



United States Political Realignment in the Present Day

Adrianna Northrop

Mentor: James Endersby

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SUMMARY OF PROJECT

- This research analysis explores the question of whether the United States is currently is experiencing or has recently experienced a political realignment.
 - *Understanding political realignments helps us understand voting behavior and predict voting trends!!!*
- An effective way to consider realignment is to look at what party leaders say – to analyze language and speech during their candidacy or presidency.
- Political speeches from Nixon presidency (1968) to Biden Administration (2021)
 - State of the Union addresses
 - Opposition responses to the State of the Union
 - Nomination acceptance speeches
 - First inaugural addresses
- Analysis done with *Diction 7.2*
 - *Explained later!*

WHAT IS A REALIGNMENT?

- *A political realignment is a monumental shift in political ideology or partisan power and agendas that persists for a substantial period of time, triggering major policy changes.*
 - *Realignments can be detected by durability, presence of a "triggering event," high voter turnout, major changes in coalitions, etc.*
- Critical vs. Secular Realignment
 - *Critical = fast*
 - *Secular = slow*
- Internal Realignment
 - *Realignment within a party instead of between parties.*
- 5 agreed-upon realignments – 1800, 1828, 1860, 1896, 1932

DICTION 7.2 SOFTWARE

- *Diction* is a text analysis software that allows the user to analyze the tone and words used in various texts (in this case, speeches).
- *Steps Followed:*
 - Read State of the Union addresses; created “dictionaries” for different word categories relevant to partisan realignment based on the State of the Union addresses.
 - *Partial dictionaries used in this project can be seen on the next slide.*
 - Inputted various political speeches into the software and ran the text analysis function.
 - Interpreted the data and converted it to charts for easy viewing.

DICTIONARIES

****Note:* This chart represents samples from each dictionary. Full word lists included in each dictionary can be found in the full version of this project.

Dictionary Title	Sample of Words Used
Crime and Law and Order Words	criminal, gangs, heroin, lawlessness, narcotics, police
Economy Words	budget, careers, deficit, economic, employment, poverty
Education and Family Words	children, education, family, nourishment, school, universities
Environment Words	air, climate, energy, environmental, pollution, renewable
Foreign Policy Words	alliance, commerce, exports, foreign, NAFTA, trade
Health Care Words	ACA, benefits, coverage, disabilities, Medicaid, prescription
Immigration Words	aliens, border, citizenship, deportation, ICE, immigrants
Military Words	army, contraband, defense, militarily, soldier, veterans
Negative Words	aggression, brutality, chaotic, coercion, damaging, failure
Politics and Government Words	Congress, conservative, democracy, liberal, leadership, populism
Positive Words	accomplishment, conscience, dignity, enthusiasm, generous, progress
Religion Words	Bible, church, God, Muslim, religious, synagogues
Social Justice Words	bigotry, discrimination, equality, injustice, racism, rights
Technology and Advancement Words	computers, data, infrastructure, innovate, research, science
Terrorism Words	atomic, dictator, espionage, ISIS, missile, terrorized
Unity Words	bipartisan, common, compromise, together, union, unity
Welfare and Labor Words	foreclosures, homeless, hunger, labor, mortgage, unions

QUESTIONS EXPLORED

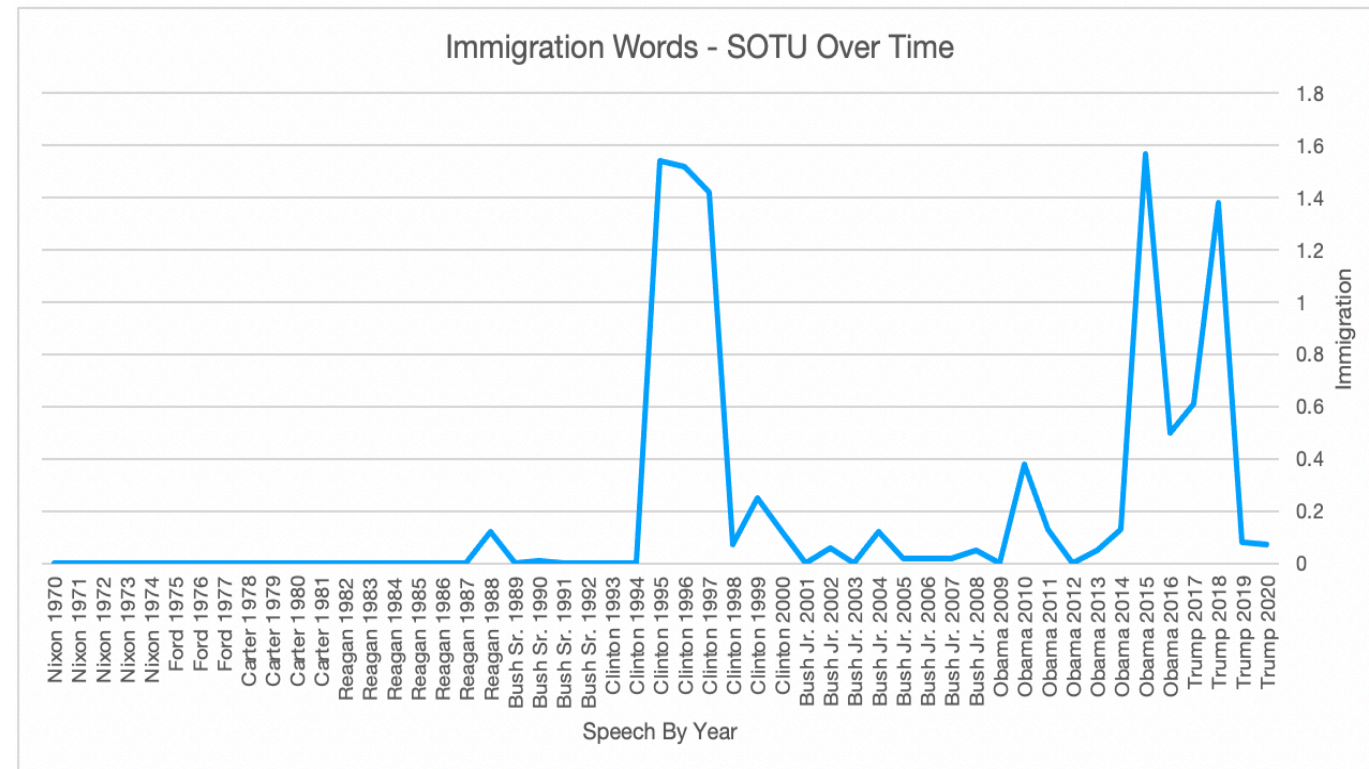
- I. Is the United States currently (starting in 2016) experiencing a secular realignment characterized by profound changes in party ideology and policy emphasis?*
- II. Did the United States experience a true (critical) political realignment in either 1992 or 2008?*
- III. What components or changes in rhetoric should characterize a national realignment? According to political scientists, what characterizes a national realignment now?*

HYPOTHESIS

- Secular realignment in 2016 (Donald Trump's election)
- *Republicans:*
 - *Prominent changes: free trade, terrorism, religion, law and order, foreign policy*
- *Democrats:*
 - *Prominent changes: democratic socialism, growing progressive wing of party*

IMPORTANT CONCLUSIONS

- INTERNAL REALIGNMENT (REPUBLICANS) ~ *immigration, welfare/labor, terrorism, economics*
 - Only the chart on immigration is shown here.

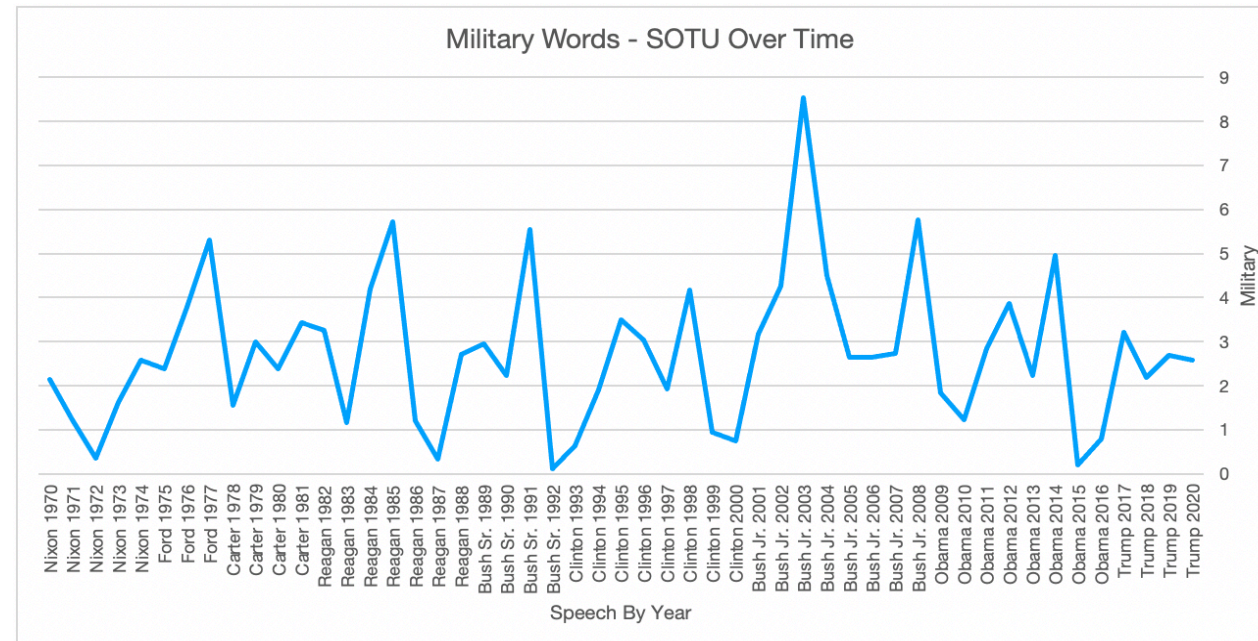
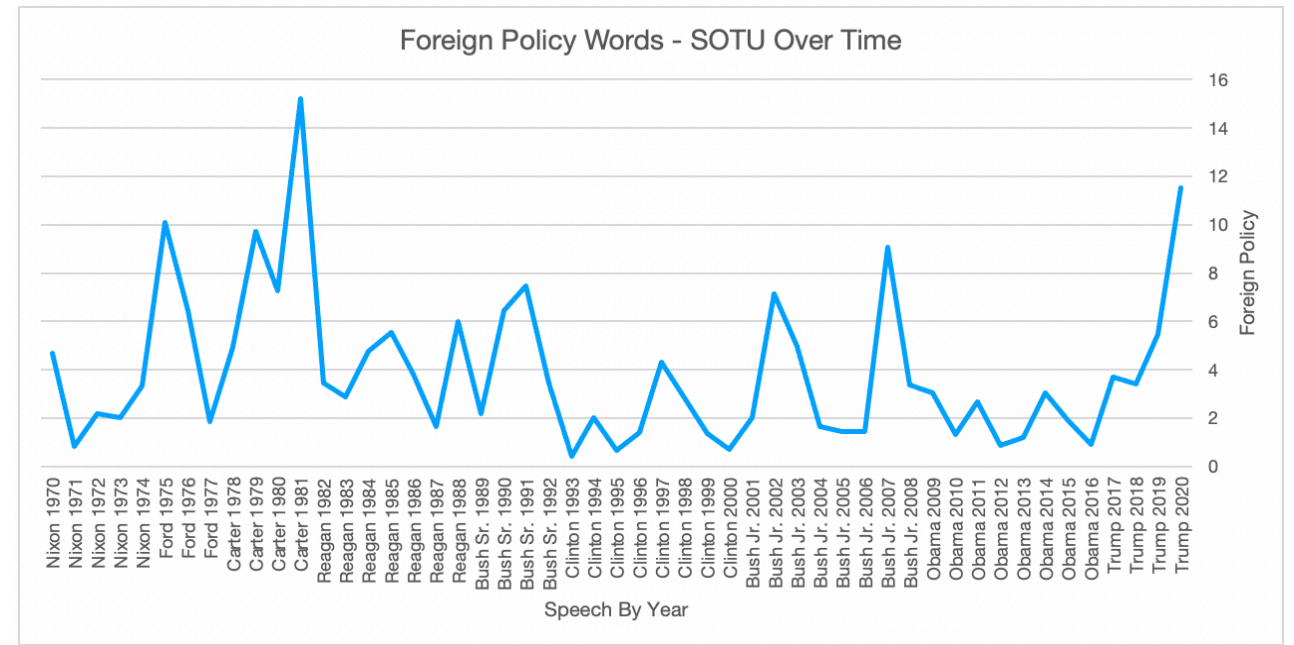


***X-axis: Dates of State of the Union addresses

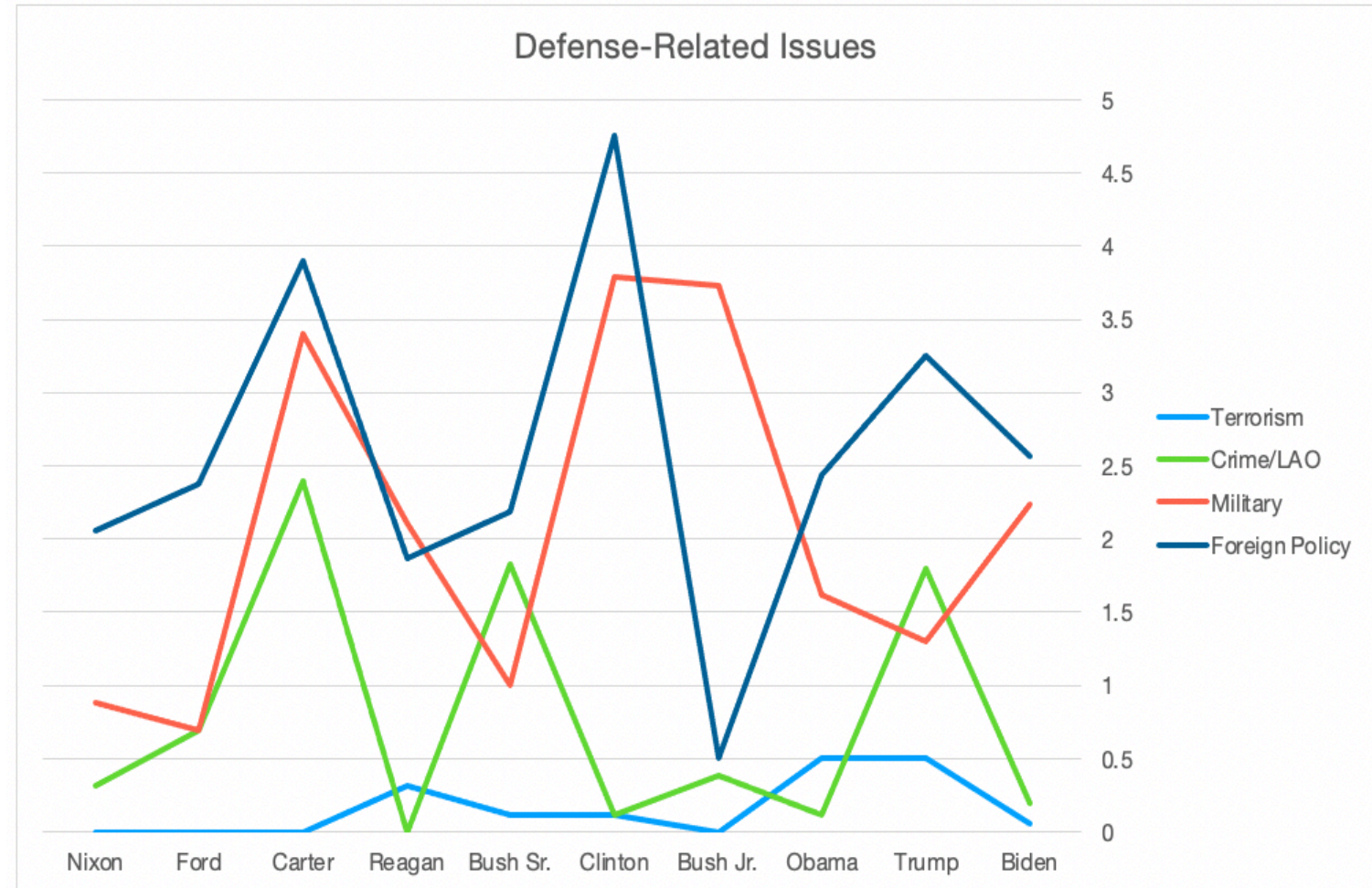
Y-axis: Scale of frequency concerning immigration

IMPORTANT CONCLUSIONS

- CRITICAL
REALIGNMENT ~
foreign policy,
military



IMPORTANT CONCLUSIONS



IS THE UNITED STATES EXPERIENCING A REALIGNMENT?

- Hard to say...
 - More evidence for *internal realignment* for Republicans
 - NOT secular as hypothesized!
 - Realignments must be *durable*, so only time will tell

FUTURE RESEARCH

- *Use more speeches* – farewell addresses, campaign speeches, presidential debates, etc.
- Use full sample of responses to State of the Union speeches
- Use smaller dictionaries that more exactly pinpoint issues/changes over time
 - Create a dictionary to track emphasis on the national budget/deficit. Such a dictionary might include words such as “deficit(s),” “debt(s),” and budget.

FINAL NOTES

- Thank you for your viewing attention!
- References for this project can be viewed in my full thesis:
United States Political Realignment in the Present Day
- This project is for presentation at the University of Missouri's Undergraduate Research Forum

