

Liberal and Conservative Trends in the United States
Since World War II

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Studies of social change tend to be of two extreme types. At one end there are the general works on social change, especially sweeping studies covering the life and death of civilizations and discussing the process of modernization. These works are usually either broad, historical overviews or are theoretical (Appelbaum, 1970; Boudon, 1983; Cochran, 1972; Durant and Durant, 1968; Holton, 1981; Nisbet, 1969; Cairns, 1962; Stinchcombe, 1978; Tominaga, 1982; Ogburn, 1922; Spengler, 1926-28; Ryan, 1969). At the other end are particularistic works that study one example or agent of change. These include monographs and case studies of particular actors, social movements, innovations, or time series. This is particularly the case in studies of attitude change using surveys, where most time series analysis either tracks a single question or a small cluster of closely related items (Smith and Crovitz, 1988).

While both the general and case studies clearly contribute to our understanding of social change, advancement has been hindered by the dearth of middle-range studies that empirically evaluate changes across a range of phenomena. This paper attempts to follow this middle-course by examining changes in the preferences of Americans from World War II to the late 1980s on a wide range of liberal-conservative issues. Using survey time series as the data blocks, the goal is to summarize trends, to look at the broad contour of social change, and to evaluate forces influencing liberal-conservative attitudes in contemporary America.

This research project emerged out of the interest of the National Data Program for the Social Sciences in monitoring and modelling social change. The first paper exploring liberal-conservative change was written in 1979 (Smith, 1982) and analyzed 111 time trends. Further work was done throughout the 1980s (Davis, 1980; Smith, 1984; Smith, 1985a; 1985b; 1985c; Smith, 1988), expanding the data base and refining the analysis, until we presently have 455 time trends covering the period through 1987.

Liberalism/Conservatism

So what is this liberalism/conservatism that we seek to study? Would that we could offer a clear, comprehensive definition of liberalism and propose definitive standards for determining whether an issue fits on the liberal/conservative continuum and to fix the liberal and conservative poles of the issue. Unfortunately liberalism is a hard concept to pin down and describe. Part of the problem is that liberalism is a chimera that has changed its emphasis and even some key tenets over time. Another impediment is the old problem of the blind men and the elephant. Liberalism is a big creature with many distinctive features and many observers describe single parts rather than the whole. Finally, liberalism has evolved out of a long historical tradition and has many fathers. There is no definitive author or work that one can turn to as an authoritative pronouncement of what contemporary liberalism is. Because of such problems we will not try to offer a comprehensive definition nor rigorous criteria for measuring liberalism.

Instead we have 1) developed a list of liberal/conservative attributes, 2) examined how issues have been classified in contemporary politics since World War II, and 3) tested issues against measures of liberalism in surveys.

First, we examined many works on politics and political ideology for the prime attributes of contemporary liberalism (variously referred to as collectivist, interventionist, new, reform, or social liberalism to distinguish it from classical or *laissez faire* liberalism).¹ The list we compiled is far from complete and ignores the problem that the attributes are not always complementary and are occasionally contradictory. With these limitations we found that domestically contemporary liberalism is (1) reformist, opting for change and generally opposed to the status quo, (2) democratic, favoring a full extension of electoral rights, (3) libertarian, supporting civil liberties such as free speech and the right to protest, (4) regulatory and interventionist, backing the management of business and the economy by the government, (5) centralist, using the federal government to set and enforce national standards and regulate state and local governments (6) humanitarian, favoring a social welfare system for the care and protection of society in general and the lower class in particular, (7) egalitarian, advocating equal treatment for all and perhaps equal conditions for all, and (8) permissive, tolerating and often approving of nontraditional life styles and practices (e.g. homosexuality, nudity, and the use of drugs). In the foreign arena there is even less consensus on how applicable liberalism is and what liberal positions are. We found that internationally contemporary liberalism is (1) internationalist, supporting active US involvement in the world, (2) multi-national, backing the UN and other collective efforts, (3) non-militarist, preferring non-military solutions to international disputes, and (4) pro-detente, advocating good relations with Communist nations and not emphasizing anti-Communism as a cornerstone of foreign policy.

Next, we considered how issues had been defined in common usage in the post World War II political scene. We considered the positions that various political parties, leaders, and groups had taken on these issue. In particular we considered how issues had been viewed by two archetypical liberal and conservative groups, respectively the Americans for Democratic Action and the American Conservative Union (Brock, 1962; Gillon, 1987; Libros, 1975). We determined whether the issues had been framed in liberal/conservative terms in the political arena and what positions, if any, liberal and conservative groups such as the ADA and ACU had taken on the issues.

¹ The works consulted included both historical and social science works on America's political tradition as well as specific studies on contemporary liberalism, including how citizens understand the terms liberal and conservative. Among the sources consulted are the following Anagnoson, 1972; Chong, McClosky, and Zaller, 1983; Conover and Feldman, 1981; Gerber, 1975; Hamby, 1985; Hartz, 1962; Hero, 1969; Kelley, 1977; Lowi, 1969; Luttbeg and Gant, 1985; Mansfield, 1978; Maddox and Lilie, 1984; McClosky and Zaller; Pollock, 1983; Rotunda, 1986; and Robinson and Fleishman, 1984.

Finally, we crosstabulated all issues that appeared on the GSS with three indicators of liberal/conservative leanings of respondents: presidential vote in the 1972 and 1984 elections and self-placement on a seven-point liberal/conservative scale. For items that did not appear on the GSS we tried to find other criterion variables to verify (or challenge) our assessments. What was available varied from other attitude items that appeared on the GSS and had been themselves vetted to demographics such as party identification and race. Obviously the variables available to check our liberal/conservative judgments were sometimes less than ideal. In sum, if an issue related to one of the liberal principles listed above, was considered to be a liberal/conservative issue by political actors and organizations during the post World War II period, and was verified as related to liberalism by the survey data (or at least there was no negative evidence from survey crosstabulations), we accepted the issue as tapping the liberal/conservative continuum.

The list of survey items we compiled to measure liberal/conservative change are obviously neither definitive nor unproblematic. They represent an extensive range of political issues, but clearly miss or underrepresent many important issues. In addition to those items in the foreign policy arena which are generally less clearly and centrally related to liberalism than most domestic items, there are perhaps about two dozen items whose relation to liberalism is weak, tangential, or debatable. For example, we included support for Hawaiian statehood as a measure of liberalism since admission to the union was opposed by Southerners concerned about the territory's racial composition and also represented change rather than the status quo (Bell, 1984). Of course, Hawaiian statehood was hardly a central liberal/conservative issue. Overall, however, we believe that the issues we defined as liberal are both valid and reasonably representative indicators of liberal/conservative change since World War II.

The collection of time trends started with time series in the General Social Survey and the American National Election Studies, but has been expanded to cover items from over a dozen different survey organizations. The time series were identified through extensive searches in survey archives, especially the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut; the Interuniversity Consortium for Social and Political Research, University of Michigan; the Louis Harris Data Center, University of North Carolina; and the National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago.²

Three major steps were taken in evaluating each item for inclusion. First, did an item measure a liberal/conservative issue as discussed above? Second, was there a time series for the item? Third, when could minor variations in wording be ignored so that a single, time series could be constructed? Obviously we preferred time series made up of only absolutely equivalent wordings. Fortunately in a majority of cases we were able to use only verbatim items. Often, however, a potential series included questions with various minor differences in wording. When the questions were judged to be equivalents, the minor

² For a list of the chief archival guides and sources see Davis and Smith, 1987 - Appendix N.

differences in wording were accepted and one time series was created.³ All variations in wordings are documented in the data base that holds these times series. Figure 1 shows an example of a question in the data base which has several variant wordings.

The data base of 455 time series has various pluses and minuses. On the one hand it is by far the most extensive collection of survey trend data ever assembled and analyzed together. There are an average of 8.1 readings per series for a total of 3,707 data points and the time series covers an average of 14.8 years. Yet this is far from total coverage. Over the 43 years from 1945 through 1987 the 455 time series could have a total of 19,565 data points ($43 * 455$) and we have points for only 3,707 or 18.9%. The shortfall comes largely because most time series cover only a part of the time period. Looking at 15 year periods, we see that 13.2% of the time series start in 1930-1945, 23.3% in 1946-1958, 47.3% in 1960-1974, and 16.3% in 1975+. Considering both the starting and stopping points in the time series, we find only 4% fit the ideal condition of starting by 1945 and ending after 1974, a plurality of trends (39.6%) started in 1960-1974 and ended in 1975+, and 16.3% both started and ended since 1974.

The 455 time series consist of 419 attitudes on which respondents express their personal preferences or beliefs, 13 non-affective judgments in which respondents report on what they believe trends are or how society is (e.g. Do you think drunkenness is increasing or decreasing in this community? or Do you think the day will ever come in the South when whites and Negroes will be going to the same schools, eating in the same restaurants, and generally sharing the same public accommodations?), and 23 measures of personal or household behavior (e.g. Have you seen an X-rated movie in the last year? or Do you (or does your husband/wife) go hunting?).

The 455 time series also cover a wide range of issues. We organized the items into 17 categories that represented major issue areas commonly discussed and defined in the media and politics. These topics generally reflect the face propose of the question (e.g. it's a race relation question or an item about the military), rather than any underlying dimensions or principles that the question might refer to (more of this alternative approach later). Classifying items into such topics was of course sometimes difficult because a question might cover two or more topics (e.g. a question on the poll tax dealt both with racial equality and democratization and an item on military spending obviously fit into both the military and spending/taxation categories), but most of the items clearly fit into the topics they are classified under. Overall for the 17 categories we employed, the 455 time series were distributed as follows:

³ First, based on knowledge of the literature on survey methods, a judgment was made whether the variation in wording was sufficient to alter the response distribution. Second, each time series with variant wordings was inspected for outliers or blips that might be due to wording. According to these two criteria, certain variant wordings were included in a time series. For treatments of special problems with using survey data to study change over time see Glenn, 1975; Hyman, 1972; Bahr, Caplow, and Chadwick, 1983; Kulka, 1982; and Martin, 1983.

Abortion	2.0%
Civil Liberties	9.7
Crime	5.3
Economic Regulation	7.3
Family	1.3
Feminism	8.4
Foreign Affairs	3.7
Labor	6.6
Lifestyles	2.0
Military Recruitment	2.2
Miscellaneous	3.5
Politics	5.1
Race and Ethnicity	14.9
Religion	5.7
Sex	6.2
Social Welfare	5.3
Spending and Taxes	11.0
	(455)

Table 1 contains the 455 questions covered grouped by these 17 topics. It indicates the response or side that was considered liberal, the years covered by the series, the number of data points included, and the trend that characterizes the time series. To categorize each trend a series of models are fitted to the data points. First, we try the constant model that all data points are simple random variations around a stable proportion. An estimate of the pooled (or average) proportion is made and we test to see if the observed data points vary significantly from it. If this model is rejected, the linear model that all data points are random variations around a linear trends is tried. Four outcomes are possible: (1) constant, (2) significant linear component, (3) significant linear trend, and (4) non-constant, non-linear. The constant model is accepted when there is no significant variation around the constant or pooled proportion. The significant linear component model is accepted when (a) the constant model is rejected, and (b) the linear model is rejected, but (c) the linear fit is significantly better than the constant fit. The significant linear trend model is accepted when (a) the constant model is rejected and (b) there is no significant variation from the linear model. The non-constant, non-linear model is accepted when (a) the constant model is rejected, (b) the linear model is rejected, and (c) the improvement between the constant and linear models is not significant (Taylor, 1976). In Table 1 time series that have either significant linear components or significant linear trends and are in the liberal direction are classified as liberal trends and similarly those in the conservative direction are classified as conservative trends.

Across the 455 trends we find that 9.7% are constant, 11.2% are non-constant, non-linear (NCNL), 54.7% are significant linear components, and 24.4% are significant linear trends. When we classify the trends as either liberal or conservative we find that 20.9%

have no direction (constant or NCNL), 54.9% are in the liberal direction and 24.2% in the conservative direction. Liberal trends thus exceed conservative trends by over two-to-one (2.27:1). Taking the % with a liberal trend minus the % with a conservative trend as a summary measure of the direction of liberal/conservative change, we find a +30.7% liberal/conservative score (with +100.0% meaning that all series showed trends in the liberal direction and -100.0% that all series had conservative trends).

Given the non-representative nature of the time series covered with their mixture of different topics and time periods, we might naturally wonder whether such a summary characterization is robust. We therefore recalculated the distribution of trends using several different adjustment procedures. The first adjustment procedure substituted a design effect of 2 for the SRS assumptions used in the initial calculations. This adjustment mainly increases the number of trends fitting the constant model. The second adjustment converted all constant models into linear trends by accepting the best linear fit each series even if the constant model had initially been accepted. This allows us to see if essentially constant series show any directional leanings. The third series employed the opposite strategy by taking weak significant linear components and counting them as showing no trends. This discounts weak trends. The fourth weighted each trend by its duration (i.e. the number of years between first and last data point). This obviously gives more weight to long trends than to short time series. The fifth adjustment gave equal weight to each of the topical areas (shown in Table 1 and discussed below). This balancing of different topics is not any more representative than the self-weighting, but does allow us to see the impact of a notable shift in the relative size of topics. The sixth adjustment excluded from the analysis questions in the foreign affairs and military topics. These exclusions remove the topics that are non-domestic and which, as a group, are hardest to fit consistently into a liberal/conservative framework over time.

None of these adjustments, nor certain variations on them discussed below, had a major impact on the overall liberal/conservative score (Table 2). The elimination of weak significant linear components lowers the liberal/conservative score the most, but its impact on the relative balance of liberal/conservative trends is somewhat less than first appears since the ratio of liberal to conservative trends only falls from 2.27:1 to 2.11:1. The duration adjustment moves the liberal/conservative about an equal margin in the opposite direction. The liberal gain reflects the fact that time series showing liberal trends are longer than their conservative counterparts. Since the unadjusted figures are in the middle of the range of adjusted figures and none the figures have any clear superiority over others, we have used the unadjusted figure elsewhere in the paper except where noted.

A second summary measure of the direction of change is the net slope. This takes the best linear slope for each series and assigns a positive slope to liberal trends and a negative slope to conservative trends. Overall the net slope is 0.0040 per annum (a yearly liberal gain of 0.4 percentage points). This liberal edge comes entirely from the preponderance of liberal trends over conservative trends since the average slope for liberal and conservative trends was virtually identical (respectively +1.32 and 1.31 percentage

point per annum).⁴ We subjected this net slope estimate to various adjustment procedures similar to those applied to the liberal/conservative score above and as above found little variation in the overall averages. We did find however that short term trends sometimes based on only a few data points did exercise an inordinate influence in the unadjusted figures and in some of the subsequent analysis have used the interval weight to compensate for this.

While the liberal and conservative trends are similar in magnitude, the liberal trends have somewhat better linear fits than the conservative trends. Liberal trends have an average r-square with time of .58 and the percent to total chi-square accounted for by the linear model is 73% compared to a r-square of .47 and a per cent of linear chi-square of 56% for conservative trends. This suggests that the liberal trends have more strength behind them than the conservative movements. The greater regularity of the liberal trends may result from the fact that they are more frequently driven by a cohort-education module that promotes steady liberal gain for many items (Davis, 1980; Pollack, 1983). In addition, the liberal trends cover longer intervals (17.1 years) than do conservative trends (13.0 years).

In terms of the "big picture" the view in post World War II America has mainly been to the left. Liberal and conservative trends have been about equal in magnitude, but liberal trends have outnumbered conservative trends by over 2 to 1. This in turn meant that on average across all time series there was a net liberal gain of about 0.4 percentage points per annum. These overall averages mask as much as they reveal however, because change has not been uniform across topics nor across time.

Trends by Topics

Table 3 shows the trends for each of our 17 topics. The liberal/conservative scores are reasonably similar in both rank order and magnitude for all adjustments. There is however considerable range in the net direction of trends across topics, ranging from abortion, race/ethnicity, and feminism with scores of +70.0 down to scores of -20.0 for military recruitment, miscellaneous, and crime. In fact, the range is so heterogenous by topic that no topic even falls close to the over all score of +30.7.

Table 4 shows the net slope for each topic, both unadjusted and weighted for length of time series. Weighting by length of time series does effect the relative ranking of topics and their magnitudes, and overall the weighted figures give a better description of the general trends.⁵ As in the case of the liberal/conservative scores in Table 4, there is

⁴ Since both constant trends and NCNL trends showed very marginal conservative leanings (respectively -.04% and -.09%), liberal and conservative trends are also almost equal in magnitude over all time series.

⁵ This assessment is based largely on the fact that a number of large changes were based on short time series. These often have a large impact on topical averages,

considerable range across topics in the magnitude of trends, ranging from racial/ethnic trends averaging over +1.0 percentage point to crime at -0.15 percentage points.

Table 5 compares the ranking of topics according to the liberal/conservative scores and net slopes. Overall the level of agreement is high. Race/ethnicity, feminism, and abortion are the most liberal on both list, while social welfare, spending and taxes, miscellaneous, and crime are the most conservative on both lists. In the middle there is more disagreement between the two indicators, with sex and lifestyles the most inconsistent followed by religion and labor. The basic reason for the difference in rank for these topics is that a) they contain a mixture of liberal and conservative trends and b) the liberal and conservative trends differ in magnitude. The liberal/conservative score gives equal weight to each trend, while the net slope weights by the size of the slope. For example, lifestyles has only six trends and five small liberal trends are off-set by one large conservative trend so its rank using net slopes is 6 positions lower than on the liberal/conservative score ranking. Similarly on sex morality the liberal trends are larger than the conservative trends, so the topic ranks as more liberal on the net slope list than on the liberal/conservative scale.

Examination of the rank order and magnitudes in Tables 3-5 allows us to draw some tentative conclusions about factors influencing liberal/conservative change. First, the topics showing the strongest liberal change (race/ethnicity, feminism, and abortion) all primarily deal with increased support for freedom of individual choice and/or equal treatment/rights for individuals (regardless of such fixed attributes as gender and race). The most conservative topic, crime, involves increased support for social control and in many ways might be seen as a counterbalance to the liberal trend toward more individual freedom. Generally in the middle one finds topics dealing with government vs. private regulation over material matters (economic regulation, labor, spending and taxes, and social welfare).

Several of these middle-ranked topics show bimodal distributions (i.e. they show a notable proportion of trends in both the conservative and the liberal directions). Such a pattern might result from a) different movement among topical sub-groups, b) different movement over different periods, c) some combination of these two causes, or 4) some other factor, such as ambivalence or cross-cutting pressures. The political topic clearly follows the sub-group model with items about political rights and democratization showing almost uniform liberal movement, while items about government power and size show a conservative shift. This intra-topical split reflects the inter-topical difference we noted above under which extensions of individual freedom and equal rights grew while support for economic regulation and government control items lagged behind. Labor's bimodal trends are generally a result of period effects. Trends in the late 1940s and in the late 1970s/early 1980s were typically anti-labor while those in between were pro-labor (more on period effects below). Economic regulation and social welfare show more complex patterns. Support for economic regulation increased for profit control, but fell for government ownership. On price control measures, it was high during periods of peak

especially for those topics that contain relatively few time series.

inflation and lower when inflation subsided. For social welfare there seems to be some real ambivalence, with different measures of support for education, health care, welfare, unemployment, and retirement moving in opposite directions. This mixed pattern is equally true if the spending items having to do with social welfare are considered as part of the social welfare topic. It suggests that Americans during this period were attracted by the benefits of entitlements, the appeal of humanitarianism, and the idea of human capital investment, but leery of both costs and government control.

Trends on Alternative Dimensions

To further explore what factors influenced or shaped liberal/conservative change, we evaluated items along three additional dimensions (i.e. besides liberalism/conservatism): a) government involvement, b) equal treatment/rights, and c) individual choice. Each of the 455 time series were independently rated as being related to each of these dimensions. While all 455 items were related to the general liberal/conservative dimension, only a subset of items were related to these three dimensions: government intervention - 282, equality - 115, and choice - 191. Although there are some definite relationships between some of these dimensions and both themselves and the liberal/conservative dimension, each was separately created without reference to the other classifications.

Turning to government intervention first, we find that 14.5% of the applicable times series showed no trend (constant or NCNL), 30.0% moved towards more state involvement and 44.5% towards less state activity for an anti-state balance of +14.5 percentage points. Overall the government intervention dimension had little relationship to liberalism/conservatism. Conservative trends were in the pro-state direction 37.5% of the time, while liberal trends moved towards more state activity in 42.3% of the cases. The anti-state trends concerned topics and items in which more government would restrict individual rights and freedom of choice- abortion, civil liberties, feminism, and religion (requiring school prayer). Trends favoring state intervention were either to protect equal rights, especially of "powerless" groups (minorities and the working class) or to re-establish social control (crime and sex education in the schools). Generally support for material entitlements and benefits (social welfare and spending/taxes) were not in the pro-government direction, although often the cross-sectional marginals indicated pro-government majorities.⁶

Movement among items related to the equal treatment dimension, which we discussed above both to explain the pattern of inter-topical differences and differences on the role of government dimension, has been overwhelmingly towards favoring more equal treatment. No direction (constant/NCNL) emerged for 15.7% of the time series, 71.3% were towards equality and 13.0% moved away from equal treatment for a more equality edge of +58.3. Unlike government involvement, which was essentially unrelated to the liberal/conservative dimension, pro-equal rights trends were all classified as liberal trends.

⁶ This was especially true of spending items in the 1970s and early 1980s.

Thus this dimension is merely a subset of liberal/conservatism and not an unrelated dimension. Items making up the set of equal rights items are overwhelmingly from three topics- race/ethnicity (48), civil liberties (29), and feminism (27). The few items that buck the general pro-equality trend are some civil liberty items from the 1940s/1950s (7) and a few race/minority items (6) that called for special treatment (e.g. affirmative action) or spending for minority groups. Such group benefits racial items are of course seen as both racist, anti-individual, and aliberal by some critics.

Trends involving items tapping freedom of choice show a general movement towards more support for individual choice, although not as strongly as the equal rights movement. No direction was shown by 23.6% of the time series, 57.6% moved towards more freedom, and 18.8% were for less freedom. The net index score was 48.8 percentage points in the freedom direction. This dimension is more closely related to the liberal/conservative dimension that government intervention, but is not a mere sub-set as equal rights is. Among conservative trends 52.3% were in the individual choice direction, while 85.3% of liberal trends moved towards more freedom of choice. This dimension drew items from more topics than the equality dimension, but had very few items from foreign affairs (0), spending/taxes (0), religion (1), politics (1), social welfare (4), or crime (4). Freedom of choice was generally expanded for ascripted groups such racial minorities and women (including the right to an abortion) and in the areas of sexual morality and for some lifestyles and miscellaneous issues (e.g. euthanasia, suicide, drugs, and prohibition). Movement against free choice was centered in three areas: civil liberties in the 1940s/1950s, support for universal military training and the military draft, especially in the 1950s, and economic regulation (i.e. against free enterprise).

In brief, liberalism has prevailed over conservatism since World War II largely because of a widespread increase in public support for equal rights and individual choice (outside of the economic realm). Support for government control over material well-being via economic regulation and an expansion of social welfare has been less consistent in direction and lower in magnitude. The one area to clearly show conservative movement has been social control and crime. Other explanations and elaborations of the general pattern of change involve differences by sub-periods.

Trends by Periods

We would like to be able to describe year-to-year changes in the annual rates of liberal/conservative change, but this is extremely difficult because of the general limitations of the individual time series (e.g. mainly the differences in the starting and ending points of various series and internal gaps in each individual series) and in particular because of the shortfall of data points in the earlier years. We have made one preliminary stab at showing what the overall rate of change was by period in Figure 2. By assuming that all change between data points was even (e.g. that a 10 percentage point shift over a five-year interval represented five annual gains of 2 percentage points), that an overall trend could be computed by taking the signed average of all estimated trends covering a given year, and that the mixture of trends represented from year-to-year does not significantly

bias the annual averages, the average liberal trend emerges as depicted in Figure 2. It suggests a fairly steady level of liberal gain from the early 1950s until about 1973/1974 and then a levelling-off of liberal movement through the mid-1980s. We refer to this levelling-off in the mid-1970s the "liberal plateau" to emphasize that on balance neither liberal nor conservative change predominated and that this flattening occurred after a long liberal climb. (The trend line prior to 1945 should be entirely ignored because of the inadequacies in the number of time series covering those years.) This overall trend should be considered only a first-cut approximation and steps are being taken to test its robustness, strengthen the data base, and refine the estimate.⁷ The mid-70s liberal plateau description is buttressed however, by numerous individual examples, particularly in the areas of civil liberties and abortion (Figure 3) and there is sufficient data to explore this hypothesis more rigorously.

Among our 455 time series there are 176 that have trends both before and after 1974 (i.e. two+ data points in both periods; including 13 times series with only a total of three points with an observation in 1974 counting for both the pre and post periods). These 176 time series have an average duration of 21.2 years and 13.0 data points. On one hand this is a relatively large, diverse, and rich set of time series. However, it represents less than half of our initial time series and covers a different mixture of topics. Looking over all years, these 176 time series do show about the same mixture of no direction and liberal/conservative movement as did the 455 items. Taking the unadjusted series 2.3% were constant, 11.9% were NCNL, 26.1% moved in a conservative direction, and 59.7% in a liberal direction, for a liberal/conservative score of +33.6. We applied a topical weight to the data so that each topic would represent the same share among the 176 series as it had among the 455 and this raised the liberal/conservative score slightly to +36.5. For the net slope the unadjusted average was +0.32 percentage points per annum and +0.36 when weighted by topic. This puts the liberal/conservative score slightly above the overall average, while the net slope is a bit lower. In general we find that the 176 trends are both reasonably representative of the 455 time series and an adequate set of items for considering how liberal/conservative attitudes have varied over time.

Table 6 shows that there was a decided shift among trends before and after 1974. Prior to 1974 the trends were overwhelmingly liberal (+43.2), while since 1974 there has been almost an even balance between liberal and conservative trends (+4.0). This same pattern emerges when we look at net slopes. Until 1974 the net slope was 0.64 percentage points per annum, while since 1974 it has been -0.04 percentage points.

Looking at the individual switches in the time series, we find that 46.6% moved in a conservative direction (i.e. from a liberal trend to no direction, no direction to a conservative trend, or from a liberal to a conservative trend), 31.1% showed no change in direction, and 22.1% shifted in a liberal direction (i.e. a conservative trend to no

⁷ For example, we are working on a procedure for merging together closely related time series via calibration in order to construct longer and denser time series as well as to test the robustness of our present estimate.

direction, no direction to a liberal trend, or from a conservative to a liberal trend). Conservative shifts were most common on the abortion topic which had 100% turn around followed by economic regulation, foreign affairs, and religion, which showed conservative shifts in over one-half of all possible cases. Shifts were least common among feminism items with only 16.7% turning towards the conservative followed by race/ethnicity and sex. Given that abortion and feminist attitudes are closely related issues and that these attitudes show moderately strong associations in cross-sectional surveys, it is striking that their trends, while consistent in direction prior to 1974, have diverged in recent years. This is not only an important finding in its own right, but cautions that related series do not always exhibit the same patterns of change.

Among the items showing ideological shifts, the most interesting are complete reversals, trends that were moving in one direction, but flipped sign to move in the opposite direction. 36 liberal trends in the pre-1974 period changed to conservative trends since 1974 and 10 initial conservative trends became liberal. These 46 trends represent reversals for fully 36.5% of the possible cases (i.e. of the 126 time series that had directional trends in the pre-1974 period). Liberal reversals were concentrated in a few areas and almost totally absent in others. They occurred on all six abortion items and were also concentrated among social control items (crime, drug control, and family preservation by limiting divorce), and government control and state welfare items. In contrast only a single trend on race/ethnicity and feminism reversed.

Conservative reversals are both less reliable, fairly scattered, and more particularistic. Many of the conservative reversals involve time series with few data points and/or weak trends pre-74, post-74, or both. Those trends that are more substantial are not concentrated in any topic and do not seem to represent any common themes. Instead they seem to involve reactions to specific events and developments, such as decrease in fear of crime after a peak in the crime rate in the early 1980s and a decline in concern over the power of government in the Reagan years.

In brief, the balance of liberal/conservative change since World War II has not been uniform over time. Many liberal trends levelled-off and some even reversed direction in the 1970s. Perhaps the two most notable features of this liberal plateau period are 1) that overall society did not reverse from liberalism to conservatism, but the liberal gains of the post World War II period did level-off. While some liberal (and some conservative) trends did reverse direction, the general shift was from liberal advance to a liberal holding-pattern (Astin, Green, and Korn, 1987; Burnham, 1980; Chafetz and Ebaugh, 1983; Hastings and Hoge, 1981; Hoge, Luna, and Miller, 1981; Ladd, 1983; Moberg and Hoge, 1986; Thornton, 1985). 2) This levelling-off did not happen after Reagan's victory in 1980 or even during 1978 with Republican election gains and the Proposition 13 tax revolt, but earlier in the seventies, around 1974. Of course some trends swung to the conservative side earlier than then (e.g. support for capital punishment began increasing in the mid-1960s) or later (support for the legalization of marijuana levelling-off in 1978-1980 and dropping thereafter) and many other trends never did show significant declines (much less reversals). Still a number of trends showed points of inflection in 1974 or centered around that year.

Causes of Liberal/Conservative Change

In our earlier writings (Smith, 1982), we have proposed a series of general to specific explanations for what has been called the general liberal hypothesis. To summarize these briefly, we argued that two basic long-term forces have moved America in a liberal direction: modernization and liberal idealism. Modernization promoted liberalism through the growth of rationalization, innovation, centralization, statism, and prosperity. Liberal idealism reflects the fact that in our historical tradition and governmental roots America is a liberal nation. The ideals symbolized in our political culture and enshrined in patriotic emblems from the Pledge of Allegiance to the Gettysburg Address are liberal ideals. While practice has often fallen far short of these ideals, the ideals have remained cherished and have continually exercised a pressure (sometimes latent and sometimes active) towards liberal change (Abbott, 1981; Hartz, 1962; McElvaine, 1987).⁸

In addition to these main forces moving America in a liberal direction, there have been several important specific forces aiding the growth of liberalism during the last half century. Perhaps the most important have been the New Deal realignment of the Great Depression (Hamby, 1985; Leuchtenburg, 1983) and the strong leadership role played by certain institutions of government, especially the Supreme Court. The New Deal realignment not only enacted liberal reforms in the 1930s and 1940s, but stimulated later liberal growth by 1) laying a foundation on which latter programs could be built, 2) creating a liberal coalition that was able to dominate politics until the 1970s (and on the Congressional level until the present), and 3) nurturing a political generation more liberal than its predecessors. In addition, liberalism was also aided by the strong leadership provided by the Supreme Court and other institutions of government and society. Without the intervention of the Supreme Court in such area as race relations, the rights of the accused, civil liberties, and voting rights, the growth of liberal attitudes would have been stunted (Marshall, 1987). Similarly, the general willingness of presidents to support the Supreme Court decisions with executive powers reenforced the impact of the Court's decisions.

Counteracting liberal advances were a series of less general, but still powerful historical forces. The surge in the crime rate starting in the 1960s and of drug-related crime latter on triggered public support for social control and punitiveness. Similarly, the stagflation of the 1970s directly counteracted some of the liberalizing tendencies of modernization and reduced public faith in the government's ability to successfully regulate the economy. The governmental failures at economic management and rising tax burdens coupled with its limited success in dealing with some social problems such as welfare and urban renewal to lower both confidence in the government and faith in government as a general solution to problems. The disillusionment with government as the solver is

⁸ Others have written of a gap between ideals and institutions (Huntington, 1981) and norms and experience (McLoughlin, 1978).

illustrated by the mocking shibboleth often cited by Reagan, "I'm from the government and I'm here to help." These problems were instrumental in triggering such liberal reactions as the "mugged by reality" Neo-conservatives, the "robbed by the government" tax revolters (Sears and Citrin, 1982; Hansen, 1980; 1983), and the New Fiscal Populists (Clark and Ferguson, 1983).

But perhaps it was not only liberal failures, but also the unintended consequences liberal successes that helped to undermine liberalism. In the area of crime the extension of the rights of the accused may well have hindered the police in dealing with the rise in crime from the early 1960s to early 1980s. Similarly, in the area of the economy the protection of employees, consumers, and the environment may have hindered the wealth producing capacity of the free market. But even more broadly the great gain in public support for individual choice in areas ranging from abortion, sex roles, and sexual morality to civil liberties may have undermined broad-based, principled support for collective solutions imposed by the government in general.

Cycles in American History

While specific sources of conservative reaction such as crime and stagflation (as well as such events as Vietnam, Watergate, etc.), may offer a sufficient explanation for the stalling of the general liberal movement in the mid-1970s, it is possible that cyclical forces were also at work. This possibility has been explored at greater depth elsewhere (Smith, 1984) and we will summarize it here.

Since celestial cycles dominate much of human life, it is not surprising that mankind has posited greater or lesser cycles governing everything from the cosmos and historical development down to fashions (Kroeber, 1919; Allport and Hartman, 1931; Richardson and Kroeber, 1940) and one's love life (Thomas, 1976 and Gittelson, 1988). The two major cyclical theories that have been applied to American history are economic and political. The economic cycles are well known and well grounded in both data and theory (Burns and Mitchell, 1946; Burns, 1965; Lucas, 1981; Klein, 1976). The most prominent of these is the basic business cycle, the rhythmic repetition of expansions and contractions which have characterized the United States and other industrial, free market economies since the early 1800s. The business cycles are not rigidly periodic, but are internally driven by the complex interaction of economic forces. In addition to the business cycle's impact on short-term economic conditions, various social conditions from the marriage rate to the level of alcohol consumption have been tied to it (Thomas, 1925; Sorokin, 1928; South, 1985; Wasserman, 1983). Besides the well-established basic business cycle, other economic cycles exist for particular sectors such as construction and longer cycles such as the Kuznets cycles of major and minor business cycles and the more uncertain Kondratieff cycles have been advanced.

Political cycles are generally much less established than economic cycles. Certain cycles are well known. National elections of course occur every two years. This cycle is highly regular and has an enormous impact on both political activity and media coverage, but is perhaps uninteresting since it is a simple function of constitutional mandates. Related to

the national election cycle are the well-established patterns of voter turnout increasing for presidential elections and falling for mid-term elections and the loss of House seats by the president's party during the mid-term elections (Campbell, 1960 and Tufte, 1975). Others have posited four-year cycles in presidential popularity (Stimpson, 1976; but see Neustadt, 1960; Mueller, 1973; and Shapiro and Conforto, 1980).

Political events such as election returns and presidential popularity have also been linked to the business cycle. Voters appear to react to economic problems (unemployment, inflation, etc.) by withdrawing approval of the seating president (Shapiro and Conforto, 1980) and voting against the party in power (Tufte, 1975; Tufte, 1978). In turn, the governing party tries to avoid such negative political consequences by maintaining a healthy economy and there is some evidence that it particularly tries to stimulate the economy during presidential election years (Allen, Sulock, and Sabo, 1986; Alt and Chrystal, 1983; Browning, 1985; Frey and Schneider, 1978; Golden and Poterba, 1982; Haynes and Stone, 1987; Hibbs, 1977; Hibbs, 1982; Hibbs, 1987; MacRae, 1977; Nordhaus, 1975; Shughart and Tollinson, 1985; Tufte, 1975; Tufte, 1978; Yantek and Cowart, 1986; and Zuk and Woodbury, 1986).

Covering a longer time span are the realignment election cycle and the succession of party systems. V.O. Key (1955; 1959) first noted that American history has been marked by a series of critical elections in which new partisan coalitions were forged. These coalitions and the electoral division of voters tended to maintain themselves through successive elections until a new critical election and realignment occurred. Key's model has been expanded, modified and refined by later authors. Key and most other early writers on realignment (MacRae and Meldrum, 1960; Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes, 1966) did not discuss the repeating nature of realignments and therefore did not consider cyclical explanations. Starting with Sellers (1965), however, most authors (Pomper, 1967; Jahnige, 1970; Burnham, 1970; Shivley, 1971-1972; Roos, 1972; Lichtman, 1976; Andersen, 1979; Clubb, et al., 1980; Niemi, Katz, and Newman, 1980; Carmines and Stimson, 1981; Petrocik, 1981; Hamburg, 1982; McCormick, 1986; Norpoth, 1986) described this political pattern as a cycle.

Two main explanations have been offered for the repetition. The change/disequilibrium model most fully articulated by Burnham (1970) argues that social and economic change creates a backlog of problems that can not be handled by the existing party system. Either the new problems are crosscutting issues which the parties find difficult to handle because of intra-party divisions (Sundquist, 1973) or the problems simply represent topics that the existing party leadership is unconcerned about or unfamiliar with and therefore fails to act on. Eventually, the accumulation of new problems forces a rupture in the existing electoral system and a new alignment of issues, groups, and parties is formed. The new coalitions represent a regrouping of old constituencies or the redivision of the electorate along new cleavages (e.g. race could replace class as a prime political organizer). These new political groups then deal with the unresolved problems and enact new policies and establish new programs (McCormick, 1986; Ginsberg, 1976; Brady, 1978; 1982; Beck, 1979; Neuman and Hicks, 1977; Burnham, 1970; Sinclair, 1978). But the

new ruling coalition is eventually overcome by future problems with which it is unable to cope.

The second explanation, the mobilized political generation model, argues that realignments are basically the result of a large number of new voters being mobilized to vote for a new leader/party (Beck, 1974; 1979; Clubb, et al., 1980; Norpoth, 1986; Andersen, 1979; Petrocik, 1981; Hamburg, 1982; Baker, 1985). This group consists primarily of young and first time voters (e.g. newly enfranchised groups such as immigrants). Once this group is motivated to vote and establishes a habit of voting for the dominant party, its members continue to follow their partisan inclinations throughout their lives. Over time, however, the mobilized cohort ages and dies off. They are fairly successful in passing on their partisan affiliation to their children, but these children inherit the party label without the intensity of attachment that their mobilized parents felt. Thus realignment is a period effect that creates a political generation and this generation eventually passes on. With the generation of intense partisans in gradual numerical decline, the population is once again open to a realignment.

This mobilized political generation model draws support from various cohort and cohort-education models of social change that demonstrate that often much of the decade-to-decade changes in attitudes can be explained by cohort turnover (Davis, 1980; Pollack, 1983; Smith, 1976).

These two models are not mutually exclusive. Their explanations of the cyclical nature of realignments are distinct, but complimentary. Authors from both schools emphasize how crises in general and depressions in particular can trigger realignments (Sellers, 1965; Beck, 1974; Burnham, 1970; Campbell, et al., 1966). The change/disequilibrium model emphasizes the growth of problems (the accumulation of problems as socio-economic changes occur and new problems arise that the existing coalition is unprepared to manage), while the generation mobilization model stresses the decline in support that the ruling coalition suffers from cohort replacement. One might argue that the passing of the mobilized political generation eases the way for the realignment necessitated by the combination of social change and political inertia. Similarly, cohort turnover without some crisis or exogenous shock would not in and of itself lead to the overthrow of established political coalitions.

When realignment occurs there is usually an accompanying change in the party system, such as the demise of the Federalists and Whigs and the rise of the Republicans. This is not inevitable however. As in the case of the New Deal realignment, parties can change their coalitions and their positions as dominant and secondary party without leading to the demise of one of the parties or even a basic turnover in partisan leadership.

Cycles of Reform?

While political scientists have been advancing the realignment cycles, historians have been advocating a somewhat similar political cycle, a cycle of reform. Historians have long noted that there have been alternating periods of reform and reaction in American history. Some historians have merely described the alternating periods without suggesting that a

repeating pattern was involved and have offered particularistic explanations for each of the successive rises and falls (Goldman, 1952; Hofstadter, 1955). Another group headed by the Schlesingers (Schlesinger, 1939; 1949; 1950; Schlesinger, Jr., 1980; 1984; 1986; Faulkner, 1939; Carleton, 1948; Forcey, 1961; Reichley, 1971; Mitchell, 1983; Huntington, 1981; Hirschman, 1982; White, 1925; McElvaine, 1987; Adams, 1890) have explicitly argued that these alternating periods form a cycle.⁹

While the cycle of reform school agrees on seeing American history as following alternating periods of reform and reaction and that these alternations are cyclical, the school does not follow a rigid catechism. There is a range of differing interpretations over what is alternating, why the alterations occur, the timing of the alternations, and the nature or shape of the cycle.

In general, the cycle of reform advocates agree that there are alternating periods of reform and of retrenchment. The reform periods are also typically described as liberal or progressive and the inter-reform periods as conservative or reactionary. Sometimes it is described as a struggle between the forces of democracy and property. This depiction draws on the perspective of the Progressive historians. Others conceptualize it as a swing between public and private interests (Schlesinger, 1986; Crotty, 1977; Hirschman, 1982). While this partly reflects only variation in terminology (one author's public interested citizens are often another's progressives), it sometimes taps deeper disagreements. For example, cyclicalists sharing the viewpoint of the Progressive historians, tend to see the periodic triumph of reformers over an equally organized and ideologically opposed camp of reactionaries, while others see the swings as between movement and stagnation rather than between camps pulling in opposite directions.

The cycle of reform school is even less in agreement on the mechanism driving the cycle and even the Schlesingers have disagreed with one another over its operation. By far the most frequent explanation is the rest/action hypothesis. Often in explicitly organismic terms it is argued that society alternates between periods of activism and repose (Schlesingers; Altbach, 1981b; Levine, 1980; Hamby, 1985; McElvaine, 1987; McLoughlin, 1978; Rotunda, 1986; Huntington, 1981). What is not made clear is why society needs to rest. Economic activity in general and economic innovation in particular shows cyclical peaks and troughs, but this periodicity is not related to a need for rest.

Probably second in prominence are variations of the pendulum/homeostasis argument. Often this has been an argument by metaphor only, a contention that reform is governed by a pendulum without explanation as to why this is so. One version of this argument contends that reform periods go to extremes and ultimately alienate the majority of citizens (McElvaine, 1978). Another variation states that reformist zeal spills over our

⁹ To the general cycle of reform school we can add two related groups that posit alternating periods of student activism and quiescence (Altbach, 1974; 1981a; 1981b; Levine, 1980; Levine and Wilson, 1980; Hoge, Luna, and Miller, 1981) and periods of religious awakening and normality (McLoughlin, 1978; Wallace, 1956; Wuthnow, 1976a; Burnham, 1981).

borders and leads to involvement in wars which in turn kill off reform (Garner, 1977; Goldman, 1952; Wasserman, 1983; Levine, 1980; White, 1925; Hofstadter, 1955; McLoughlin, 1978; Schlesinger, 1980).¹⁰

A third hypothesis theorizes that reform achieves its agenda and becomes the status quo (Oberschall, 1978; Rotunda, 1986). Some suggest that such success leads to the electorate becoming satisfied and to their abandonment of the reform movement. Others argue that at this point reform itself becomes entrenched, involved with holding office and mundane administration and ossifies (Schlesinger, 1949). Still others contend that corruption often creeps in at this point undermining both government performance and public support (Hirschman, 1982).

A fourth explanation argues that disillusionment sets in either because the promised reforms cannot be achieved (McElvaine, 1987) or because the reforms fail to achieve the promised results (Crotty, 1977; Schlesinger, 1984).

Fifth, some have given an important role to the turnover of political generations. While Schlesinger Sr. rejected a generational mechanism, Schlesinger Jr. ultimately embraced this explanation and explicitly tied it to the mobilized generation model of electoral realignment (Schlesinger, 1986).

Finally, other explanations have included vague analogies to seasons (Mitchell, 1983; White, 1925), the synchronization of social movements (Jenkins, 1986), and a human desire for change (even from change itself).

This is also considerable disagreement over the periodization of the cycles of reform. Table 7A shows the periods of reform and reaction proposed by the Schlesingers and others. There are two obvious difficulties in comparing these periodizations. First, not all authors cover the same span of American history; some dealing only with the early years and others with just recent history. Second, many of the schemes lack explicit timings, referring instead to vague eras such as Jacksonian Democracy. In Table 7B we have compared these periodization by indicating how well they match the timing proposed by the Schlesingers. In the table a "+" indicates a reform period, a "o" a period of retrenchment, and an "x" that the period was not covered. A "?" signifies uncertainty over the author's evaluation and a combination of "+" and "o" means that the period was split differently than by the Schlesingers. In matching periods we considered the periods as similar if they started and ended about the same time. For example, the Progressive Era was dated as from 1901 to 1919 by the Schlesingers, from 1900 to 1915 by Faulkner and from 1900 to 1917 by Carleton. We thus did not emphasize in Table 7B the many small differences in each timings apparent in Table 7A.¹¹

¹⁰ There is a distinct literature on cycles of wars and international relations that we will not discuss. See Moyal, 1949; Almond, 1951; Richardson, 1960; Denton and Phillips, 1968; Klingberg, 1952; 1970; 1979; Foster, 1983.

¹¹ It is noteworthy that the Schlesingers tend to start and end their periods in presidential inauguration years (e.g. 1801, 1829, 1841, 1861, 1869, 1901,

Inspection of Table 7B shows consensus on many points. The American Revolution, Age of Jackson, Progressive Era, New/Fair Deals, and New Frontier/Great Society are seen as period of reform, while the return to normalcy 1920s and the "I like Ike" 1950s are considered periods of retrenchment. But major disagreements also occur.

While the Schlesingers and White clearly see Jefferson's presidency as starting a reform period, Jefferson is generally ignored by the others and the first decade of the nineteenth century is implicitly considered to be a non-reform period. Likewise, the Schlesingers see the Civil War and the beginning of Reconstruction as a period of reform, but several other author's view it otherwise. Conversely the Schlesingers donot consider the Populists and the 1890s to be reformists, while Huntington and White start the Progressive Era at this point.

The disagreements grow even larger when the various cycle of reform periodizations are compared to other cyclical schemes such as Klingberg's interlocking international and domestic cycles (Klingberg, 1952; 1970; 1979) or the cycles of religious revivals (McLoughlin, 1978). The lack of comparability both within the reform cycle periodization and with other schemes indicates that mere references to historical cycles do not necessarily mean imply agreement on historical processes, much less on timing. In particular, the disagreements within the cycle of reform school suggest that more rigor is needed to establish reform periodicity than the disparate judgments of historians and social scientists.

The cycle of reform historians and some of the related cyclicalist social scientists generally believe that there is a strong progressive element in the oscillations. The periods of reform move society upwards in a liberal direction, while the periods of reaction generally accept the reforms of the previous activist surge (Schlesingers; White, 1925; McClosky and Zaller, 1984; Burstein, 1984; Carleton, 1948; Hastings and Hoge, 1981). As a result, each reactionary period is essentially a plateau and each liberal period an upward incline.¹² Because liberalism moves forward during periods of reform and basically holds its own during the reactions, society moves in a liberal direction. Each subsequent reformist surge and each reactionary plateau are higher than their respective predecessor. Three slight variations of this basic model are graphed in Figure 4.

In brief, while proponents of the cycle of reform hypothesis agree that there are both progressive and cyclical components in American history and that the cycles alternate between reform and retrenchment, they disagree to some extent on the mechanisms that

1961). The chief exceptions follow the end of wars (1816, 1919, 1947).

¹² The metaphor of choice has been the spiral (Schlesinger, 1939; 1949; Schlesinger, Jr., 1984). This is used to indicate that each subsequent phase is higher than the previous (i.e. that the cycles are not merely static). We find this inappropriate since it does not clearly define the three dimensions implicit in a spiral pattern and does not clearly represent time.

drive the cycle, the character of the alternating periods, and the periodization of past cycles.

Of course not all historians and students of American reform accept the cycle of reform model. Several contend that reform is more gradual and continual and that the so-called reform periods either do not show concentrations of reform or that they are merely descriptive and not governed by any cyclical mechanism (Gerbner, 1975; Walker, 1976; 1985; Wooley, 1980). Similarly, student activism/quiescence model as been attacked as descriptive and not cyclical (Hoge, 1974) and the religious awakening hypothesis has been countered with both secularization and steady state models of religious change (Greeley, forthcoming; Stark and Bainbridge, 1985; Hammond, 1985; Greeley, 1972).

The various versions of the cycle of reform model have however garnered widespread support from historians, social scientists, and the popular press ("America's...", 1984; "Feeling...", 1984; Pfaff, 1984; Cohen, 1987; "Change...", 1987). Yet in none of the literature is there anything close to proof that true repetitive cycles exist (as have been provided for the business cycle for example). Nor have a clear mechanism been offered for driving the cycle. However, one of the key tests of a valid scientific hypothesis is its ability to predict behavior. Using the observed length of reform cycles through 1931, Schlesinger in 1939 predicted a conservative phase starting in 1947 or 1948 and then in 1949 forecasted:

We may expect the recession from liberalism which began in 1947 to last till 1962, with a possible margin of a year or two in one direction or another. The next conservative epoch will then be due around 1978.

While not amounting to proof of a law of politics, three solid predictions in a row recommend serious study of the cycle of reform model.

Conclusion

Overall the post World War II period has been a time of liberal advance. Liberal trends outnumbered conservative trends by over two-to-one (Duncan, Schuman, and Duncan, 1973; Hamby, 1985; Hoge, 1974; Hoge, Luna, and Miller, 1981; Willits, Bealer, and Crider, 1977). Liberal gains were strongest on such topics as race relations and women's rights that concerned equal rights for all (Gusfield, 1981; Rokeach and Ball-Rokeach, 1988) and on abortion, civil liberties, and sexual morality that dealt with individual choice (Caplow, et al., 1983; Hoge, Luna, and Miller, 1984; McClosky and Brill, 1983; Mueller, 1984). Topics dealing with material concerns and government regulation were mixed in their trends. Responses to calls for more government action were also quite mixed, with the number of trends in opposition to more government edging out trends in favor of more government. In addition, this role of government dimension had little relationship to liberalism/conservatism. Finally, crime was the one topic that consistently showed little or no liberal growth.

Liberal movement slowed appreciably in the mid-1970s and a number of trends especially in the areas of abortion, civil liberties, crime, and spending and taxes slowed, stalled, or even, in a few cases, reversed. But the hosannas from the right and wailing from left over a conservative tide and the Reagan Revolution (Smith, 1982; 1985) are both overreactions. On average liberal momentum and advance ended on the liberal plateau of the mid-1970s, but no general conservative advance occurred.¹³

While the anti-liberal problems of crime and economic stagnation offer important particular explanations for many of the changes, a more general cyclical force may also have contributed to the dissipation of reformist momentum. The survey data compiled in this paper are consistent with the cycle of reform hypothesis, but as of yet this idea is only suggestive.

¹³ Most scholarly and semi-scholarly interpretations have tended to reject the more popularly based "conservative tide" hypothesis. Among its supporters are Eismeier, 1982 and Tiryakian, 1981; giving mixed support is Exter and Barber, 1986; and opponents include Hibbs, 1982; 1987; Smith and Spinard, 1981; Smith 1982; 1985; Goodman, 1983; and Ferguson and Rodger, 1986.

TABLE 1
SUMMARY OF TRENDS

Item	Liberal Response	Years	Number of Points	Trend (change per annum)			
				Liberal Direction	Constant	Nonlinear	Conservative Direction
ABORTION							
Abortions for defects	Allow	1962-1987	20	.0092			
Abortions for mother's health	Allow	1962-1987	19	.0044			
Abortions for unwanted pregnancy	Allow	1965-1987	17	.0164			
Abortions for poor	Allow	1962-1987	19	.0150			
Abortions for raped	Allow	1965-1987	14	.0046			
Abortions for unmarried	Allow	1965-1987	14	.0076			
Legal abortions	Always legal	1975-1985	9	.0023			
Abortions (72 wording)	Never forbidden	1972-1980	4		X		
Abortion for any reason	Allow	1977-1987	8			X	
CIVIL LIBERTIES							
Atheist book in library	Allow	1964-1981	2	.0100			
Atheist teach high school	Allow	1964-1981	2	.0169			
Atheist hold public office	Allow	1964-1981	2	.0163			
Disobey unjust law	Approve	1968-1974	4	.0059			
Communist teach college	Yes	1954-1987	11	.0138			
Atheist teach college	Yes	1954-1987	11	.0121			
Atheist book in library	Allow	1954-1987	13	.0095			
Communist book in library	Allow	1954-1987	12	.0113			
Atheist speak	Allow	1954-1987	12	.0100			
Communist speak	Allow	1954-1987	12	.0110			
Homosexual teach college	Allow	1973-1987	9	.0074			
Homosexual speak	Allow	1973-1987	9	.0053			
Homosexual book in library	Allow	1973-1987	9	.0026			
Carry ID card	No	1942-1977	3	.0071			
Outlaw Communists	No	1940-1942	3	.1047			
McCarthy	Dislike	1953-1955	16	.0671			
Wiretapping	Disapprove	1969-1986	9	.0060			
Require reporter to name source	No	1972-1979	6	.0120			
Free speech	Favor	1943-1954	4	.0144			
Speeches against democracy	Not forbid	1940-1976	4	.0078			
Speeches against democracy	Allow	1940-1976	4	.0087			
Socialist teach college	Allow	1954-1974	4	.0126			
Socialist book in library	Allow	1954-1974	4	.0184			
Socialist speak	Allow	1954-1974	4	.0095			
Militarist teach in college	Allow	1976-1987	7	.0045			
Militarist speak	Allow	1976-1987	8	.0029			
Find Communists	Protect innocent	1954-1973	2	.0183			
Disrupt government	Approve	1968-1974	4		X		
Racist teach in college	Allow	1976-1987	7		X		
Carry ID card	No	1977-1984	4			X	
Take part in legal protest	Approve	1968-1974	4			X	
Free press	For	1943-1953	4			X	
Socialist paper	Permit	1956-1957	3			X	
Militarist book in library	Allow	1976-1987	8			X	
Racist book in library	Allow	1976-1987	8			X	
Outlaw communists	No	1941-1950	9				
Racist speak	Allow	1976-1987	8				-.0103
Find all Communists	Protect innocent	1953-1956	2				-.0024
Government jobs for Communists	Allow	1948-1950	3				-.0300
Register Communists	No	1945-1953	4				-.0620
Register Communists	No	1948-1950	3				-.0149
Communists talk on radio	Yes	1946-1963	7				-.0529
Communists talk on radio	Yes	1943-1948	3				-.0096
Socialist paper	Permit	1943-1954	4				-.0250
							-.0088

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Item	Liberal Response	Years	Number of Points	Trend (change per annum)		
				Liberal Direction	Constant	Nonlinear
CRIME						
Capital punishment if under 21	Oppose	1936-1965	3	.0029		
Gun ownership	No	1959-1987	27	.0031		
Police hit abusive	No	1968-1987	10	.0054		
Police hit escapee	No	1968-1987	10	.0009		
Urban unrest	Solve cause	1968-1976	5	.0142		
Home safe/secure	Yes	1972-1983	7	.0021		
Police hit murderer	No	1968-1987	10		X	
Youth curfew	Oppose	1958-1965	2		X	
Youth curfew	Oppose	1954-1957	2		X	
Parents reimburse for child's crimes	No	1954-1958	3			
Police hitting	No	1968-1987	10			X
Police hit assailant	No	1968-1987	10			X
Hit women beater	No	1968-1987	10			X
Gun registration	Favor	1959-1987	21			
Hitting	Disapprove	1968-1987	10			
Hit robber	Disapprove	1968-1987	10			
Capital punishment	Oppose	1936-1987	39			
Pistol	Doesn't own	1959-1987	17			
Hit demonstrator	No	1968-1987	10			
Courts	Not tougher	1965-1987	20			
Rights of criminals	Protect	1970-1978	5			
Current justice deters crime	Yes	1967-1982	7			
Outlaw pistols	For	1959-1981	5			
Afraid to go out	Yes	1965-1987	27			
ECONOMIC REGULATIONS						
Big business maintains standard of living	Disagree	1968-1980	5	.0183		
Threat to future	Big business	1965-1985	10	.0041		
Threat to well-being	Big business	1976-1981	2	.0220		
Threat to personal freedom	Big business	1965-1974	3	.0048		
Wage/Price controls	For	1965-1971	10	.0168		
Wage/Price controls	For	1971-1973	4	.0764		
Wage/Price controls	For	1974-1981	10	.0052		
Price controls	For	1974-1979	4	.0091		
Environment protection	Do more	1973-1983	10	.0120		
Environment before energy	Environment	1973-1982	10	.0049		
Business regulation	Regulate closely	1955-1961	2	.0100		
Consumer protection	Business greedy	1968-1979	7	.0085		
Big business	Too big	1959-1981	12	.0125		
Big business	Too big	1959-1981	12	.0137		
Big business	Break-up	1959-1981	12	.0101		
Own railroads	Favor	1938-1973	2	.0015		
Business profits	Too much	1965-1981	9	.0185		
Business profits	Anti-business	1968-1981	13	.0314		
Business profits	Anti-business	1946-1979	10	.0079		
Age controls	For	1974-1979	4		X	
Deep utilities/housing private	Disagree	1956-1973	4			
Regulate business	More	1961-1966	4			
Wage/Price controls	For	1950-1965	6			
Wage/Price controls	For	1974-1980	2			
Business regulation	Better off	1966-1981	4			
Business regulation	Not too far	1964-1981	4			
Consumer protection	More effort	1974-1982	9			
Consumer protection	More regulation	1970-1981	3			
Own banks	Favor	1936-1962	18			
Own electric companies	Favor	1937-1962	24			
Own coal mines	Favor	1936-1953	12			

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Item	Liberal Response	Years	Number of Points	Trend (change per annum)			
				Liberal Direction	Constant	Nonlinear	Conservative Direction
Own railroads	Favor	1936-1962	23				-.0054
Business regulation	Not enough	1942-1946	4				-.0128
FAMILY							
Ideal number of children	Fewer	1941-1986	33	.0094			
Talk back to parents	Allow	1954-1973	2	.0037			
Ease divorce laws	Yes	1945-1966	2	.0020			
Ease divorce laws	Yes	1960-1978	2	.0127			
Divorce laws	Easier	1968-1986	10			X	
Divorce if marriage not working out	Favor	1970-1985	4			X	
FEMINISM							
Vote for woman for Congress	Yes	1970-1984	3	.0052			
Woman's chance to be executive	As good as man's	1970-1987	5	.0040			
Woman as boss	No difference	1953-1987	4	.0064			
Woman as clergy	Approve	1977-1986	2	.0177			
Woman as priests	Approve	1977-1986	9	.0188			
Working Mother close to child	Agree	1977-1986	3	.0153			
Man achieves outside home	Disagree	1977-1986	3	.0205			
Wife help husband career	Disagree	1977-1986	3	.0229			
Mother of preschooler shouldn't work	Disagree	1977-1986	3	.0171			
Women not suited for politics	Disagree	1971-1984	2	.0140			
Women's place is in home	Disagree	1973-1981	5	.0163			
Vote for woman president	Yes	1936-1986	26	.0102			
Don't work until children grown	Disagree	1973-1981	5	.0106			
Woman working	Approve	1936-1986	15	.0127			
Women not suited for politics	Disagree	1974-1986	9	.0107			
Women should stay home	Disagree	1974-1986	8	.0114			
Women's rights	Equal roles	1972-1984	7	.0037			
Women in politics	OK	1952-1972	2	.0053			
National service for women	Yes	1969-1984	5	.0139			
Reborn opposite sex	Like to	1946-1975	3	.0043			
Women in politics	Approve	1974-1982	3	.0141			
Women work if few jobs	Approve	1945-1977	2	.0080			
ERA	For	1981-1985	2	.0200			
ERA	For	1980-1987	13	.0293			
ERA	For	1975-1982	8	.0091			
ERA	For	1981-1984	2	.0121			
ERA	For	1979-1985	4	.0176			
ERA	For	1977-1984	8	.0098			
Equal pay for sexes	For	1954-1962	2			X	
ERA	For	1977-1982	2			X	
ERA	For	1982-1985	8			X	
ERA	For	1980-1984	4			X	
ERA	For	1983-1984	2			X	
Change gender	Like to	1955-1970	3			X	
Women drinking in public	Not object	1947-1957	2			X	
ERA	For	1975-1982	6				X
ERA	For	1981-1982	3				X
ERA	For	1975-1981	6				-.0121
FOREIGN AFFAIRS & MILITARY							
Active in world affairs	No	1945-1986	33	.0024			
Return to draft	No	1980-1984	5	.0971			
Troops overseas to stop Communism	Disagree	1956-1973	3	.0110			
U.S. performance	Good	1950-1964	12	.0188			
Communist attacks on other countries	Stay out	1950-1956	10	.0088			
U.S. performance	Satisfied	1946-1953	14	.0225			
USSR	Not dislike	1953-1986	21	.0119			
Internationalist vs. isolationist	Internationalist	1974-1984	7	.0067			
Draft	End	1974-1980	4	.0453			
Limit Red China to UN	Yes	1954-1971	19	.0141			
World problems	Concerned	1956-1960	3	.0166			
Limit UN if Red China joins	No	1955-1971	11	.0124			
Universal military training	Approve	1946-1966	9	.0031			
National service for men	Yes	1982-1984	2			X	
Universal military training	Anti	1945-1947	6				X
Work with other nations	Yes	1953-1969	4				X
Oppose Communism	Not favor	1974-1984	7				X

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Item	Liberal Response	Years	Number of Points	Trend (change per annum)			Conservative Direction
				Liberal Direction	Constant	Nonlinear	
Quit UN	No	1951-1985	13			X	
Communism	Not worst government	1973-1987	9				-.0089
United Nations	Remain in	1951-1986	18				-.0024
Universal military training	Approve	1942-1945	12				-.0076
Universal military training	Anti	1938-1947	12				-.0353
Universal military training	Anti	1947-1950	7				-.0214
National service	Favor	1969-1981	6				-.0071
UN performance	Good	1953-1985	10				-.0082
Return to draft	No	1977-1979	2				.0426
World problems	Stay home	1968-1986	6				.0024
LABOR							
Threat to future	Not big labor	1965-1985	10	.0039			
Threat to personal freedom	Not big labor	1965-1974	3	.0040			
Airline strikes	Allow	1966-1976	4	.0095			
Feather-bedding	Allow	1943-1973	10	.0068			
Open shops	Favors	1941-1961	3	.0093			
Teachers' strike	Allow	1975-1978	2	.0133			
Teachers' strike	Allow	1965-1980	7	.0051			
Union shop	Favor	1939-1949	3	.0130			
Open shop	Against	1946-1949	2	.0212			
Strikes by police	Allow	1965-1981	6	.0045			
Media strikes	Allow	1953-1966	3	-.0053			
Cut hours to 35	Favor	1953-1966	10	-.0057			
Pay 40, work 35	Favor	1953-1962	5	-.0028			
Compulsory arbitration	Don't arbitrate	1967-1972	4			X	
Threat to well-being	Not big labor	1976-1981	2			X	
Union shop	Not open	1946-1949	2			X	
Teachers' strike	Allow	1981-1982	2			X	
Public utility strike	Allow	1946-1947	5				X
Railroad strike	Approve	1966-1981	6				X
Closed shop	Approve	1939-1949	7				X
Compulsory arbitration	Don't arbitrate	1965-1967	3				-.0179
Taft-Hartley Law	Repeal	1947-1948	4				-.0486
Taft-Hartley Law	Do away with	1948-1952	7				-.0228
Taft-Hartley Law	Disapprove	1947-1949	4				-.0893
Teacher's strike	Allow	1970-1981	7				-.0031
Unions help	Use	1966-1976	5				-.0068
Union regulation	Too strict	1948-1966	14				-.0039
Union shop	Favor	1965-1967	5				-.0184
Strikes by firemen	Approve	1975-1981	5				-.0196
Strikes by police	Allow	1974-1981	6				-.0156
LIFESTYLES							
Marijuana	Legalize	1969-1987	17	.0032			
Hunting	Don't hunt	1959-1987	9	.0055			
Drinks too much	Have problem	1974-1987	9	.0035			
Drinking in family	Have problem	1950-1985	11	.0029			
Prohibition	Against	1936-1984	45	.0043			
Alcohol	Uses	1939-1987	38				X
Drunkness	Increasing	1938-1958	5				X
State lotteries	For	1936-1964	7				X
Marijuana	Discriminalize	1977-1986	4				-.0161
MISCELLANEOUS							
Seat belts	Require	1961-1965	2	.0390			
Hard work will triumph	Disagree	1968-1983	4	.0065			
Euthanasia	Approve	1947-1986	11	.0072			
Suicide if terminal	Approve	1977-1986	6	.0131			
Flouride	For	1952-1956	3				X
Suicide if dishonored	Approve	1977-1986	5				X
Suicide if tired of living	Approve	1977-1986	5				X
Suicide if bankrupt	Approve	1977-1986	6				X
Metric system	Adopt	1965-1977	5				X
Getting ahead	Luck/other	1973-1987	9				-.0022
Flouride	For	1966-1972	3				-.0054
Metric system	Adopt	1975-1981	5				-.0113

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Item	Liberal Response	Years	Number of Points	Trend (change per annum)			Conservative Direction
				Liberal Direction	Constant	Nonlinear	
Society's direction	Wrong way	1971-1987	28				-.0211
Work if rich	No	1969-1987	14				-.0038
Speed limit 55	Keep	1974-1986	9				-.0034
Artificial insemination	Approve	1948-1953	2				-.0107
POLITICS							
Disclose finances	Favor	1964-1967	2	.0109			
Big business threatens democracy	Agree	1968-1979	3	.0119			
Vote for atheist president	Yes	1958-1987	6	.0094			
Vote for Baptist president	Yes	1958-1967	4	.0026			
Vote for Catholic president	Yes	1937-1983	20	.0093			
Change political system	Yes	1973-1979	3	.0085			
Vote for divorced president	Yes	1952-1978	8	.0055			
Popular election of President	For	1948-1980	16	.0030			
Limit campaign contributions	Yes	1965-1972	6	.0039			
Change political system	Yes	1939-1971	4	.0082			
Vote for Jewish president	Yes	1937-1987	12	.0087			
Lower vote to 18	Yes	1939-1970	29	.0107			
National presidential primary	For	1952-1984	15			X	
Threat for future	Not big govt	1965-1985	10				-.0029
Threat to personal freedom	Not big govt	1965-1974	3				-.0152
Threat to well-being	Not big govt	1976-1981	2				-.0420
Political ideology	Liberal	1972-1986	10				-.0019
Government too powerful	No	1964-1984	10				-.0151
Archers	Dislike	1965-1973	3				-.0072
Party identification	Democratic	1956-1987	30				-.0010
Cloture	For	1947-1964	4				-.0083
Cloture	For	1947-1964	6				-.0056
Political ideology	Liberal	1973-1987	13				-.0053
RACE AND ETHNICITY							
Blacks have same chance for jobs as whites	Yes	1963-1978	2	.0167			
Poll tax	Against	1940-1953	6	.0065			
South will desegregate	Yes	1957-1963	5	.0476			
Blacks less ambitious	Disagree	1963-1978	6	.0145			
Blacks breed crime	Disagree	1963-1978	6	.0035			
Blacks care less for family	Disagree	1963-1978	6	.0100			
Blacks inferior to whites	Disagree	1963-1978	6	.0121			
Blacks loaf on the job	Disagree	1963-1978	6	.0072			
Blacks keep untidy homes	Disagree	1963-1976	3	.0154			
Blacks less moral	Disagree	1966-1976	3	.0167			
Blacks more violent	Disagree	1967-1978	4	.0076			
Equal hiring law	Favor	1945-1947	2	.0366			
Equal employment law	Favor	1945-1947	2	.0532			
Blacks treated same as whites	Yes	1963-1987	10	.0012			
Having black to dinner	Yes	1963-1985	13	.0128			
Object to school with a few blacks	No	1958-1986	22	.0065			
Object to school half black	No	1958-1986	22	.0106			
Object to school mostly black	No	1958-1986	22	.0037			
Neighborhood integrated	Yes	1966-1987	27	.0112			
Desegregation laws	No	1963-1987	13	.0117			
Vote for black president	Yes	1958-1986	20	.0149			
Blacks shouldn't push	Disagree	1963-1985	14	.0092			
School integration	Yes	1942-1985	19	.0150			
Neighborhood segregation	Disagree	1963-1987	12	.0132			
Black to home	Have had	1973-1987	9	.0053			
Open housing	Favor	1973-1987	9	.0123			
School busing	Favor	1970-1986	13	.0052			
Government help blacks	Agree	1964-1973	3	.0184			
Desegregation vs. segregation	Desegregation	1964-1978	7	.0107			
Open housing	Yes	1964-1976	6	.0197			
Gov help desegregate hotels/restaurants	Yes	1964-1974	5	.0348			
Statehood for Hawaii	For	1940-1958	15	.0119			
Busing	Favor	1972-1984	5	.0181			
Black neighbor	Not concerned	1963-1978	4	.0175			

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Item	Liberal Response	Years	Number of Points	Trend (change per annum)			
				Liberal Direction	Constant	Nonlinear	Conservative Direction
Brown vs. Board of Education	Approve of	1954-1961	11	.0117			
Epileptics insane	No	1949-1979	5	.0075			
Epileptic friend of child	Allow	1949-1979	5	.0102			
Epileptic employment	For	1949-1979	5	.0100			
Blacks move into neighborhood	Not move out	1958-1978	7	.0133			
Child invites black friend home	Not object	1963-1978	5	.0146			
Hire whites first	No	1944-1972	5	.0189			
Blacks as intelligent	Yes	1942-1968	10	.0150			
Integrate streetcars/buses	Yes	1942-1970	5	.0114			
Integrate transportation	Yes	1957-1961	2	.0152			
Inter-racial marriage	OK	1958-1983	5	.0164			
Miscegenation	Legal	1965-1970	2	.0264			
Family inter-racial marriage	Not concerned	1963-1978	5	.0166			
Black neighbor of same SES	Not object	1942-1972	10	.0154			
Catholic/Protestant marriage	Approve	1968-1978	3	.0092			
Talk against Jews	Not heard	1940-1959	15	.0264			
Jew/Non-Jew marriage	Approve	1968-1983	4	.0103			
NAACP	Favorable towards	1965-1973	3	.0206			
Blacks move next door	Not move	1958-1978	7	.0175			
Less ability hinders blacks	Disagree	1977-1986	4	.0053			
Integrate social clubs	Favor	1977-1986	3	.0190			
Integrated church	Attends	1978-1987	6	.0047			
Blacks less intelligent	Disagree	1963-1976	6	.0122			
Discrimination hinders blacks	Agree	1977-1986	4		X		
Low education hinders blacks	Agree	1977-1986	4			X	
Low motivation hinders blacks	Disagree	1977-1986	4			X	
Government help blacks (5 points)	Agree	1956-1973	4				-.0040
Government help blacks (7 points)	Yes	1970-1984	9				-.0047
Federal government help school integration	Yes	1964-1978	10				-.0066
Government do more for blacks	Should	1968-1982	2				-.0136
Immigration	Not decrease	1965-1986	3				-.0073
Alaska's statehood	For	1949-1958	12				-.0060
KKK	Dislike	1965-1979	4				-.0077
Special treatment for blacks	Agree	1975-1987	5				-.0046
RELIGION							
God	Not believe in	1964-1981	2	.0085			
Church attendance	Infrequent	1964-1987	15	.0069			
Prayer in schools	Opposed	1964-1984	4	.0040			
After-life	None	1944-1987	22	.0012			
Prayer on school prayers	Support	1963-1986	10	.0072			
Religious preference	None	1963-1976	13	.0029			
Religible	Not inerrant	1963-1987	14	.0110			
Religible	Not inerrant	1964-1987	8	.0021			
Religible	Not inerrant	1952-1965	2	.0031			
Pray daily	No	1952-1987	8	.0080			
Church attendance	Never	1970-1986	8	.0020			
Church attendance	Never	1952-1968	8	.0017			
Religion the answer	No	1957-1986	12	.0072			
Religious training for child	Not want	1952-1978	3	.0035			
Importance of religion	Not important	1952-1985	31	.0064			
Religious training	Had none	1952-1978	3	.0053			
Church attendance	Not last week	1939-1984	146	.0017			
Religious preference	None	1972-1987	17		X		
Read Bible last month	Not read	1939-1943	3		X		
God	Not believe in	1944-1986	9			X	
Heaven	Not believe in	1952-1980	3			X	
Read Bible last year	Not read	1942-1978	6			X	
Religious influence	Not increasing	1957-1986	20			X	
Race at meals	Doesn't say	1947-1962	2				-.0125
Religious attachment	Not strong	1974-1987	12				-.0029
God/Universal Spirit	Not believe in	1978-1986	2				-.0025
SEX							
Sex education with birth control	Favor	1965-1978	5	.0219			
Sex education in high schools	Favor	1981-1985	2	.0125			

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Item	Liberal Response	Years	Number of Points	Trend (change per annum)			
				Liberal Direction	Constant	Nonlinear	Conservative Direction
Sex education in elementary school	Favor	1981-1987	3	.0347			
Premarital sex sinful	Disagree	1970-1985	2	.0097			
Raise child without marriage OK	Agree	1970-1985	2	.0200			
Birth control information	Permit	1959-1983	11	.0084			
Premarital sex	Not always wrong	1972-1986	10	.0079			
Sex education	Approve	1965-1986	12	.0076			
Birth control information for teenagers	Allow	1974-1983	5	.0085			
Ever watch X-rated movie	Yes	1971-1977	2	.0083			
Nude plays	Not object	1969-1973	2	.0393			
Nude magazine	Not object	1969-1973	2	.0442			
Premarital sex	Not wicked	1939-1943	2	.0085			
Premarital sex	Not wrong	1969-1985	3	.0164			
X-rated movie	Seen	1973-1987	9	.0041			
Topless waitress	Not object	1969-1973	2	.0390			
Pornography	For adults	1973-1987	9		X		
Premarital sex	Not lose respect	1950-1953	2		X		
Premarital sex	Not wrong	1937-1959	2		X		
Sex education	Teach	1943-1951	2		X		
Extramarital sex	Not always wrong	1970-1987	11			X	
Birth control from clinics	For	1940-1947	4			X	
Crack down on pornography	No	1975-1982	4			X	
Women wear shorts	Approve	1939-1961	4			X	
Pornography informs	Agree	1970-1987	10				-.0014
Pornography attacks morals	Disagree	1970-1987	10				-.0051
Homosexual relations	Not always wrong	1973-1987	9				-.0042
Pornography causes rape	No	1970-1987	10				-.0040
SOCIAL WELFARE							
Government provide living for all	Favor	1940-1948	4	.0106			
Main source for retirement	Government	1969-1981	7	.0054			
Government guarantee jobs for all	Yes	1956-1973	4	.0077			
Government guarantee jobs for all	Agree	1964-1973	3	.0195			
Government medical care (5 points)	Yes	1956-1973	3	.0132			
Government medical care (agree/disagree)	Agree	1964-1973	3	.0265			
Government do more for old	Yes	1968-1982	2	.0064			
Civilian Conservation Corp	For	1961-1976	3	.0027			
Civilian Conservation Corp	For	1964-1968	2		X		
Government do more for poor	Should	1968-1982	2		X		
Medical care	Public	1973-1983	9				
Federal aid to schools (agree/disagree)	Agree	1964-1973	3			X	
Government responsible for							
life insurance and pension	Agree	1974-1981	5			X	
Government pay for medical care	Agree	1975-1987	5			X	
Government guarantee jobs for all	Yes	1972-1986	11				-.0034
Federal aid to schools (5 points)	Yes	1956-1973	4				-.0046
Government do more	Agree	1975-1987	5				-.0079
Government help poor	Agree	1975-1987	5				-.0084
Government do more for welfare	Should	1968-1982	2				-.0050
Federal aid to schools	Favor	1955-1961	5				-.0193
Government do more for mentally ill	Should	1968-1982	2				-.0107
Redistribute wealth	For	1973-1987	7				-.0063
Increase social security benefits	Agree	1973-1980	5				-.0163
Government medical care (7 points)	Yes	1970-1984	10				.0047
SPENDING AND TAXES							
Spending for drug rehabilitation	Too little	1984-1987	4	.0265			
Spending on education	Too little	1971-1987	28	.0109			
Spending for health care	Too little	1984-1987	4	.0315			
Spending for foreign aid	Too little	1971-1985	28	.0021			
Spending for social security	Too little	1984-1987	4	.0190			
Spending on drug control	Too much	1972-1976	3	.0221			
Spending on military	Too much	1961-1973	2	.0277			
Spending on farms	Too little	1961-1973	3	.0169			
Spending on health	Too little	1961-1973	2	.0070			
Spending on space	Too much	1961-1973	3	.0273			

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Item	Liberal Response	Years	Number of Points	Trend (change per annum)			
				Liberal Direction	Constant	Nonlinear	Conservative Direction
Spending for welfare	Too little	1971-1987	28	.0054			
Spending on crime	Too much	1972-1976	3	.0201			
Spending on defense	Too much	1980-1986	5	.0452			
Spending on cities	Too little	1984-1987	4		X		
Spending on roads	Too little	1961-1973	3		X		
Spending on military	Too much	1984-1987	4		X		
Spending for colleges	Too little	1972-1976	3		X		
Spending for environment	Too little	1984-1987	4		X		
Spending on welfare	Too little	1972-1976	3		X		
Spending for foreign aid	Too little	1984-1987	4		X		
Spending for crime control	Too much	1984-1987	4		X		
Spending for poor	Too little	1984-1987	4		X		
Spending for education	Too little	1984-1987	4		X		
Spending for blacks	Too little	1984-1987	4		X		
Spending for mass transportation	Too little	1984-1987	4		X		
Spending for parks	Too little	1984-1987	4		X		
Spending on UN	Too little	1972-1976	3				
Spending for crime control	Too much	1971-1987	28			X	
Spending for blacks	Too little	1973-1987	14			X	
Spending on education	Too little	1961-1973	3			X	
Tax more or cut more	Tax more	1975-1986	7			X	
Spending for environment	Too little	1971-1987	28			X	
Spending for arms	Too much	1971-1987	28			X	
Spending on water pollution	Too little	1972-1976	3			X	
Spending for military	Too much	1960-1987	21			X	
Spending for drug addiction	Too little	1971-1987	28				-.0010
Spending for military bases	Too much	1972-1976	3				-.0149
Spending for cities	Too little	1971-1987	28				-.0032
Spending for health	Too little	1971-1987	28				-.0016
Spending for space	Too much	1971-1987	29				-.0179
Taxes	Not too high	1947-1987	32				-.0020
Spending for air pollution	Too little	1972-1976	3				-.0225
Spending for blacks	Too little	1972-1976	3				-.0199
Spending for mass transport	Too little	1972-1976	3				-.0164
Spending for roads	Too little	1972-1976	3				-.0213
Spending for roads	Too little	1984-1987	4				-.0401
Spending for slums	Too little	1972-1976	3				-.0303
Spending for parks	Too little	1972-1976	3				-.0248
Spending on foreign aid	Too little	1961-1973	3				-.0032
Spending for space	Too much	1984-1987	4				-.0329

Table 2

Adjusted Liberal/Conservative Scores

Weak Significant Linear Components Eliminated	+24.6
Equal Weight to Each Topic	+28.8
Adjusted for Design Effects	+30.5
Unadjusted	+30.7
Foreign and Military Eliminated	+31.3
Constants Counted as Trends	+31.6
Weighted by Duration	+37.3

Table 3

Trends by Topical Areas

	Liberal/ Conservative Score	Liberal Direction	Trends		Conservative Direction
			Constant	NCNL	
Abortion	77.8	77.8%	11.1	11.1	0.0
Race/Ethnic	72.0	83.8%	1.5	2.9	11.8
Feminism	71.1	73.7%	18.4	5.3	2.6
Family	66.7	66.7%	0.0	33.3	0.0
Religion	53.9	65.4%	7.7	15.4	11.5
Foreign	47.1	64.7%	0.0	17.6	17.6
Lifestyles	44.5	55.6%	0.0	33.3	11.1
Sex	42.8	57.1%	14.3	14.3	14.3
Civil Lib.	40.9	61.4%	4.5	13.6	20.5
Eco. Reg.	10.2	57.6%	3.0	0.0	39.4
Labor	10.0	43.3%	13.3	10.0	33.3
Political	8.7	52.2%	0.0	4.3	43.5
Spend/Tax	-4.0	26.0%	26.0	18.0	30.0
Soc. Welfare	-8.4	33.3%	8.3	16.7	41.7
Mil. Recrt.	-20.0	30.0%	10.0	10.0	50.0
Misc.	-20.7	25.0%	18.8	12.5	43.8
Crime	-20.8	25.0%	12.5	16.7	45.8
ALL	30.7	54.9%	9.7	11.2	24.2

Liberal/Conservative Score = % liberal direction - % conservative direction

Table 4

Net Slope by Topical Area

(Percentage points change per annum)

<u>Topics</u>	<u>Unadjusted</u>	<u>Weighted by Interval</u>
Race/Ethnicity	1.16%	1.03%
Sex	0.91	0.62
Feminism	0.88	0.95
Abortion	0.72	0.84
Foreign Affairs	0.62	0.38
Civil Liberties	0.46	0.75
Family	0.50	0.58
Economic Regulation	0.39	0.20
Military Recruitment	0.26	0.22
Religion	0.22	0.28
Miscellaneous	0.08	0.03
Lifestyles	0.04	0.17
Social Welfare	-0.00	0.03
Politics	-0.04	0.24
Spending/Taxes	-0.06	0.13
Crime	-0.09	-0.15
Labor	-0.42	0.15
All	+0.40	+0.47

Table 5

A Comparison of Rank Order of Topics by
 Liberal/Conservative Score and Net Slope

(Weighted by Interval)

<u>Liberal/Conservative</u>	<u>Net Slope</u>
Abortion	Race/Ethnicity
Feminism	Feminism
Race/Ethnicity	Abortion
Religion	Civil Liberties
Civil Liberties	Sex
Lifestyles	Family
Family	Foreign Affairs
Foreign Affairs	Religion
Labor	Politics
Politics	Military Recruitment
Sex	Economic Regulation
Military Recruitment	Lifestyles
Economic Regulation	Labor
Social Welfare	Spending/Taxes
Miscellaneous	Social Welfare
Spending/Taxes	Miscellaneous
Crime	Crime

Table 6

Trends Before and After 1974

<u>Models</u>	<u>To 1974</u>	<u>Since 1974</u>
Constant	18.8%	22.2%
NCNL	9.7	9.1
Conservative Trend	14.2	32.4
Liberal Trend	57.4	36.4
Lib./Con. Score	+43.2	+4.0

Table 7

A. Periods of Reform

A. Schlesingers

Liberal	Conservative
1765-1787	1787-1801
1801-1816	1816-1829
1829-1841	1841-1861
1861-1869	1869-1901
1901-1919	1919-1931
1931-1947	1947-1961
1961-1978?	

B. Carleton

American Revolution
Jacksonian Democracy
Civil War and Reconstruction
Progressive Reform (1900-1917)
New Deal

C. Faulkner

Revolution	Federalists
Jacksonian Democracy	Civil War/Gilded Age
Progressive Era (1900-15)	1920s
New Deal	

D. Huntington

1760s-1770s
1820s-1830s
1890s-1910(?)
1960s

E. White

American Revolution
Anti-slavery Movement
Populists

F. Goldman

Progressive Era 1920s
New Deal Eisenhower

G. Hamby

Progressive Era 1920s
New Deal Eisenhower
New Frontier/Grt Society 1970s

H. Adams

1776-1787 1788-1799
1800-

B. Reform Periods Compared

Periods	Sch	Car	Fau	Hunt	White	Gold	Ham	Adams
1776-1787	+	+	+	+	+	x	x	+
1787-1801	o	o	o	o	o	x	x	o
1801-1816	+	o	o	o	o	x	x	x
1816-1829	o	o	o?	o/+	?	x	x	x
1829-1841	+	+	+	+	+	x	x	x
1841-1861	o	o?	o?	o	+	x	x	x
1861-1869	+	+	o	o	+/o	x	x	x
1869-1901	o	o	o	o/+	o/+	x	x	x
1901-1919	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	x
1919-1931	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	x
1931-1947	+	+	+	o	x	+	+	x
1947-1961	o	x	x	o	x	x	o	x
1961-1978	+	x	x	+	x	x	+	x

FIGURE 1

GAPPUN

- 1 Are you in favor of the death penalty for murder.
- 2 Are you in favor of the death penalty for persons convicted of murder.
- 3 Do you favor or oppose the death penalty for persons convicted of murder?
- 4 Are you in favor of or opposed to the death penalty for persons convicted of murder.

Cut: Proportion equals Favor versus Oppose and DK

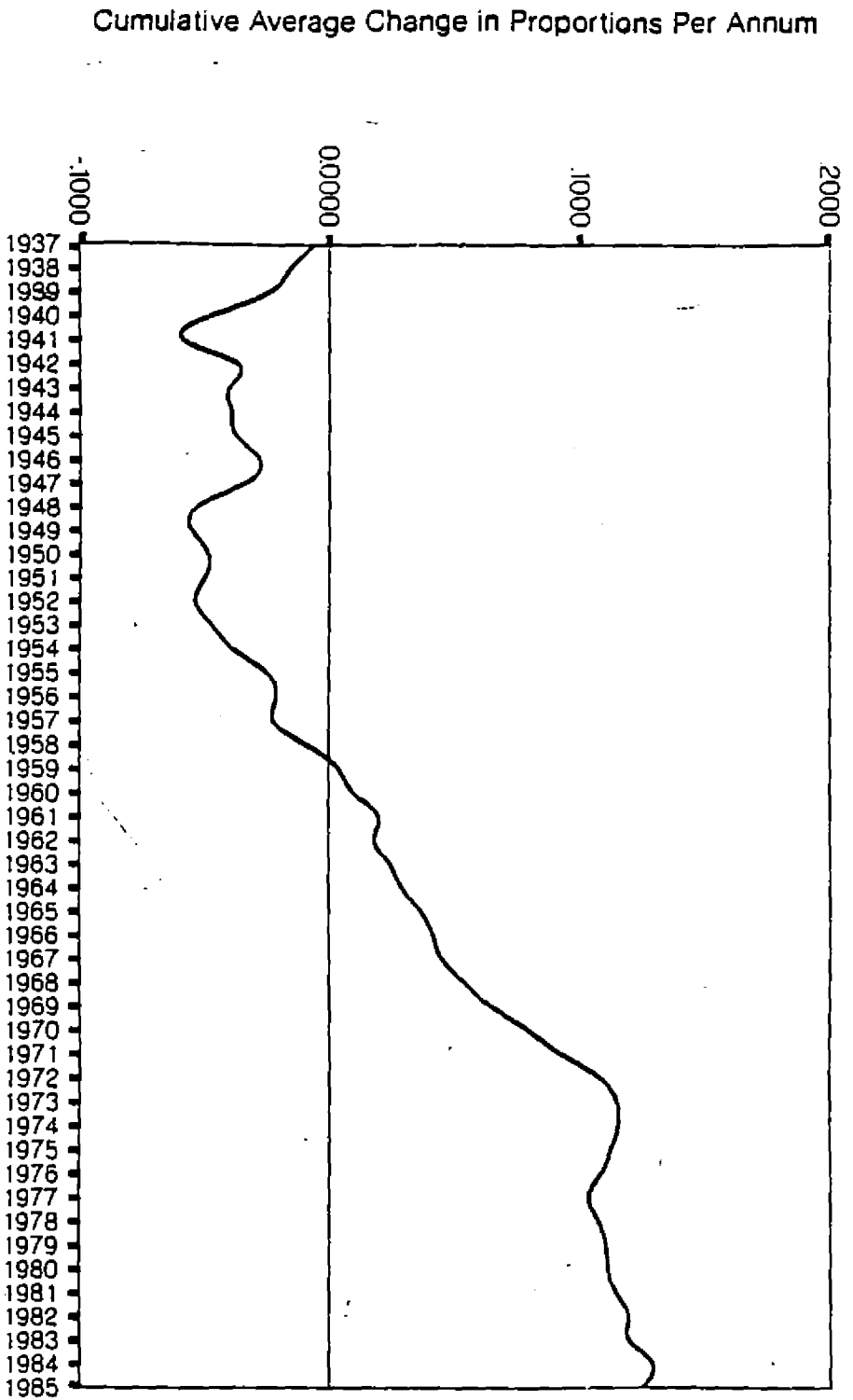
TEST	ESTIMATE	CHI SQ	PROB
Constant	0.625 plus or minus 0.0038	2642.2	< .001
Linear Trend			
Weighted Regression	Y = -7.95 + 0.0044(X)		
R Squared	0.3303		
Improvement		944.4	< .001
Fit		1697.8	< .001

Model: Significant Linear Component

Wording	Year	Marginal	N	Study	Wording	Year	Marginal	N	Study
1	1936	0.62	1400	AIPO	3	1977	0.6724	1520	GSS
1	1936	0.5525	2201	A59	2	1978	0.62	1560	A995
1	1937	0.60	1400	A105	3	1978	0.6632	1532	GSS
2	1953	0.6384	1496	A522	3	1978	0.66	1600	NBCAP
2	1956	0.534	1985	A562	3	1979	0.65	1599	NBC
2	1957	0.4745	1509	A588	3	1980	0.6721	1461	GSS
2	1960	0.5267	2973	A625	2	1981	0.73	1533	ABCWP
2	1965	0.4535	1689	A704	2	1981	0.6712	1609	A168G
2	1966	0.4235	3518	A729	4	1981	0.65	1030	AIPONW
2	1967	0.5573	1518	A746	3	1982	0.76	2464	ABC
2	1969	0.513	1503	A774	3	1982	0.7374	1504	GSS
2	1971	0.482	1558	A839	3	1982	0.71	1597	NBC
2	1972	0.5089	1509	A846	3	1983	0.732	1597	GSS
2	1972	0.5951	1462	A860	3	1984	0.7038	1462	GSS
2	1972	0.529	1609	GSS	2	1985	0.72	1523	AIPO
2	1973	0.602	1492	GSS	3	1985	0.75	1008	AIPOTEL
3	1974	0.63	1480	GSS	3	1985	0.7562	1526	GSS
3	1975	0.601	1483	GSS	3	1986	0.7135	1466	GSS
2	1976	0.6656	1540	A949	3	1987	0.696	1454	GSS
3	1976	0.665	1496	GSS	3	1988	0.708	1475	GSS

Figure 2. The Liberal Plateau in America 1937 - 1985

Summary Trend



Note: Maximum interval between data points is five years.

Year

Figure 3: Selected Trends

Demonstrating the Liberal Plateau

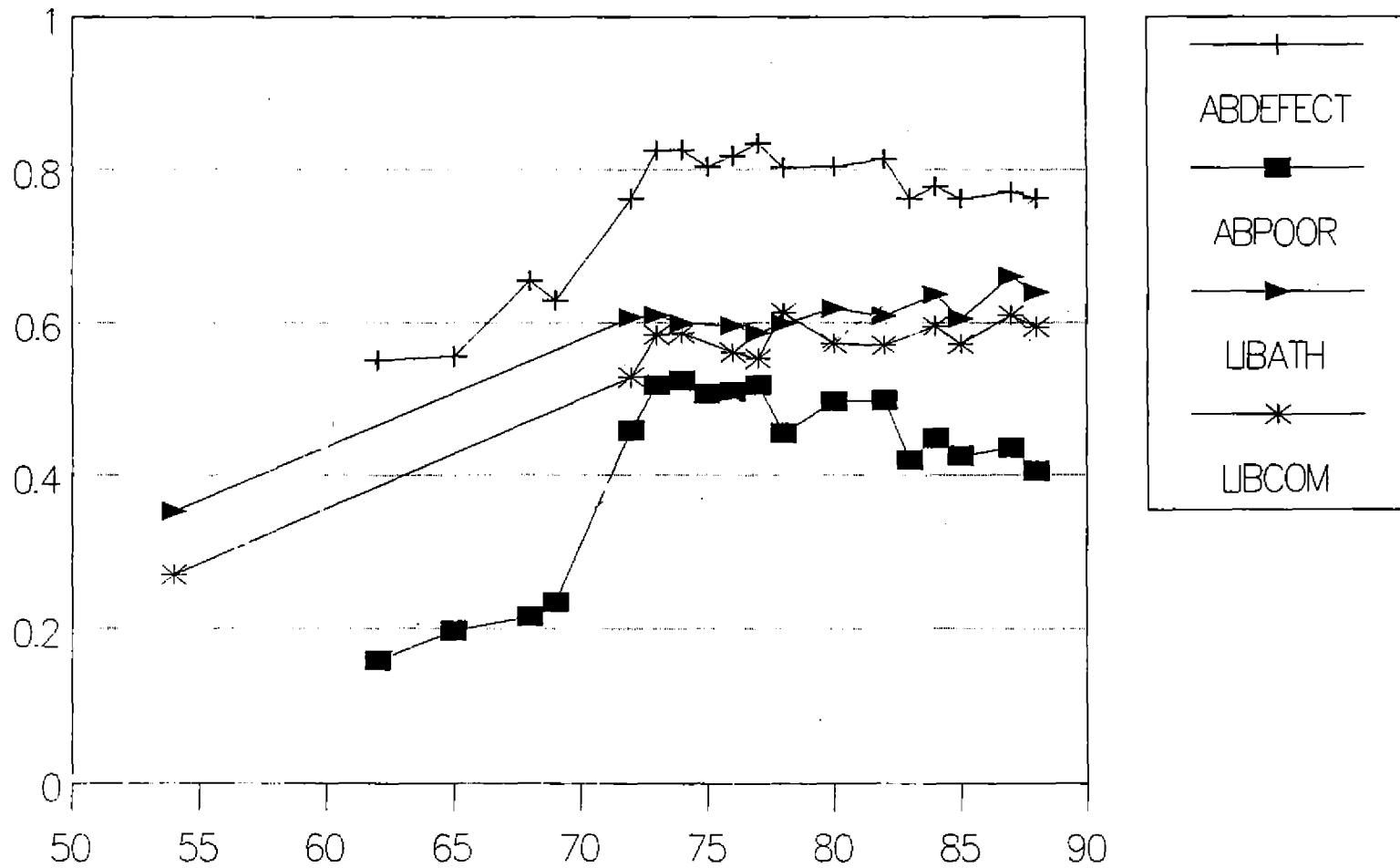
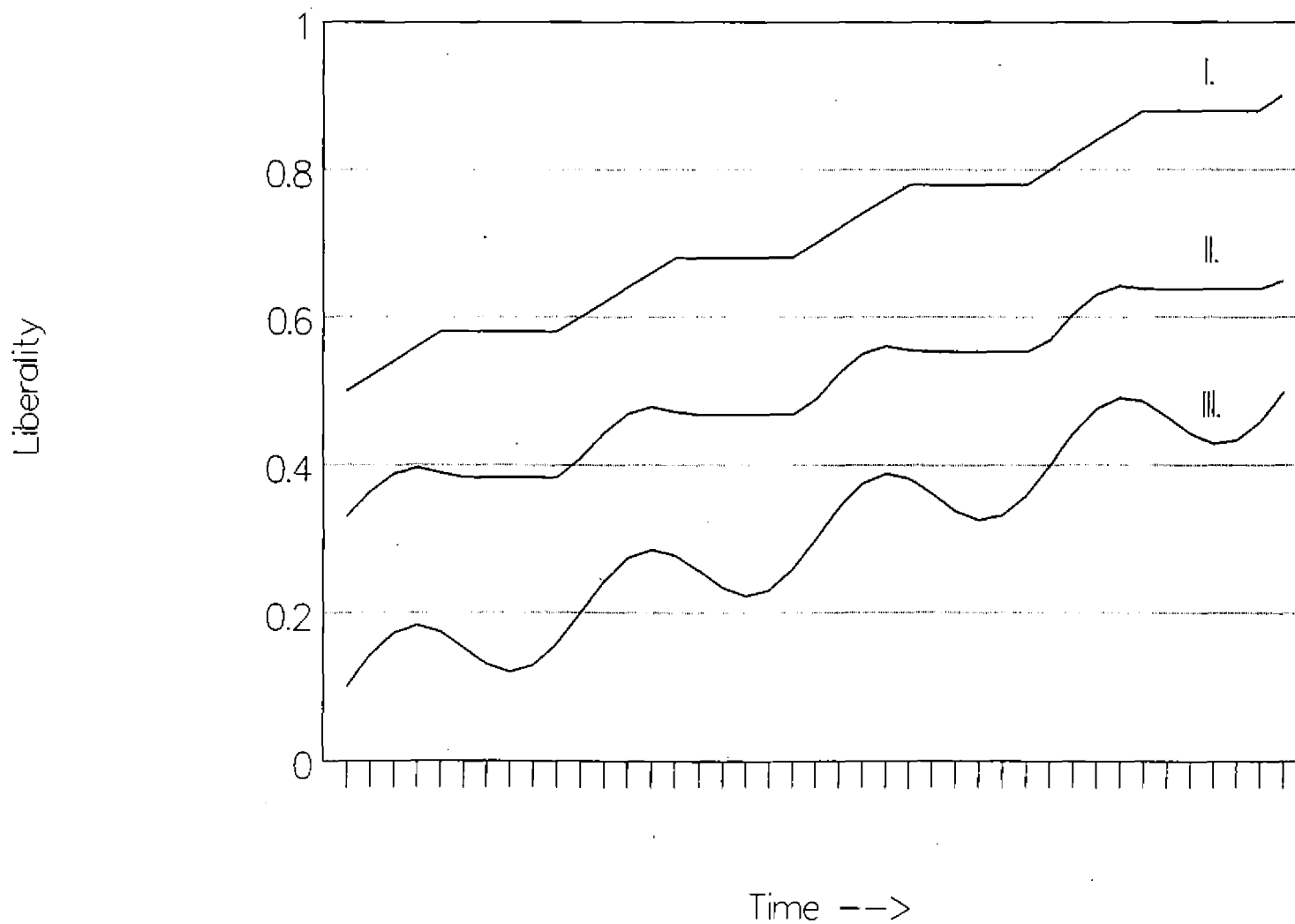


Figure 4: Three Variant Idealized
Models of Reform Cycles with Growth



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