THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL IDENTITIES ON PARTISANSHIP

DURING A REALIGNMENT PERIOD

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The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the thesis entitled

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THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL IDENTITIES ON PARTISANSHIP

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ABSTRACT

The changing nature of American political parties during the latter half of the twentieth century has long been the topic of scholarly interest. In this research, I examine the effects of different social identities on partisan realignment over two generations. By using and comparing survey data from these two generations, I isolate and identify social identities which become salient for a younger generation, while the elder cohort is less affected. This goes beyond the traditional approach of considering partisan realignments in terms of changing individuals. I examine this phenomenon, coupled with the social identity effects instilled by the preceding generation. The results suggest that parental influences through social identity establishment are an important element to be considered when studying intergenerational transmission of partisan identities.

Main Text

Trigg County, Kentucky lies in the state's southwest region along the Tennessee border. During the War Between the States, the county was the site of several battles, both on land and on the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers which run through. Ramon and Becky Oliver live on a cattle farm in the county today. They are both registered Democrats, as well as self-described conservatives. Becky recalls stories from her deceased relatives who passed on stories of their ancestors fighting in the area on behalf of the Confederate States. Great pride is taken in one Trigg County Confederate who allegedly "shot a Yankee" suspected of spying after forcing him to dig his own grave at gunpoint. The actions of the Republican Party under Abraham Lincoln are not easily forgotten. During schoolhouse battle re-enactments of the 19th Century war, children demand to be assigned to the Confederate Army, and those students see to it that the South wins that mock battle, no matter the actual course of history. Ramon and Becky were both raised Democrats. Their parents were Democrats, and their parents' parents were Democrats, dating back to the Civil War. Today, the couple attend church weekly, own an impressive arsenal of firearms, and generally think the federal government should stay out of the affairs of private citizens. Most people would think of them as conservative. However, they continue to maintain their Democratic Party identification. Their daughter Lucy, born in 1982, was raised in this Democratic household in which both God and guns were omnipresent while "Republican" was a dirty word. When she turned 18, she registered to vote, as a Democrat. She too, would attend church weekly and support conservative ideals of the day. In 2006, she went to the local courthouse and changed her partisan identification to Republican.

The above story is important for many reasons. It is important to note that the social attitudes of both Becky and Ramon are greatly reflected in Lucy. Both generations attend the

same church each week, sometimes twice in one week. Both Lucy and her parents believe in

free enterprise, that abortion should be restricted and that America must sometimes act

unilaterally on the world stage to protect her interests. The point being, that much is held

constant between the two generations, yet partisanship changes. Figure 1 illustrates the

hypothetical phenomenon.
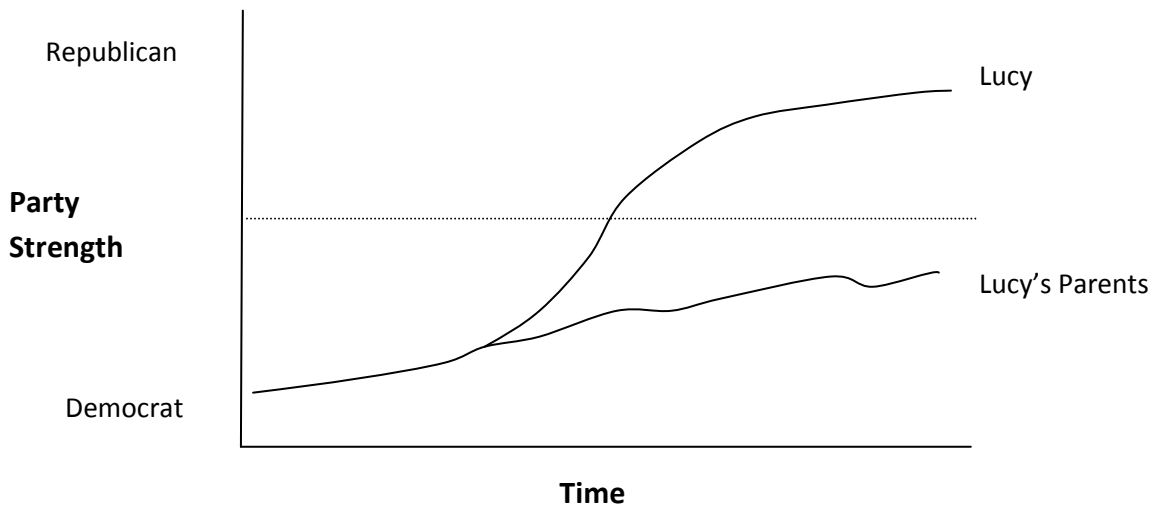
Figure 1

"Party strength" represents the ease of which one explains their identification with a particular

political party. When the younger generation enters the electorate, there may be stronger

attitudinal reasons to identify as a Republican, but early adolescent influences from the

identifiably Democratic parents has caused the young voter to be socialized into the Democratic

fold. In the case of the Oliver family, Ramon and Becky had perceived the Democratic Party to

be closer to their ideal point on the salient issues. Over time, however, they felt the Democratic

Party moved further from their desired philosophical position. By the time Lucy registered to

vote, the Republican Party was clearly closer to the family's ideological perspective. Despite

this, the engrained mistrust and dislike of all things Republican had caused Ramon and Becky to

see the Democratic Party as *their* party. They have a sense of ownership and connection to it

that has been instilled in them through the several generations since the Republican Party attacked their way of life during the "War of Northern Aggression." Despite the growing ideological inconsistencies between their partisanship and their ideology, the Oliver parents continue today to call themselves Democrats. The young Lucy, on the other hand, only stayed with the party of her family's heritage for several years before "correctly" identifying the Republican Party as more representative of her belief system.

This situation signifies a successful transmission of political ideology between two generations. Also significant is the fact partisanship was unsuccessfully transmitted. Lucy, like her parents, was conditioned all her life to believe Democrats were "good," while the GOP was the party that desecrated her homeland. Like her parents, she registered to vote as early as possible as a Democrat. However, unlike her parents, she changed her partisan registration at a very early age. Something must have caused Lucy to make this shift. This dynamic is the topic of this paper.

I wish to research the causes of realignment within American political parties in the latter half of the twentieth century. The true story of Lucy and her parents is one of millions of people around the United States who found that the party they were conditioned to support through their upbringing was not the party that reflected their political views. This would happen to both Democrats and Republicans all over the country, of varying social strata and demographic group. Recent decades have seen many examples of high profile politicians defecting from their party of origin over concerns with its philosophical basis. Senators Phil Gramm and Strom Thurmond would both leave the Democratic fold *and* join the GOP. On the other end of the spectrum, Senator Jim Jeffords would leave the Republican Party to sit as in Independent. The parties appear to have become more ideologically and socially homogenous in recent decades.

Conservatism is closely associated with the Republican Party while American liberalism is associated with the Democratic Party. This correlation was not necessarily the case prior to the realignment that took place starting in the 1960s.

Through this paper, I will shed light on what happened to the two parties during this turbulent period of American history. I will show how their membership base changed from a social identity perspective. I will provide evidence of attitude stability throughout a realignment period through the political interactions between one generation and the next. My goal is to demonstrate the increasing social identity homogeneity of the parties between two generations. What follows provides the theory behind this story. Elites capitalized on demographic cleavages that were originally largely only influenced by family. Demographics/social identities form the basis for issue position justifications in the mass public. By executing political marketing along demographic cleavages, elites caused members of the mass public to re-evaluate which social identities are salient. As the salience levels of these different social identities fluctuated, this led to attitudes becoming either more or less justifiable. The net balance of these changing justifications led the individual to re-evaluate their partisan identification.
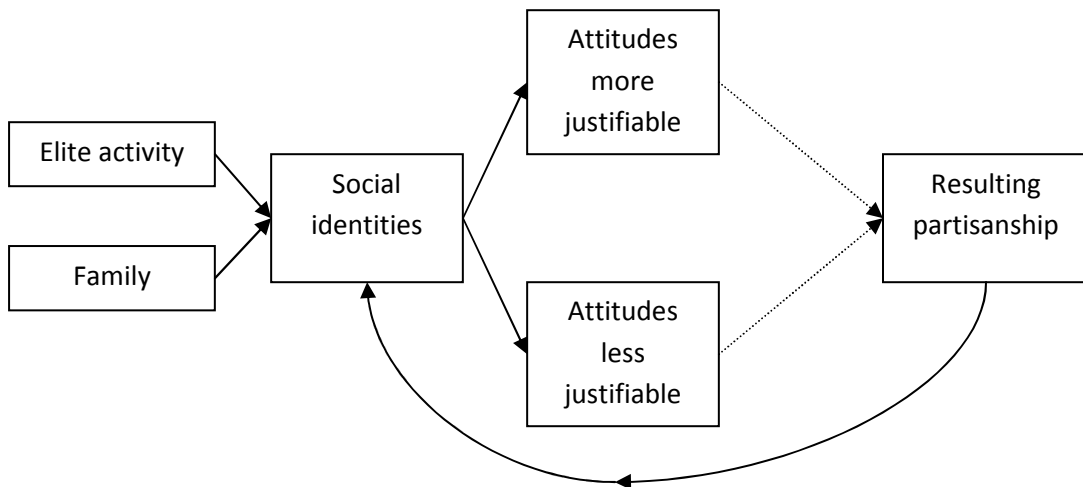

Figure 2

Additionally, the changing partisanships of others would undoubtedly cycle back to impact on the social identity stage of this logic, as partisanship can be considered a social identity. This is shown in Figure 2, a model of the social stratification of the parties during the realignment period in question. Figure 2 represents my theory of partisan social realignment. It is based on previous research that will be discussed further on in this paper. Macdonald & Rabinowitz (1987) cite *The American Voter* (Campbell et. al. 1960), as well as Cobb and Elder (1972), and Kingdon (1984) to show that it is elites who tend to be the initiators of public policy. Petrocik (1983) explores social identity and the cleavages associated with these social identities as key aspects of the definition of a partisan realignment. Andersen (1988) found, while citing Snow et. al. (1980), that the social identity of religion is in fact used as an explanation for political stances. I will extrapolate this conclusion onto other forms of social identity, such as religiosity, region, ideology and partisanship. Greene et. al. (2002) contend that partisanship itself is a social identity. This results in a complex relationship between social identity and partisanship. The changing nature of mass partisanship will have an effect on the remainder of the population.

Kingdon (1984) in *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies* looks at the participants in the political process. He divides the participants into "visible" and "hidden" categories. The members of the visible category include national-level politicians, prominent appointees, the media and campaigners/political parties. The hidden sect includes academics, bureaucrats and congressional staffers. Kingdon notes that the visible group can have great influence on agenda setting when they take up an issue. Henceforth, these visible participants will be considered "elites." In the 1960s, elites were actively pursuing agendas. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. actively fought to get his agenda of racial integration salient with the public. President Johnson sought to

put the Great Society and the Vietnam War on the agenda. Feminist groups tried to get women's

issues on the agenda. Much of this elite activity found no shortage of media coverage, thus

exacerbating its effects. Much of the elite activity of the time was focused along demographic

lines. The counterculture era challenged traditional values concerning religion, religiosity, race,

sex, ideology and partisanship. Bra-burning feminists were attempting to redefine the role of

women in society, while the Students for a Democratic Society were trying to redefine the

Democratic Party. Dr. King and Malcolm X were attempting to reform race issues in America

while Goldwater supports were launching a redefinition of the "right." All of this elite activity

would generate ripple effects along these demographic fault lines, as illustrated in Figure 3. The

significance of social identity, or demographic segmentation in marketing (either politically or

otherwise) is demonstrable through large scale software productions that seek to find correlations

of such categorical demographic variables, such as the Chi-squared Automatic Interaction

Detector (Kass 1980). Additionally, Clancy and Krieg (2000) demonstrate the significance of

social identity in marketing research through a case study concerning beef products.
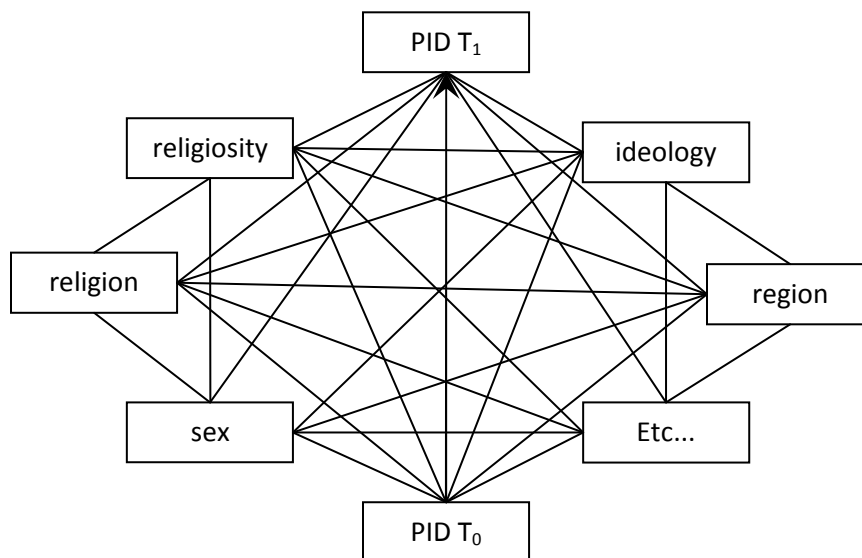
Figure 3

The level of complexity of Figure 3 is intentional. These identities, plus more than likely others, interact with each other. Included in these social identities is partisanship at time 0, resulting in a partisan identification at time 1. The open-ended web present in Figure 3 is meant to highlight the complex interconnected relationships within the production, maintenance and possibly ultimate loss of partisan identification within an individual. The social identities discussed here constitute many ways in which individuals define themselves. Whether the elite activists intended to or not, their activities impacted the salience of social identities within millions of Americans. As I will show below, it is these social groups that define partisan realignment. In order to discuss the concept of a partisan realignment, it must be defined. There are several different conceptualizations of realignment that will first be explored. One is chosen for suitability in examining the realignment of the second half of the twentieth century.

Short term forces can converge to dramatically swing an election in a lopsided fashion, such as in 1964 and 1972. This "exciting times" conception of a realignment appears to be more a function of ideological elements of either party gaining power and polarizing the electorate, with electorally devastating results for the ideological party in both 1964 and 1972 (Petrocik 1983). This conception fails to account for the long term trends and addresses realigning *elections*, rather than realigning electoral eras (Campbell et. al. 1960). This notion of a long term shift is reasserted decades later in *The American Voter Revisited* (Lewis-Beck et. al. 2008). These eras, consisting of multiple generations, are of greater long term consequence and will be the topic of this examination.

Sometimes a new majority party is produced. This would by definition be a long term phenomenon and seemingly suitable for this research. However, this situation should not necessarily imply that a realignment has occurred. If partisan identification is to be considered a

form of social identity (Green et. al. 2002), the occurrence of a new majority party is merely a function of electoral success at a particular level and office, not a realignment of the actual engrained partisan identification of voters. The Democratic dominance of the US House of Representatives during the latter half of the twentieth century represents not specifically a realignment, but a series of electoral victories at a certain level. Petrocik (1983) noted that a surge in the number of gerrymandered districts likely contributed to the Democratic dominance throughout the period. Actual shifts in real partisan identification will be considered as necessary for a realignment in this paper. This does not only have to occur in unique individuals, but over generational lineages, as data presented here will show. Additionally, this notion of realignment does not consider the social identity aspect of elite activity, which was a defining factor in this period of realignment.

Another possible definition of realignment, largely advanced by Burnham (1965), concerns behavioural patterns among the electorate. This conception deals with changes in the "party system" as explained by Schlesinger (1985). His definition of the party system concerns the level of competitiveness for various offices. This definition relates directly to this "changing shape" conception of the realignment. Behavioural trends or changes in elite activity can work to disrupt the status quo. The rise of split-ticket voting, off-year turnout downturns, or the "roll-off" phenomenon contribute to alter electoral results at various levels. These can be considered behavioural shifts, but not as a genuine realignment. Falling back on the Green et. al. (2002) notion of the partisan ID as a social identity, Burnham's theory fails to adhere to the corollary that for a realignment to occur, genuine partisan change must be happening within unique individuals (or their family line) in which demographics and personal factors can be held relatively constant. Adjustments to the party system would fit into my (Figure 2) theoretical

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framework more as a symptom of an ongoing realignment than as an actual realignment in and of itself. Therefore, this definition is deemed inadequate for this theory.

The "political-agenda" conception discussed by Petrocik (1983) appears to be quite tempting for this paper. This notion deals with the idea of crosscutting issues reforming party policy (Sundquist 1983). At first glance it appears that race issues crosscut the Democratic Party's "Big Tent," along with other aspects of the counterculture movement. Relatively suddenly, the issues associated with "abortion, amnesty and acid" became salient concerns. While it is true that the parties reformed their policies and "target audience" based on this schism, this divide was present for decades, and only manifested itself with the advent of the counterculture era. It was the social identity activation by elites which drive the salience level of these matters, either up or down. Petrocik (1983) argues that this conception is too broad to successfully explain the partisan shifts of this era, so he advances the theory of a realignment as "transformations of the social group profile of party supporters."

The above conceptualization of realignment will form the basis for this paper. Petrocik (1987) explains as follows. "The theoretical rationale for this definition arises from the social cleavage theory of parties and party systems; its practical merit is its correspondence with the way in which parties conceive of their electoral base." Political parties are essentially media for mass political marketing, and as such, have target audiences. Demographics play an important role in any marketing campaign, particularly when it involves potentially divisive social and political issues. As noted above, Kingdon (1984) found that elites (including parties) rather than mass publics, have found the primary role as initiators of public policy. In other words, it was not Americans like the Olivers who initiated the realignment period of the 1960s-1970s. It was elites who led the realignment by championing issues, affecting their salience level with the mass

public, including the Olivers. Demographic concerns would form the basis for the political marketing of the time, including the "Southern Strategy" of the Republicans and the civil rights causes of the Democrats. Both attempted to capitalize on demographic-based issues. The Republicans undertook a marketing campaign aimed at Southerners and white voters, while the Democrats looked to minorities, Northerners and liberals. These explanations justify the use of Petrocik's (1983) definition of realignment: "A realignment occurs when the measurable party bias of identifiable segments of the population changes in such a way that the social group profile of the parties-the party coalitions-is altered." This differs from the "agenda-issues" conception involving cross cutting issues slightly. Petrocik (1983) explains that cross cutting issues modeled spatially by Sundquist (1983) may be the cause (or consequence) of a realignment, but it is the "organic change" (a shift in alignment of party divisions) in parties that constitutes a realignment. I consider examining this "organic change" in partisan realignment by examining partisan trends between individuals of one generation and their specific offspring. This contention must consider findings from the parent-child socialization literature. Recalling Figure 2, not only is it activities of the elites that will have an influence on social (including partisan) identification (Greene et. al. 2002), but also the partisanship of others, particularly of one's parents. Lucy was able to successfully receive her parents' partisanship, as well as other identities. These other identities would prove important.

When Lucy turned 18 she registered to vote, as a Democrat. She has always believed ideas such as that the federal government is "too big," the American military must remain dominant across the globe, and that some form of intelligent design is the basis for mankind's existence.   She has described herself as a conservative for all her life, and by most reasonable definitions of an American conservative, she is correct. However, she registered as a Democrat.

When asked about this decision she points to the fact that her parents are Democrats. Then she will point to the fact that nearly all local elections, right up through the state legislature, are fought in the Democratic primary election, rather than in the general election. Lucy was hardly ignorant of the world when she registered to vote. She was aware of the general differences between Republicans and Democrats at the national level. She would soon go on to complete a Bachelor's degree at the University of Kentucky.

As mentioned above, eventually Lucy would convert her partisan registration to that of the GOP. However, we must consider the influence of parents on their offspring. These intergenerational forces play a pivotal role in realignments. These realignments do not occur in a vacuum, but occur over time. During this time period, the voting base changes. New voters enter the electorate, while older Americans die off. For a realignment to truly occur, it must be somewhat enduring. In light of this conjecture, I will add the following lemma to Petrocik's definition of realignment. In order for a realignment to have successfully occurred, its effects must be visible over multiple generations. This idea contributes a defined temporal dimension to Petrocik's theory of realignment as demographic changes. It would appear to be true simply by definition. If a demographic alters its partisan allegiances in a measurable fashion, it would seem that the demographic would naturally carry the realignment over to the following generation, at least in some significant residual levels. The purpose of this paper is to further solidify Petrocik's conceptualization of the realignment with the addition of empirical support for this lemma. This concept must first be considered from a theoretical perspective based on the *corpus* of research concerning the transmission of political attitudes between parent and child. It is my contention that this temporal dimension of realignment and intergenerational attitude transmission has not been fully explored.

M. Kent Jennings and Richard G. Niemi are cited as the principle investigators of the three wave 1965-1982 Youth-Parent Socialization Panel Study. Their research was based on interviews of parents and their children over this time period. This long-term experiment was able to shed light on the relationship between the politics of parents and that of their children. They penned *The Political Character of Adolescence* (1974) as an explanation of their initial findings following the second round of interviews in 1973. Controversial conservative commentator Ann Coulter has remarked that, "by the age of fourteen, you're either a conservative or a liberal if you have an IQ above a toaster." Her comment is not without at least some scholarly support. In *The Development of Political Attitudes in Children* (1967), authors Hess & Torney found that by the ages of ten or twelve, children recognize the names of the parties and "respond in a partisan or consciously Independent fashion to a question about voting preferences" (Jennings & Niemi 1974). This shows that partisanship is formed prior to formulations of opinions on public policy issue positions, offering further support to Greene's (2002) conclusions. Beck & Hershey (2001) suggest that opinions of these ideologically salient issues are formed through a "partisan lens," based on the findings of Hess & Torney (1967) and Fred I. Greenstein's *Children and Politics* (1965). Children gain their partisan social identity prior to learning of the nuances of "the issues." Jennings & Niemi (1974) conclude that while partisanship may be the earliest transmitted aspect of a child's political consciousness, the late adolescent stage causes shifts in partisanship in reaction to attitudes on salient issues. What issues are salient are a function of what social identifies are made salient. The dynamics of how that child takes that pre-programmed partisanship and applies it to the issues is what forms the foundation of a temporally-robust partisan realignment.

Tedin (1974) attempts to show that parents are weak in their transmission of political values to their children, with the exception of simple partisanship. Tedin rejects the conclusions of Campbell (1969), Sigel (1970) and Hyman (1959) which state generally that parents and children share a high degree of consistency on political attitudes. Tedin goes on to test and reject this hypothesis using a series of three questions concerning racial integration, US policy towards Communist China and marijuana laws. Tedin's conclusions appear steeped not only in a questionable methodology, but also were based on field research gleaned during what was later established to be a realignment. The counterculture was arguably hegemonic in the lives of American youth and more importantly, Tedin's temporally constant observations failed to control for age. Simply because a child holds certain views as a newly voting 18 year old does not imply those attitudes will be held further in life. Of particular consequence is that the child may yet grow up to answer those survey questions in the same fashion as their parents did. This problem can be controlled for via the Youth-Parent Socialization Panel Study. By using *changes* in partisanship as a dependent variable, rather than simply a single temporally constant conception of youth partisanship, the intergenerational partisan transmission process during this realignment period can be better understood.

Miller (1992), in "Generational Changes and Party Identification," explores the relationship between the younger and older generations throughout the "turbulent" events of the early 1960s through to the mid-1980s. He divides the population into pre- and post-New Deal generations. This convenient demarcation point is underwritten by Petrocik's (1983) consideration of the "New Deal coalitions." Miller points to a continuing realignment within the younger generation. The Democratic dominance of the South was eroding and further cleavages along demographic lines were becoming measurably altered from the traditional coalitions

established under FDR. Once again, the drawback of Miller's research is that generational shifts are examined independently of family influences. Partisan parents would see their children defect to the opposing party over this turbulent period only 10% of the time (Beck & Hershey 2001). The influences of an adolescent's family play a role in determining the future partisanship of that adult offspring, as well as the "turbulence" of a realignment. To further understand the realignment of this period, I will consider these matters.

It has been established by works cited above that a new generation achieves its partisan coalitions through a myriad of sources. Elite cues and parental attitudes play a major role in determining partisanship.   Lucy originally registered as a Democrat. Her parents' shaped that social identity in her and it successfully manifested itself as the addition of another Democratic voter in Kentucky. However, Lucy was susceptible to other influences. While her ideology remains nearly identical to that of her gun-toting parents, her partisanship was challenged by elite cuing and issue framing. Following the events of September 11, 2001, Lucy would listen to newscasts on a more frequent basis. The Republican Party spokespeople would discuss keeping America safe through strong military actions and aggressive law enforcement campaigns. Democrats would struggle, in her eyes, to reflect her belief in a more "hawkish" foreign policy. Other concerns with the party of her initial registration would emerge. Democrats aggressively calling for a separation of church and state seemed to offend her view of America as a Judeo-Christian-based state. These and other concerns would eventually lead to Lucy's conversion to the Republican fold. Her parents, however, remain just as conservative, yet staunch Democrats to this day. Lucy's social identities were changing in salience. Elite activity brought several of her social identities into the realm of higher political salience. Some elites associated with the Democratic Party offered discourse which was in sharp contrast to her identity as an active

church participant. The Democratic agenda also highlighted her views toward gender, as Lucy appreciates the traditional gender roles of a strong rugged male with a loyal, beautiful wife as opposed to the "androgyny" she saw in the Democratic Party. She would also begin to see the Democratic Party as in opposition to her values as a Southerner, beginning to make the region demographic salient. Of course, all of these different social identities which were being made more relevant interacted with each other, harkening back to the complicated web seen in Figure 3. Despite all of this, her parents spent 18 years conditioning her to see the Democratic Party as "her" party. Her Democratic affiliation did not last long under all of that pressure, however. As elites made her various social identities more salient, she weighed these influences, alongside the influences of her parents and made a decision to join the GOP. Recalling Figure 2, her choice was a result of her ability to justify then-currently held beliefs as a result of her salient social identities.

Andersen (1988) explores the basis of social identity as the justification for attitudes and behaviours. She executes field work concerning women involved with the "pro-family" movement, including opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment and homosexual rights. She found that individuals were using their social identity (specifically religious views) to justify their political attitudes. It stands to reason that if one social identity is used to justify views, then other social identities would perform similar functions. This is supported by Sidanius and Pratto's work, *Social Dominance* (1999). The authors use the term "legitimizing myths" to describe "attitudes, values, beliefs, stereotypes, and ideologies that provide moral and intellectual justification for the social practices that distribute social value within the social system." Individuals use their social identities as justifications to explain their existing beliefs, much like

the Christian women of Andersen's study used their religious identities to explain their socially conservative attitudes.

Lucy would originally use her Southern heritage identity to explain her affiliation with the Democratic Party. However, in Lucy's case, other social identities becoming salient made it difficult for her to continue her justification of support for the Democratic Party. Her social identity as a practicing evangelical Christian however, was made salient by elite discourse concerning the role of religion in society. Elites associated with the Democrats would appear hostile, in her mind, to this very deeply held identity. Elites associated with the GOP, would communicate in a fashion that appealed to Lucy more so, contributing to her increasingly difficultly in explaining her support for the Democratic Party. Her identity as a Democrat was also challenged by other young members of the Democratic Party whom she associated with while attending university. She saw and described them as "whiny liberals," activating her identity as a conservative and further challenging her identity as a Democrat, as she does not consider herself a liberal, and certainly not whiny. Eventually a threshold was reached within Lucy and she converted to the Republican fold. This marked the first of several generations of proud Southern Democrats to defect to the party of Lincoln. Enough social identities became salient to a high enough degree by the actions of elites to prompt Lucy to change her partisanship. She was no longer able to adequately explain her support for the Democratic Party.

By exploring intergenerational political-attitude trends throughout this realignment period, I hope to shed further light on the continuing evolution of American political parties. I will begin the examination by a description of the data and the recoding necessary to effectively research this phenomenon.

The Jennings and Niemi Youth-Parent Socialization Panel Study forms the basis for the quantitative exploration into these issues. For the first wave, in 1965, the researchers identified 1063 parent-child dyads to interview. Due to attrition over the lifespan of this experiment, only 695 cases are available to be used in this research. I am concerned with the changes in partisanship between the two generations. The dependent variables used will be the actual partisan change of the parent between 1965 and 1982, the partisan change of the child between 1965 and 1982, as well as a comparison between these two results. The variables representing change are categorized into "stay Democrat," "swing Democrat," "neutral," "swing Republican," and "stay Republican." Swinging does not necessarily imply a full partisan conversion, but simply a shift in the said direction, possibly involving Independents. For example, a person changing their partisan identity from Democratic to Independent is classified as "swing Republican." An individual changing from Independent to Republican is also classified as "swing Republican." The distribution of these categories for parents and children is illustrated in Tables 1 and 2, respectively. Only white subjects are examined due to lack of variance among non-white individuals participating in this survey.

Table 1: Changes in Parent PID between 1965 and 1982.

Parent ΔPID	Percentage
Stay Democrat	42
Swing Democrat	7
Neutral	8
Swing Republican	12
Stay Republican	31
TOTAL	100
Number	695

There were only 60 non-white parent-child dyads in this study, so the number was not sufficient for adequate consideration. Both generations see a net swing toward the Republican

Party. This swing is more pronounced in the younger, more malleable generation, but is certainly also seen within the ranks of the parental cohort. Table 3 highlights the members of both generations who have swung in either direction.

Table 2: Changes in Child PID between 1965 and 1982.

Child ΔPID	Percentage
Stay Democrat	31
Swing Democrat	15
Neutral	7
Swing Republican	26
Stay Republican	21
TOTAL	100
Number	695

The difference in the younger generation is nearly twice that of their parents' generation. This supports the above lemma which states that in order to achieve a successful realignment, its effects must be visible over multiple generations.

Table 3: Summary of PID shifts in both generations.

ΔPID	Parent %	Child %
Swing Democrat	7	15
Swing Republican	12	26
NET-DEFECTION RATE	Republican +5	Republican +11
TOTAL SWING	19	41

Table 3 shows that the trends which began with the parent cohort are further exacerbated in the younger cohort. The younger generation was more susceptible to partisan shifting, as indicated by "TOTAL SWING" in Table 3. These results bolster the theory that social identities are the defining factors of realignment, as advanced by Petrocik. There would likely be continuity in social identities over generations (e.g.: religiosity, religion, cultural norms, etc.). These results

provide a warrant for exploring these social identities and values, and the ways they interacted with the changing partisanships of both generations.

The question remains as to whether the younger generation had these social identities activated and whether they in fact worked to overcome the partisan identity transmitted via their parents. The following results will show that various social identities made salient during the time of the realignment were activated in both generations, but had a greater impact on the partisan changes of the more susceptible youth. As the parents had decades to reinforce their partisan identities, the children had relatively little time to solidify those partisan persuasions. As shown in Figure 2, my theory claims that various social identities present in the individual were made salient by elite activity. I claim that this impacted the individual's ability to explain (or justify) his or her partisan identity. Having established a warrant for this examination, I now turn to several social identities that have intergenerational connections. By intergenerational connections, I am referring to social identities that the parents likely had *some* impact on shaping within the youth. This is a critical clarification because it highlights the linkages between the two generations. I will first explore how religiosity impacted both generations during the realignment period.

Religious observance forms a social identity that is often established at a very early age. Baptism into a particular denomination and subsequent religious participation may begin within the first years of an individual's life. In the Lucy example, she became a practicing Christian long before she would identify with a political party. She cites her devout religious observance as a factor impacting her partisan shift. Extrapolating this onto the general population via the Jennings-Niemi socialization panel study, I will show that Lucy is one data point of many who were in her situation. The proxy variable for religiosity is the frequency of religious service

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attendance in 1982. Those who attend either every week or almost every week are classified as "frequent attendees," while those who attend less often are classified as "infrequent attendees."

Table 4: Church attendance affecting PID shifting in youth.

Child ∆PID	Infrequent Attendees (%)	Frequent Attendees (%)
Stay Democrat	33	29
Swing Democrat	17	12
Neutral	8	5
Swing Republican	24	29
Stay Republican	18	25
TOTAL	100	100

There are 50% of parents classified as regular church goers, while 35% of the youth are classified as regular religious service attendees. Table 4 shows that among frequent church goers there is a substantially stronger break toward the Republican Party. Of regular attendees, 29% shift toward the GOP, while only 12% move in Democratic direction, an approximately 17 point advantage for the Republican Party. When observing infrequent religious observers, there is a 24% swing to the Republicans and a 17% swing toward the Democratic Party, a 7 point advantage for the Republicans. It appears that frequency of church attendance played a role in determining changes in partisanship within the younger generation, as there is a (17-7) 10 point difference between gains of each category of the religiosity variable. For this to support my theory shown in Figure 2, there would be less of a distinction within the older generation, but a relationship may still exist. Table 5 shows the same data as Table 4, with the exception that it is for the older generation. Of regular attendees, 11% shift toward the GOP, while only 6% move in Democratic direction; an approximately 5 point advantage for the Republican Party. When observing infrequent religious observers, there is a 13% swing to the Republicans and an 8% swing toward the Democratic Party; a 5 point advantage for the Republicans.

Table 5: Church attendance affecting PID shifting in parents.

Parent ΔPID	Infrequent Attendees (%)	Frequent Attendees (%)
Stay Democrat	42	41
Swing Democrat	8	6
Neutral	7	9
Swing Republican	13	11
Stay Republican	29	33
TOTAL	100	100

With an only (5-5) 0 point difference between categories of the religiosity variable, I infer that there is essentially no difference in partisan change in the parents caused by religiosity. Table 4 allowed me to conclude that there was a measurable crosscutting effect caused by the child's religiosity due to the 10 point difference in gains for the GOP. This is not true amongst the older generation. Therefore, I conclude that the social identity associated with religiosity was made salient enough during the period in question to contribute to the partisan realignment. The younger generation was more malleable to the ongoing societal effects which led to this partisan stratification of this social identity. Religiosity is just one of many social identities that were activated within the younger generation.

Religion itself provides another unique, but related, social identity. Andersen (1988) specifically examined religion as a mechanism for individuals to justify other beliefs. In her case, it was socially conservative attitudes toward gender, but my research is extrapolating this finding to apply to other beliefs, such as partisanship. Religion will be broken into a binary variable representing Catholics and Protestants. Other religions, as well as the non-religious will be omitted from the analysis as their numbers are minimal. The Protestant category combines nearly all survey responses that could be classified as Protestant, with the exception of non-mainstream denominations such as Mormonism, Quakerism, etc. The numerical breakdown of

the Religion variable is shown in Table 6. Note the loss of 77 Christians in the younger

generation. These individuals largely moved to the non-religious category.

Table 6: Religious affiliations of Parents and Children in 1982.

Religion	Parent %	Child %
Catholic	24	22
Protestant	76	78
TOTAL	100	100
Total Number	670	593

Now I will show the interaction of these religions with partisan change of both generations.

Table 7: Interaction of religion with partisan change of child in 1982.

Child ΔPID	Catholic (%)	Protestant (%)
Stay Democrat	45	25
Swing Democrat	10	16
Neutral	7	6
Swing Republican	25	27
Stay Republican	13	26
TOTAL	100	100

Table 7 shows that Protestant youth had a net-defection rate of 11% (27-16) toward the

Republican Party. Catholic youth had a net-defection rate of 15% (25-10) toward the GOP.

Both of these figures are either at or above the overall net-defection rate of the youth shown in

Table 3 to be 11%. This allows for the conclusion that an overall Christian identity in the youth

was favourable to the Republicans, and the particular "style" (both Vatican and Reformation

based varieties) of Christianity makes minimal difference. Table 8 shows Protestant parents

having a net-defection rate of 7% (13-6) toward the GOP while Catholic parents had a 3% (11-8)

net defection rate toward the GOP. Recall from Table 3 that the overall net-defection rate of the

older generation was 5%. Because Protestant parents swung toward the GOP at a higher rate,

and Catholic parents swung toward the GOP at a lower rate (than the generational average), I

conclude that religious identity (Catholic/Protestant) crosscut the older generation. While the

younger generation sees all Christian sects contributing to the overall Republican shift of the

period, the elder cohort still sees fissures along traditional Catholic-Protestant lines. The

younger generation saw an increase in the nonreligious, who contributed to the retardation of

Republican gains.

Table 8: Interaction of religion with partisan change of parents in 1982.

Parent ∆PID	Catholic (%)	Protestant (%)
Stay Democrat	50	40
Swing Democrat	8	6
Neutral	8	7
Swing Republican	11	13
Stay Republican	23	35
TOTAL	100	100

These results are indicative of the elite political dialogue of the period. The older

generation of Catholics was responding to the elite discourse concerning social welfare programs

and realigned accordingly. The older generation of Protestants was responding to Republican-

associated discourse surrounding individual responsibility and freedom, hallmark traits of the

Protestant work ethic. These are values fostered by the corresponding religion that had been

entrenched in the more rigid older generation. The parents absorbed the elite discourse that

matched their well-established religious values. The younger generation however, did not have

an as-solidly engrained religious based identity, or at least, it was more malleable. Because of

this, the younger generation's Christians as a whole began to view much of the discourse coming

from the Democratic elites as antithetical to any sort of Christian beliefs. The advent of abortion

issues, "free love," homosexuality and other morally charged issues being thrust to the forefront

of the political conversation caused a pronounced exodus of younger Catholics towards the GOP, as well as younger Protestants. In terms of my theory, the religious social identity was activated in both generations, but at different levels. In the older cohort, the realignment centred on the Protestant-Catholic schism, while the younger group saw a religious realignment focused on the Christian-non-Christian division. These identities are technically different, but they are related to such a high degree, and the youth net-defection rates towards the GOP are also relatively high. Therefore, I conclude that an overall "Christian" identity was made salient enough during the period in question to contribute to partisan realignment in the direction of the Republican Party. Religious identity would have undoubtedly interacted to some degree (Figure 3) with gender identity, which I will now explore.

The concept of gender identity forms another demarcation of partisan stratification over this realignment period. The notion of gender identity is often established at a very early age and no doubt influenced substantially by the child's family. Males were socialized and reared in a particular fashion, usually different from how a female was brought up. Table 9 shows the variations in partisan defection rates in the younger generation. Males of the younger generation have a net-defection rate of 15% (31-16) toward the GOP; while female have a net-defection rate of only 6% (21-15), a difference of 9%. This shows that the male identity contributed to the realignment toward the Republican Party. The political conversation during this realigning era saw a great deal of gender oriented issues being discussed, sometimes quite publicly and vocally. The feminist movement likely played a substantial role in raising the salience of gender identity among the public. These results show that the movement in fact crosscut America's sexes, at least in the younger cohort. The younger males absorbed the rise of the salience of gender

identity as a motivating factor for movement towards the Republican Party, while the female

movement away from the Democratic Party was substantially retarded by the salience of gender.

Table 9: Interaction of sex with partisan change of youth in 1982.

Child ∆PID	Female (%)	Male (%)
Stay Democrat	36	28
Swing Democrat	15	16
Neutral	7	7
Swing Republican	21	31
Stay Republican	22	19
TOTAL	100	100

Table 10: Interaction of sex with partisan change of parents in 1982.

Parent ∆PID	Female (%)	Male (%)
Stay Democrat	41	44
Swing Democrat	7	6
Neutral	9	5
Swing Republican	12	13
Stay Republican	31	32
TOTAL	100	100

Table 10, however, shows a different result when observing the older age bracket. The parental

generation saw a net-defection rate among males of 7% (13-6) toward the GOP. The net-

defection rate among females was 5% (12-7) toward the Republican Party. This gap is dwarfed

by the relatively large difference of 9% between sexes in the younger generation. It seemed that

men were uncomfortable with the elite cues concerning gender coming from those associated

with the Democratic Party.

These results suggest that gender was a social identity that was activated to a high enough

degree among the youth to prompt identity stratification around it. However, the salience of this

identity did not become strong enough to prompt partisan re-evaluation among the more rigidly

partisan parents. Placing these results in the context of the theory illustrated in Figure 2, the male identity caused Democratic partisanship and sympathies to be less justifiable, resulting in a strong shift towards the GOP within this social group. This shift was only possible due to the relative malleability of the young cohort's partisanship, as the results show that the parental generation saw essentially no effect from this same discourse. Males were likely alienated by Democratic-associated elite discourse concerning feminist ideals, which may well have been construed occasionally as "anti-man," or at least a neglect of "male" issues. This can be exemplified by the attitudes of many elites towards the traditionally male occupation of the soldier. The protests of America's fighting men returning from the Vietnam War and being called "baby killers" by many on the left, likely contributed to male shifts away from the Democratic Party. This would be largely demarcated by region, as many of these protests would occur in the north and west coast, while the south saw much less activity on the matter.

The next social identity that I will explore is that of region. America has experienced regional cleavages since prior to the Revolutionary War. Following independence, the country saw Federalists dominate the north, while Republicans would win in the South. The period revolving around the War Between the States saw a Democratic hegemony in the South (with the exception of Reconstruction) and a Republican North. This section will explore how the two generations reacted to the mobilization of regional identity in the north and south. The other regions are omitted due to less firmly entrenched partisanships within the populace. I divided the variables to represent an intuitive definition of the north, based on both geographic region and status during the War Between the States. The South includes respondents from Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Oklahoma and Virginia. The north includes Connecticut, Maine,

Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania and Vermont.

During the realignment period, many matters became salient that raised the awareness of regional identity. Civil rights concerns highlighted many of the issues of the South's past. Federal actions in the South over racial integration, voting laws and decentralization of power caused the southern identity to be heightened in its salience level within southerners.

Table 11: Interaction of region with partisan change of youth in 1982.

Child ΔPID	North (%)	South (%)
Stay Democrat	33	30
Swing Democrat	13	16
Neutral	8	5
Swing Republican	25	29
Stay Republican	21	21
TOTAL	100	100

Table 11 shows the results of this comparison for the younger age group. The net defection rate in the South is 13% (29-16), while in the North it is 12% (25-13). It appears that regional identity had no effect on partisan change.

Table 12: Interaction of region with partisan change of parents in 1982.

Parent ΔPID	North (%)	South (%)
Stay Democrat	34	24
Swing Democrat	18	24
Neutral	0	19
Swing Republican	24	29
Stay Republican	24	5
TOTAL	100	100

Table 12 shows similar results for parents. The south saw a net-defection rate of 5% (29-24) towards the Republicans, while the north saw a 6% (24-18) net-defection rate in the same direction. Again, this is essentially even. These results suggest that regional identity was not made salient enough to evoke partisan realignment. While Republicans saw net gains in both generations and in both regions, the differences between regions were negligible. This runs counter to the assumption that the events of the period prompted more southerners to move toward the Republican Party while northerners left the GOP as it engaged in the so-called "southern strategy." It would follow from the logic of this paper that the youth cohort would be more affected by this than the older generation. The youth in the south do in fact show a 13% net-defection rate toward the Republican Party, 2% more than the average of 11% for their cohort (Table 3). The surprising result is the high 12% net-defection rate toward the GOP in northern youth. These findings suggest that elites associated with the Republican Party were successful in limiting the heightened salience of the north-south regional identity divide within the north. Logically, this is where the southern strategy would likely have had detrimental effects on the GOP. I will leave it to future researchers to examine how Republican-associated elites were able to limit attrition to their party in the north during this period, but based on casual observations of later decades, it appears that regional identity would quickly become salient to a high enough degree among many voters in the north and south. Lucy and her family would be a prime example of this, but these events took place in the 21st century, decades after regional identity started to become salient. A single anecdote certainly does not prove a rule, but the continuing stratification of the parties around regional poles is plainly visible. Republicans in the northeast have steadily vanished, as have many Democrats in the south, at least on the

national level. This attrition seems to be highly correlated with ideology, the next social identity to be examined.

Ideological matters were also appearing more salient during this realignment period. The elections of the 1950s were fought by moderates. The Democratic coalition consisted of southern conservative-minded individuals, and northern liberals, but generally inclusive of a wide range of ideological outlooks. The Republican Party was similarly composed of a relatively heterogeneous coalition. The identities of liberals and conservatives were becoming salient during this time. Presidential candidates such as Barry Goldwater and George McGovern addressed the issues in an explicitly ideological fashion. Whether or not they intended it, their actions contributed to a mobilization of ideological identities within the mass public. Liberals saw this identity as becoming more important while Goldwater tried to activate conservative identifiers. In this case, the war (and other ideologically-relevant issues) really did help determine who was "right." Conservative identities within Americans were mobilized by the overt liberalism witnessed during the counterculture era. These two increasingly salient identities would build off of each other, and compound the ideological identities' saliencies.

In order to gauge the changes in partisanship based on ideology, I use the respondents' 1982 responses to the ideological self-identification question. The seven-point scale was dichotomized between liberal and conservative. Table 13 shows a decisive shift toward the GOP among conservative youth of 32% (39-7). Liberal youth have undertaken a smaller 17% (28-11) shift toward the Democratic Party. This suggests that the Republican Party was the major beneficiary to ideological identity mobilization among the younger generation. While liberals were already generally (50%) Democratic compared to conservatives already identifying and

Republican (34%), the Republican Party absorbed a noticeably greater amount of defectors. This

ideological social identity became quite salient during the period and thus had strong results

Table 13: Interaction of ideology with partisan change of youth in 1982.

Child ∆PID	Liberal (%)	Conservative (%)
Stay Democrat	50	17
Swing Democrat	28	7
Neutral	5	3
Swing Republican	11	39
Stay Republican	7	34
TOTAL	100	100

Table 14 shows the interaction between ideology and changing parents in the elder

generation. Among conservative parents there is a 10% (16-6) net-defection rate toward the

GOP, and a 5% net-defection rate toward the Democratic Party among liberals. This is a

comparable ratio to the equivalent relationship in the younger cohort, but the smaller magnitude

shows that the parents were less influenced by the political discourse of the period, consistent

with the theory of this paper.

Table 14: Interaction of ideology with partisan change of parent in 1982.

Parent ∆PID	Liberal (%)	Conservative (%)
Stay Democrat	70	24
Swing Democrat	10	6
Neutral	7	5
Swing Republican	5	16
Stay Republican	8	50
TOTAL	100	100

Both generations were crosscut by the liberal-conservative ideological identity.

Conservative youth were thrust into the Republican Party while liberal youth migrated toward

the Democrats. The ideological identities of the youth were raised to a high enough salience

level to help prompt a re-evaluation of party loyalties in many of the youth, with particular

advantage to the Republican Party. These results suggest that it was the events of this

realignment that fostered an ideological schism between the parties that is still evident today.

The partisan realignment of the 1960s through 1980s saw substantial demographic

movement between parties. Petrocik's 1983 definition of realignment states one is occurring

when, "the measurable party bias of identifiable segments of the population changes in such a

way that the social group profile of the parties-the party coalitions-is altered." The above results

illustrate that this was indeed occurring. By examining several different social identities held by

Americans, I showed these identities were influencing their changing partisan affiliations. The

results are summarized in Table 15. Table 15 shows that during the realignment period these

social identities had a substantial impact on the partisan behaviour of the younger generation, but

minimally impacted on the elder cohort.

Table 15: Summary of social identity effects by generation.

	Overall shifts	
Social Identity Category	**Parent**	**Child**
Religiosity	Nil effect	Frequent attendees move sharply Rep.
Religion	Catholic (Dem.)/Protestant (Rep.) divisions still evident	Christians become more homogenous, Rep.
Sex	Nil effect	Males move sharply Rep.
Ideology	Conservatives move more Rep. than liberals move Dem.	Cons move more Rep. than liberals move Dem. (greater magnitude)
Region	Nil effect	Nil effect

This research examines two age brackets over the same period and has found that each cohort

has absorbed the societal cues and discourse differently. The Republican Party had a net gain in

each generation (Table 3), but saw particular gains from frequent church attendees, Christians,

males, and ideologically conservative Americans. Each of these social identifications overtook the previously held partisan identification in saliency level and prompted a change in the social group profile of the parties. Regional identities did not become salient enough during the timeframe examined. At the same time, the older generation was not as vulnerable to the raised saliencies of these social identities. Their partisan identities had been deeply enough entrenched to act as a buffer against changing saliencies of social identities.

These results allow me to suggest several conclusions about *this* realignment period. The counterculture of the era alienated more people than it gained. By raising the salience of these deeply held social identities the counterculture crowd alienated many Americans from the Democratic Party. It became difficult for practicing Christians, males, and conservative Americans to continue to justify their Democratic affiliations, and thus defected in substantially higher numbers than the overall population.

A broader conclusion to be gleaned from these results is that simply because the youth may accept transmission of parental partisanship *as youth*, this in no way implies that the child's partisanship is not susceptible to societal forces. Once the child gets older, leaves home, and is exposed to a wide array of societal influences, social identities in that child may be activated, and may very well influence partisanship. It is not that the youth is necessarily "changing attitudes," but that social identities established in their developmental years are being activated and mobilized by these societal messages. In this context, more continuity is seen between generations. How this continuity is obstructed from view is by the dynamic nature of social identities. The salience may rise or fall, impacting how these social identifiers are able to explain their partisan affiliations. This indicates more relevance for parental influences than some scholars may suggest. It is the parents who primarily establish these social identities in the

youth, but it is societal discourse that determines the salience of these identities when the youth is older. This, in turn, shapes partisanship in the younger generation.

This paper allows future researchers to more fully understand the dynamics of a realignment. Petrocik (1983) showed how social groups changed to contribute to the realignment. I have explored why this occurred, while adding a generational element. I have found that it is not simply a matter of explaining partisan changes in social cleavages, but in fact an issue of understanding the realignment process as changes in the saliencies and relevancies of these social identities.

Just a few short years prior, Lucy was a registered Democrat, firmly allied with her ancestors who fought for President Jefferson Davis' America. Now she is an active Republican, participating in county party events and voting straight-ticket. In fact, her attitudes would differ little, if at all, with the current Republican Party platform. With the exception of her partisanship, her own social identities changed minimally, a direct result of her western Kentucky upbringing. The identities her parents passed on to her remained incredibly intact. It was the greater societal political conversation that activated these identities in her. No longer was she able to justify her identity as a Democrat. She did not deviate from the values instilled in her by her parents. What the Democratic Party represented, in her eyes, deviated from her original identity as a Democrat.

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