
Framing the Critique

3 HOW WELL DOES THE CLASSICAL RE-alignments genre stand up at the start of the twenty-first century, well past its base in historical evidence and a generation or two beyond the main assertions by its chief exponents?

All the claims I have presented here can, in principle, be assessed for their empirical validity; that is the principal task I undertake in the remainder of this work. How can this be done? In some instances, reasonably hard empirical information is available in published works and can be assembled. Yet in many instances that course is not possible, and one must resort to conventional wisdom that has been piled up by many generations of historians writing standard works about American political history—or at least that conventional wisdom as I apprehend it. For