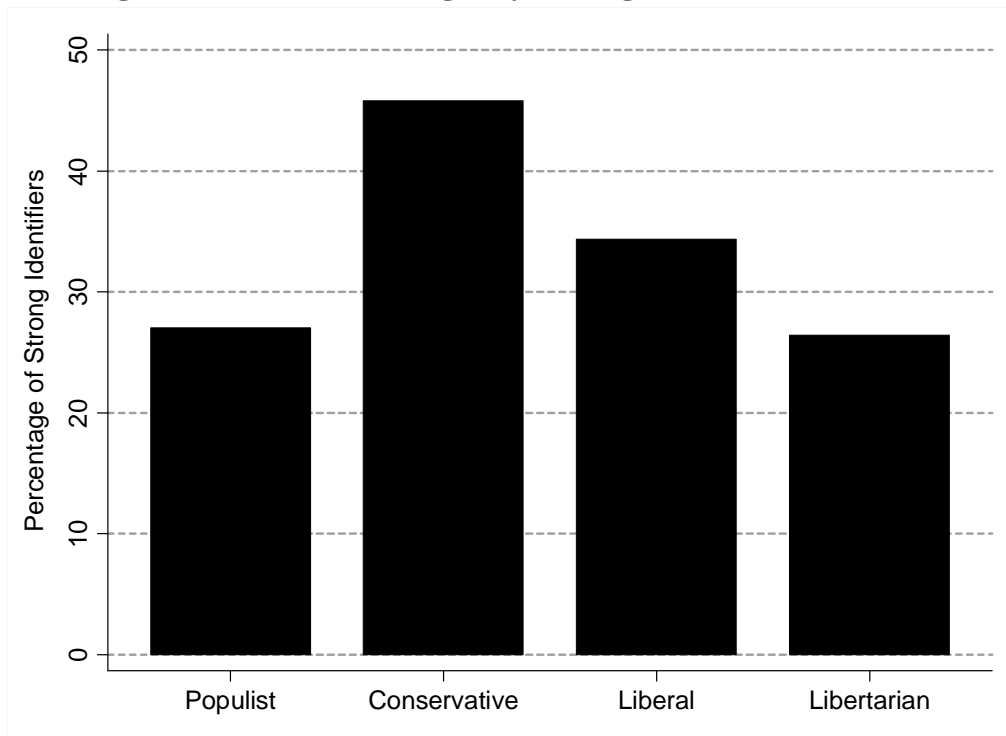
I generated means for both NOCS and political sophistication for each group of citizens, which are plotted in Figure 5.6. Each variable is coded on a zero to one scale. The findings strongly support expectations. The mean levels of NOCS for populists and conservatives is nearly identical ($M=.65$ and $M=.63$, respectively). These two groups, however, diverge substantially in terms of their political knowledge, with conservatives quite a bit higher in their mean levels of sophistication ($M=.44$ and $M=.57$, respectively). In contrast, liberals and libertarians show few differences in their levels of either NOCS or sophistication. For the former variable, liberals show a mean of .37 while libertarians show a mean of .44, both well below the values for populists and conservatives, although this difference is statistically significant ($d=.07$, $p<.05$). With respect to political knowledge, there is no significant difference between liberals and libertarians ($M=.58$ and $M=.57$, respectively). These levels of sophistication are also nearly identical to that of constrained conservatives, and significantly higher than that of populists.

Figure 5.6. NOCS and Political Sophistication by Ideological Class, 2004 ANES



We can also consider differences across the groups in terms of their average levels of partisan strength. The percentage of strong identifiers across the four groups is shown in Figure 5.6. Populists, liberals and libertarians are all less likely to identify strongly with their parties than constrained conservatives. Libertarians are also marginally significantly less likely to strongly identify than liberals, but do not differ significantly from populists. Overall, this pattern is consistent with theory. First, conservatives and liberals are the strongest identifiers of the four classes. This is consistent with the idea that individuals within these groups have aligned themselves with the elite space on the basis of motivational orientations, and subsequently adopted the understanding of the economic dimension disseminated from these groups. In contrast, populists identify more weakly with the two parties and are relatively unsophisticated. This group is best described as simply detached from American politics, which is again consistent with their low level of construal of economic issues, and thus explains their tendency towards economic liberalism despite their high levels of NOCS. Finally, libertarians are also weaker identifiers than conservatives and liberals, despite having equivalent levels of political sophistication. This is a particularly important point. As I have argued above, identification with actors at the elite level tends to lead to ideological constraint across the various dimensions of policy in American politics through both simple cue-taking on specific issues, and the reception of abstract frames which link specific policies to broader ideological ideas (Goren 2005; Goren, Federico and Kittilson 2009; Levendusky 2009). Thus, despite having a similar motivational profile to constrained liberals, and similar levels of sophistication, libertarians appear to eschew the dominant narrative disseminated from the elite level, leading to weaker identification, and allowing for a more malleable ideology, one which may not fit the mold of contemporary political conflict.

Figure 5.7. Partisan Strength by Ideological Class, 2004 ANES



5.3.4. Further Differentiating Liberals from Libertarians

While a comprehensive treatment is beyond the scope of the present study, we can further consider the theoretical underpinnings of the liberal/libertarian distinction. First, to the extent that economic issues are seen from a low construal level, personalized point of view, low NOCS implies a focus on goals related to individual achievement and gains versus non-gains (Higgins 1998; Schwartz 1992). Thus, individuals with low NOCS, particularly those with high levels of income, to the extent that they view such issues in personal terms, should flock to economic conservatism. It is thus possible that the libertarian class of citizens, despite their levels of sophistication, nonetheless view such issues in personalized terms, and thus seek the promotion of their own economic well-being, similar to populists, but in an opposite fashion. Their tendency to eschew political identifications, to some degree at least, may temper the tendency towards depersonalization. As research within the social identity paradigm has demonstrated, people differ in the level at which they find “optimal distinctiveness” with respect to their social affiliations (Brewer 1991). In other words, there are individual differences in the need to be a part of a social group versus the need to be seen as a unique individual. Low NOCS, generally speaking, should be associated with a tendency towards individualism on the optimal distinctiveness spectrum, and thus a general tendency to forego strong political identifications, at least on average. We see this pattern in the extent of strong identification across constrained conservatives, constrained liberals, and libertarians, with the latter two groups identifying less strongly the former. Perhaps libertarians are particularly sensitive to this individualism. This prediction is borne to some degree by the data. The average income of libertarians on a zero to one scale is .55, while it is only .48 for liberals, a highly significant, if modest difference. Thus, there is at least some support for the notion that libertarians pursue self-interest in a way consistent with their motivational profile.

Second, there is more than one way to view free market institutions from a low NOCS point of view. The constrained liberal interpretation focuses on the promotion of goals related to socioeconomic equality and institutional evolution and change (Jost et al. 2003a). This, however, is only one possible set of goals consistent with the low NOCS motivational profile, despite being the most extensively discussed (e.g. Jost et al. 2003a). An alternative concerns basic notions of freedom and individualism as abstract ideals. In other words, the idea that the individual is inviolate, and concerns with social stability and equality cannot outweigh such individual rights. While such rhetoric is often utilized by Republicans at the elite level, and thus forms an ideological basis for the constrained conservative position above, there is nonetheless something fundamentally distinct between the way in which these ideas are understood between conservatives and libertarians.

In the former case, such notions are really about symbolic conflicts over American values and traditions, not necessarily freedom per se. In other words, in championing freedom, Republicans are in effect tapping cherished symbols rather than the substantive ideas themselves. It is thus about conflict over tradition and American pride. This is consistent with the tendency for such rhetoric to invoke “socialism” or “communism,” as we have seen in the recent debates over healthcare, thus highlighting a despised outgroup. No prominent left-leaning politicians in America are calling for very drastic changes to the structure of American economic institutions, and thus the distinction between left and right is drawn out in the context of symbolic conflict.

In this sense, then, Jost et al. (2003a) are correct in linking the motivational foundations of constrained conservatism to a general discomfort with change and diversity of ideas. If nothing else, this can be seen in the seeming inability of constrained conservatives, by definition, to connect the freedom they call for in the economic domain to freedom in the social domain.

Beyond notions of individual rights, however, the libertarian position of faith in the free market to generate positive outcomes for society as a whole is highly consistent with the general comfort with uncertainty and unpredictability associated with low NOCS. There is something fundamentally disconcerting about the free market as a mechanism for creating social order. Social order *emerges* from a free market system, rather than being imposed from the top down, and thus requires a certain degree of comfort with uncertainty, and a willingness to forego handing over control to a centralized authority. The political philosopher, and self-described “bleeding heart libertarian,” Matt Zwolinski (2011b), evinces this perspective well when he argues, “It is natural to want the government to protect and promote our most important values. After all, when governments try to do something of value, they come up with a plan. ‘Leaving things to the market,’ by contrast, doesn’t sound like much of a plan at all. But plans are overrated. Or, at least, singular overarching and one-size-fits-all plans are overrated. The great virtue of a free society is that it allows for a multiplicity of plans, and for the emergence of success through an evolutionary, trial and error process.” In this sense, adherence to free market values is quite “open” in a personality sense, and requires a sort of faith in the ability of society to continue to function and prosper in the absence of a hand on the controls. The general anxiety most citizens have with the concept of anarchy is surely anecdotal evidence in favor of this idea.

A libertarian point of view in the economic domain then is not at all inconsistent with a motivational orientation which entails comfort with ambiguity and uncertainty. The failure of recent research to consider this possibility is, I would guess, largely the result of our research being done “inside the model” so to speak. We, as political scientists, exist ourselves within an historical era of American politics which shapes our own understanding of ideological conflict. Our failure to see beyond the equality-inequality, traditionalism-radicalism divide in the economic domain has hidden such possibilities from our view. More work is needed which specifically addresses the dispositional underpinnings of political libertarianism. As seen above, these individuals constitute a significant percentage of the mass public. In the next chapter, I consider these ideas in greater depth in the context of a consideration of the past and future of the motivational cleavage which defines contemporary American politics. As I will argue, I believe that libertarianism, in one form or another, and its roots in low NOCS, could be an important part of the future of American political conflict.

5.4. Chapter Conclusion

The present chapter has considered in empirical depth the connection between NOCS and economic preferences. I have argued that NOCS translates into economic preferences differentially conditional on the level of construal through which citizens represent economic issues, and thus conditional on political engagement, as demonstrated in the previous chapter. More specifically, citizens with low levels of political engagement tend to see the economic

domain in personalized terms, with respect to the implications of various policies for the self. For these individuals then, the relevant NOCS-consistent goals which shape preferences concern personal economic security, and those high in such needs tend towards the maximization of such security through their support for social welfare. In contrast, highly engaged citizens represent economic issues in higher level terms. For low NOCS citizens, the relevant goals thus become socioeconomic equality and institutional evolution in the name of social justice. For high NOCS citizens the relevant goals concern societal order and the maintenance of the institutional status quo.

Consistent with these ideas, I first considered the impact of the empirically related, yet conceptually distinct goals of personal security and societal order on economic preferences across levels of political engagement. I found that security goals had a substantively meaningful impact for low interest citizens, but no impact for high interest citizens. Conversely, the goal of societal order had a large impact for high interest citizens, but no impact at all for low interest citizens. Importantly, as would be expected if these two goals are derivative of a single underlying motivational continuum, they are meaningfully correlated. Nonetheless, they have exactly opposite effects on economic preferences, with the former leading to greater economic *liberalism*, and the latter leading to greater economic *conservatism*.

In the second study of this chapter, I directly tested the relationship between NOCS and economic preferences across levels of political engagement utilizing three separate datasets from the American National Elections Studies. Consistent with theory, I found that low engaged citizens become more economically liberal as NOCS increases. Indeed, the *most liberal citizens in this analysis, all else equal, were low engagement, high NOCS individuals*. This is a striking result when considered in light of recent theorizing, as it directly contradicts predictions derived from this work. In contrast, high engaged citizens became increasingly conservative as such needs increased. I was also able to replicate the basic dynamic with an entirely distinct measure, namely, the need for cognitive closure in the 2008 ANES, providing additional support for the generality of this effect.

The pattern uncovered in these analyses is, perhaps, particularly striking in that the operationalization utilized for NOCS has often been considered as a measure of the construct of “authoritarianism.” With the exception of Lipset (1960), no work of which I am aware has ever theorized, or found empirically, an effect of authoritarianism on liberalism of any stripe. In contrast, I have theorized, and shown here, that this type of “populism” is actually consistent with the motivational profile of authoritarians across *both* the social *and* economic domains. This simply indicates the importance of going beyond a highly abstracted (and often, trait-based) framework to understand preference formation in social cognitive terms. In other words, we must continue to seek the motivational underpinnings of preferences, and understand how they translate into preferences *conditional on citizen representations of issues themselves* (Mischel and Shoda 1995; Shoda 1999).

The patterns also contained subtleties of interest. First, the interaction between NOCS and engagement was driven largely by the upper end of the NOCS spectrum. The gap between low and high engagement citizens was much larger on the upper end than the lower end. Also, in both 2000 and 2004, I found *polarization* of preferences on the upper but not the lower end. For high NOCS citizens, the highly engaged were more conservative than the average citizen, while such citizens with low political engagement were more liberal. For low NOCS citizens, by contrast, the highly engaged were more liberal, but low engagement did not lead to conservatism.

The degree of liberalism for highly engaged, low NOCS citizens also varied across the three ANES studies.

In the final study of this chapter I considered the relationship between NOCS, political engagement, and the extant ideologies in the American mass public in 2004. I found, consistent with previous results, that “constrained conservatives” were, on average, high on both NOCS and political engagement. “Populists,” in contrast, while possessing similar levels of NOCS, had very low levels of political engagement, consistent with the patterns uncovered in Study 2. The most intriguing results to emerge from Study 3, however, concern the patterns for “constrained liberals” and “libertarians.” Effectively, these two groups look identical with respect to both NOCS and political sophistication. Both are significantly lower in these needs than constrained conservatives and populists, but possess similar levels of sophistication to constrained conservatives. One key distinction between libertarians and liberals concerns their degree of attachment to parties. Libertarians were less likely to strongly identify with a political party, suggesting that they may reject the dominant narrative extant in American politics, seeking a distinct (though nonetheless abstract) understanding of economic issues.

Overall, this chapter provides very strong evidence in support of the theory put forth in Chapter 2. The motivational continuum identified by recent research, which I have represented in terms of NOCS, is a critically important determinant of economic policy preferences in the American case. Importantly, however, the translation of this continuum into preferences is conditional on how citizens understand policy conflict itself. The figures of this chapter make clear why the present study finds such large effects, whereas previous work has generally failed to find strong connections between related psychological needs and preferences. Specifically, because the effect of this variable is opposite in sign across levels of political engagement, a failure to take into account this heterogeneity will lead to null findings in aggregated analyses, as the two effects cancel. The failure to consider these more complex relationships between motivation and economic preferences is the result of a failure to go beyond the stereotypes of left and right which pervade contemporary politics. We cannot, as political scientists, allow ourselves to be unduly influenced by pop politics. Political issues are complex, and citizens are heterogeneous. If we simply rely on caricatures in the generation of our hypotheses, we will be left with models which apply to only a select few, and which represent only a small slice of American public opinion.

Chapter 6

The Past and Future of American Ideology

One of the key insights of the present dissertation is that the relationship between the motivational continuum I have identified as needs for order, certainty and security (hereafter NOCS) and economic preferences is the result of the dynamic interplay between elite party images, citizen characteristics, and political engagement. More specifically, I have argued that the association of the two major parties with culturally divergent symbols has driven partisan informational sorting amongst the politically engaged on the basis of NOCS, and a process of cue-taking and ideological development which drives the “constraint” we observe between social and economic conservatism, and the degree to which NOCS structures these associations. This model, however, suggests the historically bound nature of the structure to mass preferences which we observe in contemporary American politics. If the process by which such constraint is generated is contingent on the symbolic nature of extant party politics, then so too will be the end result of the aggregation of this process. Interestingly, this model also suggests that the rise of ideological constraint in the last three decades highlighted by political scientists (e.g. Abramowitz 2010; Levendusky 2009) is the result not of elite polarization per se, but of polarization on the cultural dimension.

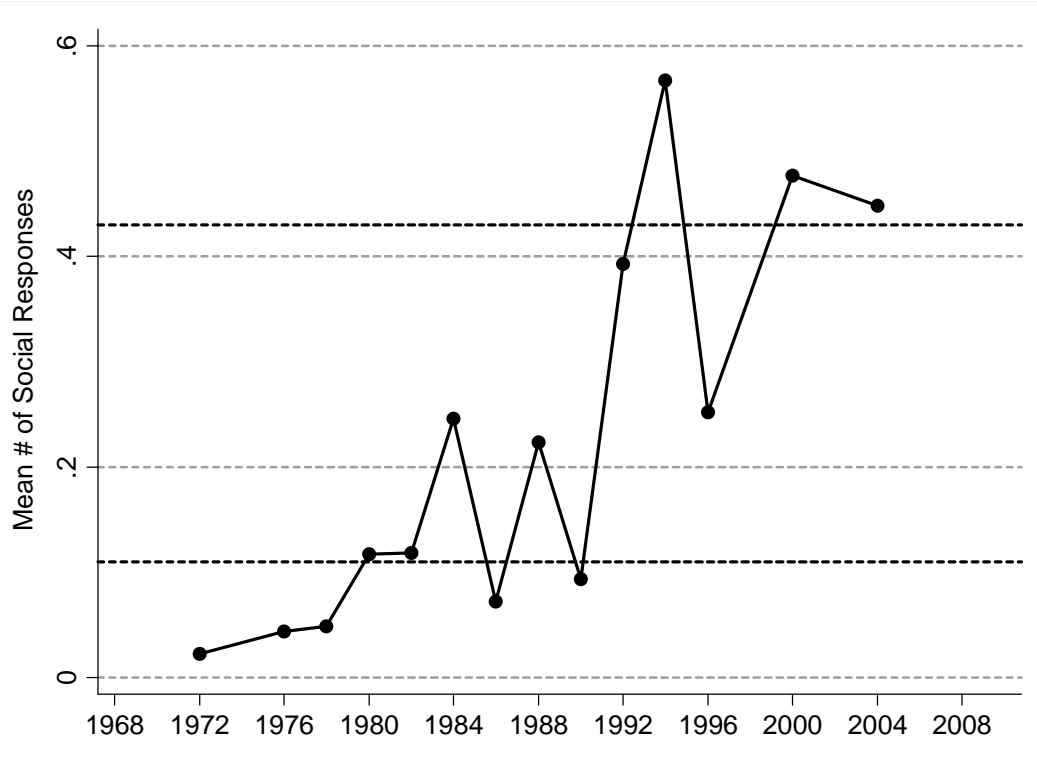
This idea, however, conflicts with nearly all recent work on the psychology of ideology. This work seeks transcendent relationships between motivational profiles and personality traits and “core” aspects of ideology. In other words, there are characteristics of left and right which transcend historical circumstance, and thus manifest similarly with respect to their connection to dispositions across time and place (e.g. Alford, Funk and Hibbing 2005; Jost et al. 2003a; Smith et al. 2011). In the present chapter, I argue that patterns we observe in contemporary American politics with respect to dispositions and ideology are time-bound. In this sense, the reemergence of interest in the psychology of ideology during the contemporary period is no coincidence, but rather, is a very function of the fact that the relationships being uncovered have emerged within this era. Political scientists have not become so interested in the possibility of dispositional and genetic foundations to liberalism and conservatism randomly. The interest has arisen because our contemporary politics behaves like this is the case.

6.1. The Emergence of the Culture War

The key event which has driven the ideological constraint which we now observe in American politics, and which underlies the emergence of NOCS as itself a structuring force to ideology across domains, is the emergence of cultural polarization at the elite level with respect to Democrats and Republicans. Polarization of the parties ideologically has increased drastically over the last thirty years (McCarty, Poole and Rosenthal 2008). It is, however, only since the

early 1990s that the cultural division between Democrats and Republicans has been prominent (Layman 2001). Indeed, the emergence of the culture war is often symbolized by Pat Buchanan’s “culture war speech” during the 1992 Republican convention.

Figure 6.1. Mean Number of Social/Religious Party “Likes and Dislikes” Over Time



The idea that cultural divisions emerged only in the early 1990s likely does not ring true to many. While a good deal of evidence suggests that, at the very least, the association of religiosity to partisanship emerged at this time (Layman 2001), we can examine this further empirically. The American National Elections Studies has consistently asked respondents to state things that they like and dislike about the two major political parties. Responses are recorded verbatim, and subsequently coded into a number of categories. The ANES cumulative file contains all of these items for each year in which they were asked. I utilized the “master code” file to categorize categories of statements as to whether they referenced a social or religious characteristic of the parties. The categories which I included are shown in the Appendix to this chapter. I then calculated the mean number of social/religious responses per respondent for each year. I plot these means in Figure 6.1.

This figure makes clear the extent to which the social domain became a critical partisan division in the early 1990s. While there is a small rise in the mean in 1980s relative to the 1970s, a surge in social/religious responses occurs in the 1992 election, nearly doubling in magnitude from 1988, and quadrupling in magnitude from 1990. Indeed, this year appears to be a structural

break in the data. I have also plotted two reference lines which represent the mean of the means for the pre-1992 period, and the mean of the means for the 1992-2004 period. Clearly, something changed in the 1992 election with respect to the way the two parties were viewed.

Partisan change in the aggregate is slow; it takes time (Green, Palmquist and Schickler 2002). The emergence of the connection between NOCS and economic preferences should thus have emerged as a function of the sorting process which began in the early 1990s in interaction with strong elite cues on that dimension. Fortunately, the ANES contains data which are well-suited to examining this possibility. Specifically, the 1992 ANES contains the same four childrearing items which I have utilized to operationalize NOCS in the studies above, as well as an identical set of economic preference items. To the extent that this relationship *is* emergent, we should see a strong difference in the pattern of results in 1992 relative to the 2000-2008 studies. Put another way, if partisan sorting along this motivational continuum only began around 1992, then the relationship between needs and economic preferences should be weak at this time, as the development of abstract belief systems connecting this dimension to the economic domain should not have had sufficient time to develop.

Using these data, I estimated an identical regression to the 2000 and 2004 studies, utilizing political knowledge and partisan strength as proxies for political engagement, and the same three economic items to operationalize economic conservatism: government spending, government insurance, and government guaranteed jobs and income. The results of this regression are shown in Table 6.1. Consistent with the results of the previous chapter, I consider whites only in this analysis.¹⁸ First, the interaction between NOCS and political sophistication is in the wrong direction, small, and insignificant ($B=-.03, p>.80$). The interaction with partisan strength just attains significance at the .05 level, but is much smaller than the effects seen in the other three studies ($B=.15, p<.05$). In addition, the constituent term on NOCS is small and insignificant ($B=-.03, p>.60$).

To better interpret these findings, I plot predicted values of economic conservatism in Figure 6.2. I place the y-axis on the same scale as the 2004 graph for comparison purposes. As seen, the dynamic is substantially muted relative to the three other years examined in the 2000s. The marginal effect of moving from low to high NOCS amongst citizens with low political engagement is near zero and does not approach significance ($B=-.03$). The marginal effect of NOCS for the highly engaged is also small, and also fails to attain statistical significance ($B=.09, p>.10$). The combination of these two effects, however, does result in a marginally significant increase in conservatism as a function of engagement for those with high NOCS ($B=.13, p<.10$).

Overall, this analysis contrasts sharply with what we have observed for 2000, 2004 and 2008. NOCS has little effect on preferences for either the low or high engaged, suggesting that processes of partisan sorting and economic cue-taking had yet to exert a strong influence on the American citizenry. Hints of the emerging dynamic are apparent in the data, but, as would be expected if the dynamic itself is conditional on processes which were ongoing, is muted.

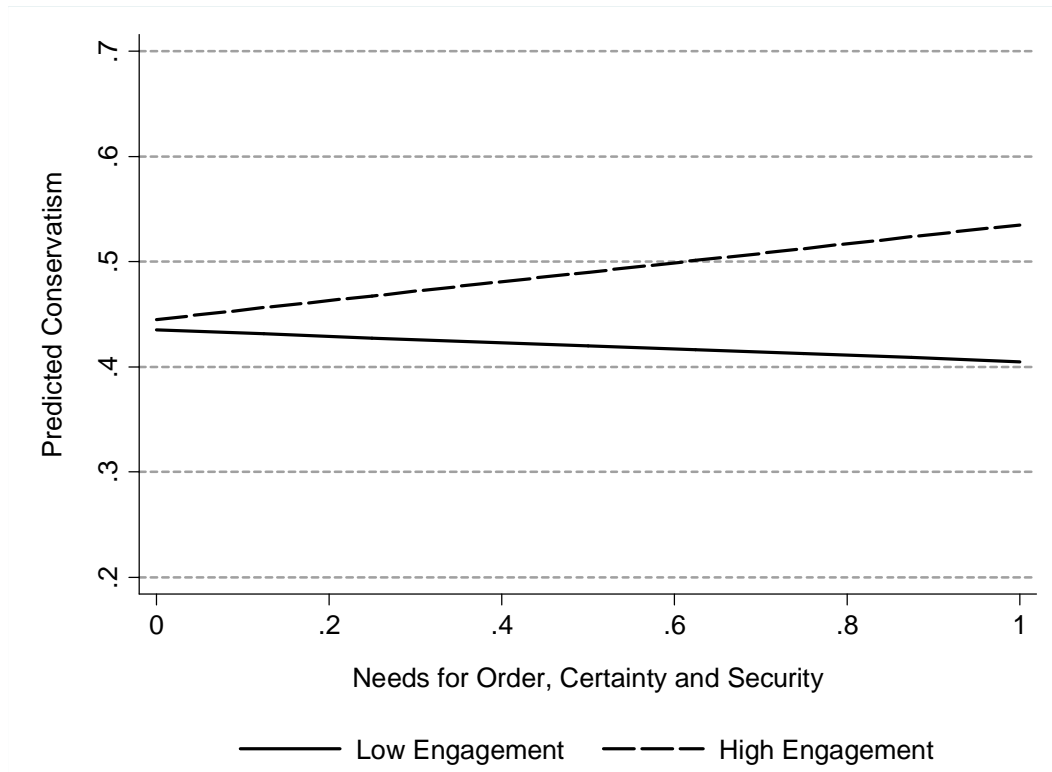
¹⁸ The results did not differ at all for a full sample analysis which is consistent with the theoretical ideas expounded above.

Table 6.1. NOCS and Economic Preferences, 1992 ANES

Variable	Whites Only
NOCS	-.03 (.08)
NOCS X Soph	-.03 (.13)
NOCS X Strength	.15 (.08)*
Sophistication	.10 (.08)
Partisan Strength	-.09 (.05)^
Age	.10 (.03)*
Male	.04 (.02)*
HS Degree	.03 (.03)
Some College	.03 (.03)
2-Year Degree	.01 (.03)
4-Year Degree	.06 (.03)^
Post-Graduate	.00 (.04)
Income	.13 (.03)*
Unemployed	-.05 (.04)
Religiosity	.10 (.03)*
Constant	.27 (.06)*
R ²	.10
N	791

Notes: Entries are OLS coefficients and robust standard errors. * $p < .05$; ^ $p < .10$.

Figure 6.2. NOCS and Economic Preferences, 1992 ANES



6.2. The Republican Revolution

As I said, partisan change takes time, and the emergence of the relationship expected between NOCS and economic conservatism should be a dual function of changing party images at the elite level, and strong cues along the economic dimension. Again, fortunately, the ANES offers an opportunity to put this on display. The 1992 study, in addition to the typical cross-sectional sample, was part of a multi-year panel study, including the midterm elections of 1994. The two years between these elections are significant for both the so-called “Republican Revolution,” culminating in the 1994 sweep of Congress, as well as heated debates between the Clinton administration, Republicans and right-wing groups over the issue of health insurance. In effect, the period from 1992-1994 constitutes the exact confluence of factors we would expect to drive an emergence of the dynamic between NOCS and economic conservatism: a changing set of symbolic party images and strong cues on the economic dimension.

I estimate the same model as above, but this time utilizing the 1992-1994 panel study. The dependent variable for this analysis is economic conservatism in 1994. I measure all independent variables in 1992, and control for economic conservatism in 1992. Thus, any influence of these factors on 1994 preferences is above and beyond what effects they may have

in 1992. In this sense, and due to the time lag of two years, this constitutes a particularly conservative test.

Table 6.2. NOCS and Economic Preferences, 1992-1994 ANES Panel

Variable	Whites Only
NOCS	-.21 (.09)*
NOCS X Soph	.26 (.10)*
NOCS X Strength	.12 (.08)
Lagged Preference	.50 (.05)*
Sophistication	-.09 (.07)
Partisan Strength	-.03 (.05)
Age	-.03 (.04)
Male	.02 (.02)
HS Degree	-.05 (.03)
Some College	-.01 (.04)
2-Year Degree	-.06 (.04)
4-Year Degree	-.03 (.04)
Post-Graduate	-.07 (.04)^
Income	.09 (.03)*
Unemployed	-.01 (.04)
Religiosity	.03 (.03)
Constant	.36 (.06)*
R ²	.36
N	452

Notes: Entries are OLS regression coefficients and robust standard errors.

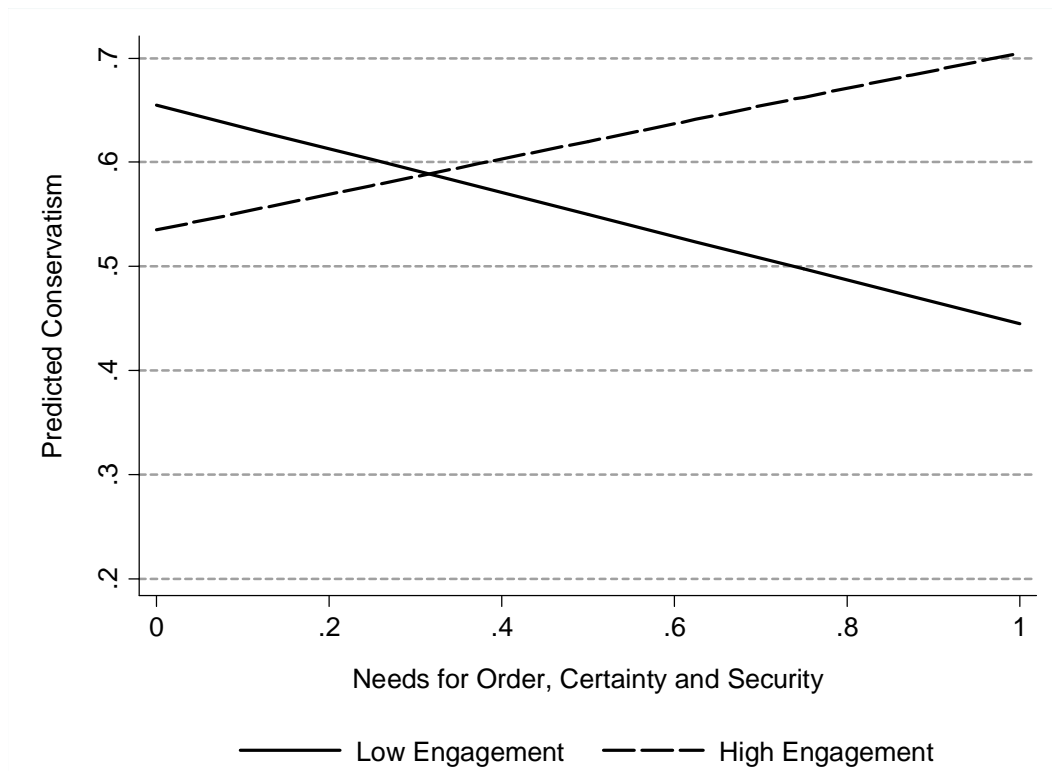
* $p < .05$; ^ $p < .10$.

The estimates for this model are shown in Table 6.2. I find strong support for expectations. The interaction between NOCS and sophistication in 1992 is large and highly significant ($B = .26, p < .05$), which contrasts sharply with the results for economic conservatism measured in 1992. The partisan strength interaction is of a meaningful magnitude, but only approaches significance ($B = .12, p < .15$). In addition, the constituent term on NOCS is large, in

the expected negative direction, and highly significant ($B=-.21, p<.05$). Put simply, things look very similar to 2000 when examining the transition from 1992 to 1994.

Once again, I generated predicted values of economic conservatism in 1994, and plot these in Figure 6.3. I again place the figure on the 2004 scale for comparison purposes. The marginal effect of NOCS for the unengaged is negative, relatively large and significant ($B=-.21, p<.05$). A change from low to high amongst these citizens entails an expected decrease in economic conservatism of about one-fifth of the scale. The marginal effect for the highly engaged, by contrast, is positive and significant ($B=.17, p<.05$), entailing a change of about 17% of the scale. As with the analyses in the other years, we also see the same asymmetry between the upper and lower ends of the NOCS continuum, with high NOCS citizens driving the pattern to a greater degree. The effect of engagement for these individuals is positive and significant ($B=.26, p<.05$), while the effect is only marginally significant for low NOCS citizens, and about half the size ($B=-.12, p<.10$). Overall, despite slightly smaller effect sizes relative to 2004 and 2008, the basic pattern emerges in the 1992-1994 transition period. This presents a strong contrast to the 1992 cross-sectional study, where the dynamics had yet to emerge in force. In a sense, the confluence of factors which define this period constitute a “mini-realignment” of sorts for American politics. I address the implications of this realignment for ideology in the next section.

Figure 6.3. NOCS and Economic Preferences, 1992-1994 ANES Panel Study



6.3. The (Recent) Rise of Ideological Constraint

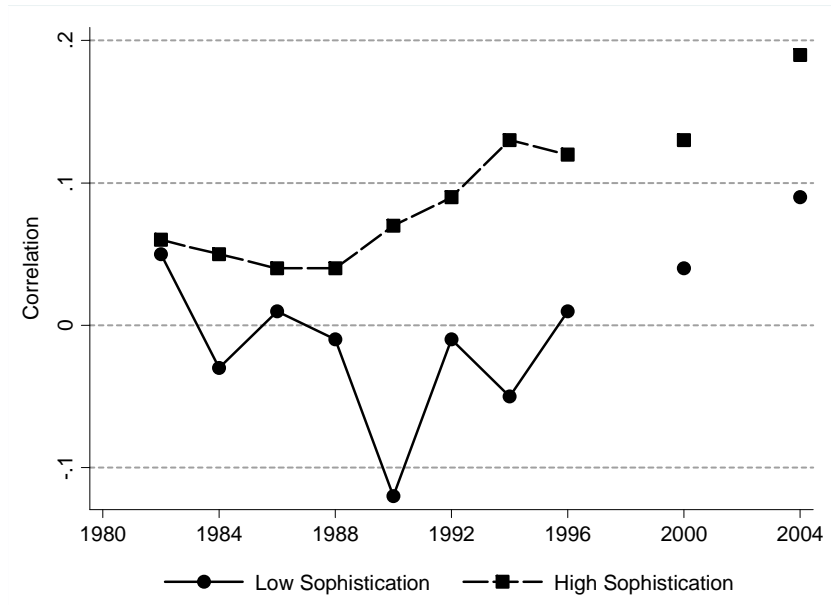
Simply put, the extent of ideological constraint in the mass public is a recent phenomenon (Abramowitz 2010). This should not be a surprise to political scientists who have long lamented the *lack* of constraint to citizens' beliefs (Converse 1964). The fact that political scientists have so long obsessed over the gap between mass and elite levels in terms of ideology makes it all the more surprising that recent theorizing in the domain of personality and politics places so much emphasis on the ways in which dispositions structure connections between transcendental aspects of cultural and economic conflict. If this *were* the case, then constraint should not vary so much over time. At the very least it should be observed amongst sophisticated citizens consistently across time.

It is not. I again draw on the ANES cumulative file, and examine the correlations, over time, between preferences for more or less government spending and services and abortion, spending and services and moral traditionalism, and moral traditionalism and egalitarianism.¹⁹ I break the sample down into low and high sophisticates on the basis of a median split. Sophistication, to be consistent across time, was generated as the average of political interest and the interviewer's subjective rating of the respondent's political knowledge, as in the 2008 ANES analyses in Chapter 5. These are plotted in Figure 6.4. In all three cases we see clear evidence of an *emerging* ideological constraint, and even then, only in force amongst the politically sophisticated. In addition, the emergence of constraint, as expected, only takes off in the early 1990s, settling into an upper equilibrium in the 2000s. Constraint is a new phenomenon, and this suggests that the underlying psychological dynamics are historically contingent in the ways I have argued. *Economic and social conservatism go together in contemporary American politics, in the aggregate, amongst a large portion of citizens, but this does not have to be so, and is conditional on the dynamics of party conflict and polarization, and the political engagement of citizens themselves.*

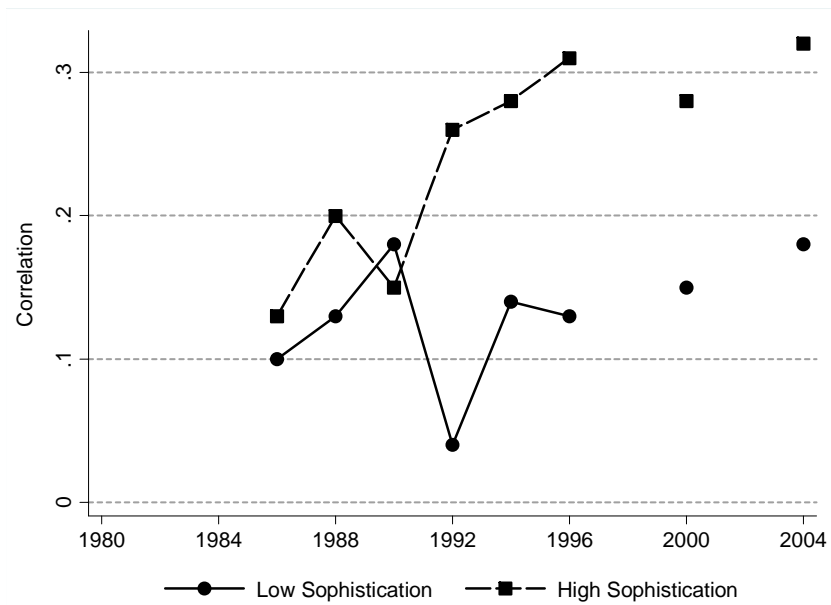
¹⁹ The items for these correlations are given in the Appendix to this chapter.

Figure 6.4. Ideological Constraint over Time

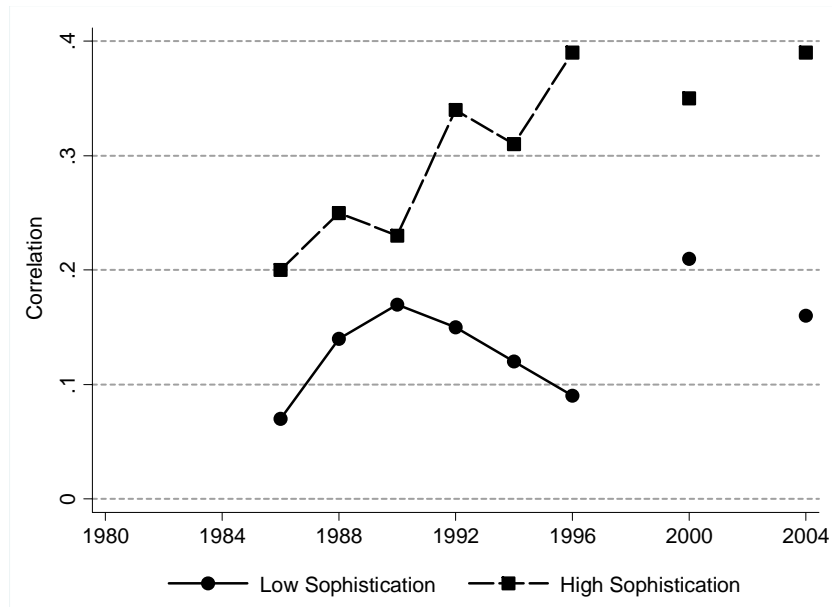
Panel A. Government Spending and Services with Abortion



Panel B. Government Spending and Services with Moral Traditionalism



Panel C. Moral Traditionalism with Egalitarianism



6.4. Domestic and International Economic Policy

To this point my analysis has focused exclusively on domestic social welfare policy. This is consistent with research to date, yet ignores an emerging locus of conflict related to economic policy on a global scale. We have already seen the potential for globalization to elicit strong ideological responses in American politics, from the Seattle protests against the WTO in 1999, to the neopopulist rhetoric of right-leaning politicians and pundits like Pat Buchanan; we see it in laments over the decline of U.S. manufacturing (i.e. “we don’t make things anymore”),²⁰ and the ever-present calls by Presidential candidates for policies which prevent companies from “shipping jobs overseas.” In an increasingly globalized world, economic policy will itself increasingly concern America’s relationship with emerging economic powerhouses such as China and India, and the implications of the economic rise of these countries for American interests at home and abroad.

Importantly, however, there is no *necessary* ideological connection between domestic and international economic policy. To be sure, parallels abound, as they inevitably must. Politically sophisticated actors will always attempt logical reconciliations of policy stances which may, at first glance, appear unrelated. Left leaning activists, for example, often frame globalization as an issue of global equality, thus globalizing their understanding of domestic social welfare policy.

²⁰ See, for example, President Obama’s speech in Iowa in June of 2011: “And a big part of that, a big part of our future has to be a robust and growing manufacturing sector. We’ve got to make things right here in America. We’ve always made things here in America. It’s in our blood.”

From this view, as within the domestic sphere, capitalism on a global scale is exploitative of poorer nations in the same sense in which it is exploitative of poorer citizens on a domestic scale. On the free market side, breaking down barriers to capital mobility and international trade is the straightforward analogue of free market reforms taken domestically since the 1980s. But the realm of the think tanks and activist organizations is not the realm of day to day politics, and surely not the realm of the average citizen. Such connections are *constructed*, not givens, and could always be constructed differently, as I will argue further below.

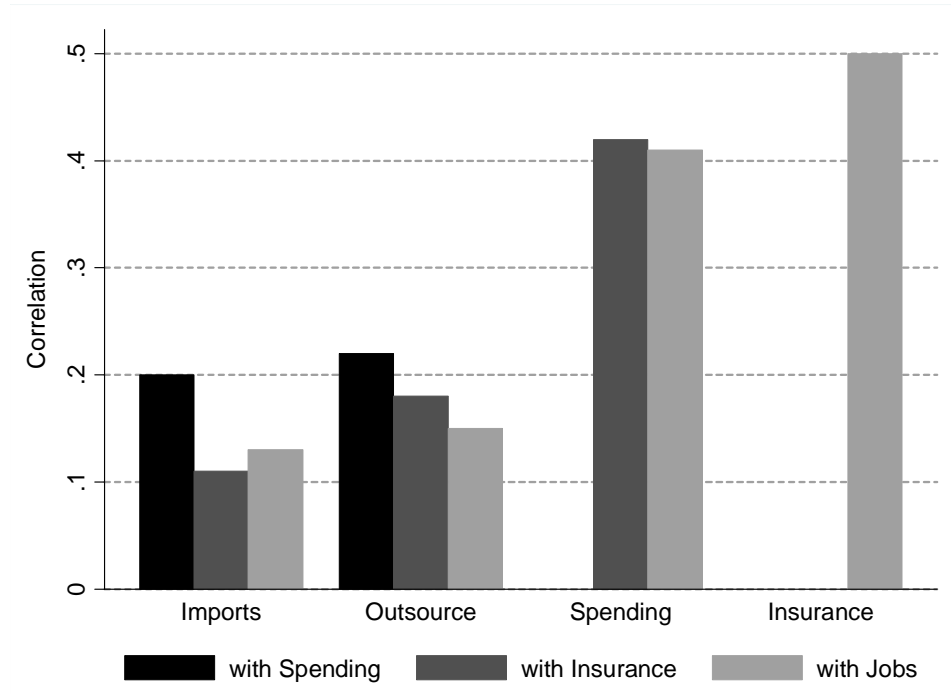
First, however, simply consider that the connection between domestic and international economic policy, in the mind of the average citizen, is fairly weak in the contemporary era. The 2004 and 2008 American National Elections Studies contain two items which tap policies relevant to the international domain of economic policy. The first item presented to respondents read, “Some people have suggested placing new limits on foreign imports in order to protect American jobs. Others say that such limits would raise consumer prices and hurt American exports. Do you FAVOR or OPPOSE placing new limits on imports, or haven’t you thought much about this?” The second item read, “Recently, some big American companies have been hiring workers in foreign countries to replace workers in the U.S. Do you think the federal government should DISCOURAGE companies from doing this, ENCOURAGE companies to do this, or STAY OUT of this matter?” For those who say “encourage” or “discourage,” a follow-up item was asked which probed the extent of this belief, from “Only a little,” to “A great deal.” As very few people state that the government should encourage outsourcing, I code this variable to range from “0,” for respondents who say “stay out” or “encourage,” to “2,” for respondents who say the government should “discourage a great deal.”

In Figure 6.5 I present correlations among the domestic (government spending, insurance and guaranteed jobs) and international economic policy items across the two election studies. As seen, there are strong intercorrelations amongst the domestic items, approaching .50 in most cases. In contrast, the correlations between international and domestic items are much weaker, reaching a maximum of around .20, but typically much smaller. These weaker associations suggest that the public does not readily connect the domestic to the international in the economic domain, but rather, forms preferences over these domains through distinct processes.

One reason for this lack of connection concerns the extent to which elites make a connection explicit for the mass public. While an emerging issue, international economic policy remains subservient to domestic concerns in American politics. In addition, to a large extent at least, and for the time being, such issues are largely “valence” issues (Stokes 1963), in the sense that they inspire contentless appeals to protecting American workers and the American economy (e.g. “stop shipping jobs overseas”). This entails a lack of strong divisions between Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives, over specific international economic issues. This lack of divide decreases the overall constraint observed between the domestic and international realms of economic policy (Zaller 1992). To see this more clearly, I have plotted the correlations between the domestic and international policies and both partisan and ideological identifications in Figure 6.6. We see a clear pattern in which domestic policy preferences are strongly tied to left-right orientations in American politics, while international preferences are but weakly associated with these orientations.

Figure 6.5. Correlations amongst Domestic and International Economic Policy Preferences

Panel A. 2004 ANES



Panel B. 2008 ANES

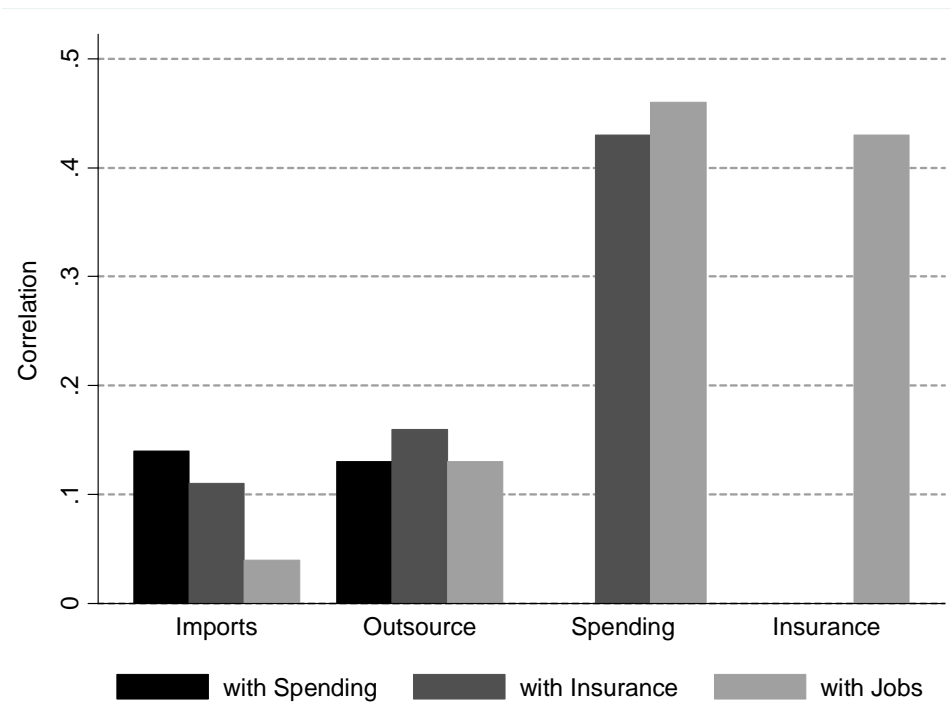
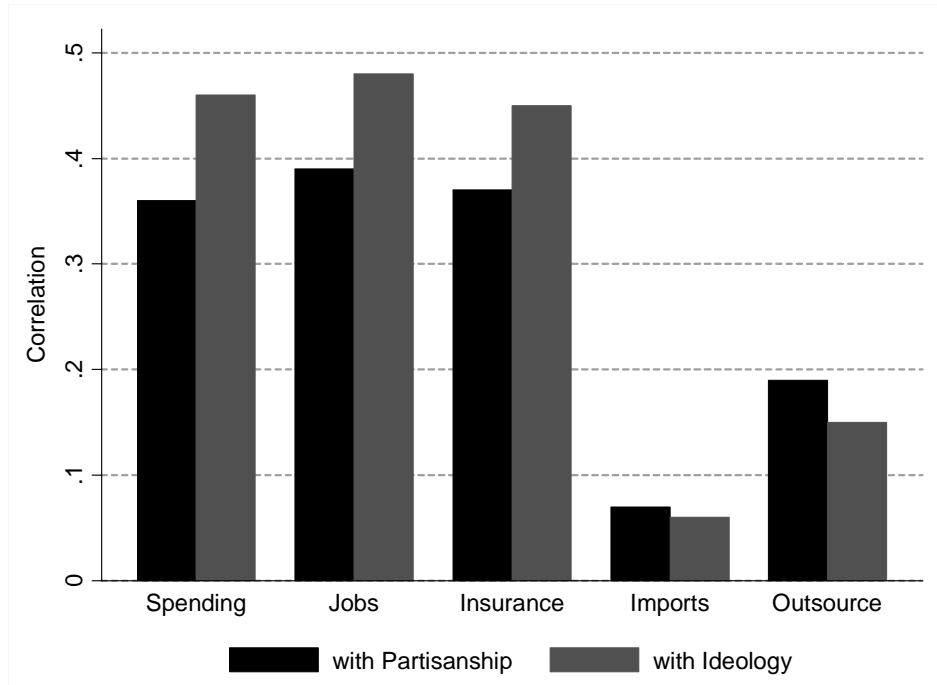
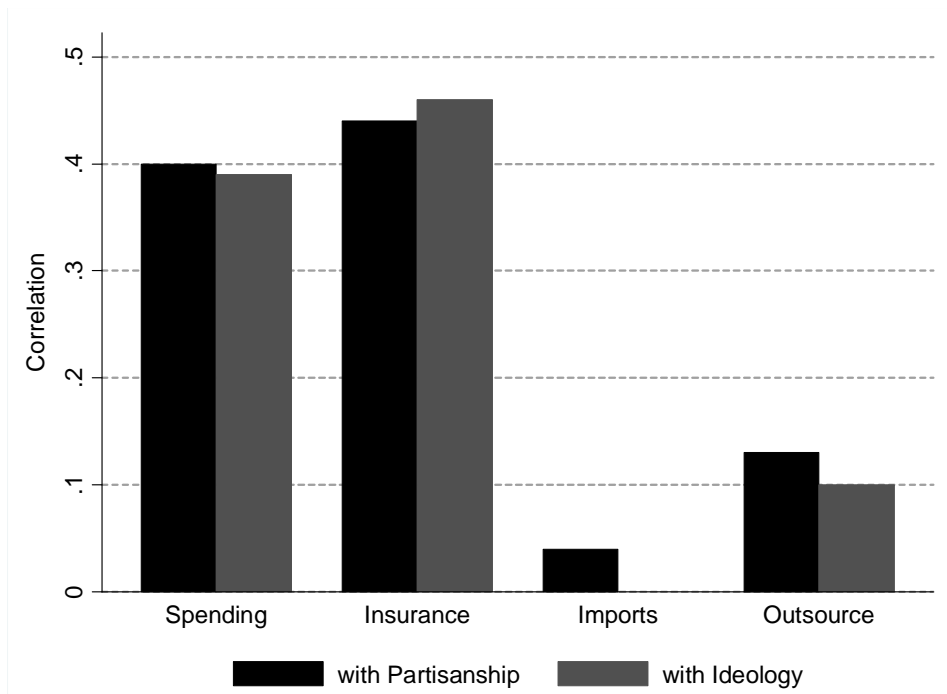


Figure 6.6. Correlations amongst Political Identity, Domestic and International Economic Preferences

Panel A. 2004 ANES



Panel B. 2008 ANES



These patterns suggest that the international policy realm represents a latent potential cleavage in American politics. The dominant conflict through which to understand such issues has not been rigidly defined by the elite space, and thus remains open. Given this observation, to what extent do motivational orientations structure such preferences? Should we expect relationships between NOCS and preferences? If so, what are the implications for the future of American political conflict in this domain? For the future of American political ideology?

6.5. NOCS and International Economic Preferences

On the one hand, we might expect the dynamic examined in Chapter 5 to simply extend to the international realm. High NOCS combined with a low level construal of issues related to globalization would result in preferences for protectionism and government policy to support American industry. The ability of American companies to outsource jobs, and the competition implied by cheap imports from developing countries should increase workers' insecurity regarding their future employment prospects (Scheve and Slaughter 2004), and, to the extent that they are particularly risk and uncertainty averse, they should prefer government policies which restrict competition from abroad, and make it difficult for companies to hire workers overseas. Ehrlich and Maestas (2010), for example, find that low skill workers who are risk averse are particularly opposed to free trade. Other aspects of economic integration also have the potential to generate insecurity, and thus calls for government intervention amongst those with a high NOCS. Scheve and Slaughter (2004), for example, argue that foreign direct investment increases the elasticity of firms' demand for labor, which increases the volatility of wages and employment. They show that higher levels of foreign direct investment in a given industry in Great Britain increase workers' feelings of insecurity.

In contrast, we might expect high NOCS citizens with a high level of construal to simply analogize from the domestic to the international. From this perspective, the federal government should stay out of the economic realm, and let the free market work, whether it be in terms of domestic social welfare, domestic regulation, or international economic policy. In this sense, protectionism is simply the international analogue of the institutional threats leveled by the left against free market capitalism. Similarly, low NOCS citizens viewing such policies in abstracted terms may extend their own understanding of economic policy from the domestic to the international, seeing the global form of capitalism as exploitative, but on a larger scale. We see aspects of this representation in the so-called "fair trade" movement, the protests against WTO rulings, particularly with respect to issues of domestic regulation, and the periodic calls for boycotts on products made abroad in labor conditions which would be considered exploitative, or simply outright illegal, in our own country. Similarly, such individuals may see the openness of global free markets as welfare decreasing for U.S. citizens, and thus support protectionist measures which prop up failing or insufficiently competitive industries (e.g. automakers; agriculture).

The connection between motivational orientations and the international scene is not so simple, however. As I have argued above, it is not *necessarily* straightforward in the domestic realm either, and the patterns we observe there are largely a result of historical circumstance, not

a “natural” association of left and right to psychological dispositions. The fact that the international realm of economic policy remains muted with respect to elite conflict, however, suggests that these ideological conflicts are unlikely to be at the forefront of any but the most active members of the mass public. Very few people engaged in the Seattle protests. Not many citizens have considered in depth the relative benefits of free trade for the price of consumer goods. While many might buy “fair trade” coffee, it is unlikely that many who do connect this purchase to broader ideas concerning globalization and the wages of workers in developing countries beyond the simple thought that it helps the disadvantaged. Citizens are not very sophisticated when it comes to international trade (Caplan 2008; Krugman 1997).

Moreover, there are reasons to expect that the relationship between NOCS and international economic preferences may be quite distinct, even *opposite* what we might expect given domestic patterns. In particular, as I argue below, the international realm of economic policy has the potential to invoke the same “worldview divides” which underlie the domestic “culture war,” and which are driven by the NOCS motivational continuum (Hetherington and Weiler 2009). In this sense, globalization as an issue, in particular, as an issue related to American interests and power versus global diversity and power sharing, has the potential to divide the citizenry along this same dispositional dimension in ways similar to that of socio-cultural and foreign policy issues.

6.6. The Decline of American Hegemony

In *The End of Influence: What Happens When Other Countries Have the Money*, DeLong and Cohen (2010) argue that “the money” is leaving the United States, that it is “not likely to come back anytime soon,” and that this has important consequences for the extent of America’s influence over other countries, military, economic and cultural, and suggests a new era where cooperation between the U.S. and other nations will be of paramount importance. DeLong and Cohen (2010), in speaking of “the money,” are referring both to the fact that the United States, as “importer of last resort” for developing nations, is now the world’s biggest debtor nation, and to the rise of what have come to be known as sovereign wealth funds, large swells of money controlled by foreign governments which, in the interest of high returns (and perhaps less benign purposes) will increasingly be used to purchase foreign interests rather than parked in safe but low return assets such as government debt.

DeLong and Cohen (2010) argue that this will have three key consequences for the United States and its relationship with foreign powers, all of which imply that America must “become, recognize that you have become, and act like a normal country,” which “For America... will be a shock: American has not been a normal country for a long, long time.” The major consequences they state are three. First, America will lose the ability to undertake unilateral actions in the foreign policy realm, exercising rights as a “hyperpower.” Second, America’s “soft” influence over world culture will decline: “Those who must beseech others for the money always look less worth emulating than those from whom money is besought.” Finally, they argue that a return of nations to ambitious industrial policies as a result of the recent economic crisis will weaken America’s economic position in the global economy. They argue

that American firms will find it increasingly difficult to keep up with protected domestic startups in other nations, such as with China's foray into solar power. In addition, the ability of sovereign wealth funds to invest in American industry will imply some degree of leverage for the financing nation to demand "back-transfer" of the technological innovations. In any case, all three of these possibilities imply the decline of the American hegemon in all three policy spheres.

There are two important implications of these points for the connection between motivational orientations and international policy preferences. First, as I noted in Chapter 5, the connection between NOCS and economic conservatism amongst those with an abstract construal of such issues is largely symbolic in nature. It is not about free market institutions per se, but about a symbolic conflict between the traditional symbols and values of the country and those who would seek to institutionally innovate in the name of social justice. In this sense, the social and economic domains are linked through a general aversion to institutional change, broadly defined, and in and out-group conflict (Alesina and Glaeser 2004; Gilens 1999; Jost et al. 2003a). To the extent that this is the case, it is much less likely that the analogy of "protect free market institutions" will be made to the global realm. On a global scale, free market institutions imply the *decline* of American preeminence, and should thus be *threatening* to individuals with high NOCS.

Thus, an increasingly globalized world is a threat to "American exceptionalism," in its valenced sense. Consider Mitt Romney's recent critique of Barack Obama: "I believe that it flows from his fundamental disbelief in American exceptionalism. In the President's world, all nations have 'common interests,' the lines between good and evil are blurred, America's history merits apology. And without a compass to guide him in our increasingly turbulent world, he's tentative, indecisive, timid and nuanced" (Sargent). In Romney's view, then, international relations are a zero-sum game, it is us against the world, whether it be foreign, cultural or economic policy. This position is echoed in the plethora of recent laments about the fact that we simply "don't make things anymore."

We can also see undercurrents of this possibility in contemporary American politics with respect to China. Glenn Beck, for example, devoted an entire episode of his television show to the threat that China poses both economically and culturally entitled, "China's Rise, America's Fall?" He introduced the show by examining in some depth the implications of a toy found in his child's fast food bag, which, he pointed out, was not only *made* in China, but *designed* in China. This discussion is worth quoting in full:

So, now, we are getting not our toys and our things in our little Happy Meals which should be banned, they're so dangerous. Not just our toys in the bag made in China, but the image and everything else, the culture coming from China. That was the first thing that I thought. You know, I point this out to the American people because it's going to happen and it's going to happen slowly and subtly. In fact, do we have the cartoon that is -- a Chinese cartoon you probably have seen a million times. We've had cartoons made overseas in China, et cetera. But this is Chinese culture again coming over here. So, as everybody used to watch "Dallas" and "Who Shot J.R.?" in Germany and you saw that. That was our culture being exported overseas. The second genesis for the show are the headlines. This is what happened this year. Right here -- 'China Holds Line; Won't Commit to Strategic Talks with U.S.' OK. We're the superpower, right? Hmm. No. They are.

In essence, Beck is lamenting the exact developments which DeLong and Cohen (2010) emphasize as an inevitable aspect of our future global world, namely, the end of American hegemony in the economic, cultural and foreign policy spheres. But it is more than that. Consider that the rhetorical strategy utilized here is nearly identical to that used by Beck himself, as well as Republicans and the right more generally during the *domestic* debates over healthcare reform: it is about a threat to American preeminence, tradition and culture. For good measure, he even highlights the extent to which these toys are “dangerous,” and “should be banned.” Not very free market at all, but highly resonant with NOCS. International economic policy is a different beast.

Now, Glenn Beck is not typical, in any relevant sense of the term, but we should not discount the degree to which this interpretation, while not the only possible interpretation which might resonate with individuals with high NOCS, *does indeed resonate with this motivational orientation*. In some sense, it is also perhaps the more natural representation of the issue. The analogy from “America First” in the foreign policy realm to “America First” in the international economic realm is perhaps more easily made than the one from “get government off our backs” in the domestic economic realm to “get *our* government off *other* countries’ backs” in the international realm. The former is also more easily conveyed by politicians interested in placing themselves strategically on the issue, suggesting the potential for its emergence as a general line of argument for dealing with international economic conflict, real or perceived. The latter is more nuanced, and requires a greater understanding of the relative costs and benefits of international competition and trade, an understanding which is not widespread in the American public (Caplan 2008; Krugman 1997), and which, because of this nuance, should be relatively unappealing to high NOCS individuals. Indeed, consider again Romney’s statement above where he uses the word “nuanced” in a pejorative fashion. He clearly understands, if only implicitly, the psychological profile of his base, and shapes his rhetoric accordingly (Smith 2007).

So the economic and cultural threat line of argument should appeal strongly, and perhaps emerge naturally, for those with high NOCS, suggesting the possibility of a straightforward relationship between these motivational orientations and protectionism in the international economic realm. What about citizens low in NOCS? It is my sense that, on the domestic side, in contemporary American politics low NOCS individuals are rejecting the symbolic imagery of the right as much as they are accepting the imagery of the left. There is a sense in which the cultural symbolism of the right engenders disgust amongst those on the left, and as I have demonstrated above, leads indirectly to the adoption of domestic policy orientations and ideologies which “fit” with these motivational profiles, even if these are not the only matching possibilities (see, e.g., Chapter 5 on libertarians).

We can imagine a very similar process occurring in the context of something like Glenn Beck’s program above. To the extent that globalization becomes an issue of cultural, economic and foreign policy hegemony, low NOCS citizens are likely to find protectionist and “America First” positions on such issues highly unappealing, at least to the extent that they are rooted in nationalism and subtle ethnocentrism. Such citizens are open to diversity, and tend towards more nuanced interpretations of such conflicts, preferring compromise over zero-sum takes on the issues (Hetherington and Weiler 2009). As DeLong and Cohen (2010) note: “Sino-American partnership, in managing the complex mess of their imbalanced economic codependency, can constitute a good beginning for managing the utterly unhinged problems of world balance and order. We have no acceptable choice but to get good at it, and that will take some doing on both

sides.” They argue that a key to safely navigating this codependency is in containing “populist outbursts, to minimize frictions, even to cooperate.” There is thus something very similar in these issues to Hetherington and Weiler’s (2009) “worldview divides,” reserved, in their case, for domestic social policy and issues concerning the war on terror.

6.7. NOCS and Cosmopolitanism

We can begin to examine these possibilities empirically by looking at the extent of “cosmopolitanism” amongst those with low and high NOCS. The 2006 World Values Survey contains two items which tap into this dimension. Both questions began with the introduction, “People have different views of themselves and how they relate to the world. Would you indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about how you see yourself?” The first item then read, “I see myself as citizen of the U.S.” The second read, “I see myself as a world citizen.” Each item contained four possible responses ranging from “Strongly agree” to “Strongly disagree.”

To examine the relationship between NOCS and these two items, I estimated two ordered probits, regressing the citizen items on the two goal items of Chapter 5: those related to personal security, and those related to societal order. I included the same set of controls as the analyses from Chapter 5, including age, gender, race, education, income, employment status, and religiosity. These estimates are shown in Table 6.3. They show a strong relationship between motivational orientations and self-representations regarding one’s citizenship as a member of the world versus a member of the United States. The four coefficients relating security and order goals to the two citizenship items are in the expected directions, and are either significant or marginally significant.

As ordered probit coefficients are difficult to interpret, I translate these into predicted probabilities of responding “Strongly agree” to each item, across levels of these two motivational indicators. To generate these probabilities, I held all controls at their central tendencies, and varied, concurrently, the two motivational items from zero to one. These estimates are plotted in Figure 6.7. The combined effects of these two indicators are quite large. Citizens at the low end of the security and order goals items, all else equal, are about equally likely to strongly agree that they are citizens of the world and citizens of the U.S. At the upper end, by contrast, citizens have a very high probability of strongly agreeing that they are a citizen of the U.S. (.78), and a very low probability of strongly agreeing that they are a citizen of the world (.12). The marginal effect of moving from low to high on this motivational continuum for the citizen of the world item is substantively meaningful and statistically significant ($B=-.23, p<.05$). The marginal effect on the citizen of the U.S. item is very large and statistically significant ($B=.42, p<.05$). Thus, NOCS, here in the form of its associated goals, is strongly related to one’s self-representations concerning membership in a world versus national community.

Table 6.3. Security and Order Goals and Cosmopolitanism, 2006 WVS

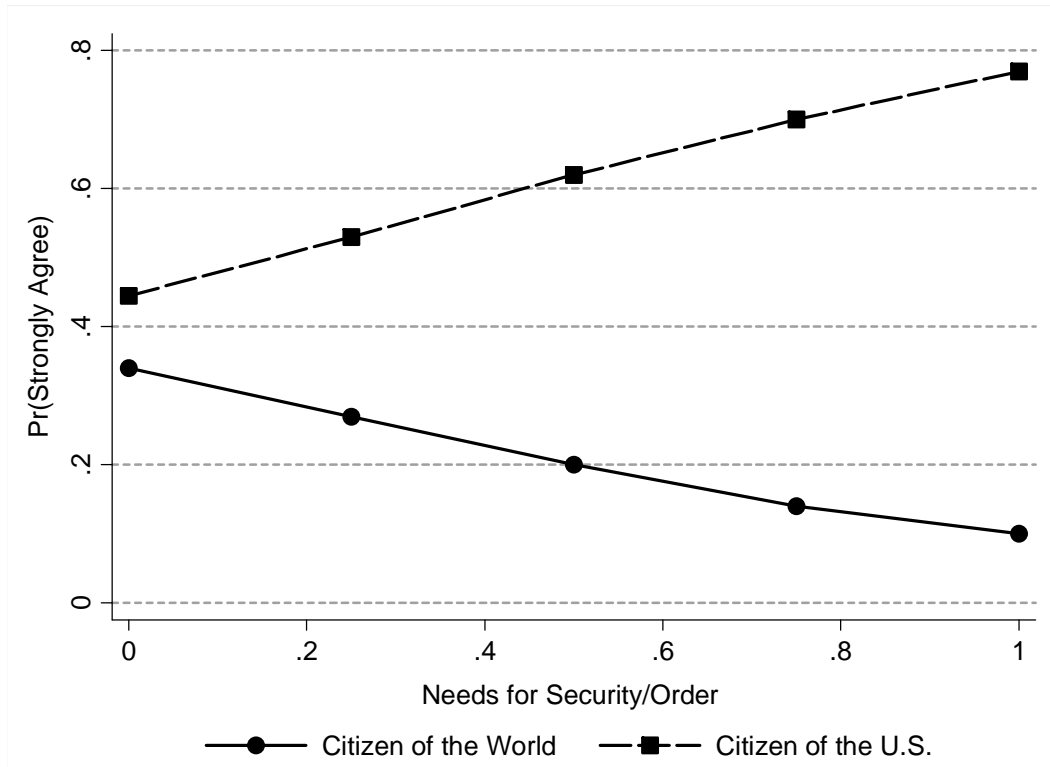
Variable	World	U.S.
Security Goals	-.59 (.17)*	.59 (.20)*
Order Goals	-.20 (.12)^	.54 (.13)*
Age	.19 (.15)	.88 (.18)*
Male	-.12 (.07)^	.00 (.08)
Black	.42 (.11)*	-.35 (.12)*
Education (2)	.07 (.20)	.04 (.23)
Education (3)	.15 (.18)	.22 (.21)
Education (4)	.10 (.19)	.12 (.22)
Education (5)	.07 (.19)	.09 (.22)
Education (6)	.22 (.21)	.16 (.24)
Education (7)	.49 (.30)^	.10 (.34)
Income	-.22 (.17)	-.07 (.19)
Unemployed	.19 (.18)	.26 (.20)
Religiosity	.37 (.12)*	.33 (.13)*
Cut 1	-1.81 (.25)	-1.29 (.30)
Cut 2	-.61 (.24)	-.83 (.28)
Cut 3	.70 (.24)	1.02 (.28)
Pseudo R ²	.02	.06
N	1132	1133

Notes: Entries are ordered probit coefficients and standard errors. * $p < .05$; ^ $p < .10$.

As a second test of the connection between motivational orientations and cosmopolitanism, I turn to the 2010 American National Elections Study. This study contains items measuring two facets of the “Big Five” personality traits which are highly related conceptually to NOCS, namely, openness to experience and conscientiousness (see Carney et al. 2008; Thorisdottir et al. 2007). While imperfect, they should nonetheless tap the same motivational continuum of interest here, as described in the literature review of Chapter 2. For each facet, respondents were presented with two statements. The statements were preceded by an introduction which read, “Here are a number of personality traits that may or may not apply to you. Please mark how much you agree or disagree with each statement. You should rate the extent to which the pair of traits applies to you, even if one characteristic applies more strongly

than the other.” Each item was then rated on a seven-point scale ranging from “Agree strongly” to “Disagree strongly.” The first conscientiousness item read, “I see myself as dependable, self-disciplined,” and the second read, “I see myself as disorganized, careless.” The second is reverse scored. The first openness item read, “I see myself as open to new experiences, complex,” and the second read, “I see myself as conventional, uncreative.” The second was reverse scored.

Figure 6.7. The Relationship of Security and Order Goals to Cosmopolitanism



As with the Schwartz (1992) value items, I calculated the respondent-specific mean for all ten of the “Big Five” indicators, and then subtracted the mean from the individual responses to purge respondent-specific variance in the use of the rating scales. The correlation between the two mean-deviated conscientiousness items was strong ($r=.52$), as was the correlation between the mean-deviated openness items ($r=.45$).²¹ I averaged the two items for each facet to form an overall scale for conscientiousness and openness. As the effective range of each variable is substantially less than its full range, I recoded each scale to have a mean of zero and a standard deviation of .5.

²¹ The correlations between the items were substantially smaller prior to mean-deviation, suggesting that future work using these scales should utilize this approach.

The 2010 study also contained five items intended to measure cosmopolitanism. The items were preceded by the statement, “We are interested in the kinds of things people do for recreation. In the last ten years, have you done any of the following, or have you not done them?” The five items included, “Visited Europe or Australia,” “Visited Canada or Mexico,” “Visited Asia, Africa, or South America,” “Eaten at an Indian restaurant,” and “Eaten Japanese food.” I created a scale from these five which was simply a count of the number of things the respondent reported having done in the previous ten years.

To assess the relationship between the personality items and cosmopolitanism, I conducted a poisson regression of the dependent variable on both personality scales, as well as controls for age, gender, race, education, income, and employment status. The results of this regression are shown in Table 6.4. The estimates again show patterns consistent with the notion that the motivational continuum of interest is related to cosmopolitanism. The coefficients for both conscientiousness and openness to experience are significant and in the expected directions ($B=-.10$, $p<.05$, and $B=.25$, $p<.05$, respectively). Thus, conscientiousness decreases cosmopolitanism, while openness increases it. To get a sense of the magnitude of these effects, I generated expected counts for the dependent variable at the 5th, 50th and 95th percentiles of each of these two personality traits. These estimates are shown in Figure 6.8. The effect of conscientiousness is quite a bit weaker than that of openness, despite being significant. A move from the 5th to the 95th percentile of conscientiousness entails a predicted change in the expected count of about -.27, or a percentage change of about -13%. A move from low to high on openness increases the expected count by about .82, for a percentage change of about 55%.

Overall, the results of these two analyses suggest that NOCS, here proxied through intermediate goals related to security and order, and the personality traits of openness to experience and conscientiousness, is meaningfully related to the individual’s self-understanding in globalized versus more purely nationalized terms. Those at the low end of the NOCS spectrum are more likely to have globalized self-representations in terms of their identifications, and to engage in cosmopolitan behaviors, while those at the high end are much more likely to see themselves as purely American, and are less likely to engage in such behaviors.

6.8. NOCS and Protectionism

I turn now to an examination of the relationship between NOCS, as operationalized in previous chapters, and support for protectionist trade policies. I utilize the two items concerning restrictions on foreign imports and federal policies designed to discourage outsourcing of jobs described in this chapter above. These items were included in identical form in both the 2004 and 2008 American National Elections Studies. I examine models for whites only in both 2004 and 2008, and examine models for black and latino Americans separately in 2008 for purposes of comparison. With respect to the import restrictions item, a large percentage of individuals responded “Haven’t thought about it.” There are thus potential selection effects for this item which could bias coefficient estimates (Long 1997). To mitigate concerns with selection, I utilized heckman probit models which estimate the effects of independent variables on support for import restrictions conditional on giving any valid response at all. This is accomplished by

estimating both an outcome model (a probit for the dichotomous dependent variable), and a selection model (for the dichotomous indicator corresponding with having given a valid response). For the outsourcing item, I estimated ordered probits. As independent variables I include NOCS (operationalized via the childrearing items), and all controls as in Chapter 5. For the selection models, I include these controls as well as political interest, political sophistication, and partisan strength as measures of political engagement, and thus of the probability of giving a response.

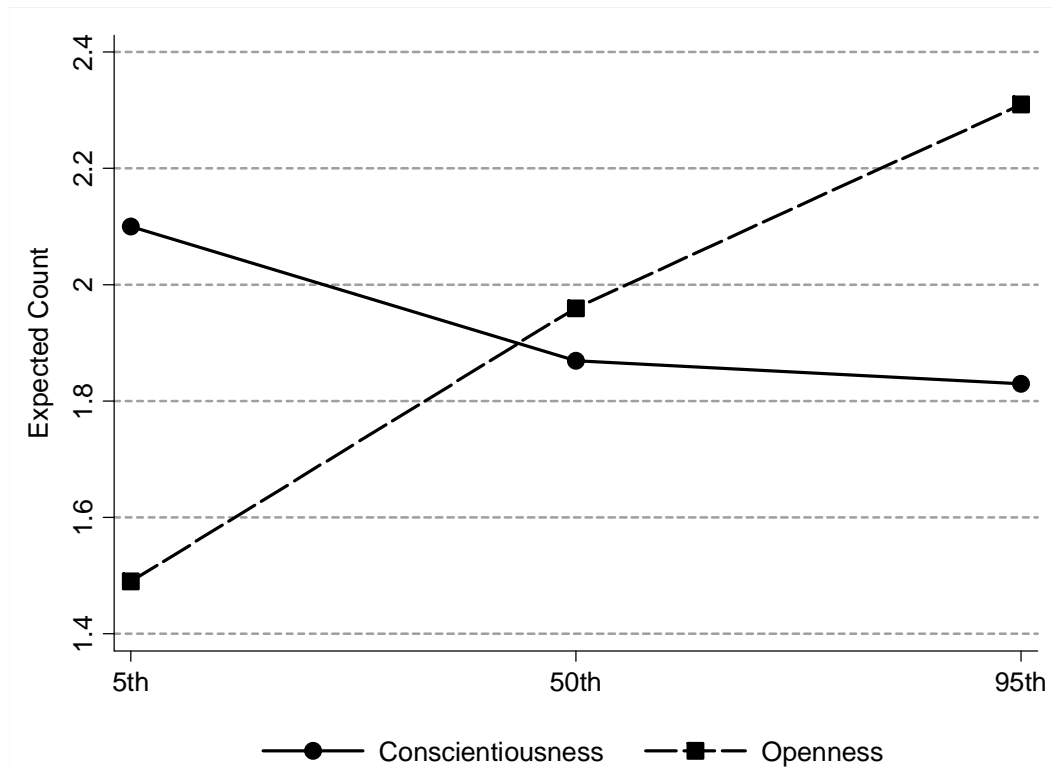
I examine first the results for white Americans in 2004 and 2008 contained in Table 6.5. Overall, the results are supportive of the notion that increases in NOCS increase the tendency to be protectionist with respect to international economic issues. Three of the four coefficients (all but outsourcing in 2004) are significant, and of a substantively meaningful magnitude. To better interpret these results, I generated predicted probabilities of giving a protectionist response (i.e. supporting import restrictions and “strongly discouraging” outsourcing), holding all controls at their central tendencies, and varying NOCS from low to high.

Table 6.4. Conscientiousness, Openness and Cosmopolitanism, 2010 ANES

Variable	Whites Only
Conscientiousness	-.10 (.04)*
Openness to Experience	.25 (.04)*
Age	.05 (.10)
Male	-.01 (.04)
Black	-.12 (.08)
HS Degree	.08 (.18)
Some College	.29 (.17)^
College Degree	.54 (.17)*
Post-Graduate	.64 (.17)*
Income	.72 (.09)*
Unemployed	-.02 (.06)
Constant	-.22 (.19)
Pseudo R ²	0.06
N	1499

Notes: Entries are poisson regression coefficients and standard errors. * $p < .05$; ^ $p < .10$.

Figure 6.8. Conscientiousness, Openness and Cosmopolitanism



These estimates are plotted in Figure 6.9. The top panel of this figure shows the results for import restrictions across the two years. First, there is an across the board increase in support for protectionism moving from 2004 to 2008, which should be expected given the economic downturn. Second, however, there is a substantial increase in support for import restrictions in both years as we move from low to high NOCS. In 2004, citizens with low NOCS had a probability of supporting restrictions of about .36, while those with high NOCS had a probability of support of about .56, for a marginal effect of about 20 percentage points. In 2008, the effect is of about an equal magnitude, with low NOCS individuals showing a probability of about .60, and high NOCS individuals showing a probability of about .79. All else equal, the move from low to high on this motivational continuum strongly increases protectionism in the realm of import restrictions.

The bottom panel of this figure shows the results for the outsourcing item. In 2004, the effect is in the expected direction, with high NOCS citizens more likely to state that the government should “strongly discourage” outsourcing, but this effect is not statistically significant. The marginal effect in 2008, however, is significant, and of a substantial magnitude. Low NOCS citizens have a probability of saying “strongly discourage” of about .55, while high NOCS citizens have a probability of giving this response equal to about .70, for a change of 15 percentage points. The increase in the marginal effect of NOCS in 2008 appears to be due to the increase in support for protectionism amongst citizens with high NOCS moving from 2004 to

2008, as seen in Figure 6.9. This is consistent with the notion that such individuals are particularly sensitive to economic threats, and thus seek policies intended to increase domestic economic security during this troubled period.

Table 6.6 shows the results for blacks and latinos in 2008. The results are much less consistent for these two groups. With respect to restrictions on imports, I find a very large and statistically significant impact of NOCS for black Americans (1.32, $p < .05$), but not for latinos ($B = .27$, $p > .10$). For blacks, a move from low to high entails an expected change in the probability of supporting restrictions from .69 to .96. Thus, at the upper ends of the NOCS continuum, black Americans are almost guaranteed to support import restrictions. Despite this one substantial effect, however, all other estimates for NOCS are insignificant. There is no impact of needs on preferences over outsourcing for either black or latino Americans. Once again, we are left with an asymmetry between whites and minorities which must be addressed in future research. This motivational continuum simply does not operate in the same manner for all citizens. We need theories for why this should be, and much more empirical research probing these dynamics further.

6.9. The Future of American Ideology

As I have demonstrated, and as other recent research attests (Hetherington and Weiler 2009; Jost et al. 2003a), the motivational continuum I have represented in terms NOCS is a key structuring force to the constraint we observe in contemporary American politics. Those who engage themselves in the political sphere do indeed show constraint across the various dimensions of policy, and this constraint is rooted in motivational orientations which give rise to competing goals related to societal order and institutional stability on the one hand, and equality and institutional change on the other. As I have argued, however, and demonstrated in the first part of this chapter, such constraint is also rooted in the dynamic interplay of citizens with elites within a contemporary context which is characterized by symbolic party images with strong cultural content. Ideological constraint across the dimensions of economic, social and foreign policy is a relatively recent phenomenon, and we should not be confident that the patterns we currently observe will remain in place forever.

In the second half of this chapter, I have argued that international economic policy shows very distinct dynamics with respect to NOCS compared to the domestic domain. I hypothesized that the content of such issues bears a strong resemblance to the cultural and foreign policy conflicts highlighted in the work of Hetherington and Weiler (2009) on authoritarianism, and should thus display similar dynamics with respect to NOCS. I have shown that those with low NOCS are more likely to see themselves as “citizens of the world,” and much less likely to strongly identify as “citizens of the U.S.” In addition, such individuals are more likely to engage in behaviors which we would label “cosmopolitan,” indicating a greater general comfort level with diversity of values and cultures than found amongst individuals with high NOCS.

Table 6.5. NOCS and Protectionism, 2004 and 2008 ANES, White Americans

Variable	2004 ANES		2008 ANES	
	Imports	Outsource	Imports	Outsource
Outcome				
NOCS	.51 (.22)*	.24 (.17)	.49 (.23)*	.39 (.15)*
Age	.94 (.24)*	-.36 (.20)^	-.06 (.30)	.02 (.17)
Male	-.29 (.13)*	-.23 (.10)*	-.30 (.16)*	-.09 (.08)
HS Degree	.30 (.24)*	-.11 (.19)	.04 (.25)	.13 (.15)
Some College	.20 (.25)	-.20 (.20)	-.26 (.26)	.00 (.15)
College Degree	.02 (.26)	-.64 (.21)*	-.39 (.28)	-.23 (.17)
Post-Graduate	-.01 (.28)	-.57 (.23)*	-.51 (.30)^	-.17 (.18)
Income	.16 (.23)	.24 (.19)	-.16 (.27)	-.01 (.17)
Unemployed	.60 (.23)*	.19 (.18)	-.30 (.27)	.18 (.21)
Religiosity	.05 (.16)	.10 (.16)	.37 (.19)*	-.09 (.13)
Constant/Cut 1	-1.22 (.31)*	-.69 (.24)	.15 (.51)	-.39 (.20)
Cut 2	-	-.27 (.24)		-.04 (.20)
Selection				
Age	.40 (.22)^	-	.37 (.19)*	-
Male	.07 (.10)	-	.28 (.09)*	-
HS Degree	-.07 (.20)	-	-.03 (.16)	-
Some College	.18 (.21)	-	.05 (.17)	-
College Degree	.33 (.23)	-	-.04 (.19)	-
Post-Graduate	.04 (.25)	-	.04 (.20)	-
Income	.47 (.20)*	-	.14 (.19)	-
Unemployed	-.03 (.19)	-	.34 (.22)	-
Political Interest	.42 (.15)*	-	-.22 (.28)	-
Sophistication	.68 (.18)*	-	1.30 (.38)*	-
Partisan Strength	-.52 (.14)*	-	.13 (.13)	-
Constant	-.56 (.24)*	-	-1.03 (.21)*	-
N	464	754	528	1026
Censored	290	-	421	-

Notes: Entries are estimates from heckman probits with selection and probits, respectively. * $p < .05$; ^ $p < .10$.

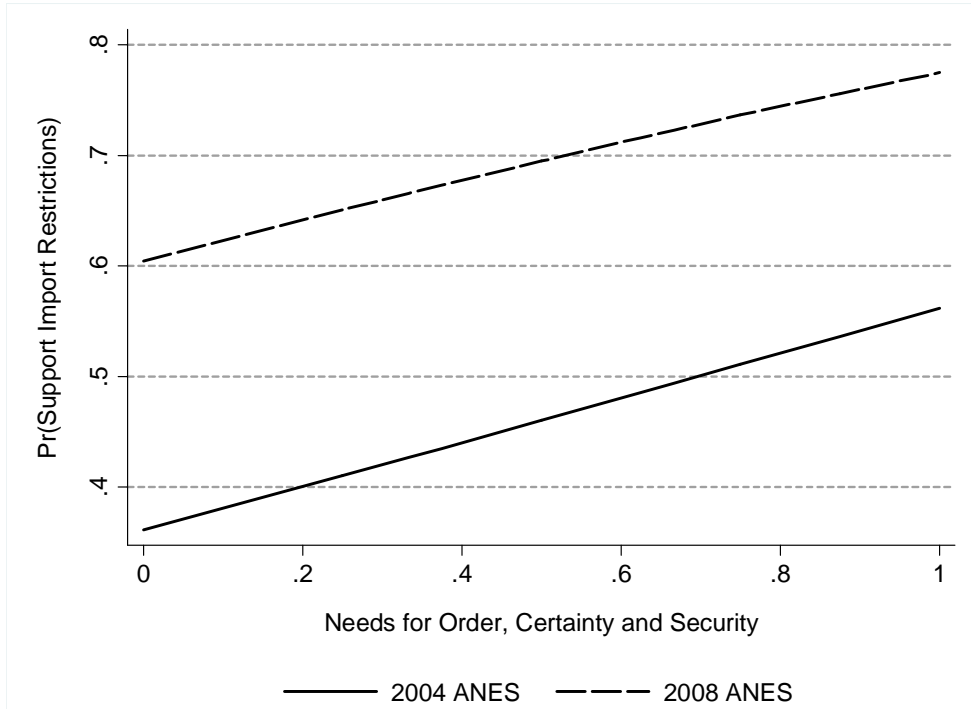
Table 6.6. NOCS and Protectionism, 2008 ANES, Black and Latino Americans

Variable	Blacks		Latinos	
	Imports	Outsource	Imports	Outsource
Outcome				
NOCS	1.32 (.60)*	.27 (.26)	.53 (.40)	-.25 (.31)
Age	.57 (.89)	.75 (.28)*	-.67 (.46)	.69 (.32)*
Male	-.44 (.21)*	.11 (.12)	-.32 (.19)*	.18 (.13)
HS Degree	-.19 (.34)	.10 (.16)	-.18 (.28)	.33 (.18)^
Some College	.10 (.34)	.09 (.17)	-.30 (.28)	.45 (.19)*
College Degree	-.22 (.41)	.33 (.25)	-.30 (.35)	.22 (.28)
Post-Graduate	-.66 (.42)	.10 (.28)	-.47 (.38)	.03 (.30)
Income	.52 (.69)	1.02 (.26)*	.25 (.42)	-.34 (.31)
Unemployed	-.06 (.38)	-.18 (.20)	.10 (.42)	.17 (.28)
Religiosity	-.73 (.55)	.05 (.27)	-.01 (.36)	.36 (.27)
Constant/Cut 1	.50 (1.27)	.71 (.31)	1.21 (.48)*	.27 (.33)
Cut 2	-	.91 (.31)		.48 (.33)
Selection				
Age	.87 (.31)*	-	1.17 (.36)*	-
Male	.16 (.13)	-	.20 (.15)	-
HS Degree	-.16 (.18)	-	.04 (.21)	-
Some College	-.15 (.19)	-	.26 (.22)	-
College Degree	-.04 (.26)	-	.10 (.30)	-
Post-Graduate	.09 (.30)	-	.04 (.33)	-
Income	.48 (.29)^	-	.57 (.34)^	-
Unemployed	.11 (.23)	-	.38 (.31)	-
Political Interest	-.25 (.42)	-	-.06 (.44)	-
Sophistication	1.94 (.61)*	-	1.25 (.63)*	-
Partisan Strength	-.23 (.23)	-	-.38 (.22)^	-
Constant	-1.66 (.29)*	-	-1.54 (.29)*	-
N	194	496	145	365
Censored	273	-	187	-

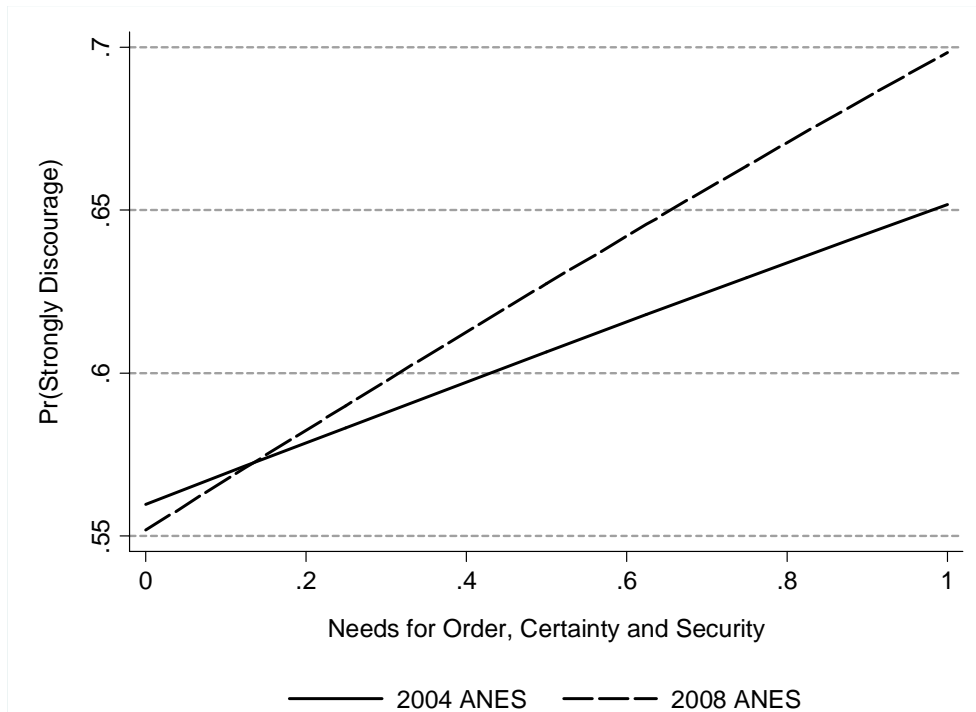
Notes: Entries are estimates from heckman probits with selection and probits, respectively. * $p < .05$; ^ $p < .10$.

Figure 6.9. NOCS and Protectionism, White Americans

Panel A. Import Restrictions



Panel B. Strongly Discourage Outsourcing



As I have shown in the previous section, this tendency of high NOCS individuals to be, in this sense, “nationalistic,” in addition to their general tendencies toward policies which should promote domestic economic security, leads to substantially greater support for protectionist economic policies in the international realm. While American citizens, on average, are more supportive of protectionism than we might like (Caplan 2008), high NOCS individuals are particularly so relative to their low NOCS counterparts. They prefer restrictions on imports in order to shelter American industries, and support strong efforts by the federal government to discourage outsourcing on the part of American companies.

What are the implications of these dynamics for the future structure of American ideology? On the one hand, we might see these dynamics as relatively unimportant, an outlier. From this perspective, domestic economic policy should remain dominant, and thus it is unlikely that such issues will generate any sort of ideological “realignment” anytime soon. On the other hand, we might consider that this “cosmopolitan divide” has the *potential* to have a profound impact on American political ideology, if not in the immediate future, then in decades to come. Why might this be?

First, I have argued that there is no “natural” relationship between NOCS and support for the free market. Indeed, as I suggested in the previous chapter, there is something fundamentally disconcerting about the free market as a means to create social order. It requires a faith in decentralized, bottom up processes, rather than top down, centralized decision making. As we know from research on authoritarianism, this motivational continuum of interest is strongly related to the tendency to exalt and submit to such top down processes as a means of obtaining the order and structure so valued by high NOCS citizens. In contrast, the low NOCS citizens are much more skeptical of authority and tend towards individualism and freedom. Thus, there is, at the very least, good reason to believe that the *potential* exists for a realignment of this “dispositional divide” along a libertarian-populist dimension.

The potential for this is, nonetheless, hard to see because we are so engrossed within the current framework for understanding political conflict. The theory I have proposed in this dissertation, however, suggests that the current alignment of dispositions with economic preferences amongst the politically attentive is an historical idiosyncrasy rather than a necessary relationship. As I have argued, and as others have pointed out (Jost et al. 2003a), the roots of the relationship between NOCS and economic conservatism concerns the interpretation of the economic domain in terms of its symbolic aspects, specifically, those related to the preservation of traditional American values and institutions. This interpretation, however, is a *construction* which has served a purpose for the right-wing in American politics (e.g. Dionne 1991).

The process by which this constraint has developed is rooted in the emergence of cultural divisions, partisan sorting on the basis of motivational orientations in response to these divisions, and the development of analogies from cultural divides to economic ones which facilitates the development of ideological structure amongst the politically aware. This, however, suggests that a decline in the “culture war” itself, or a change in what the “culture war” represents in terms of content, could change the available analogies which allow for a structuring of mass opinion. The culture war will not last forever. Citizens in all regions of the country are becoming increasingly comfortable with the notion of gay rights, abortion rights are likely to settle into equilibrium, and, barring another massive attack on U.S. soil, citizens, as always, will grow weary of extended foreign policy interventions as our costs, both human and monetary, continue to rise.

In contrast, as DeLong and Cohen (2010) argue, the U.S. stands at the end of an era. In the coming decades, we will transition, as a nation, from the status of hegemon to another

“normal country.” DeLong and Cohen (2010) are right to see this as a shocking experience to our citizens. But the extent to which any given citizen is comfortable with these changes will be intimately tied to these same motivational orientations, thus providing a second front for the “culture war,” albeit of a very distinct character. This war is both economic *and* cultural. As DeLong and Cohen (2010) suggest, the two are inextricably intertwined. This, however, suggests the potential for a new set of analogies, and thus a new alignment of dispositions and ideologies.

In the contemporary era, we have analogized from traditional values and racial and ethnic animosity to an economic divide which concerns institutional innovation in the name of social justice versus institutional stability in the name of American values and traditional social hierarchies. High NOCS citizens flock to the right for cultural reasons, and subsequently learn economics through rhetoric which pits the “American value-hating, socialist” left against the defenders of American meritocracy and individualism. Low NOCS citizens, disgusted with the culture of the right, flock to the left, and learns economics as a battle between those who care about disadvantaged groups and those who don’t.

Even with the emerging issues related to globalization, I do not expect citizens with long-held ideologies to change their positions in the face of new policy cleavages. Such beliefs are too strongly rooted to identity, and are highly stable. Citizens cannot change ideologies without, in a sense, admitting that a core aspect of who they are as people was completely mistaken. The implications for self-esteem are too negative to expect changes amongst the initiated (Tajfel and Turner 1979). True realignments take time. They spread from emerging issues at the elite level to the young in the early stages of their political development, leading to slow but steady redefinitions of political conflict. If international issues related to economics and culture emerge as a line of conflict in American politics, younger generations will be socialized into a political world in which the older understandings of left and right are muted. The Cold War is over, and the symbols of Communism and socialism are unlikely to inspire the same emotions amongst future generations as they did amongst the last few. In a world where global capitalism is ascendant, there is the potential for this “cosmopolitan cleavage” to offer a new dimension along which dispositional differences drive political sorting and ideology development. To the extent that the freedom and interconnectedness of the global economic system differentially appeals to these motivational orientations, there is also the potential for the core analogies which define economic ideologies to be *redefined*. More specifically, for these to be redefined along a libertarian/cosmopolitan-populist/nationalist cleavage.

In his recent book, *The Globalization Paradox*, Dani Rodrik (2011) argues that “deep” globalization inevitably entails a conflict between the national and the international. He poses this problem in the form of a “trilemma,” specifically, the notion that we can have two of the following, but not all three: “deep” globalization, the nation state, and strong democratic institutions. If we want “deep” globalization, we must either sacrifice democracy or the nation state. In the latter case, “the golden straightjacket,” nation states are restricted to globalization-friendly policies which ignore domestic interest groups and their demands in the service of an open global economy. This, obviously, would be, if even desirable, exceedingly difficult to undertake. The former involves a reconsideration of the level at which democracy is instantiated. Specifically, our democratic institutions would themselves be global. The last alternative, is to temper our pursuit of globalization altogether. Despite ultimately rejecting it, Rodrik (2011) notes that global democratic institutions are quite appealing as a solution. In this future, we can keep all of the economic benefits of globalization while maintaining the

democratic process. Indeed, Rodrik states that, when presenting the trilemma to his undergraduate classes, this is always the most popular (by far) option.

I do not think it is any coincidence that Rodrik's undergraduates see global democracy as the most appealing option. This is, I would guess, nothing more than an instance of the basic dynamic which I am arguing is operative in the international realm. Young college students are inevitably more "open" and cosmopolitan, they tend towards low NOCS motivational orientations to a much larger extent than the uneducated and older citizens in our country. They are also being politically socialized in an environment where capitalism has, for the time being at least, dragged millions out of poverty, and where the Cold War is a piece of history. Of course these individuals see this option as the most appealing, it is motivationally consistent: open, cosmopolitan, free market oriented, and egalitarian. Older generations of low NOCS individuals, their representations of economics rooted so strongly in the cultural conflicts of the last half century, are inevitably skeptical of the poverty-reducing power of economic growth in developing nations, but this should be less and less the case for newer generations. As Dierdre McCloskey notes, quoting Charles Calomiris, "if well-intentioned protestors could be convinced that reversing globalization would harm the world's poorest residents (as it surely would) some (perhaps many) of the protestors would change their minds." I am not sanguine about that possibility for reasons explicated above, but the accumulation of time does the intergenerational work which evidence cannot do intragenerationally.

Consider a related set of ideas to the above, but one with a different conclusion regarding the future of ideology. In a blog post entitled, "The fragmenting coalition of the 'left', some musings," the philosopher Chris Bertram provides some insightful commentary on the nature of the contemporary left in terms of its various ideologies, and its potential future in the face of increasing globalization. He argues that four strands of left-wing thinking are extant.

1. The "technocratic quasi-neoliberal left" which is "Pro-globalisation, pro-market, pro-growth." This group sees economic growth as a means of increasing human welfare and living standards.
2. The "left version of populist nationalism. Culturally conservative, worried about immigration (and willing to indulge popular anxieties), anxious about the effect of markets on working-class community."
3. The "eco-left. Highly egalitarian. Deeply skeptical about the capacity of capitalism to provide real improvements in people's lives through 'growth.' Anxious about the way in which both the natural and social environments that make life tolerable are being undermined by neoliberalism." Importantly, and rightly I think, he identifies this group as "not very coherently both localist/communitarian and cosmopolitan in outlook," and "Highly connected to the social movements...[of] the past 40 years."
4. The "old Leninist hard left," which he sees as "Washed up, marginal, authoritarian and unappealing."

We are thus dealing with three basic groups of "leftists," which roughly correspond with the types I have been considering in this chapter: pro-market libertarians, social and economic populists, and traditional American liberals. Bertram sees this "coalition" as highly unstable, but has a different idea about the resulting future than my own. More specifically, he sees the third group, the "eco-left," as growing in size over time as a result of "the environmental crisis [becoming] deeper, and as promises based on growth become both harder to keep and harder to translate into real improvements in quality of life." As this group grows, he sees the potential for the extant alliance between the quasi-neoliberals and the populist left to become increasingly

unstable, with the latter drifting either into the eco-left camp, or devolving into “xenophobic right-wing nationalism.” As he states, “compromises with global capitalism required by the quasi-neoliberal left will not be met by [sic] any compensating benefits for the constituency of left populist nationalism.” In this vision of the future, we would expect the alignments of economic preferences with motivational orientations to remain largely intact, with low NOCS citizens taking solidly anti-globalization stances on the basis of continued identification with marginalized groups, pro-environment positions in opposition to capitalism’s taxing of natural resources, and a concern for “exploited” citizens of developing nations. In Bertram’s interpretation then, the major cleavage which defines contemporary left and right will largely remain intact.

The possibility I have put forth, however, is nearly opposite Bertram’s, despite the fact that I largely agree with this characterization of the left’s potential fragmentation. The differences largely stem from differences in optimism regarding global capitalism’s ability to deal with, and successfully navigate environmental threats, and the potential for economic growth to continue to increase the welfare of citizens in developing nations. While Bertram sees the future growth of the eco-left, I see its future decline. To the extent that capitalism can deal successfully with environmental concerns, and to the extent that future generations continue to be politically socialized within a world of increasing wealth and living standards for citizens in developing countries, the tension within this group, as Bertram puts it, “both localist/communitarian and cosmopolitan in outlook” will prove a devastating fracture. Indeed, this is exactly the point I make above: there is an inherent tension amongst those with low NOCS between global integration, cultural and economic, and traditional views of the role of the free market in bringing about social well-being and social justice.

Highly sophisticated individuals like Chris Bertram have navigated this conundrum to construct coherent ideologies which are largely anti-globalization in content, but future groups of low NOCS citizens may resolve this tension much differently, having been socialized under a very different set of conditions. If the future breaks toward a more optimistic path, it is unlikely that the “eco-left” can maintain itself in its current form. In this case, we should expect newer generations of low NOCS citizens to turn to “quasi-neoliberalism” on the basis of its cosmopolitan appeal, and perhaps, by analogy, to a newfound attraction to growth as a means of poverty reduction.

It is possible, then, that the future of this motivational profile lies in something akin to Zwolinski’s “bleeding heart libertarianism,” finding the contemporary economic cleavage an anachronism. As Zwolinski (2011a) argues, “Debates about politics and the poor often devolve into arguments between those who favor personal responsibility on the one hand, and those who favor state assistance to the needy on the other. But if effective state assistance is a chimera, then this choice is a false one. Indeed, if state power is almost always used to serve the powerful at the expense of the poor, then our real choice is clear. The single most effective way that we can help the vulnerable is to stop hurting them. We might owe them more, but the first and most important thing we owe the poor is liberty.” In contrast, high NOCS citizens should move to a form of Bertram’s “xenophobic, right-wing populism,” for these reasons. In essence, in American politics at least, this would imply that the current “dispositional cleavage,” rooted in the traditional “culture war,” would give way to a new cleavage rooted in libertarianism/cosmopolitanism versus populism/nationalism.

The implications of this for policy more broadly are interesting. On the one hand, we might expect to achieve some equilibrium on domestic economic policy, and have political

conflict move to the international level. Domestic economic policy will obviously always be important, but its *relative* salience may decline in the future. This development could exacerbate the ideological realignment above, as newly minted political generations analogize “down” from the international to the domestic, reinforcing the libertarian/populist division rooted in these motivational orientations. In this sense, the “naturally” disconcerting nature of bottom up processes of social order generation would emerge as the dominant interpretation of the conflict over economic institutions.

6.10. Chapter Conclusion

The present chapter has considered the past and future of American political ideology in the context of motivational orientations. Drawing on the broader theoretical framework which I presented in Chapter 2, I have argued that the emergence of both ideological constraint and a strong relationship between NOCS and preferences in the economic domain is a recent phenomenon, one which is derivative of the emergence of salient cultural conflict between Democrats and Republicans at the elite level. Party images only became strongly associated with social and religious concerns in the early 1990s, and strong associations between economic and social issues followed from this association, as citizens with high NOCS sorted into the Republican Party, and vice versa, leading to the development of coherent ideologies in subsequent years through the reception of elite cues and frames of economic issues. I show that NOCS has only a minimal influence on economic preferences in 1992, but by 1994 the dynamic found in Chapter 5 emerges in force, which is exactly what would be expected given (1) the emergence of cultural sorting during this time, and (2) the events of the 1992-1994 period which provided strong cues on the economic domain with respect to social welfare policy, and in particular, health care policy.

These conclusions conflict with recent research on the dispositional foundations of political ideology which posits that dispositions influence preferences through “transcendent” concerns (Jost et al. 2003a; Smith et al. 2011). From these perspectives, dispositions influence historically independent aspects of political conflict similarly in both the economic and social domains, and thus ideological constraint should be seen across most, if not all, time periods, at least amongst the politically sophisticated (Jost, Federico and Napier 2009). This is not what we observe, however. These perspectives are overly simplistic in failing to account for the dynamic relationship between party conflict at the elite level, the nature of partisan sorting on the basis of party imagery derivative of such conflict, and the ways in which elite rhetoric is shaped and constrained by these same processes.

Extending this idea, the second half of the present chapter has considered the potential future of American ideology within a motivated social cognition framework. I have argued that the decline of American hegemony in the economic, foreign policy, and cultural realms has the potential to form a new cleavage between low and high NOCS individuals. High NOCS citizens should find the decline of the American hegemon, and its associated implications, threatening, and should thus respond positively to policies which we would typically deem populist, nationalistic, or protectionist. Conversely, the greater cosmopolitanism of those with low NOCS should engender positive affect towards international developments which put other countries on

a more level playing field with the U.S., and necessitate cooperation and compromise across all domains of policy.

I have additionally argued that these developments, in concert with the move beyond the socio-cultural conflicts inherited from the 1960s and the Cold War era, have the capacity to reshape the nature of ideological conflict in the United States. A key proposition of the present dissertation is that representations of the economic domain are shaped as a function of reciprocal interactions between citizens and elites. For example, the “constrained conservatives” of Chapter 5 are economically conservative as a result of cue-taking from the right-wing in American politics, which frames economic issues in terms of liberal threats to traditional American institutions and values. Conversely, the “constrained liberals” of this chapter have adopted a construal of the economic domain which emphasizes the goals of equality, social justice and institutional evolutions. These understandings “fit” with contemporary party images rooted in social changes in the 1960s, which, eventually, gave way to cultural divisions in the mass public in the early 1990s.

To the extent, however, that younger generations become politically socialized in a world with different “cultural” divisions, the analogies which seem relevant may very well change. As I argued in Chapter 5, there is nothing *intrinsic* to free market capitalism that engenders a positive association with NOCS. Markets as a means by which to create social order, if anything, are anxiety producing, not alleviating. Globalization thus has the potential to reframe the content of the economic dimension in a way that makes free markets and global interdependency more appealing to low NOCS individuals, and less appealing to high NOCS individuals. This will only be more likely to the extent that capitalism deals successfully with its most pressing contemporary problems, such as energy and the environment, and to the extent that developing nations continue to rise out of abject poverty. In this sense then, the future of American ideology may lie in a libertarian/internationalist versus populist/nationalist divide.

Chapter 7

Discussion and Conclusion

The most straightforward purpose of this dissertation was to explore the relationship between dispositional needs for order, certainty and security (hereafter NOCS) and political preferences in the economic domain within the United States. While recent work has made strong theoretical claims regarding this relationship, empirical evidence has fallen short of expectations. Such needs have been found to be influential determinants of political preferences in the social and foreign policy domains (e.g. Hetherington and Weiler 2009; Jost et al. 2003a; Van Hiel, Pandelaere and Duriez 2004), as well as of general ideology (Jost et al. 2003a), and more recently, political partisanship (Hetherington and Weiler 2009), but little support has been found for a connection between such needs and economic conservatism. This asymmetry in support suggests that extant theories are missing something important and unique to preference formation in the economic domain.

I have argued that the *theoretical* asymmetry which divides the economic from these other domains of public policy is readily captured by Carmines and Stimson's (1980) distinction between hard and easy issues, and that the key aspect of this distinction concerns the extent to which elites are influential in shaping opinion over policy. Because of their technical nature, citizens turn to elite actors for both *cues* to the "correct" position on economic policy, and *frames* which shape their understanding of such issues in broader terms related to ideological abstractions. This is quite different from, say, an issue like gay marriage, where the symbolic content is readily accessible to all citizens independent of their exposure to elite-level politics. This distinction immediately opens up a gap between the politically engaged and unengaged in terms of how economic issues are represented conceptually. While the politically engaged receive such elite cues, and develop abstract/symbolic representations in the context of their attention to elite discourse, the unengaged do not, and turn instead to considerations *which are* readily available, namely, considerations of the personal implications of such policies, in Converse's (1964) words, those "closest to home."

This asymmetry of representation has important implications for the connection between NOCS and preferences in the economic domain. For the politically engaged, the relationship should be similar to what is expected by recent theorizing in political science and psychology, namely, that NOCS should increase economic conservatism. As we have witnessed in recent years, most visibly in the debates over health insurance in 2009-2010, the Republican Party is relatively successful in drawing out symbolic content in the economic domain which pits competing proposals as a conflict over traditional American values (e.g. "government healthcare is socialism"), the need for individual responsibility, and the relative desirability of the status quo relative to the riskiness of major institutional changes. In such a context, conservatism is indeed palliative for those with high NOCS (Jost, Federico and Napier 2009). In contrast, such frames should be particularly unappealing to those low in NOCS, who, as Gerber et al. (2010) argue, have an "attraction to novelty and tolerance for complexity" (p. 116). These frames reinforce partisan sorting as a function of NOCS, and the cue-taking across issues which derives from such sorting.

Amongst the unengaged, however, things are quite different. Lacking the exposure of engaged citizens, they turn instead to considerations of perceived personal costs and benefits. NOCS has very different implications for economic preferences when seen from such a perspective. More specifically, those most dispositionally sensitive to insecurity and uncertainty in general should *prefer* government provided social welfare and redistribution as a means of obtaining *specifically economic* security and certainty; in this sense, such policy serves a social insurance function (Iversen 2005; Iversen and Soskice 2001; Moene and Wallerstein 2001; Rhem 2009; Sinn 1995).

Perhaps the most theoretically satisfying aspect of this dynamic concerns its ability to explain the *lack* of empirical support for the expectations of previous theorizing. Specifically, the fact that the marginal influence of NOCS is *opposite in sign* across levels of political engagement implies that ignoring such heterogeneity will generate null associations in aggregated analyses. In other words, the overall association between NOCS and economic conservatism, when taking the citizenry as a whole, is minimal, because there are latent subgroups of the citizenry whose unique structural parameters cancel on average.

My empirical investigation of these dynamics proceeded in three parts. In Chapter 3, I demonstrated the basic asymmetry in empirical support for recent theorizing, showing that NOCS is strongly associated with social and foreign policy preferences in a nationally representative sample of American citizens, but has no association at all with economic preferences. Importantly, however, using an experimental design, I showed that the expected relationship *can* emerge in the context of citizen interactions with elite cues over economic policy. More specifically, I find a strong association between NOCS and economic conservatism when party labels are attached to policy positions, but not when such labels are absent. As expected, given the “easy” nature of social and foreign policy preferences, the association between NOCS and conservatism in these latter domains is unrelated to the presence or absence of elite cues.

In Chapter 4, I considered the representation of economic issues in terms of their level of abstraction across political engagement. It was expected that politically engaged citizens, exposed to the cues and frames which drive economic abstractions, would show strong relationships of these considerations to their economic preferences, but little association between personal considerations and preferences. Conversely, lacking such exposure, it was expected that the unengaged would show strong relationships between personal considerations and economic preferences.

The first section of Chapter 4 considered survey evidence in support of these expectations. Using data from the 2010 American National Elections Study, I demonstrated strong associations between personal insecurities related to health insurance coverage and personal finances and preferences for government provided health insurance and general spending and services, but only amongst politically unengaged citizens. Conversely, I showed that highly engaged citizens rely *not at all* on such considerations, but instead show exceptionally strong associations between “racial resentment” and economic preferences. I replicated these basic dynamics with data from the 2006 World Values Survey, demonstrating that politically uninterested citizens utilize personal considerations related to their employment to generate their preferences over redistribution and the government provision of unemployment insurance, while the highly engaged rely only on beliefs about the legitimacy of free market institutions and their attendant socioeconomic inequalities.

In the second part of Chapter 4, I additionally demonstrated that abstract representations of economic issues can be elicited by issue frames which explicitly connect specific policies to broader ideas, and thus that such representations of the economic domain can develop in the context of exposure to elite discourse. More specifically, using an experimental design, I showed that unengaged citizens, in the absence of abstract/symbolic frames, rely on personal considerations in the generation of their economic preferences. In contrast, in the presence of such frames, these citizens rely on abstract considerations, but not on personal considerations. As expected, the politically engaged, as a result of their prior and consistent exposure to elite discourse, were unaffected by the presence or absence of the experimental treatment. In both the control and frame conditions, engaged citizens relied on abstract but not personal considerations.

Finally, in Chapter 5, I considered the implications of these first two chapters for the relationship of NOCS to economic preferences across levels of political engagement. Consistent with theory, and the first two empirical chapters, I found strong *negative* associations between NOCS and economic conservatism for low engaged citizens, and strong *positive* associations between NOCS and conservatism for the highly engaged. These dynamics were replicated across three different, nationally representative samples of Americans. In addition, I showed, using data from the 2006 World Values Survey, that the correlated goals of personal security and societal order are associated with economic conservatism differentially across levels of political engagement in terms of the strength of association, and also show qualitatively distinct patterns in their influence. Consistent with the notion that the unengaged rely on the personal, needs for personal security amongst this group increase economic *liberalism*, while needs for order have no influence. Conversely, for the highly engaged, personal security needs have no influence, while needs for order increase economic *conservatism*.

I also found subtleties to these results which are worthy of note. First, the influence of NOCS appears to be restricted to white Americans, at least with respect to the patterns expected by theory. In most analyses, the dynamics were more pronounced for white only subsamples compared to analyses utilizing full samples. This suggests that the inclusion of minority groups “dilutes” the effects. In addition, I leveraged the black and latino oversamples in the 2008 ANES to explicitly explore possible heterogeneity across racial and ethnic subgroups. I again found strong support for expectations with a whites only subsample, but not for either of the other two groups. Indeed, the patterns found in this analysis for blacks and latinos were *opposite* in direction to that of whites. This was highly unexpected, and should be interpreted cautiously. The estimates themselves were relatively inefficient, and I have no ready explanation for these patterns. More work is needed to understand how psychological dispositions differentially influence preferences across racial and ethnic lines.

Second, the dynamic expected by the theorizing above is driven more by the high ends of the NOCS spectrum than the low end. To understand this, we can consider, rather than the marginal effect of NOCS at different levels of political engagement, the marginal effect of engagement at different levels of NOCS. Across all analyses, the effect of moving from low to high political engagement was substantially larger for high NOCS citizens than low NOCS citizens. Indeed, in some analyses, I found *no* significant differences at the low end of this motivational continuum. In this sense, the “action” appears to arise from citizens with high NOCS, as they differentially respond to the content of economic issues in opposite ways. Moreover, when significant effects of engagement *were* found for the lower end of NOCS, there was nonetheless an asymmetry in the nature of this pattern relative to the upper end. Specifically, engagement tended to drive an increase in liberalism, but *lack of engagement* did

not drive an increase in conservatism, relative to the average level in the citizenry. In other words, low engaged, low NOCS citizens tended to be rather moderate in their preferences, while high engaged, low NOCS citizens tended to be liberal relative to the average citizen. This differs from the upper end of NOCS in that these citizens show polarization from the average as a function of engagement, with low engaged citizens more liberal, and high engaged citizens more conservative.

In the final section of Chapter 5, I considered a possible explanation for this asymmetry in the context of an investigation of the structure of mass preferences over social and economic issues. I proposed that the weaker influence of engagement at the low end of the NOCS spectrum may be due to the fact that low NOCS is consistent with both a liberal *and* a libertarian position. Using latent class analysis, I found four ideological classes of white Americans in the 2004 ANES. Consistent with the notion that low NOCS can drive both liberalism and libertarianism, I found that these two groups were nearly identical in terms of both NOCS and political sophistication. Importantly, however, libertarians tended to be show weak partisan attachments, perhaps suggesting that the key feature which differentiates the groups concerns their involvement with the major partisan (cultural) cleavage in contemporary American politics. Citizens who reject this cleavage perhaps develop an understanding of the economic domain which does not align with contemporary elite rhetoric, and thus show a distinct dynamic with respect to the influence of dispositions on economic preferences. More research is needed to probe this heterogeneity further. Indeed, libertarianism has effectively been ignored in this literature.

Overall, Chapters 3-5 provide empirical support for the linear argument of Chapter 2: (1) the economic domain is “different” in that such issues are hard issues, and the relationships expected by previous research only emerge in the context of citizen interactions with the elite space, and the cues and frames which provide the positions and symbolic referents which are the basis of the expectations of recent theorizing; (2) the necessity of exposure to elite discourse drives a wedge between the politically engaged and unengaged, such that the former rely on abstract/symbolic considerations in the generation of their economic preferences, while the latter rely on those “closest to home,” namely, issues of personal economic security; and (3) this heterogeneity of representation across political engagement drives heterogeneity in the qualitative nature of the structural relationship between needs for order, certainty and security and economic conservatism, with the highly engaged showing a positive relationship due to their focus on symbolic aspects of the issues, and thus institutional stability and change, and the unengaged showing a negative relationship as a function of their concerns with personal economic security, and thus the relative desirability of government provided social welfare qua social insurance.

7.1. Implications for Contemporary American Politics

Importantly, these results speak to recent debates over the importance of the “culture war” to American politics. The typical argument for the importance of the culture war concerns the “displacement” of the economic dimension as a function of the rise of cultural cleavages (e.g.

Frank 2004). In other words, as cultural concerns have increased in salience, blue-collar Americans have voted on these bases *instead* of on the basis of material interests, thus giving power to a party which, while mirroring their cultural orientations, fights for economic policies which hurt those very same constituents. The displacement hypothesis, however, has found little empirical support in rigorous treatments within political science. Indeed, scholars have found that, despite some increase in the importance of social issues to mass voting behavior, economic issues remain the dominant concern of citizens (Ansolabehere et al. 2006; Bartels 2006; 2008; Gelman 2008; Smith 2007).

The present dissertation, however, offers an alternative path through which cultural divisions may influence economic policy. Rather than *displacing* economic preferences as a locus of concern, my results suggest that the culture war *shapes* economic preferences in the mass public, albeit indirectly. The tendency for citizens to sort into the Republican and Democratic parties on the basis of basic psychological needs which differentially resonate with the parties' symbolic imagery has downstream consequences for preferences in what, at first glance, seem to be unrelated ideological domains. Because cultural issues are "easy," and thus non-technical, symbolic and emotional, sorting is more likely to occur on this basis. In contrast, the difficulty of economic issues suggests that engaged citizens will readily accept elite cues on these issues, bringing their own preferences into line with their partisanship, and thus generating strong associations between partisan affiliations, votes, and economic preferences. These associations, however, are deceiving, because they are endogenous to identity (Goren 2005; Levendusky 2009). This suggests that the recent analyses which find a continued association between votes and economic issues are oversimplifying a dynamic process by failing to consider the origins of these preferences, by taking them as exogenous.

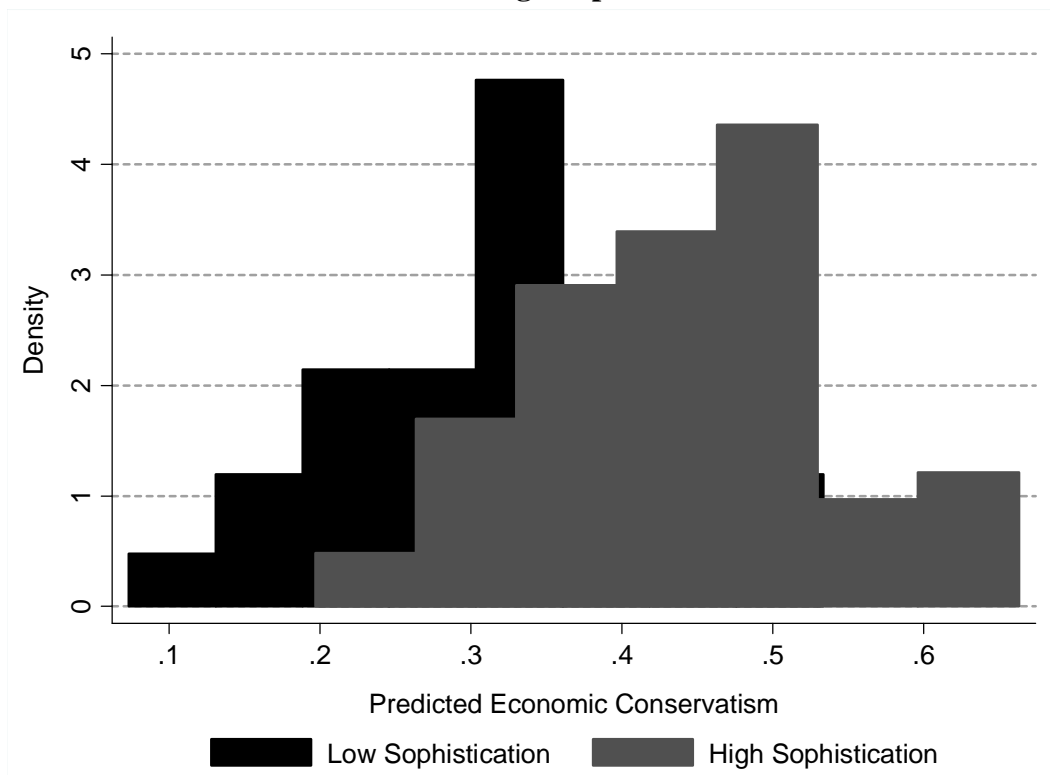
Importantly, these dynamics suggest that commentators, such as Thomas Frank (2004), who are concerned about the extent to which the rise of the culture war might have implications for the provision of social welfare may be right, but for the wrong reasons. There is a reasonably strong association between needs for order, certainty and security and socioeconomic status, both income and education. In a perverse sense, then, as low socioeconomic status citizens become *more sophisticated* politically, they become *less* likely to connect their material interests to their economic preferences, at least in the purely "rational choice" sense of favoring redistribution when below the mean level of income (Meltzer and Richard 1981). Political engagement, as seen in Chapter 5, drives conservatism among individuals with these motivational profiles. Thus, the "culturalization" of the economic dimension by Republican elites has indeed served the purpose of moving blue-collar individuals into the conservative camp economically.

It is worthwhile to take a brief, empirical glance at these dynamics. I reran the regression of economic conservatism on NOCS and its interactions with political engagement from the 2008 ANES, whites only subsample, reported in Chapter 5. I then generated predicted values of the dependent variable for each respondent on the basis of this equation. On the basis of the empirical relationship between socioeconomic status and NOCS, and the structural parameters of this model, we should see a movement in the conservative direction for low income respondents as political engagement increases. In Figure 7.1, I plot these predicted values for respondents at or below the 25th percentile of income, separately for low and high sophisticates.²²

²² Low sophisticates are the lower 40% of citizens on the sophistication scale utilized in Chapter 5, and high sophisticates are the upper 40%.

As seen in this figure, sophistication drives a substantial change in the distribution towards economic conservatism. The median for low sophisticates is .33, while the median for high sophisticates is .44, indicating a substantively meaningful move in the conservative direction. Indeed, this graph seriously understates the power of sophistication to alter preferences amongst these citizens, as I have only coarsely differentiated low from high in this analysis. It is important to emphasize that these estimates are *not* generated by changing values of NOCS in the context of simulations. They are entirely a result of the model itself in interaction with the distribution of NOCS across levels of income. In this sense, these estimates give a particularly good sense of the effect of political engagement amongst low income, white Americans; one which conflicts with recent work which is skeptical of the importance of the culture war. Put simply, the rise of culture war dynamics in American politics has altered the distribution of economic preferences among low income, white Americans who choose to engage with elite-level politics.

Figure 7.1. Distribution of Predicted Economic Conservatism for Low Income Respondents at Low and High Sophistication



7.2. Beyond Contemporary American Politics

The theoretical position outlined in Chapter 2 gives extant party images a key role in the way in which NOCS is translated into economic preferences. Specifically, such images determine the nature of partisan sorting vis a vis NOCS, and thus the extent to which NOCS will be influential in determining preferences over economic issues. In addition, the nature of partisan sorting at any given time constrains the rhetoric which can be successfully utilized by political elites in their persuasive attempts, thus, at least partially, determining the content of the frames which elites utilize in their rhetoric, and the dominant representations of such issues in the mass public. This, however, implies that the relationship between NOCS and preferences in the economic domain is time-bound, and likely a result of the rise of cultural conflict between Democrats and Republicans in the early 1990s.

The rise of the “culture war” in the early 1990s led to partisan sorting on the basis of dispositional needs for order, certainty and security, such that individuals high in such needs are now far more likely to be Republicans, and vice versa (Hetherington and Weiler 2009). This implies that such individuals are also far more likely to listen to, and thus receive cues and frames from, Republican partisan elites. This also suggests that Republicans are incentivized to frame economic issues in ways which will resonate most strongly with such motivational profiles. Taken together, these considerations suggest that the relationship between NOCS and economic conservatism seen amongst the politically engaged is a recent development, and should have emerged in concert with the rise of the culture war in the early 1990s. By extension, to the extent that such dispositions provide underlying structure to preferences across domains, ideological constraint should be emergent as well, rising significantly in the 1990s to the present, but observed minimally before this period.

In the first section of Chapter 6, I examined this possibility in depth. I first showed that the dynamic observed in 2000, 2004 and 2008 in Chapter 5 was *not* present in the 1992 election, despite utilizing an identical set of measures from the 1992 American National Elections Study. This is intuitive. If the process by which this dynamic developed is conditional on both partisan sorting and the subsequent reception of elite cues and frames, then the relationship should have only begun to emerge during this period. In particular, it is likely to have emerged, to some extent at least, in the period from 1992 to 1994. The 1992 election was the symbolic start to the culture war, with Pat Buchanan’s speech at the Republican National Convention, and the year in which the association between religiosity and moral traditionalism (and the psychological needs which underlie these orientations) emerged in force. The years between 1992 and 1994 were characterized by intense debates over the Clintons’ health insurance reform plan, and thus strong cues on the economic dimension disseminated from the elite space *in the context of a realignment of partisan orientations*. This is the exact confluence of factors which we should expect to drive the emergence of the relationship between NOCS and economic conservatism expected by recent theorizing. Indeed, as I show using panel data from 1992-1994, and an identical set of measures, the interaction between NOCS and engagement emerges strongly over the course of these two years, in stark contrast to the 1992 election, but consistent with the data from 2000-2008. In addition, I show that ideological constraint between the economic and social domains of public policy emerged during this very same time period.

If this association is time-bound relative to the past, however, this also suggests that it may be time-bound relative to the future, or, in other words, the relationship between NOCS and economic preferences may be altered as culture war divisions become less important, at least in their contemporaneous form, and new issues emerge with the potential to both alter representations of left and right, and of the economic domain of public policy. In the second part of Chapter 6 I considered emerging issues related to economic globalization, America's place in the world economically and culturally, and the ways in which NOCS might structure orientations in this emerging domain of political conflict, with implications for the future structure of ideology.

The key idea is that *international* economic issues prime distinct sets of considerations relative to contemporaneous interpretations of domestic economic policy. Consider that the relationship between NOCS and domestic policy observed amongst the politically engaged is related to the desirability of institutional stability, and thus, in a sense, is "culturalized" in the present context. Thus, citizens high in NOCS prefer economic conservatism for its emphasis on adherence to traditional American values and the stability of the socioeconomic hierarchy. But economic globalization implies the *decline of American hegemony*, and thus the instability of America as a leading global power, not only economically, but culturally and in terms of foreign policy. This makes it unlikely that analogies can be made between domestic and international economic policy with respect to the desirability of free market institutions. If support for free markets is rooted in a sort of cultural conflict over American values, then there is little reason to expect support for the free market amongst high NOCS citizens to extend to the international scene. Indeed, the decline of the American hegemon implies just the opposite, namely, a threat to the very values and institutions which high NOCS citizens hold dear. Conversely, globalization, its associated need for global cooperation, and the cultural diversity which it engenders should be highly *appealing* to those low in NOCS. This suggests the possibility for a very distinct dynamic between NOCS and economic preferences when extended to the international level, more specifically, a kind of cosmopolitan-libertarianism amongst low NOCS citizens, and a populist-nationalism amongst high NOCS citizens.

I examined this possibility empirically in two ways. First, I demonstrated that citizens high in needs for order and security are much less likely than their low needs counterparts to see themselves as citizens of the world, but far more likely to see themselves as exclusively citizens of the United States. This differential cosmopolitanism found additional support in an analysis of the association between the "Big Five" traits of openness to experience and conscientiousness with behaviors indicative of a "worldly" identity. Those high in openness to experience and low in conscientiousness were more likely to have traveled widely, and engaged in behaviors suggesting openness to foreign culture.

I examined the policy implications of these dispositional dynamics through an analysis of the relationship between NOCS and trade protectionism. Utilizing data from the 2004 and 2008 American National Elections Studies, and the same measure of NOCS utilized for my domestic analyses in Chapter 5, I showed that high NOCS citizens are much more likely to prefer government intervention in the international realm. More specifically, they are more supportive of restrictions on foreign imports to protect American jobs, and of government interventions designed to inhibit the outsourcing of jobs to foreign countries. Importantly, this dynamic should be observed regardless of the level of abstraction at which such policies are understood. From a low-level, personalized construal, free trade should be seen as uncertainty and insecurity enhancing (Scheve and Slaughter 2004), and thus opposed by self-interested, risk averse citizens

(Ehrlich and Maestas 2010). From a high-level, abstract construal, free trade is a threat to American preeminence.

These findings are important because they suggest again that it is not the free market *per se* that is appealing to high NOCS citizens, but only a very specific representation of the free market. This representation is not *necessary*, but a result of changes in party images, and specifically, the rise of the culture war and the strategies for persuasion utilized by elite actors in the context of this rise. To the extent that the culture war, in its present form, dissipates over time, and issues related to America's place in the global economic and cultural community are ascendant, the possibility of an ideological realignment along this same motivational dimension is real. As I discuss in-depth in Chapters 5 and 6, there is something "naturally" disconcerting about the free market as means for creating social order, as such order is *emergent* rather than imposed from the top down. When we add in the issue of national boundaries, a libertarian-cosmopolitan versus populist-nationalist cleavage in American politics should not be discounted. In other words, if such issues become a primary focus of political conflict, "opportunistic cultural entrepreneurs" (Pollock, Lilie and Vittes 1993) may find that non-traditional economic cleavages offer the possibility of tapping latent divisions over such issues, and seek to exploit them. This, in turn, has the potential to reshape citizen representations of economic issues generally, as racial conflict and the culture war have done for the present generation.

7.3. Beyond Left and Right

Beyond the dispositional foundations of economic preferences in American politics, a key conclusion I hope the reader takes away from this dissertation is the necessity of future research in political psychology to go beyond simple left-right distinctions in theoretical and empirical analyses of political ideology. As political scientists, we oversimplify preference formation in two important ways. First, being immersed in elite politics ourselves, we too often focus on the dominant representations of issues extant at the elite level, and amongst the most active of the mass public, and ignore the substantial heterogeneity that exists across citizens in how issues and issue domains are understood. This is a legacy of Converse (1964) which, despite the importance of that contribution, is a net negative for the field. We treat divergence from the dominant as incoherence, instability and ignorance, and ignore the ways in which preference formation can be both relatively idiosyncratic *and* relatively systematic (e.g. Conover and Feldman 1984).

I believe that there is much to be gained by taking seriously the notion that preferences which do not line up nicely with elite divisions are nonetheless substantively meaningful, both from the subjective perspective of the individual, as well as according to a more objective, logical standard. As I have demonstrated above, there are perfectly reasonable connections amongst the constructs of motivation, self-interest, and economic preferences for politically unengaged citizens. There also appears to be a substantial contingent of sophisticated citizens (i.e. libertarians) who reject the dominant cleavage, but may possess meaningfully structured beliefs derivative of the interaction of dispositions with issue representations.

Second, and relatedly, we rely too much on survey items which constitute reductionist treatments of complex issues. This, while understandable in its efficiency, is nonetheless deficient. We ask citizens to place themselves on bipolar scales which portray issues as simple debates over, say, the desirability of “more or less” government spending, but do not delve any deeper into the meaning of these responses to citizens, and often simply ignore specific issues in favor of broad statements. We need to supplement this paradigm with more idiographic methods which allow citizens to explain their own positions on issues, rather than forcing them onto scales derivative of our own understanding, or the understandings inherited from elite debate.

This second point is particularly important for the personality and politics literature. Too much recent work has relied for its theoretical expectations on extant stereotypes of “liberals and conservatives” in contemporary pop politics. In many cases, such analyses have been less successful than we might like (in terms of explained variance) in accounting for political preferences. This problem echoes the debates in the personality psychology literature between trait-based and social cognitive theorists, the former seeking broad, nomothetic, descriptive accounts of average levels of behavior, but finding much inconsistency across contexts, and the latter seeking a more personalized, idiographic analysis which examines the interaction of the individual’s chronic and temporary goals with their (perhaps idiosyncratic) understanding of their context (e.g. Mischel and Shoda 1995; Shoda 1999).

Recent work in personality and politics has approximated the former approach, but I believe that much can be learned from the latter. This is not a dichotomy. We can allow for greater heterogeneity in understanding of political issues across citizens, and thus multiple potential paths through which dispositions might influence preferences, without losing the ability to generalize and speak to broader patterns in the aggregate. My latent class analysis in Chapter 5 is a very simple demonstration of the potential types of analyses which might prove useful. With technological advances in textual analysis, there is good reason to think that we can begin to combine ideographic and nomothetic methods, for example, by allowing citizens to state their preferences within a relatively open-ended format, and subsequently using data reduction techniques to extract latent categories of issue representations. These categories can then be examined as moderators of the translation of individual differences into preferences, looking for *functional* correspondence between representations and goals (Shoda 1999).

Overall, the personality and politics literature remains in its infancy. A good deal of progress has been made, but future research must become more sophisticated both theoretically and empirically. I hope this dissertation has, at the very least, demonstrated the potential utility of moving forward in this fashion.

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Appendix A: Needs Items for Chapter 1, Study 2

“How would you place your views on this scale? 1 means you agree completely with the statement on the left; 10 means you agree completely with the statement on the right; and if your views fall somewhere in between, you can choose any number in between.”

[Left] To have a good life one must be willing to pursue adventures and take risks

[Right] A safe and secure environment is the best foundation for a good life

[Left] It is best for everyone if people try to fit in instead of acting in unusual ways

[Right] People should be encouraged to express themselves in unique and possibly unusual ways

[Left] People should not try to understand how society works but just accept the way it is

[Right] People should constantly try to question why things are the way they are

[Left] It is most important to give people the freedom they need to express themselves

[Right] Our society will break down if we allow people to do or say anything they want

[Left] We should admire people who go their own way without worrying what others think

[Right] People need to learn to fit in and get along with others

Appendix B: Knowledge Items for Chapter 4, Study 3

Fill in the blanks (Respondents were presented with the option of selecting “Don’t Know”).
“Now we have a set of questions concerning various public figures. We want to see how much information about them gets out to the public from television, newspapers and the like.”

- a. “The first name is Joe Biden. What job or political office does he NOW hold?”
- b. “John Roberts. What job or political office does he NOW hold?”
- c. “John Boehner. What job or political office does he NOW hold?”
- d. “David Cameron. What job or political office does he NOW hold?”
- e. “Which party, the Democrats or the Republicans, currently holds a majority in the U.S. House of Representatives?”
- f. “Which party, the Democrats or the Republicans, currently holds a majority in the U.S. Senate?”

Appendix C: Knowledge Items for Chapter 5, Study 2

2000 ANES

Now we have a set of questions concerning various public figures. We want to see how much information about them gets out to the public from television, newspapers and the like.

The first name is _____. What job or political office does he NOW hold?

- a. Trent Lott
- b. William Rehnquist
- c. Tony Blair
- d. Janet Reno

Do you happen to know which party had the most members in the House of Representatives in Washington BEFORE the election (this/last) month?

Do you happen to know which party had the most members in the U.S. Senate BEFORE the election (this/last) month?

2004 ANES

Now we have a set of questions concerning various public figures. We want to see how much information about them gets out to the public from television, newspapers and the like.

The first name is _____. What job or political office does he NOW hold?

- a. Dennis Hastert
- b. Dick Cheney
- c. Tony Blair
- d. William Rehnquist

Do you happen to know which party had the most members in the House of Representatives in Washington BEFORE the election (this/last) month?

Do you happen to know which party had the most members in the U.S. Senate BEFORE the election (this/last) month?

Appendix D: Categories for Social/Religious Likes and Dislikes of the Parties

Pro-Far Right/Birchers/reactionaries; encouraging fascist/ police state

Anti-Far Right/ " " ; discouraging "

Pro-Far Left/radicals/Yippies/SDS; encouraging anarchy/ guerilla state

Anti-Far Left/ " " " ; discouraging "

Pro-Extremists (NA direction)/nuts/bomb-throwers

Anti-Extremists " " "

Acceptance of change/new ideas; less bound to status quo; more open to new ideas/ways of doing things; flexible, innovative

Resistance to change/new ideas; stick to (protect) status quo; resist new ways of doing things; rigid
Public morality--NA direction

" " --Strict/older/traditionalistic outlook; improve/renew morality of country; pro-family; defends family values

" " --Permissive/newer/modernistic outlook; not (strongly enough) pro-family; doesn't defend (strongly enough) family values

Separation of church and state/religion and politics--pro

Separation of church and state/religion and politics--anti

Stand/views on religion (church/state relationship NA)
Aid to parochial schools--NA direction

" " " --Pro

" " " --Anti

Civil rights/Racial justice/Integration/Desegregation/ Voting Rights -
- NA direction

" " -- Pro

" " -- Anti

Civil liberties/Freedom of expression/First amendment/ Privacy --
NA direction

" -- Pro; against snooping; political trials, etc; (88) like Dukakis'
stand on Pledge of Allegiance issue

" -- Anti; for snooping; political trials; McCarthyite; (88) dislike
Republican party stand on Pledge of Allegiance issue

Law and order--NA direction

" " " " --campus demonstrators

" " " " --criminals/organized crime/ hoodlums/street crime

" " " " --anti power of police; court interference

" " --hard line--unspecified

" " " " --campus demonstrators

" " " " --criminals/organized crime/ hoodlums/street crime

" " " " --pro power of police; reduced court interference

Drugs--NA direction

" --Pro legalization/decriminalization; soft-liner; (88) doesn't
support (strongly enough) the war on drugs; not willing to do more
to combat drug use/pushers; involvement with Noreiga

" --Anti legalization/decriminalization; hard-liner; (88) supports the
war on drugs; willing to do more to combat drug use/pushers

Abortion and birth control--NA direction

" " " --Pro reform/legalization; new outlook

" " " --Anti reform/legalization; traditional outlook

Gun control--NA direction

" " --Pro; controls

" " --Anti; "everyone has the right to own a gun"

ERA; Women's rights--NA direction

" " " --Pro

" " " --Anti

Influx of political/economic/past refugees (Cubans, Haitians, Mexicans, etc.); include "the little Cuban boy"- Elian Gonzalez --NA direction

" " " --Pro

" " " --Anti

School prayer--NA direction

" " --Pro

" " --Anti

Gay rights; Gay marriages--NA direction

" " --Pro

" " --Anti

opposes death penalty

favors death penalty

Establish/enforce standards for schools (test teachers, require minimum curricula, regulate class size, etc) -- NA direction

" " " -- Pro

" " " --Anti

Stem cell research - NA direction

Stem cell research - Pro

Stem cell research - Anti (or limitations upon)

Scientific research/Biologic research/Cloning research -- NA direction

Scientific research/Biologic research/Cloning research -- Pro

Scientific research/Biologic research/Cloning research – Anti

Appendix E: Value Items for Chapter 6

Egalitarianism

“Our society should do whatever it takes to make sure that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed.”

“We have gone too far in pushing equal rights in this country.”

“One of the big problems in this country is that we don’t give everyone an equal chance.”

“It is not really that big of a problem if some people have more of a chance in life than others.”

“This country would be better off if we worried less about how equal people are.”

“If people were treated more equally in this country we would have many fewer problems.”

Moral Traditionalism

“The newer lifestyles are contributing to the breakdown of our society.”

“The world is always changing and we should adjust our view of moral behavior to those changes.”

“This country would have many fewer problems if there were more emphasis on traditional family ties.”

“We should be more tolerant of people who choose to live according to their own moral standards, even if they are very different from our own.”