The Deep Structure of Ideological Partisanship in the United States

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Institute for Social Research University of Michigan USA Over the last 50 years, the U.S. political system has changed from a largely non-ideological political system to a polarized and increasing rigid ideological system.

- We have a series of cross-sectional data sets that examine this transformation and demonstrate that there has been a significant growth of attitude constraint along with the polarization of the political system.
- The second portion of the analysis will use data from the current World Values Survey to examine whether the growth of ideological politics is rooted in personal social and religious values.

American political parties in the 20th century have always had some ideological basis:

- The Democratic Party has been supportive of the labor movement and small farmers.
- The Republican Party has been supportive of business interests and the owners of larger farms.
- But the long shadow of slavery and the Civil War created pressures that made the New Deal coalition unstable over the second half of the 20th century.

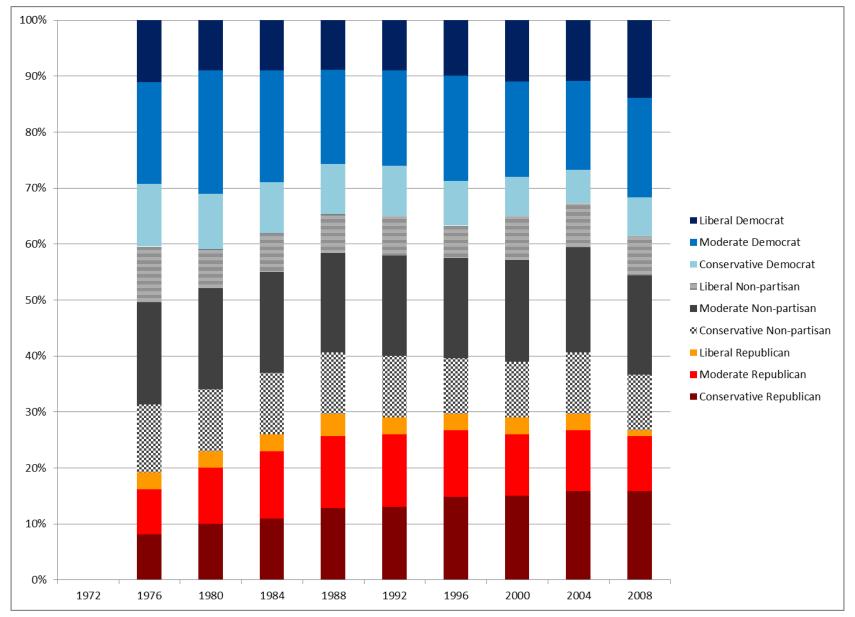
The current ideological re-alignment of American political parties is the result of:

- Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka and the mandate to de-segregate public education in the United States.
- The Civil Rights Movement and the full embrace of racial equality by the Democratic Party.
- The growth and politicization of a largely Protestant fundamentalist religious movement.
- The Roe v. Wade decision and the development and politicization of an anti-abortion movement.
- Resistance to the speed and content of cultural changes in the United States during the second half of the 20th century.

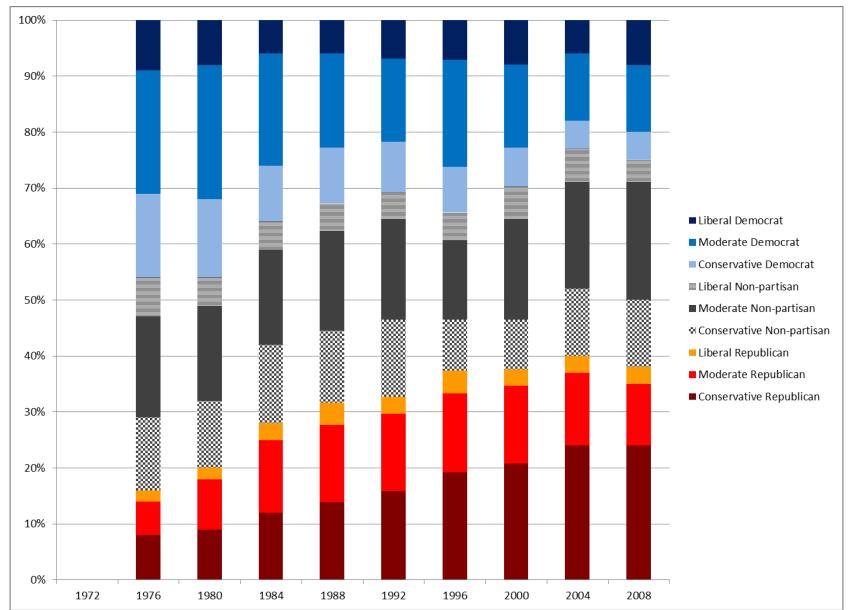
Growth of Ideological Partisanship in the U.S., 1976-2008 (CBS/NYT)

	1976	1980	1984	1988	1992	1996	2000	2004	2008	∆ 76-08
Conservative Republican	9	10	11	13	13	15	15	16	16	+7
Moderate Republican	8	10	12	13	13	12	11	11	10	+2
Liberal Republican	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	1	-2
Republican subtotal	19	23	26	29	28	29	29	30	27	+8
Conservative Nonpartisan	12	11	11	11	11	10	10	11	10	-2
Moderate Nonpartisan	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	19	18	0
Liberal Nonpartisan	10	7	7	7	7	6	8	8	7	-3
Nonpartisan subtotal	41	36	37	35	36	34	36	38	35	-6
Conservative Democrat	11	10	9	9	9	8	7	6	7	-4
Moderate Democrat	18	22	20	17	17	19	17	16	18	0
Liberal Democrat	11	9	9	9	9	10	11	11	14	+3
Democrat subtotal	40	41	37	36	35	36	35	33	38	-2
N (CBS/NYT data)	9,553	14,091	12,186	12,848	16,203	8,768	9,096	8,765	7,859	
Cell entries are the percenta	ge of adu	lts age 18	and olde	er in each	partisan	group in	each yea	r.		

Note: Subtotals may not round to exact number due to rounding.



Change in Ideological Partisanship, All adults, 1976-2008.



Change in Ideological Partisanship, White South, 1976-2008.

Does this growth in ideological partisanship reflect an increase in attitude constraint among adult partisans?

- In the political world of the early 1960's, Converse was undoubtedly correct in concluding that most voters had limited attitudinal constraint. As Burns observed, it was a four-party system.
- The movement of white southern Democrats into the Republican Party was led by leaders like Strom Thurmond and others who sent strong signals about the need to switch parties.
- If there has been a significant growth in attitude constraint in recent decades, we should be able to see it in data from 2004 and 2008.

One part of this problem is that our measures of attitude constraint have been inadequate and we need to develop an improved measure of attitude constraint.

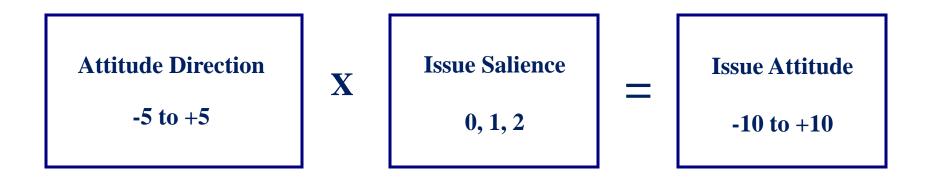
- The measurement of ideology requires separate measures of the *salience* of each major issue and a measure of the *direction* of the individual's views on each issue.
- To capture salience, each respondent is asked whether each of several issues are very important, important, somewhat important, or not at all important in their decision about voting for President.
- To capture attitude direction and strength, each respondent is asked agree or disagree with a series of policy statements using a zero-to-10 scale, which converts into a -5 to +5 scale.

Thinking about this year's election for president, please look at the list of issues below and, for each one, indicate how much, if any, that issue influenced your decision about who to vote for this year.

[Respondent could check one of the following four choices: Very important factor, Important factor, Minor factor, Not a factor]

- 1. the condition of the economy
- 2. the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan
- 3. the cost of health care, including prescription drugs
- 4. the war on terrorism
- 5. the candidates' views on gay marriage
- 6. the candidates' views on gun control
- 7. the candidates' views on abortion
- 8. the candidates' personal military service record
- 9. the candidates' views on environmental issues
- 10. the candidates' views on education issues
- 11. the candidates' views on illegal immigration and illegal immigrants
- 12. the candidates' views on stem cell research
- 13. the candidates' views on Social Security
- 14. the candidates' views on taxes and tax cuts
- 15. the candidates' views on health insurance and health care
- 16. the candidates' views on exporting jobs
- 17. the candidates' moral and religious values and beliefs
- 18. the ability of the candidates to be commander-in-chief
- **19.** the ability of the candidates to provide national leadership

Please read each of the sentences below and indicate to what extent you agree or disagree statement, using a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means you completely disagree, and 10 me completely agree. You may, of course, choose any number from 0 to 10.	
	0-10
If the present rate of fossil fuel use continues, serious long-term environmental damage will occur.	
Marriage is between a man and a woman and we should amend the Constitution to protect marriage.	
The current federal education law – No Child Left Behind – is not working well and needs to be revised substantially.	
The current economic policies of the Bush Administration are pushing the United States into a serious recession.	
It is important to withdraw most American troops from Iraq within the next year.	
The federal government should fund stem cell research on the same basis as other biomedical research.	
The tax cuts under the Bush Administration were unfair because too much of the money went to the very rich.	
The federal government should ban private ownership of automatic guns and assault weapons.	
It was a mistake to start the war in Iraq.	
The next president should appoint Supreme Court justices who will protect life and reverse the Roe Versus Wade decision giving women the right to an abortion.	
Federal law should mandate more fuel-efficient mileage standards for cars and trucks in the United States.	



	20	004	20	08		
	Policy	Moral	Policy	Moral		
War issues	.84		.77			
Economic issues	.82		.92			
Health insurance issues	.72		.84			
Tax issues	.75		.75			
Education issues	.71		.43			
Stem cell issues	.49		.43			
Environmental issues	.34		.81			
Gun control issues	.38		.49			
Same sex marriage issues		.88		.83		
Abortion issues		.58		.28		
Religious fundamentalism		.57		.51		
Factor correlation	'	67		16		

Factor loadings for selected issues, US adults, 2004, 2008.

of Approximation (KMSEA) .044;

Upper 90% confidence interval for RMSEA = .051; N (2004) = 1,014; N (2008) = 942.

Issue attitudes by 7-group ideological partisanship classification, 2004.

Mean attitude scores on	Liberal Democrat	Moderate Democrat	Liberal Independent	Independent	Conservative Independent	Moderate Republican	Conservative Republican
War issues	7.5 _(.32)	4.9 _(.25)	5.0 _(.70)	1.3 _(.33)	-2.1 _(.63)	-3.1 _(.45)	-4.6 (.25)
Economic issues	7.0 _(.31)	5.6 _(.25)	3.6 (.66)	1.7 _(.30)	- 0.8 _(.51)	-2.3 _(.38)	-3.3 _(.22)
Health insurance issues	6.3 (.35)	5.2 _(.26)	3.3 _(.56)	2.1 _(.27)	0.5 _(.45)	-1.7 _(.38)	-2.4 _(.20)
Tax issues	5.9 _(.36)	5.0 _(.25)	3.7 _(.51)	2.1 _(.31)	-2.1 _(.53)	-0.9 _(.39)	-4.1 _(.28)
Education issues	4.7 _(.35)	2.8 _(.26)	1.6 (.46)	0.3(.22)	-1.1 _(.39)	-2.8 _(.37)	-3.6 _(.23)
Stem cell issues	4.3 (.39)	2.0 _(.23)	3.2 _(.72)	1.2(.28)	-0.3 _(.40)	-0.2 _(.42)	-2.2 _(.28)
Environmental issues	4.0 _(.33)	2.1 _(.17)	4.0 _(.47)	2.1 _(.18)	1.1 _(.23)	1.4 _(.22)	0.8(.12)
Gun control issues	3.0 _(.42)	0.9(.22)	2.1 _(.55)	0.4(.28)	-1.3 _(.54)	0.0 _(.48)	-2.1 _(.31)
Policy issues (summary)	5.5 _(.21)	3.8 _(.15)	3.5 _(.40)	1.4 _(.19)	-0.8 _(.33)	-1.4 _(.22)	-2.8 _(.13)
Same sex marriage issues	-1.4 _(.40)	0.4 _(.23)	-1.0 _(.81)	1.4(.27)	3.7 _(.49)	4.3 _(.45)	5.5 _(.29)
Abortion issues	-3.5 _(.44)	- 0.4 _(.25)	-3.1 _(.66)	-1.1 _(.26)	1.0 _(.41)	1.5 _(.48)	3.2(.34)
Religious fundamentalism	0.1 _(.38)	0.4 _(.29)	0.4(.30)	0.7 _(.19)	1.0 _(.58)	2.0 _(.47)	4.2(.32)
Morality issues (summary)	-2.8 _(.34)	-0.9 _(.18)	-2.6 _(.57)	-0.5 _(.22)	1.5 _(.45)	2.1 _(.39)	3.9 _(.27)
N =	129	315	62	184	78	117	253

Issue attitudes by 7-group ideological partisanship classification, 2008.

Mean attitude scores on	Liberal Democrat	Moderate Democrat	Liberal Independent	Independent	Conservative Independent	Moderate Republican	Conservative Republican
War issues	5.2 _(.48)	5.0 _(.29)	4.3 _(.62)	2.5 _(.25)	-1.1 _(.55)	0.1 _(.50)	-3.4 _(.39)
Economic issues	6.2 _(.48)	6.3 (.28)	4.6 (.62)	3.3 _(.28)	1.0 (.54)	2.0 _(.46)	- 0.8 _(.36)
Health insurance issues	5.9 _(.53)	6.5 _(.30)	4.8 _(.75)	3.8 _(.29)	1.3(.47)	2.1 _(.52)	-1.3 _(.42)
Tax issues	4.2 _(.51)	4.7 _(.30)	2.7 _(.59)	2.2 _(.27)	- 0.0 _(.57)	0.8 _(.54)	-3.2 _(.39)
Education issues	4.4 _(.54)	3.0 _(.32)	2.5 _(.55)	2.5 _(.24)	1.6 _(.38)	2.1 _(.41)	1.1 _(.29)
Stem cell issues	3.9 _(.49)	1.5 _(.28)	1.5(.42)	1.4 _(.23)	0.0(.44)	0.4 _(.39)	-1.4 _(.33)
Environmental issues	4.7 _(.47)	3.6 _(.24)	3.8 _(.58)	2.4 _(.20)	2.2 _(.39)	1.7 _(.29)	0.2 _(.26)
Gun control issues	2.6 _(.53)	1.2(.28)	1.0 (.66)	0.3 _(.23)	-1.6 _(.44)	-0.5 _(.44)	-2.3 _(.42)
Policy issues (summary)	4.6 _(.32)	4.2 _(.18)	3.3 _(.32)	2.3 _(.17)	0.5(.33)	1.1(.27)	-1.6 (.22)
Same sex marriage issues	-2.5 _(.54)	1.0 _(.27)	-1.4 _(.61)	1.1(.20)	2.7 _(.45)	0.5 _(.32)	4.1 _(.36)
Abortion issues	-2.2 _(.54)	-0.0 _(.30)	-1.9 _(.66)	-0.0 _(.19)	-0.7 _(.55)	-0.5 _(.40)	1.9 _(.43)
Religious fundamentalism	0.3(.32)	1.9 _(.26)	1.0 _(.44)	1.1 _(.17)	2.8 _(.50)	1.5 _(.35)	4.6 _(.39)
Morality issues (summary)	-1.5 _(.38)	1.1 _(.22)	- 0.6 _(.37)	0.9 _(.14)	2.2 _(.39)	0.7(.26)	3.9 _(.30)
N =	78	211	51	282	93	88	147

		2004			
Policy		-			
Attitudes	Strong Conservative	Moderate Conservative	Neutral on Non-attitude	Moderate Liberal	Strong Liberal
Strong Conservative	0.9%	0.4%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Moderate Conservative	4.9	4.6	5.6	1.1	0.0
Neutral or Non-attitude	4.6	7.5	24.1	4.5	0.6
Moderate Liberal	0.6	1.9	15.4	8.8	3.1
Strong Liberal	0.3	1.3	4.5	2.4	2.3
		2008			
Policy			Morality Attitude	5	
Attitudes	Strong Conservative	Moderate Conservative	Neutral or Non-attitude	Moderate Liberal	Strong Liberal
Strong Conservative	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Moderate Conservative	1.3	2.3	3.5	0.2	0.0
Neutral or Non-attitude	5.0	5.9	34.0	1.2	0.0
Moderate Liberal	3.0	4.9	22.6	3.5	0.7
Strong Liberal	1.1	1.1	7.3	0.9	0.7

Ideological consistency between policy and morality attitudes, 2008.

Importance of Major Life Domains and Ideological Partisanship, 2011.

Moion Life Domoing				Ideolog	gical partis	sanship				Ν
Major Life Domains	Cons R	Mod R	Lib R	Cons N	Mod N	Lib N	Cons D	Mod D	Lib D	IN
Religion (G = 0.17)		•								
Very Important	25%	7%	1%	12%	20%	2%	6%	17%	10%	896
Rather Important	13	8	1	8	29	4	4	20	13	616
Not important	9	8	1	6	35	8	2	15	16	696
Family (G = 0.12)										
Very Important	17	8	15	10	25	5	4	17	13	2,012
Rather Important	9	9	2	3	35	10	2	17	13	164
Not important	6	3	0	13	40	6	3	13	16	32
Work (G = -0.09)		-		-			-	-		
Very Important	13	6	2	9	28	5	5	17	15	782
Rather Important	19	9	1	8	27	4	4	16	12	984
Not important	18	8	1	11	28	4	3	17	10	438
Leisure time (G = -0.08)										
Very Important	16	8	1	7	25	5	4	17	17	863
Rather Important	18	8	1	10	27	3	4	18	11	1,139
Not important	14	4	0	14	37	6	5	11	9	202
Friends (G = ns)	_									
Very Important	17	9	1	9	25	5	3	16	15	1,190
Rather Important	16	6	2	9	30	4	5	17	11	875
Not important	14	3	1	9	32	6	4	20	11	142
Politics (G = ns)										
Very Important	23	6	1	12	16	2	4	19	17	250
Rather Important	20	8	1	9	22	4	4	19	13	926
Not important	12	7	1	8	37	5	4	15	11	1,031

Important Qualities that Children should learn at Home, 2011.

Immontant Qualities				Ideologi	cal part	isanship)			N
Important Qualities	Cons R	Mod R	Lib R	Cons N	Mod N	Lib N	Cons D	Mod D	Lib D	Ν
Religious faith (G = -0.23)	25%	7%	1%	11%	21%	3%	5%	18%	9%	956
Hard work (G = -0.15)	20	8	1	9	27	4	4	15	12	1,472
Obedience (G = -0.12)	21	7	2	9	28	4	5	16	9	619
Thrift, saving (G = -0.11)	21	8	1	10	26	3	4	17	10	698
Responsibility (G = ns)	17	8	1	9	28	5	4	15	13	1,445
Determination (G = ns)	19	8	1	9	22	6	4	17	14	795
Unselfishness (G = ns)	15	8	1	9	28	4	3	17	15	725
Independence (G = 0.11)	15	7	2	9	26	5	4	18	14	1,190
Imagination (G = 0.14)	11	7	1	8	31	6	3	18	15	678
Self-expression (G = 0.18)	9	9	1	6	29	8	4	16	18	386
Tolerance (G = 0.29)	12	8	1	9	27	5	4	19	15	1,592

Monality Igguag				Ideologi	cal part	isanship)			Ν
Morality Issues	Cons R	Mod R	Lib R	Cons N	Mod N	Lib N	Cons D	Mod D	Lib D	IN
Abortion (G = 0.34)										
Unacceptable	30%	8%	1%	14%	23%	1%	5%	12%	6%	763
Mixed	12	8	1	7	30	5	4	19	14	956
Acceptable	6	6	2	5	25	10	3	20	23	459
Homosexuality $(G = 0.32)$										
Unacceptable	29	7	1	14	23	2	4	13	7	685
Mixed	14	8	0	9	31	4	6	17	11	784
Acceptable	6	8	2	4	28	8	3	20	21	709
Sex before marriage $(G = G)$).28)									
Unacceptable	32	7	1	13	22	2	6	11	6	460
Mixed	15	8	1	10	29	3	5	18	11	967
Acceptable	8	8	2	6	27	8	3	18	20	752
Divorce (G = 0.22)										
Unacceptable	23	7	1	17	27	2	6	9	8	277
Mixed	20	7	1	8	29	3	4	17	11	1,184
Acceptable	9	8	2	7	24	8	4	19	19	715
Suicide (G = 0.17)										
Unacceptable	21	7	1	10	25	3	5	17	11	1,376
Mixed	11	9	0	7	33	6	3	16	15	624
Acceptable	5	5	5	8	26	10	2	15	24	177

Selected Morality Attitudes and Ideological Partisanship, 2011.

WVS Items on Acceptance of the Market Model

Rejection of market model:	Acceptance of market model:
Government ownership of business and industry should be increased.	Private ownership of business and industry should be increased.
Competition is harmful. It brings out the worst in people.	Competition is good. It stimulates people to work hard and develop new ideas.
Hard work doesn't generally bring success – it's more a matter of luck and connections.	In the long run, hard work usually brings a better life.
Government should take more responsibility to ensure that everyone is provided for.	People should take more responsibility to provide for themselves.
People can only get rich at the expense of others.	Wealth can grow so there's enough for everyone.
Items in shaded area did not load satisfactorily seven countries included in this analysis.	y in confirmation factor analyses in any of the

Mean scores and distribution of scores on the Acceptance of Market Economics Index

Correctory	Accep	tance of Mar	ket Economy	v Index	N
Country	Reject	Mixed	Accept	Mean _(se)	N
United States	6%	30%	64%	2.1 _(.04)	2,232
New Zealand	6	35	59	1.8(.07)	841
Sweden	8	42	50	1.3(.06)	1,205
Japan	5	52	43	1.2(.03)	2,443
Spain	6	53	42	1.2(.05)	1,189
South Korea	8	51	41	1.1(.05)	1,200
Russia	21	50	29	-0.3 _(.04)	2,500
Legend: Reject include Mixed includes values		•	Accept includes	values from 2	through 5.

Factor loadings on selected economic and social value issues, 2011-2.

	U	.S.	Swe	eden	Sp	ain	N. Ze	aland	Ru	ssia	Jap	pan	S. K	orea
	E	S	E	S	E	S	E	S	E	S	E	S	E	S
Increase private ownership	.58		.55		.16		.39		.37		.54		.19	
Competition is good	.79		.77		.98		.92		.48		.36		.42	
Hard work pays off usually	.60		.47		.37		.51		.49		.10		.98	
Index of Religiosity		59		33		45		55		20		13		26
Acceptance of homosexuality		.76		.68		.80		.64		.41		.63		.72
Acceptance of abortion		.84		.82		.62		.77		.84		.74		.77
Acceptance of divorce		.74		.85		.82		.76		.65		.80		.77
Post-material values (12-item)		.28		.25		.33		.22		26		.20		.24
Correlation between factors		15	(03)8	.1	2)6	.1	18		19
N =	2,2	232	1,1	91	1,1	82	8	841	2,4	51	2,4	43	1,1	196
Legend: E = economic and relate	ed issu	ies; S =	= socia	al and	moral	lity iss	ues.							

Mean scores and distribution of scores on the New Social Attitudes Index

Country	Acceptance of New Social Values				N
	Reject	Mixed	Accept	Mean _(se)	N
Sweden	4%	24%	72%	2.4(.06)	1,193
Spain	11	40	49	1.3(.06)	1,183
Japan	14	61	25	0.4(.04)	2,324
New Zealand	22	46	32	0.3(.06)	827
United States	34	42	24	-0.3(.05)	2,192
Russia	33	59	8	-0.8(.03)	2,451
South Korea	44	46	10	-1.1 _(.05)	1,197
Legend: Reject includes values from -5 through -2. Accept includes values from 2 through 5.					

Mixed includes values for -1 to +1, including zero.

After a fast run through a lot of data, we conclude that there has been a substantial growth of ideological attitude constraint in the American political system and in selected other countries.

- The growth of ideological conservatism is responsible for the growth of the current Republican Party in the U.S., which was unable to win the presidency this year but still represents a large number of citizens.
- The extension of this analysis to six other countries found the emergence of a two-dimension structure with emancipative values as one dimension. This emancipative dimension is of varying strength – very strong in Sweden and least strong in Russia and South Korea.
- There is little or no relationship between a commitment to market economic systems and emancipative values.

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