

# The American Public Mind

*The Issues Structure of Mass Politics  
in the Postwar United States*



William J. M. Claggett • Byron E. Shafer

CAMBRIDGE

This page intentionally left blank

## The American Public Mind

### *The Issues Structure of Mass Politics in the Postwar United States*

What is the real nature of substantive conflict in mass politics during the postwar years in the United States? How is it reflected in the American public mind? And how does this issue structure shape electoral conflict? William J. M. Claggett and Byron E. Shafer answer by developing measures of public preference in four great policy realms – social welfare, international relations, civil rights, and cultural values – for the entire period between 1952 and 2004. They use these to identify the issues that were moving the voting public at various points in time, while revealing the way in which public preferences shaped the structure of electoral politics. What results is the restoration of policy substance to the center of mass politics in the United States.

William J. M. Claggett is Associate Professor of Political Science at Florida State University. He is the author of *The Two Majorities: The Issue Context of Modern American Politics*, with Byron E. Shafer. He has also published numerous articles on public opinion and electoral behavior in leading academic journals, including the *American Political Science Review*, the *American Journal of Political Science*, and the *Journal of Politics*.

Byron E. Shafer is Glenn B. and Cleone Orr Hawkins Chair of Political Science at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. He is the author of *The End of Southern Exceptionalism: Class, Race, and Partisan Change in the Postwar South*, with Richard Johnston; *The Two Majorities: The Issue Context of Modern American Politics*, with William J. M. Claggett; *Bifurcated Politics: Evolution and Reform in the National Party Convention*; *Quiet Revolution: The Struggle for the Democratic Party and the Shaping of Post-Reform Politics*; and numerous scholarly articles, some of which are collected as *The Two Majorities and the Puzzle of Modern American Politics*. He has won the Schattschneider Prize, the Race and Ethnicity Prize, and the Party Politics Prize of the American Political Science Association, along with the V. O. Key Prize of the Southern Political Science Association.



# The American Public Mind

## *The Issues Structure of Mass Politics in the Postwar United States*

WILLIAM J. M. CLAGGETT

*Florida State University*

BYRON E. SHAFER

*University of Wisconsin, Madison*



CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,  
São Paulo, Delhi, Dubai, Tokyo

Cambridge University Press  
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9780521863735](http://www.cambridge.org/9780521863735)

© William J. M. Claggett and Byron E. Shafer 2010

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provision of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published in print format 2010

ISBN-13 978-0-511-68681-8 eBook (Adobe Reader)

ISBN-13 978-0-521-86373-5 Hardback

ISBN-13 978-0-521-68232-9 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of urls for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

*For Robert A. Dahl*

*Who Knows that*

*Ordinary People can do Extraordinary Things*





# Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>page</i> ix
PART I. THE STRUCTURE OF PUBLIC PREFERENCES	I
<i>A Dataset, Some Theory, and a Method</i>	4
<i>Organization of the Book</i>	9
1 The Established Issues: Social Welfare	11
<i>Item Selection</i>	12
<i>Exploratory Analysis</i>	17
<i>Confirmatory Analysis</i>	25
<i>Social Welfare in the Public Mind</i>	37
2 The Established Issues: International Relations	41
<i>Item Selection</i>	42
<i>Exploratory Analysis</i>	47
<i>Confirmatory Analysis</i>	59
<i>International Relations in the Public Mind</i>	69
3 The New Issues: Civil Rights	74
<i>Item Selection</i>	75
<i>Exploratory Analysis</i>	78
<i>Confirmatory Analysis</i>	87
<i>Civil Rights in the Public Mind</i>	97
4 The New Issues: Cultural Values	101
<i>Item Selection</i>	102
<i>Exploratory Analysis</i>	109
<i>Confirmatory Analysis</i>	120
<i>Cultural Values in the Public Mind</i>	130
5 Blended Items: True, False, and Obscure	134
<i>Face Content and Appropriate Placement</i>	135
<i>Cultural Values Revisited</i>	154
<i>Blended Items in the Public Mind</i>	157

PART II. SOME CONSEQUENCES OF THE STRUCTURE	161
<i>Cross-Domain Analysis</i>	164
<i>A Voting Model</i>	170
6 Voting Behavior: The Established Issues	177
<i>Presidential Voting and the Pure Politics of Policy Choice</i>	180
<i>Social Welfare and Presidential Voting</i>	184
<i>International Relations and Presidential Voting</i>	194
<i>The Established Issues and the Vote</i>	204
7 Voting Behavior: The New Issues	210
<i>Civil Rights and Presidential Voting</i>	213
<i>Cultural Values and Presidential Voting</i>	220
<i>Major Independent Candidates for President</i>	228
<i>The New Issues and the Vote</i>	236
8 Voting Behavior: The Rest of the Story	241
<i>Partisan Attachment, Policy Preference, and Voting Behavior</i>	243
<i>Electoral Eras in Postwar Politics</i>	259
9 The Issue Structure of Mass Politics	266
<i>An American Public Mind</i>	267
<i>Issue Evolution in Postwar Politics</i>	270
<i>Mini-Eras in Postwar Politics</i>	272
<i>A Responsible Electorate?</i>	275
<i>Appendix: Alternative Policy Domains?</i>	277
<i>Bibliography</i>	283
<i>Index</i>	291

## Preface

What is the real nature of *substantive* conflict in American politics during the postwar years? And more precisely, how is it reflected in the American public mind? Is it even possible to talk about an “issue structure,” about ongoing policy conflict with continuing policy alignments, at the mass and not just the elite level? If so, what is the ongoing structure of issue conflict characterizing the mass politics of our time? How do policy issues cluster, and nest, within this substantive environment for mass politics? How does the resulting issue structure relate to, and shape, electoral conflict? Has this relationship remained essentially constant over the last half-century, the period for which public opinion data are most widely available? Or are there major breakpoints, and, if so, when did they occur?

Those are the questions that motivate this book. Despite more than fifty years of survey data about public preferences, work on issue evolution – on the changing identity of those policy issues that actually shape political behavior within the general public – is still in its early days. This is surely not for lack of great events apparently requiring some public response during all the postwar years. There is war and peace, boom and recession, plus social change nearly everywhere one looks. Likewise, there is no shortage of grand policy conflicts following on from these events: conflicts over social welfare, international relations, civil rights, and cultural values. There is even a regular device – an institutional means – for inviting the public into these conflicts and then registering public wishes, in the form of recurrent electoral contests.

Despite all of that, the story of substantive conflict within the general public and its reflection in mass politics tends to be told only in pieces, for highly focused realms at particular points in time, when it is told at all. This wound is partly self-inflicted. Serious scholars have argued that the public lacks stable preferences – or sometimes any preferences – on leading public issues, so that the apparent substance of policy and politicking cannot really be shaping electoral contests. Partly, the situation also reflects inherent problems with the relevant evidence, problems often taken to be intractable. The American

National Election Study, the centerpiece of research on political opinion, is now itself more than fifty years old; yet long stretches of stable items on policy preferences remain in short supply.

The result has added up to further self-limitation. If the underlying phenomenon is in doubt *and* the clarifying evidence is in short supply, perhaps scholars would be well advised to look elsewhere: to focus on procedural or presentational rather than substantive influences on politics, to confine themselves to topics with a narrower time frame, and thus to banish the explicitly political elements – governmental policies and public preferences on them – from the study of politics? Perhaps the picture that would result from trying to do the opposite, from trying to address policy substance in the public mind, is so inherently mottled that it cannot be refocused in any intelligible way? Perhaps a mottled picture, along with measurement difficulties both familiar and intractable, has rightly caused analysts not to worry about a focus on policy substance and issue conflict?

We think not, and *The American Public Mind* sets out to take an alternative view: that the complexity of the empirical phenomenon itself, plus the difficulties in addressing it systematically, have caused analysts to concentrate their energies elsewhere – at the cost of making American politics look more idiosyncratic, more subject to ephemeral influences, more organized by nonsubstantive structures, and less organized by ongoing issue conflict and policy preference than is actually the case. To sharpen the contrast, we take what is, in effect, the opposite approach. Ours is an effort to see how much of postwar politics within the general public can be explained by knowing the policy preferences of rank-and-file voters, a few key pieces of historical background, and only that.

Three tasks are central to such an undertaking. Admittedly, each is substantial in its own right. Yet if they can be addressed successfully, they constitute the main contributions of such a book. In any case, it is impossible to talk about issue evolution in postwar American politics without meeting three central requirements:

- First, it is necessary to have *consistent measures* of public preferences within the main realms of policy conflict for the entire postwar era.
- Second, it is necessary to meld these measures to create an overarching *issue context* for every year with an electoral contest in this era.
- And third, it is necessary to relate the elements of this issue context to *voting behavior* in each of those elections.

The search for a continuing structure characterizing public preferences on policy conflicts and capable of shaping mass political behavior is thus the principal challenge of this book. Its first step is arguably the most important. Consistent measures of public preference in four major issue domains – welfare policy, foreign policy, race policy, and social policy – are sought, developed, and analyzed. To that end, a theoretical grounding for these key domains is derived from the literature on postwar political history. An exploratory factor

analysis then applies this theoretical grounding to the American National Election Study, 1948–2004. After that, a confirmatory factor analysis, as informed both by the results of this exploratory analysis and by a review of the professional literature on public opinion in each of these policy domains, is used to produce ongoing measures of public preferences across the entire postwar period.

That is the critical first product of the enterprise. Yet this result is also well on its way to providing the ongoing issue structure, an issue context for each postwar election, that is necessary to the total project. Moreover, confirmatory factor analyses actually facilitate the combination of these individual measures into a single comprehensive model, while simultaneously checking on the relationships that theory would suggest for its main elements. It is worth underlining the theoretical importance of this further procedural step. Relationships between the vote and, say, civil rights or foreign affairs may look very different when those issue domains are studied, not in isolation and for themselves but within a comprehensive issue context – the way that they actually appeared in their time.

Creation of these overarching contexts, in turn, permits a hunt for relationships between the issue context of each postwar election and the vote. The presence, strength, and direction of these relationships, when they appear, are themselves fundamental structures in American politics. We try to keep them at the center of the analysis. We also attempt to tease out the critical differences within them: differences among policy domains, across temporal eras, and even among partisan subgroups. Sometimes, however, it is the absence of all such relationships that requires explanation. If there is no link between policy options and voting behavior at the height of the Cold War or the civil rights revolution, for example, then why is that? The collective result is a picture of issue evolution for the postwar period in the American public mind.

The reasons that this has not been accomplished previously are evident and daunting. The theoretical phenomenon itself is complex; the relevant data were never collected with these purposes in mind. Still, we believe that a combination of strong theory plus the best available methods – in this case, confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling, supplemented by newly sophisticated ways of handling missing data – offers a reasonable hope of success. And, if successful, the payoff is large. Not only would the structure of the postwar issue environment be mapped across, and not just within, policy domains. Postwar elections also would (or at least could) be given a strong substantive interpretation – if this continuing issue structure can indeed be isolated and if it can be shown to be tied to actual voting behavior.

The same thing could be said more acerbically. Journalistic interpreters of American politics often treat the subject as if it were all strategy, horse race, and hoopla, essentially lacking in any dominant issue content. Yet academic interpreters who have tried to avoid this approach (and its associated conclusions) have often relied upon *structural factors* – most commonly partisanship – to provide a kind of surrogate substance. Either way, the great issues of politics,

along with the combat over public policy that elections theoretically represent, get pushed to the sidelines. We believe it is easy to interpret American politics in terms of the policy conflicts at its center. Moreover, we believe that we can tease these out from mass (and not just elite) concerns, so that they return as a central part of the story, influential and data-driven.

The manuscript that tells this story did not set out to do so. We began, more than a decade ago, to return to the issue structure of American politics by a different route. Our own earlier effort to grapple with this structure (Shafer and Claggett 1995) had been generally well received. If critics had a complaint, it was that an intendedly fundamental argument had been built on a single survey at a single point in time. So we set out to see whether we could elicit the same argument from a much longer but also much thinner body of survey data by way of the American National Election Studies (ANES).

In relatively short order, we found ourselves refocused. From one side, the effort to elicit an ongoing structure that could be recognized in each and every ANES proved even more demanding than we had anticipated. From the other, it came to seem more important to tease out the consequences of this structure itself, if it could be elicited, rather than to boil it down to two simple summary measures. At the same time, these struggles suggested – to us, and we hope now to others – that there were substantial side benefits in understanding the contents of the ANES and their implications, benefits that followed from the overall effort and that constituted virtues that we had certainly not considered when we began.

In any case, we were sustained in this effort not just by a certain mutual stubbornness but also by some important working relationships that developed along the way. The most important of these involved J. Merrill Shanks of the University of California, Edward G. “Ted” Carmines of Indiana University, and the PACES project. Merrill and Ted were in part seeking a much richer version of what we were trying to do, with better data and a more contemporary focus, just as we were in part seeking a longer temporal reach in what they were trying to do. As a result, there was a time several years ago when we were placed on the same panels so frequently at the American Political Science Association (APSA) and Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA) that we continually threatened to present each others’ papers.

While they have been cursed less often with common panel appearances, Christopher Wlezien of Temple University and Stuart N. Soroka of McGill University have likewise been pursuing a project with clear resonances, one that also provided us with encouragement and reinforcement. And there was a critical point later in the manuscript, with the voting analysis, when Henry E. Brady of the University of California took extended time out of the APSA meeting where he was program chair to help sort out some conceptual issues that appear, in hindsight, to be crucial to what follows.

Financial support came from the Andrew W. Mellon Chair in American Government at Oxford University and the Glenn B. and Cleone Orr Hawkins

Chair in American Politics at the University of Wisconsin, allowing us, among other advantages, to work together during many summers. That work has been ably supported by two research assistants: Stacey Pelika, who is now on the faculty of The College of William and Mary, and Amber Wichowsky, who is finishing her doctoral work at the University of Wisconsin. We have not hesitated to task each of them with particular interpretive problems as we progressed, so that they have been much more than “data handlers” in the course of this project – though we are sure that both can produce AMOS graphics in their sleep.

Late on, the project acquired a supportive staff at Cambridge University Press in New York as well. Lewis Bateman, Senior Editor for Political Science and History, reached out to this project when it promised less and had far less to show as justification for what it did promise. His consistent support has freed us from further concerns about the publication process. He in turn was supported by Emily Spangler, Senior Editorial Assistant for History and Politics, who was often our contact for operational questions. Helen Wheeler was Production Editor for the book itself. All managed to retain their patience with our arguments about how the book should present itself.

Finally, the project was in a very real sense supported by the *spirit* of three others. Robert A. Dahl gets the dedication not just because he has been the pre-eminent political scientist of our lifetime but even more because he articulates implicitly the message that this analysis implies. The late V. O. Key, Jr., made the same argument explicitly; we borrow its crucial sentences as the closing paragraph for the book. And Norman Rockwell provided the graphic for the cover to the paperback edition, in his iconic *Freedom of Speech* from *The Four Freedoms*. We thank John Rockwell and the Rockwell Family Agency for facilitating the use of a graphic that we think aligns powerfully with the message of this book.





## PART I

### THE STRUCTURE OF PUBLIC PREFERENCES

The postwar years in American politics contain some of the great policy conflicts in all of American history, several of which characterized the entire period. Battles to extend or retrench the American welfare state, institutionalized with the New Deal and then delayed by the Second World War, resumed in its aftermath and stretched across all these years, right up to the present, in headlines on Medicare, tax cuts, and Social Security. Likewise, questions about how to address the outside world were omnipresent. The Cold War arrived, colored an extended era of foreign relations, disappeared, and was replaced by an era still in its formative stages as this is being written. Along the way, the United States found itself intermittently enmeshed in struggles in geographic theaters as divergent as East Asia, Central America, and the Middle East.

Others of these great policy conflicts, while they did not dominate politics during the entire period, were remarkably intense when they arrived, and gave no indication that they would readily depart thereafter. A civil rights “revolution” burst upon the national stage, with a policy surge and then spin-offs in every institutional theater: in Congress, the presidency, the Supreme Court, and the federal executive. Conflict over race policy seemed here to stay. In a different fashion, behavioral norms fundamental to social life – bedrock cultural values involving religion, gender, achievement, and order – produced an insistent parade of policy issues that, if they lacked a single dominant thread like the Cold War, sustained their claim on the political agenda by their very multiplicity. Like race, culture had arrived as an ongoing and insistent bone of contention.

What does not stretch across this same postwar period is some simple and consistent role for public preferences within the political conflicts generated by these policy realms. Certain implicit opportunities for public influence, especially presidential elections, were reliably and regularly present. Moreover, the general public could indeed produce judgments on these matters – apparent policy preferences – when asked by surveyors of public opinion. Yet issues rose and fell in a manner not reliably dependent on those preferences. Preferences

gained or lost salience in a manner not necessarily dependent on their content. And elections turned on a sufficient variety of factors as to blur the contribution of public wishes, when they did not actively encourage analysts to despair of that contribution.

The relationship between policy substance and public preferences in the shaping of a political process is hugely complex when examined concretely, though the abstract nature of their interaction can be simply summarized. From one side, political ideas – and policy goals – are ephemeral in the absence of social support, and usually in the absence of lasting social coalitions. That fact has led many social scientists to derogate the role of policy debate in political conflict. Yet from the other side, political coalitions have no intrinsic coherence apart from the policy preferences – the programmatic concerns – that unite and then hold them together. In the absence of unifying political ideas, social coalitions collapse and are replaced by alternatives that can provide some policy rationale. These need not be “grand” preferences, but their existence and their continuity remain essential.

Putting the argument this way does not make the task of teasing out the alignment and evolution of public preferences on the core aspects of policy conflict any easier. What it does accomplish is to suggest how unlikely it would be to find a developed society that had a citizenry lacking shared historical experiences or stable social locations, the kind of society in which most people did not hold policy preferences, in which such preferences as existed were reliably malleable, and in which any residue of fixed opinions was easily bamboozled. By comparison, substantively stable preferences in temporally stable alignments – should the analyst be able to find them – would themselves **constitute** an important aspect of the structure of politics. They would presumably shape mass political behavior in regular ways. In so doing, they would presumably shape elite political behavior as well, in anticipation or in counteraction.

One response to the inherent complexity of teasing out such a structure has been to surrender. Impressed by very real difficulties in the comparability of data and their analysis over time, and buttressed by the associated suspicion that partial and shaky findings might be all there was – that there might be no connecting threads in the public mind to help add substantive sense to a complicated political picture – many scholars of public opinion have shifted to focusing on its shortcomings and studying its manipulation (often paying special homage to Converse 1964 and Zaller 1992). Ironically, in a world far more impoverished in terms of surveys and data, scholars once conceived of the dimensions to this opinion and the relationships among them as absolutely integral to understanding the structure of politics more generally (most iconically Truman 1951 and Key 1961). Those who think of themselves as following in this tradition continue to view the inherent difficulties of its tasks as attesting to the importance of the problem, central to democratic theory and crucial to practical politics.

On the one hand, then, no self-conscious democrat can take the view that there is no “public mind.” On the other hand, even the most determined analyst has to acknowledge the difficulties inherent in teasing it out. Fortunately,

encouragement for this alternative line of thinking comes from a growing body of work on what has come to be summarized as *issue evolution* (Carmines and Stimson 1986; Feldman 1988; Carmines and Stimson 1989; Shafer and Claggett 1995; Layman and Carsey 1998; Layman 2001; Shanks and Strand, 2002; Shanks, Strand, Carmines, and Brady 2005; and for an overview, Carmines and Wagner 2006). Not all of this work shares our particular focus. Not all of it proceeds in even roughly parallel ways. Yet within its confines, the central items of political debate do appear and evolve in ways that tie policy substance and public preferences together, though the means by which this occurs can still vary considerably:

- Sometimes, the general public insists on attention to a policy problem, driving it onto the national agenda, such that the substance of the main alternatives then feeds back onto (and shapes) social coalitions within that public. This is perhaps the classic view from democratic theory.
- Sometimes, it is instead political elites – partisan elites most of all, but also interest group elites and sometimes media elites – who drive an issue onto the policy agenda. The general public then responds, again in ways that foster lasting social coalitions or not.
- And sometimes, perhaps oftentimes, major events outside of either mass or elite control generate policy concerns that require a response from political elites **and** the mass public. The nature of that response is then powerfully conditioned by whether there is an existing structure to public preferences in the relevant realm and how it applies.

No one of these dynamics dominates all the others all the time. That is part of the empirical difficulty in making sense of the place of public preferences in electoral politics. Yet complexity should not be presumed to imply incoherence, much less irrelevance. All it has to imply is that challenges in addressing the substantive conflict in American politics, as it actually moved the mass public across the postwar years, are indeed everywhere. For purposes of addressing this conflict in a comprehensive way, however, two such challenges seem fundamental:

- The first is to elicit comparable issue measures across the entire postwar era, a sufficiently demanding standard all by itself. Otherwise, even individual policy realms cannot be examined for their evolution.
- The second is to isolate a comprehensive “issue structure,” one that combines these measures for this period. Otherwise, it is quite possible for apparent relationships with mass behavior to be, in fact, artifacts of some other, more dominant issue focus that is simply not in the analysis.

Accordingly, the operational substance of this introductory section must begin where the analysis itself begins, with its dataset. It must be followed by the theoretical framework that will be imposed on that dataset and through which these data will be addressed. It must add specific techniques for applying exploratory and then confirmatory analyses to the product; this is the mechanical heart of the enterprise. And the introduction must close by linking the

potential product back to a small body of work that served as crucial stimulus and support for us. Only then are we ready to go off in search of the issue structure of mass politics in postwar America.

#### A DATASET, SOME THEORY, AND A METHOD

The bedrock task in such an effort is to isolate an issue *structure*; that is, a set of continuing elements within the major policy domains of postwar politics, a set of consistent measures of public preferences on these elements, and a composite that puts all these measures in their proper relationship to each other for every election year. The obvious dataset is the American National Election Study (ANES), beginning with what became an incipient pretest in 1948 and was then institutionalized for every presidential election (and most midterm elections) thereafter. Yet if the scope and quality of the ANES trumps all other contenders, it still brings with it huge problems for any initial effort to isolate an issue structure:

- Undersampling of policy realms makes it hard to create measures of some issue domains in some years, no matter how great their potential consequence to postwar political history.
- Oversampling of policy realms means that other domains can easily generate their own measures, however minimal their potential consequence for the historical record.
- When oversampling meets undersampling, oversampled domains may even “ingest” the substance of the undersampled, despite the fact that they have no evident substantive connection.
- Beyond all that, changes in question wording can make it difficult to separate true structural shifts from simple item development.
- Likewise, the **same** question wording can nevertheless align its substance in a different fashion, depending largely on what else is in the survey.

Any hope of surmounting these difficulties must begin with a theoretical framework sufficient to discipline the analysis. As a first step, this framework requires a set of hypotheses drawn from postwar political history about the major domains of policy conflict during this extended era. We believe that four major domains would make nearly any list of policy priorities in postwar politics. They are: social welfare, international relations, civil rights, and cultural values (Diggins 1988; Barone 1990; Blum 1991; Mayhew 1991; Patterson 1996; Davies 1996; Chafe 2003; Patterson 2005; Abrams 2006; Light 2006; Mayhew 2008). We adopt these four as our theoretical frame. (See Baldassarri and Gelman 2008 for an approach to public opinion data using the same four realms.)

These domains then require a set of definitions clear enough to assign opinion items to them. In practice, working definitions need to meet two criteria when the evolution of an issue structure is the principal concern. From one side, they must be able to specify items that do **and do not** fall within each overall realm,

while providing some sense of priority – of centrality or periphery – among those items. From the other side, working definitions must allow a changing array of specific referents to embody each larger (and continuing) domain. With those ends in mind, we propose the following:

- *Social welfare* involves efforts to protect citizens against the randomness – that is, the harshness and individual inequities – of the economic marketplace. While there are myriad ways to accomplish this, direct personal benefits are the crucial touchstone, while *social insurance* provides the irreducible programmatic core. (For overviews, see Sundquist 1968; Hamby 1973; Marmor, Mashaw, and Harvey 1990; Berkowitz 1991; Patterson 1994; Weaver 2000.)
- *International relations* involves connections between the United States and the *non-American world*. Foreign policy thus reflects efforts to manage the interaction of the United States – its government, its citizens, and their organizations – with the same elements in other nations. (For overviews, see Gaddis 1972; Schulzinger 1990; Spanier 1991; Jentleson 2000; Gaddis 2004; Ray 2007.)
- *Civil rights* could be given an abstract definition, making it in effect a sub-domain of civil liberties. Yet civil rights in the postwar period has been most centrally a matter of race policy for black Americans, so that in the search for an issue structure, it seemed essential to retain *racial concerns* as the essence of a policy definition. (For the comprehensive story, see Sitkoff 1981 and Graham 1990; see also Skrentny 2002.)
- *Cultural values*, finally, involves the norms within which social life should proceed, and social policy involves the governmental role in supporting those norms. The flashpoints for conflict over social policy in the postwar period were heterogeneous in the extreme; that is the great challenge of this realm. Yet *the character of national life* is in some sense the focus of them all. (Landmarks include Scammon and Wattenberg 1970 and Hunter 1991; see also Layman 2001 and Leege et al. 2002.)

Measures for issue domains defined this way must then have two fundamental prerequisites of their own. First, individual items for each domain must have *face validity*. That is, the surface content of any such items has to reflect critical elements of the theoretical definition. Second, those individual items must *scale collectively*. That is, appropriate surface contents have to be correlated with each other, so that they are in fact measuring at least facets of the same underlying phenomenon. Because the voting analysis is ultimately focused on presidential elections, and in order to make the overall analysis manageable at all, we have limited ourselves to presidential years.

With those definitions and these prerequisites, the standard for inclusion was *policy implications*, a touchstone that is not quite as intuitive and self-evident as it might seem. Now and then, the ANES offered items that asked what current policy is, without asking what it should be. Now and then, items surfaced that appeared to explain why individuals held the policy preferences

that they did, without establishing the preferences themselves. And occasionally there were items that asked for a judgment on the state of the nation in this or that regard, without asking what should be done in return. None of these can enter the dataset. In a different category were items that asked about policy preferences but provided responses that did not permit an ordinal continuum. Ideally, these, too, could be excluded before the fact.

Sometimes, despite all that, items that appeared to avoid all these problems – they did have a policy referent, and they did ask for a preference on it – still failed to scale with the bulk of other items that belonged to the domain. Most often, this was because they elicited actual responses that permitted only a muddled continuum. Yet the good news is that nearly all years can provide **something** that meets these standards in every one of the four great policy realms. Many years can in fact provide multiple indicators for the individual realms. And every realm has at least a couple of years where the ANES added substantially more items, to try to make internal sense of a policy area.

Accordingly, for each presidential election year in the ANES series, all items with clear policy implications were isolated and assigned to one of six policy categories: welfare, foreign, race, social, other, and multiple. These categories reflected the fact that not all items that showed a clear policy implication belonged self-evidently to one – and only one – of the four major domains. Some of them, as with items tapping what appeared to be environmentalism or populism, were not self-evidently constituents of any of the four. Hence the category “other.” By contrast, there were other items that appeared to blend domains. That is, they were written in such a way as to encompass more than one of the four great policy realms, or they blended one of them with recognizable concerns that belonged outside all four; hence the category “multiple.”

For the initial exploratory step, the *within-domain analysis*, these blended items had to be excluded, though once an ongoing structure was isolated, some could be returned to the *cross-domain analysis* if they did not fail on other criteria. This decision to exclude those items with policy referents in multiple domains reflects a fundamental strategic decision, a choice between two types of measurement error at the exploratory stage. We cannot overestimate its importance:

- The first type of error involves including an item that does not measure the underlying domain. This is the disastrous error type, especially when there are few items per policy domain per survey. In such circumstances, any item will have a substantial impact on the resulting factor, while most items are likely to load somewhere. An ambiguous item, with the obvious potential to go somewhere else in a larger survey, could thus wreak special havoc.
- The second type of error involves excluding an item that does in fact measure the domain in question. This decreases the number of relevant items from which the underlying dimension is constituted and thus reduces the reliability of the resulting measure. That, too, is consequential, but it is

much less serious than failing to measure the underlying dimension by effectively measuring some unknown “something else.” Moreover, this second type of error can potentially be compensated later in the analysis, while the first type really cannot.

Issue items that unambiguously referred to welfare, foreign, race, or social policy were then subjected to exploratory factor analyses, domain by domain and year by year (Kim and Mueller 1978a, 1978b). Note that it was necessary to proceed by individual policy domains because an analysis of all policy items together, especially early in the series when there were so few items in total, could create components that reflected nothing more than this paucity of items. On the other hand, there seemed no reason not to allow any resulting dimensions to be correlated since there was no abstract requirement that they be orthogonal, while much concrete research suggested that they were not. Note also that cross-survey work was essential for isolating measures that, while constituted from a partially shifting array of items, could be argued to measure the same continuing policy domain.

Cross-survey work is, of course, also conceptually integral to the notion of an *issue structure*. Which is a good thing, since it was simultaneously essential to any methodological solution to this challenge. There would be many twists and turns in pursuit of these measures, and there would ultimately be a variety of measures to choose from, depending on the level of abstraction of the particular analysis. These are the subject of Chapters 1 through 5. Here, the point is merely that it did prove possible to isolate an ongoing structure with a set of relevant dimensions for each great policy realm. From one side, measures for each of these opinion dimensions and for the domain as a whole did follow from the relevant substantive definition. From the other side, all scaled appropriately in an exploratory factor analysis (EFA).

At that point, however, it was necessary to turn from EFA to confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) in order to confront an existing set of hypotheses from the relevant professional literature while simultaneously commenting on the inductively derived findings from our own exploratory analysis. In formal terms, CFA applies prior theory and its evidence to specify relationships between one or more latent, unobservable factors and a set of observable variables that these factors are hypothesized to affect, such that the observed variables become indicators for the latent factors (Kline 1998; Byrne 2001). The existing literature on public opinion was nowhere near sufficiently consensual to eliminate the exploratory stage of our analysis. Yet that literature did reenter at this point, in specifying hypothetical relationships.

The central focus of CFA lies in assessing how well the postulated set of relationships explains or accounts for the covariance among the observed variables. In the aftermath of an exploratory analysis of issue domains and their structure from the within-domain analysis, this has two further implications. First and foremost, it allows testing for the possibility that measures asserted to constitute a single dimension would actually be better explained by some

variant of a multifactor model. Second and simultaneously, it allows testing the assertion that dual or multiple dimensions within one of our major policy domains could actually be collapsed to a single dimension. Either way, confirmatory analyses were conducted for all domains in all years when there were at least four items available per domain.<sup>1</sup>

AMOS (Analysis of Moment Structures), a program for structural equation modeling (SEM), was used to estimate the confirmatory factor analyses. An important ancillary advantage of AMOS is that it uses full-information maximum-likelihood estimation in the presence of missing data, which is a much better means of handling this problem than the traditional strategy of listwise deletion. Yet structural equation modeling via AMOS has a further, directly substantive advantage, for it moves easily, almost automatically, from the within-domain to the cross-domain analyses, testing how well postulated structures fit the data in both cases.

In pursuing this analysis with all its difficulties, we were encouraged by the evolution of a literature that, while not always directed toward the same ends, appeared in retrospect to contribute important antecedents:

- A concern with establishing a place for substantive conflict in American politics at the mass level received powerful impetus from the issue-voting debate of thirty-plus years ago (Brody and Page 1972; Pomper 1972; Nie, Verba, and Petrocik 1976; Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus 1978), though in truth that focus was hardly absent from crucial early landmarks in the field (Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960, especially Chapter 7).
- A burst of activity in this realm about fifteen years ago then made substantial progress toward establishing a differentiated structure for mass preferences on public policy (Page and Shapiro 1991; Popkin 1991; Stimson 1991; Mayer 1992). Indeed, three of these titles – *The Rational Public*, *The Reasoning Voter*, and *The Changing American Mind* – constitute implicit arguments that resonate with much of what follows.
- Now, within the last half-dozen years, several groups of scholars have at last begun to turn to the specific challenges involved in creating comprehensive measures for such a structure in the modern world (Shanks and Strand 2002; Shanks, Strand, and Carmines 2003; Wlezien 2004; Shanks, Strand, Carmines, and Brady 2005; Soroka and Wlezien 2005).

All these developments, collectively, encouraged us to take the next step: to assemble the best available data, address it with best contemporary practice, and see what a comprehensive *issue context* – and its impact – would look like for the entire postwar period, with all the measurement difficulties and all the data shortcomings that such a comprehensive look would inevitably imply. It

<sup>1</sup> CFA models are saturated with three items or less and either cannot be estimated or cannot produce fit statistics.



is only a short step from that product to an inquiry into the evolution of major policy conflicts and how these did, or did not, engage the mass public.

For this second inquiry, centering on the relationship between an issue structure in the American public mind and postwar political behavior at the mass level, we have focused on voting behavior. While not easy, this is an easier focus than behaviors that are either more distant from politics, as with watching the news, or more specialized in their application, as with contributing money. More to the theoretical point, voting is the archetypal embodiment of mass behavior in a democracy. Its pursuit here is built principally around voting for president, supplemented by attention to partisan loyalty and partisan defection within those votes.

Yet the goal of the enterprise is something more even than pursuit of the relationship between an issue structure and mass political behavior. That goal is implicitly the restoration of policy substance to the center of political analysis and with it the restoration of a voting public aligned by policy preferences. Those are major substantive goals. They are major methodological goals. But they are also major *normative* goals. We have spoken about them briefly in the preface and will say little more until the concluding chapter. Here, the main point is just that, along the way, two major by-products to this enterprise should emerge, both of which constitute further – and more unequivocal – contributions:

- The first is some simultaneous set of issue measures that can stand in for the issue structure of American politics in all of the postwar years – essentially the era in which there was defensible survey data – in order to generate further hypotheses and encourage better measures.
- The second is a picture of what we might call “the pure politics of policy choice,” where conflict over public policy by way of this ongoing issue context offers a kind of baseline influence on the vote to which other – and alternative – influences can potentially be added.

#### ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

The volume that attempts to do all these things has a simple and straightforward organization. Part I assembles the structure of policy preferences in the mass public for the postwar United States. We have, with some trepidation, called its product *the American public mind*. Part II then examines this structure for its relationship to voting behavior in presidential elections. The result contributes what we are calling the *pure politics of policy choice*.

Within this overall division, Chapters 1 and 2 address the nature and measure of the great issue domains that already dominated the political landscape as the postwar era began, namely social welfare and international relations. Together, these policy realms testify to the prospects, and problems, associated with the effort to tease out an overarching issue structure. Together, and more concretely, their structures were to provide the background contours of the

issue environment for practical politics for a very long time. Chapters 3 and 4 then address the nature and measure of the great issue domains that joined these first two on a recurrent basis, the policy realms that in some sense distinguish the postwar era. These were civil rights and cultural values, and their similarities and differences, with each other and with the established issues, go a long way toward specifying the full substantive landscape of postwar American politics.

By its close, Chapter 4 has thus set up the great substantive domains that must be assembled in order to possess a comprehensive issue context, one that can permit a systematic examination of voting behavior. Before this examination, however, Chapter 5 doubles back to investigate those items that were set aside as potentially blending more than one domain, where the point is either to confirm their blended character or to return them to the analysis if they prove instead to belong to one particular realm. What results is finally reassembled in the introduction to Part II as an overarching issue context built on the four grand policy domains as a comprehensive whole. This allows creation of the basic voting model that will govern the analysis of electoral relationships across the postwar period.

Chapter 6 returns to the established issues, social welfare and international relations, within the confines of this voting model. Chapter 7 adds the new issues, civil rights and cultural values, along with a pair of Independent candidacies for president that add nuance to the overall voting picture. By the end of Chapter 7, the presence of powerful and consistent issue relationships to the vote, the presence of issue relationships that actually change partisan direction over time, along with the presence of a greater array of policy links that move in and out of electoral influence, have all been confirmed. Together, simultaneously, they help explain why previous analysts could so often fail to find a role for policy conflict in electoral politics.

Chapter 8 begins by asking more pointedly about the impact of policy preferences on partisan loyalty or defection, as a further influence on this picture of relationships between public preferences and presidential voting. It closes by assembling everything that has gone before into a picture of electoral orders and eras in the postwar world. Chapter 9 then recapitulates this entire story very briefly. Appearing centrally in that story is a general public whose preferences are not inchoate and incapable but rather patterned, persistent, and thus an important aspect of the larger structure of American politics.

## The Established Issues

### *Social Welfare*

Two policy crises, along with the programmatic responses to them, were central to the political order existing in the United States in the immediate postwar years. The first crisis was the Great Depression, and its policy response was the New Deal, bringing to the United States an extensive collection of welfare programs – its first real “welfare state.” The second crisis was World War II, and its policy response was total mobilization, bringing in its wake a standing military establishment plus an array of “entangling alliances,” also really for the first time in American history. Perhaps inevitably, the four presidential elections preceding the postwar era, those involving Franklin Delano Roosevelt from 1932 through 1944, were centrally focused on one or the other of these grand policy concerns.

At the time, observers could not know where each policy realm would go as World War II came to an end. As it turned out, a formal end to armed conflict was followed not by international quietude but by the succession of foreign crises that resulted in the Cold War. Relief at the ending of World War II was thus insistently coupled with anxiety about the international future in ways that few could escape. For many, however, the domestic future was an even greater worry. Many feared that the domestic economy would merely fall back into depression, having been supported principally by mobilization for war. In this view, returning soldiers would encounter the same old economics, with familiar problems made only worse by the appearance of hundreds of thousands of adult males looking for work.

That view was to prove unduly alarmist. While economic reconversion was to be a turbulent process, economic collapse did not follow. Reconversion and extended recovery thus left some free to plan for an expansion of the welfare state, the intended completion of the New Deal, just as it left others free to hope that the New Deal (and with it the welfare state) had been an exceptional response to a temporary emergency, as extended by the unprecedented length of the Roosevelt presidency. And it left the American public free to adjudicate

the resulting debate. The turbulent politics of the immediate postwar years must have made the outcome seem – feel – like a very open question.

Yet, with hindsight, we know that the most severe economic catastrophe in American history had altered the role of the state in American society in a fundamental way. The New Deal had brought national involvement, by the federal government, in unemployment insurance, retirement benefits, agricultural pricing, labor–management relations, rural electrification, and on and on. Major aspects of American life were now infused with – and enmeshed in – governmental activity. The end of World War II could (and did) allow a return to conflict over these programs, over their expansion or their retrenchment. What it did not even begin to do was reduce the interpenetration of state and society that the New Deal had fostered. In that environment, policy conflict over social welfare would be a regular feature of American politics.

#### ITEM SELECTION

The refocusing of the political parties on welfare issues, and thus the institutionalization of these concerns within the national party system, might by themselves have ensured their continuation into the postwar years (Sundquist 1968; Ladd 1975). Yet immediate postwar policy conflicts needed no such assistance. Harry Truman, who succeeded to the presidency on the death of Franklin Roosevelt, quickly proposed expanding some elements of the New Deal program while taking it into extensive new territory: full employment, medical care, and public housing. These would ultimately be gathered under the umbrella of Truman’s putative “Fair Deal.” Newly resurgent Republicans, who recaptured both the House of Representatives and the Senate in 1946 after eighteen years in the political wilderness, then declared war on some aspects of the New Deal, especially its labor–management regulations, rumbled about doing so with others, and dug in their heels against Truman’s expansive proposals (Hamby 1973; Berkowitz 1991).

In that atmosphere, it is no surprise that survey analysts also brought these concerns immediately into what became the American National Election Studies. It was to take a few iterations before survey designers reached agreement on how best to tap these welfare concerns. In truth, it would take more than a few iterations before they reached agreement on how to tap policy opinions in general. But social welfare was present and recognizable from the beginning in the ANES, and even early attempts at its measurement bear a logical – a face – connection to our definition. Accordingly, the good news is that the policy domain credited by most analysts with creating the postwar party system is well represented across the entire postwar era, including the crucial early years when the number of items in ANES surveys was at its most limited.

There is, however, a downside to this benefit: social welfare constitutes one of two grand policy realms – cultural values is the other – that can be so broadly defined as to risk drawing nearly everything into its maw. In some abstract sense, there is an economics of everything, just as there is a culture of everything.

This means that most governmental policies have some potential welfare effects, which are always relevant to the well-being of some Americans. Accordingly, while the process of hunting for an underlying structure in any realm involves a constant interaction between substantive definition, item content, and public response, the definition itself has to play a larger role at the beginning of the exploratory analysis in social welfare, where questions of inclusion or exclusion abound and where blended items (those tapping more than one domain) are a particular hazard.

Recall that social welfare in our definition involves efforts to protect citizens against the randomness – the harshness and individual inequities – of social life generally and, most pointedly, of the economic marketplace. In the United States, welfare policy is most commonly justified on grounds that such protections will help restore citizens to a productive social (and economic) life. The irreducible essence of such policies normally involves some form of social insurance, with direct personal benefits as its signature product. Such a definition does cover most of the classic programs of the welfare state, including unemployment compensation, pension arrangements, and medical care. It can, however, reach well beyond these programs when concrete benefits with distributive impacts are aimed at correcting undesirable situations. So far, so good.

Yet given the centrality of economic transfers to this definition, where anything done by government is likely to benefit someone and where most of these benefits can be argued to transfer resources in the process, the policy situation within the domain of social welfare brings with it two intrinsic problems, corresponding to the two broad categories of items that had to be removed from at least the initial analysis:

- First were the blended items, those conflating two or more of our grand policy domains. The risks from blended items involving social welfare were no greater in the abstract than the risks from blended items involving international relations, civil rights, or cultural values. It was just that there were **more of them** in the welfare realm. The only saving grace is that these are the kind of items that can most easily be brought back into the analysis once unconfused items have contributed defensible measures for the structure of public opinion in the overall domain. In other words, if we have defensible core measures for social welfare and international relations, for example, we can see whether items blending those two domains belong more with the former, more with the latter, or proportionately to both.
- In a different category was a diverse collection of items that, if they had to fit within one of our grand policy domains, would clearly belong to social welfare – they were evidently not international relations, civil rights, or cultural values – but otherwise lacked an inescapable surface connection to our working definition. Sometimes, this was in effect a drafting problem, where available responses failed to reflect a direct continuum from

welfare liberalism to welfare conservatism. Sometimes, the problem arose because the item in question reflected public attitudes toward some group or groups normally associated with liberalism or conservatism on social welfare rather than toward particular policies. And sometimes, while the item in question did involve a policy focus with great potential impact on society, this focus had no automatic face connection to general preferences on welfare policy.

The first of these two problem categories, blended items that conflate two policy domains and thus risk contributing mismeasurement from the start, abounds within the realm of social welfare. Most of these items are actually better addressed in the chapter on the **other** domain in question since they tend to feature a touchstone characteristic from one of these others – to mention a foreign nation, a racial minority, or a gendered policy – and become problematic only because the available responses add a welfare aspect. Here, all that we need is an introductory example, which can be provided by what is perhaps the grandfather of all blended items, involving three of the four major policy domains. This is an item tapping public preferences on governmental policy toward urban unrest. Initiated during the upheavals of the late 1960s, it ran for three elections before being brought back in 1992:

*There is much discussion about the best way to deal with the problem of urban unrest and rioting. Some say it is more important to use all available force to maintain law and order – no matter what results. Others say it is more important to correct the problems of poverty and unemployment that give rise to the disturbances. (1968, 1972, 1976, 1992)*

One of these responses looks like nothing so much as a classic call for welfare policies: “correct the problems of poverty and unemployment that give rise to the disturbances.” The difficulty is that the other response looks like a classic call for social policies, and with an opposite ideological drift: “use all available force to maintain law and order.” Worse yet, because the problem of urban rioting was in its time a problem of racial rioting, the possibility that this item would tap attitudes toward civil rights could not be dismissed a priori, which is just one more way of saying that only the actual pattern of public preferences can determine the proper placement of such a potentially blended item, and then only after we possess an unconfused measure of preferences on both social welfare and cultural values (and even civil rights in this case!) through which to evaluate public responses.

The second substantial category of items initially excluded from the realm of social welfare is quite different, containing as it does items that would have been assigned to the welfare realm if they had been assigned to any of our four great domains. What drove some out of the exploratory analysis was that these items were just less central on their face to the policy domain in question. That is, while having some relevance to social welfare – they were not obviously blended items – they were not automatic extrapolations of general orientations

toward the programs at the heart of a developed welfare state, and intendedly at the heart of our welfare definition. In these cases, the link between face content of an item and core definition of the realm was just not sufficient to allow the former to define the latter, rather than being a subject for further study once this realm had acquired its defining measurements.

One cluster of such items involved public orientations toward one or another **social group** that was reliably associated with the liberal or the conservative position in welfare debates. The problem here was that there was no clear intellectual need for nonmembers to align orientations toward the group with basic preferences on welfare policy in the fashion that group members could be expected to display. Said differently, there was no good reason to turn the definition of social welfare over to one or another of these reliably aligned groups. This problem surfaced most often in the early years of the ANES, and it surfaced most reliably with groups epitomizing labor–management relations:

*The government ought to see to it that big business corporations don't have much say about how the government is run.* (1956)

*The government ought to see to it that labor unions don't have much say about how the government is run.* (1956, 1960)

Overall, it may seem that attitudes toward labor and business must show some correlation with liberalism or conservatism on welfare policy, and in the obvious direction: labor liberal and business conservative. Yet even on theoretical grounds, it would have introduced a peculiar confusion into the analysis to go on and say, for example, that being pro-welfare but anti-labor was part of the definition of welfare *conservatism*, or that being anti-welfare and anti-business was part of the definition of welfare *liberalism*. In any case, this theoretical argument can be tested empirically. Even when such items are excluded from the exploratory factor analysis, it is possible to see what they would have done had they been allowed in. In this case, the relationships between business power, labor power, and programmatic items in the welfare domain were in fact very weak: a mean correlation of .12 for business and .07 for labor.<sup>1</sup>

A second cluster of items that failed to have sufficient connection to our basic definition – built around protecting citizens against random inequities in the economic marketplace by way of insurance programs delivering concrete and divisible benefits – featured **policies** that were insufficiently central to the alignment of preferences on social welfare. Either such policies were not central to a comprehensive welfare orientation (that is, they could easily enough be given a liberal or conservative interpretation, but on matters that were substantively peripheral to the welfare debate). Or such policies were at the center of

<sup>1</sup> Such weak correlations raise the possibility that these items more appropriately reflect a kind of populist impulse, pitting the organized against the unorganized, rather than reflecting an ideological alignment, left versus right. Indeed, those who were opposed to business power were more likely to be opposed to labor power, too, rather than opposing business and supporting labor or vice versa. See the appendix for a further note on this.

the welfare debate but could not reasonably be aligned with the liberal or conservative position. Although they were intrinsically consequential, their welfare implications could not be determined from face content.

In the first category, items that were outliers in the policy debate such that they needed to have no direct connection to it for many respondents, were items about public versus private **delivery** of a desirable service. At the end of the Second World War, this concern was most commonly expressed in a debate over public ownership. Forty years later, it was most commonly expressed in a debate over governmental regulation. Examples from each period include:

*The government should leave things like electric power and housing for private businessmen to handle.* (1956, 1960)

*We need a strong government to handle today's complex economic problems. Or, the free market can handle these problems without government being involved.* (1992, 1996, 2000, 2004)

While the overall direction of association may seem straightforward – those favoring public provision of housing seem unlikely to be welfare conservatives, and those favoring the free market seem unlikely to be welfare liberals – the logical connection was not inescapable on its face. That is, it remained quite possible to desire more housing but not care about the instrument of its provision or, conversely, to enjoy municipal utilities without preferring a greater governmental role in the economy in general. Many people lived in social contexts conducive toward just such combinations.

Farther down the road from these policy concerns, but more pressing and more common in recent years, were items that were indisputably central to a national policy debate and were clearly not focused on foreign, race, or social policy but offered no easy connection to a basic continuum of preferences on social welfare. Chief among these were programmatic initiatives by the federal government that could have generalized fiscal impact. Sometimes, these deserved the full-blown title of “macroeconomic policy,” as when they forced an express choice among revenues, expenditures, and deficits. Other times, they featured only one aspect – one side – of a coherent fiscal policy, usually by way of taxation, most commonly by way of “tax cuts.”<sup>2</sup>

All such policies, comprehensive or partial, promised to have economic impacts; there was no reason to implement them otherwise. Yet the connection between responses to such items and the essential definition of social welfare was often distant enough that they could not be allowed to **create** the main measure of public preferences for the welfare domain. Possessing such a measure, the analyst could double back and ask how public preferences on macroeconomic policy or tax policy were related to bedrock welfare preferences. But in the absence both of that measure and of this knowledge, it could prove disastrous to allow these items into the central definition of the realm. The best did at least force choices that had clear implications for a composite policy:

<sup>2</sup> For some further difficulties in the analysis of these items, quite apart from the question of their relationship to the classic concerns of social welfare, see the appendix.