

THE SIXTIES AS HISTORY: A REVIEW OF THE POLITICAL HISTORIOGRAPHY

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The concept of a historical decade seems first to have been invented for the 1890s, but for the American twentieth century the Sixties has excited more popular and academic attention than any other.¹ Conferences, websites, and television and radio programs seem almost in permanent and argumentative session to debate the Sixties. University courses and textbooks have proliferated, yet no two look alike. They disagree over dates, content, and significance. They even disagree over case—is the Sixties singular or plural? Yet debate on the era seems strangely unstructured, even that on its political history.² One sign of this is the scarcity of historiographical articles or review essays on the Sixties *qua* the Sixties. The student can be introduced to most recognized topics in American history, such as the American Revolution or the New Deal, via essays that survey the literature and lay out the scholarly battleground.³ Not so with the Sixties, for which few guides light the way.⁴

One reason for this absence has been the difficulty of writing synthetic history as a consequence of the 1960s, when the powerful currents of race, gender, class, and culture undermined the older notion of a consensual society. The pieces have never been put back together again. While these forces have fragmented the writing of American history in its entirety, for the Sixties an agreed narrative was never constructed in the first place. For an older topic like the New Deal, a reasonably coherent literature had come into existence within a generation. There were disagreements, of course, but the battle lines or the rules of engagement seemed to be fairly clearly understood. This could not be said of the Sixties, whose fate it was to be dissolved by the currents it spawned before a stable historiography could be written. Probably too the Sixties has seemed unfocused as a topic because scholars have been reluctant to impute too much significance to an arbitrary segment of time.⁵ Further, its very contents invite discrete treatment, ranging as they do through the New Frontier and the Great Society, Civil Rights and Black Power, the Cuban Missile Crisis and Vietnam, the New Left and the New Right, the Counterculture and Rock Music (several of which have commanded their own review essays).⁶

Just why the era continues to excite such interest deserves a study of its own. Several factors have contributed. A measure of cultural polarization did occur in the Sixties, one that became—and has remained—entangled with party politics. During the conservative 1980s such figures as President Reagan and Prime Minister Thatcher helped to carry the culture wars forward to a new generation with their assaults on what the Sixties represented, and the subsequent controversies of the Clinton administration deepened the cultural divide. “If you look back on the Sixties and think there was more good than bad, you’re probably a Democrat,” mused Bill Clinton in June 2004. “If you think there was more harm than good, you’re probably a Republican.”⁷ The media and the associated technology too were important in perpetuating Sixties’ preoccupations. Television and television archives, the general supplanting of black-and-white by color film, and electronically amplified rock music have meant that the images, sounds, and sound bites of the Sixties have cascaded down the decades in a way denied to earlier forms of culture. Demography has played a vital part, as the aging baby-boom generation that once imparted to the era its youthful ambience has continued to fight its battles (not to mention one another) and to provide a large market for its products. An emerging globalization helps to explain the era’s continued fascination; the Beatles made history in 1967 when a live performance of “All You Need Is Love” was transmitted around the world by satellite technology.

If the experiences of the Sixties fractured historical scholarship, this was not evident for most of the era in the United States, when historical writing seemed to be empowered by new intellectual currents. Among the books that occasioned debate were Stanley Elkins’s study of *Slavery* (1959) with its psychological underpinnings, Lee Benson’s *Concept of Jacksonian Democracy* (1961) with its multivariate analysis, and Stephan Thernstrom’s study of urban mobility with its reams of statistics. Social science was the new history, and there were international conferences to solemnize the marriage between the two.⁸

Emblematic of this approach was Robert Wiebe’s *The Search for Order*, published in 1967. For one thing it focused on the Progressive era, an era that was a favorite of Ph.D. students at the time. Young scholars may have been drawn to the Progressive era because in some ways it looked familiar: the high proportion of young people in the population, the drive towards business consolidation and the subsequent unease about corporate power, the muckraking exposés, the reforming zeal of a portion of the middle class. Some of these scholars, following Wiebe, reduced the confusion of the Progressive era to a measure of coherence through what became known as the “organizational synthesis.” The systematizing imperative of bureaucrats and professionals, in this view, helped to reconcile the conflicting demands of modern

society. But it may be that the organizational synthesis says as much about the 1960s as it does about Progressive America, a point to which we shall return.

But what of the Sixties? Several renderings can be found in the literature. To cite just a few, the Sixties is variously seen as

- an era shaped by the intersecting dynamics of an unprecedented prosperity and an unusually youthful population
- an era in which a politics rooted in class and economics was displaced by a politics rooted in race and culture
- an era dominated by the imperatives of the Cold War, not least in the hubris of the best and the brightest
- an era in which the personal became the political, dissolving the distinction between politics and culture
- an era constituting a watershed, separating the political culture of industrialism from the political culture of post-industrialism.

The fragmentation in the literature reflects the diverse forces shaping it—the testimony of witnesses of the Sixties, the expectations of the student market, the culture wars still being fought in American politics. The personal, the pedagogic, and the political pull in different directions. The Sixties—or the more symbolic “Sixties”—can be pushed into almost any shape to suit a particular agenda. The slipperiness of the topic is illustrated in the debate over just when the era occurred.⁹

“Periodizing the Sixties” was initially the project of literary scholar Fredric Jameson, who, with an eye on the Third World, began his analysis with the late 1950s and located an end “in the general area of 1972–1974.” Arthur Marwick largely concurs. Focusing on four western countries (including the United States), he proposed a “long” 1960s, encompassing a cultural transformation between about 1958 and 1974. Latina scholar Elizabeth Martínez stretches the decade from 1955 to 1975. Activists like to think that their movement is still ongoing. According to the sometime Weatherperson Bernardine Dohrn in a recent essay, “The sixties began in 1954 and the real news is that they’re not over yet.”¹⁰ In this at least she concurs with Newt Gingrich, that sometime professor of history, who speaks of the Sixties as “the long aberration.”¹¹ The Sixties, it has been said, was “the longest decade of the 20th century.”¹²

But if there is a case for the long 1960s, there is also a case for a short 1960s. Jon Margolis in a recent book insists that the Sixties began in 1964. If we are to believe Bruce Schulman, the Sixties ended rather abruptly in 1968. That leaves us with a truncated era sometimes characterized as the “high Sixties.”¹³ Some authors have crystallized the Sixties into 1968, a sort of twentieth-century counterpoint to 1848, implying a turning point more important than the larger decade.¹⁴ (Marwick has fretted that undue emphasis on 1968 subverts

his case for a "long" 1960s.) It has also sometimes been suggested that the decade has been seriously mislocated. David Frum perversely argues that the Sixties did not occur until the 1970s.¹⁵

Some of the most popular explanations for the Sixties also leave questions begging. Authors have been right, for example, to emphasize the role of prosperity in fostering expectations and the demographic significance of the postwar baby boom, but analyses are not always pursued to their logical end. That strong economic growth accounts for much about the era cannot be doubted, though curiously economic explanations are not often invoked for the "end" of the Sixties, which tends to be explained in terms of political frustration. It may be that prosperity triggered the phenomenon and that political turmoil ended it, but the harder times that emerged from about 1967 onward surely had something to do with puncturing the Sixties spirit. The high proportion of young people in the population is also essential to any analysis, but generations are not born at convenient twenty-five-year intervals. The younger generation had been advancing on the Sixties for some years, but they appear rather suddenly in many histories, and subsequently tend to disappear again, although their numbers only slowly dwindled.¹⁶ Perhaps as important as the volume of young people were the locales they inhabited. As unprecedented numbers went on to higher education, college towns became crowded communities of young people, who were instructed more often by graduate students than by increasingly remote professors. Understanding the Sixties may require understanding the culture of these peer communities, which a few scholars have now begun to investigate.¹⁷

Both economic indices and examples of student activism could be used to periodize the Sixties, but other markers could be proposed too. As President Clinton might say, it depends on what you mean by Sixties. How we play this parlor game depends on what we think was important. Or perhaps what we think will make an attractive course or textbook. Sometimes the Sixties looks more like a pedagogic construction than an academic topic. Still, what have historians identified as the distinguishing features of this elastic era?

Several historians press the theme of disintegration. The tone was set as long ago as 1971 in William L. O'Neill's *Coming Apart*, which dwelt on the process of fragmentation and found little to celebrate, offering a somewhat sardonic view of both the governing administrations and their critics on the left. That phrase "coming apart" has echoed in the literature ever since, and O'Neill's rather jaundiced view of the era has also been widely shared. Fracture or dissolution has remained a central theme of Sixties syntheses, as in John M. Blum's *Years of Discord* (1991). David Burner emphasizes the destructive effects of the splitting apart of liberalism and radicalism; groups that might have been allies in progressive causes fatally turned on one another. In 1999 Maurice Isserman and Michael Kazin conveyed their mes-

sage in their title, *America Divided*, and reinforced it in their subtitle, *The Civil War of the 1960s*, invoking the fratricidal battles of a century earlier.¹⁸ This is the Sixties as *Apocalypse Now!*

This argument has often been overstated.¹⁹ That there were convulsions has to be admitted, but a relatively recent body of literature has posited a happier version. Discord may be rewritten as the healthier phenomenon of multiculturalism. Sympathetic treatments discerning some change for the better include that by David Farber, who concedes that while a consumer-oriented American society emerged more polarized it also emerged more egalitarian. David Chalmers too places the upheavals of the decade in the context of an often-liberating transformation of consciousness. Quite frankly disavowing the notion of disintegration is Arthur Marwick, who recognizes a cultural revolution but is impatient with the argument that the United States was splitting apart.²⁰ Even the conservative historian Gertrude Himmelfarb, who argues that the Sixties split American society into two cultures—the one permissive and the other moralistic—concedes that these two cultures more or less rub along together.²¹

Whatever the cultural convulsions, the notion of “coming apart” has limited applicability with respect to the conventional political arena. No less an authority than Richard Nixon said in 1968, “There is nothing wrong with this country that a good election cannot cure.” William Chafe cites a British journalist who wrote of the 1968 election that “the enormous power of the Presidency passed peacefully from one man to another [despite] the fear that the country was coming apart.”²² Such observations echo those about the presidential election of 1932, when the United States was deep in the Depression and there were mutterings of revolution, but then the election came along to offer deliverance in the hopeful candidacy of Franklin Roosevelt. In retrospect historians have been unable to find any real evidence of a revolutionary mood in either 1932 or 1968, outside of small radical circles, but perhaps the contrivance of quadrennial elections always acted as a kind of safety valve. This perspective on the Sixties has the sobering effect of turning Richard Nixon into the savior of American democracy! The Democratic party, of course, did suffer serious convulsions in 1968 and after, but it survived.

As well as being invited to choose between these rather simple understandings of the Sixties in terms either of fragmentation or of political resilience and cultural change, we have also been offered a number of distinct narrative themes. Broadly there are now three competing political stories, one focusing on the protest movements, one seeing the era as primarily concerned with liberalism, and a third emphasizing the return of right-wing politics.

The Sixties had opened with the expectation among liberals at least that the Sixties would be their decade. The Old Left had disappeared, while even many Republicans had turned their backs on an unreconstructed conservatism.

Indeed, in an era in which the social science of psychology commanded respect, both political extremes tended to be dismissed as deluded. Communists, such as there were, found themselves represented as psychologically impaired, whether as soulless automatons or as monomaniacal zealots. When student protests erupted in the Sixties, affronted professors reached for dismissive psychological explanations. Student activism had its faculty sympathizers, of course, but some early academic analyses disparaged participants as emotionally immature.²³ Feminists too were still vulnerable to crude insinuations rooted in Freudian theories about hysteria or penis envy. This questioning of the psychological state of young leftists paralleled the impulse to dismiss right-wing activists as kooks. The ideas of Daniel Bell, Richard Hofstadter, and others enjoyed a certain currency and tended to represent right-wing movements as aberrant revolts against authority or modernity. Such groups were marginalized as "extremist," as products of some sort of psychological maladjustment or at least "status anxiety" on the part of their members.²⁴ Only middle-aged liberals, it might almost be concluded, were psychologically sound. The subsequent ravaging of liberalism by revolts on the right and the left served both to undermine the complacent assumptions of social scientists and to provide alternative narratives about the true meaning of the Sixties.

The most popular story of the Sixties is one that focuses on the protest movements. This is the view presented in a reader edited by Alexander Bloom and Wini Breines and tellingly entitled "*Takin' it to the streets.*" This claims to bring together "representative writings" of the Sixties, thus offering an "authoritative" account. In a book of 636 pages, about 40 are devoted to right-wing and backlash sentiments, another 30 or 40 reproduce governmental reports or mainstream journalistic accounts, while the rest, well over 500 pages, reproduce the voices of movement activists, from the civil rights campaign to the counterculture. This volume has to share responsibility for the widespread view that the important events of the 1960s happened on the streets. Scholarly syntheses also tend to give generous space to the protest movements. In one recent account, for example, Students for a Democratic Society merits eighteen page references in the index, while the right-wing John Birch Society is not mentioned at all. The SDS leader Tom Hayden manages seventeen citations; the Chief Justice of the United States, Earl Warren, gets just six.²⁵ Such publications raise the awkward question of how far history is consumer-driven. Are scholars shaping history to student taste?²⁶

In fairness, this narrative in its origin was producer-driven. The author of the Hayden/Warren example was himself was a Sixties activist, and this helps to account for the extensive coverage given to the left in this historiography. Veterans of those movements wrote much of the specialist literature on

the protest movements. The classic publication is Todd Gitlin's *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (1987), by an early leader of the SDS, and James Miller, Wini Breines and Maurice Isserman also published major studies illuminating aspects of the New Left experience.²⁷ These accounts tend to focus on organizations and leadership, conveying an image of white, middle-class, and quite often Jewish activists from liberal or Old Left homes. They are typically sympathetic to the ideals and behavior of the New Left in its early years, but lose empathy as the New Left succumbs to ideological schism, Marxist dogma, and violent rhetoric towards the end of the decade. This account is variously known as the "New Left consensus" or the "good sixties/bad sixties" analysis or the "declension hypothesis." It is one frequently disseminated in texts written for the proliferating courses on the Sixties, exposing this narrative to the charge that it is sustained by an unholy alliance between movement veterans and modern students. But it is a view that is hotly contested, and recent studies have offered a more complex picture of the composition of the New Left, ranging across a host of Christian, feminist, multi-cultural, and working-class elements.²⁸

A strong case can be made for the leftist narrative.²⁹ As Terry Anderson has put it in the best assessment of protest activity, "one could argue that the most significant aspect of the sixties was social activism."³⁰ Certainly conservative critics have imputed considerable subversive power to the protest and liberation movements. The New Left represented the "destructive generation," according to one pair of renegades.³¹ Conversely, sympathizers of Sixties activism point to evidence of a multicultural and more tolerant society. Either way the New Left is credited with pervasive influence. One of the stronger arguments for the key role of youthful protest is sometimes missed in histories that focus narrowly on the United States; the American example helped to inspire protest and youth movements that served to destabilize regimes around the world.³² Leftist protest also invites academic attention simply because it was unexpected. The Kennedy and Johnson administrations foresaw trouble from the right and developed their policies accordingly. The last thing they anticipated in the early Sixties was a revolt on the left. The unexpected eruption of radicalism deserves scholarly explanation.

But should we interpret the Sixties primarily in these terms? The protest movements were minority movements, though one would not wish to deny their role in creating a new consciousness. In 1969 only 13 percent of college students identified with the New Left, and only 3 percent of the same age group outside college did so. In an early 1965 poll, a mere 4 percent of African Americans gave a positive rating for Malcolm X, (although the non-violent protests of Martin Luther King scored high approval rates). Of course minority movements can change history. But such statistics are a reminder that an approach to the Sixties that focuses on action in the streets excludes

the bulk of the American people. As political scientists Richard M. Scammon and Ben J. Wattenberg pointed out in 1970, statistically speaking the "Middle Voter" in 1968 was "a forty-seven-year-old housewife from the outskirts of Dayton, Ohio, whose husband is a machinist."³³

And there are further difficulties with the narrative of the Sixties as protest. Perhaps these movements prodded the system to change, but demonstrating a causal connection is not always easy. Some scholars, for example, deny that the anti-war movement had any real effect on American policy over Vietnam, which was probably more discredited by the Tet Offensive than by anything else. Student activism may have helped to delegitimize traditional forms of authority, but there were people in high places ready to welcome these new allies in pursuit of a progressive agenda (as conservatives bitterly complained). Further, radical activism was counter-productive, alienating some liberals and arguably precipitating a right-wing backlash that brought Richard Nixon and his celebrated "silent majority" to power. More important, perhaps, advocates of the radical thesis need to explain why some of the most dramatic social gains, such as the integration of southern schools, the adoption of affirmative action, the introduction of environmental legislation, and the increase in social security benefits actually occurred during the Nixon administration. Finally, while one might accept that in some respects American society has become more tolerant since the 1960s, one might also want to give some credit for this to American liberals and to those august justices on the Supreme Court.

If Sixties activists themselves helped to shape the leftist narrative of the Sixties, another major narrative has been developed by what one might call establishment historians, except that some of them are not. Protest activity may be highlighted in student texts, but the ascendant view in more academic scholarship is that the Sixties were about liberalism (that is, the modern American notion of liberalism in which the state assumes much responsibility for promoting the good life). The very term liberalism in this context focuses attention on Washington, not on the streets. The assumption is that the era represented the cresting of a political liberalism rooted in the New Deal. Broadly this school echoes the New Left narrative as it traces the early optimism of Sixties liberals followed by disillusionment and collapse. This is a story of liberal hubris and nemesis.

Godfrey Hodgson's *America In Our Time* is influential in this narrative, deploying the concept of consensus liberalism. Hodgson argues that virtually all those in public life in the early 1960s were liberals of a sort who agreed on the need for an anti-communist foreign policy abroad and a mixed economy at home and assumed that social problems could be readily solved by the application of social science and appropriate resources. Sixties liberals, in this analysis, believed that they spoke for almost all Americans; only a "handful of

dissidents" were excluded from the "Big Tent." Hodgson is no admirer of consensus liberalism, which he held to be based on faulty premises, and his assertion that consensus liberalism was "hardly to be distinguished from a more sophisticated . . . conservatism" was subsequently to be reinforced by studies arguing that liberalism had already taken a rightward turn in the 1940s. By the postwar era, according to Alan Brinkley, a liberalism evolving out of the New Deal had become less concerned with the structure of economic power and more concerned with promoting a consumer and full employment society.³⁴ Certainly many liberals put their faith in "growth liberalism," and its consensual and material values help to explain the rebellion of many younger and idealistic Americans in the 1960s.³⁵

Hodgson's formulation informed the understanding of a generation of scholars.³⁶ Nonetheless an approach that explains the failure of liberalism in terms of its flawed premises may overlook the degree to which liberalism continued to change in the 1960s. Gareth Davies, for example, argues that it was not so much the premises as the eventual abandonment of a traditional style of liberalism in the mid-1960s for a more radical variety that doomed the project. Brinkley in turn has emphasized the destructive effects of the militant lurch in Democratic party liberalism prompted by the events of 1968. Other scholars find little fault with liberalism but lay blame squarely on mistakes made by Lyndon Johnson.³⁷

Hodgson may not admire the liberal consensus, but others see constructive potential in a system of politics in which a broadly based electoral coalition (buttressed by accommodating Republicans) subordinated class, racial, and ethnic differences to a common purpose. The immediate postwar period, it has been suggested, witnessed a degree of social harmony under the aegis of such a coalition. Some authors believe that this political configuration could have effected further progress had it not been torn apart in the 1960s as whites turned against liberal strategies in the aftermath of race riots and black militancy. This is a view of the Sixties as an era of wrenching change, when race surfaced rather suddenly as an issue for whites and seems to implicate black militancy in the breakdown of coalitional politics.³⁸ And exception has been taken to this understanding. The research of Thomas J. Sugrue and Arnold Hirsch, for example—drawing attention to the often reactionary and distinctly non-consensual sentiments of the white urban working class in the 1940s and 1950s—suggests the highly tenuous nature of the New Deal coalition (and of the consensus liberalism that rested on it). In this perspective, the ghetto riots of the 1960s were responses to long-standing white racism (associated with the anxieties of whites over the invasion of their neighborhoods by southern blacks), and other upheavals were but the latest manifestations of class tensions that the myth of consensus had imperfectly concealed. Consensus liberalism was always something of an illusion, in this

view, and the 1960s were more like the preceding period than is commonly admitted.³⁹ This approach challenges the very idea of Sixties exceptionalism; the implication is that the era should not be singled out for the separate treatment so lavishly bestowed upon it. But treatments that accept the authenticity of postwar liberalism or insist that the Sixties represented an era of dramatic change retain their vitality.

For some scholars, consensus liberalism is too broad a concept, one that hides significant differences. Such historians as James Patterson and John Blum identify liberalism primarily with the New Deal tradition of the Democratic party and believe that a useful distinction can be made between that kind of liberalism and the rather conservative business values associated with the Republican party. Studies of liberalism of this sort thus give attention to the Democratic administrations of the 1960s, and see it reaching its apotheosis in the Johnson years, as it was energetically if clumsily championed by an ambitious president. But within a very few years Great Society liberalism was breaking apart, undermined by the costs and divisions occasioned by the Vietnam War and beset by black rage, radical contempt, and white backlash.⁴⁰ The election of Richard Nixon in 1968 and his crushing re-election in 1972 left liberals demoralized for a generation.

Some of these historians, such as John Blum, present the travail of liberalism with sympathy. Others are much more critical, coming to the same conclusions as the New Left that liberalism was something of a fraud, a sort of p.r. exercise of corporate America. The most unremittingly critical is Allen J. Matusow in *The Unraveling of America*. He is unrelenting in his condemnation of the inadequacy and incompetence of liberal, especially Great Society programs, tracing responsibility to "corporate liberalism" and the governmental refusal to address the highly unequal distribution of income.⁴¹

Matusow's 1984 analysis was too selective to be the last word, and the debate on 1960s liberalism has continued. There remain some intriguing contradictions in the literature. There is, for example, the question of the source of liberal reform. Civil rights historians in recent years have tended to emphasize the vigor of the movement at the grassroots level, so that the federal government only belatedly embraced civil rights when faced with widespread disorder. A similar interpretation of the War on Poverty has been offered, with Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward arguing that the anti-poverty programs were attempts to pacify the ghettos.⁴² In short, these and other programs were essentially reactive, put into place because of pressure from below. This argument, of course, provides support for the leftist narrative of the 1960s.⁴³

Yet a very different argument can also be found in Sixties historiography, one concerning manipulation from above. The liberal public policies of the decade, according to this view, reflected the ambitions of unrepresentative

elites. The major public policies can be traced to the agenda of liberal intellectuals, public policy experts, Washington bureaucrats, Supreme Court justices, and a so-called "new class," who handed down Great Society programs and such policies as affirmative action to an unappreciative electorate.⁴⁴ Reform, then, came from above. This is an argument in which both radical and conservative critics of Sixties liberalism sometimes meet.⁴⁵ Liberals in authority, it seems, cannot win. They are either hesitant appeasers or patronizing manipulators.

Neither the "bottom up" nor the "top down" approach can stand on its own, since the respective influences of the forces they identify varied according to timing and movement. Thus the early civil rights movement did take its vigor from support in the streets (and in the churches and colleges), and it shook an inattentive liberal establishment. The dynamic of such movements as environmentalism and feminism was also located outside the conventional political arena, at least until they picked up legislative allies. On the other hand, a movement from below did not initially drive the War on Poverty, although its direction was ultimately affected by the ghetto riots.⁴⁶ Other parts of Lyndon Johnson's various Great Society programs similarly cannot be easily explained in terms of an irresistible popular demand, though the ambitions of the president and the nature of the academic task forces that he assembled to advise him were powerful influences. On several issues the Supreme Court too was at odds with public opinion. Not all scholars have taken care to resolve the confusion occasioned by the competing demands of the "bottom up" and "top down" approaches to the Sixties.⁴⁷

Another confusion about Sixties liberalism involves the position of middle-class citizens, whom the historiography sometimes seems to depict as both the main beneficiaries and the victims of Great Society programs. Whatever the intentions, it is sometimes averred, environmental, educational, social security, and health care policies often afforded protection and benefits to those of at least modest property and income rather than to the truly poor. Yet the argument is also made that many white middle-class and diligent working-class Americans felt betrayed when their tax dollars were directed towards troublesome minorities like urban blacks and rioting students.⁴⁸ Of course, given the amorphous nature of the middle class in a country in which most citizens habitually claimed middle-class status, it is possible that the Great Society contrived both to protect suburban environments and strew resources on various professionals and middle-income citizens, while offending lower-middle-class ethnics who perceived those professionals as providing services for undeserving groups. There are some indications that economic processes were serving to accentuate the stratification of the middle class, separating the upwardly mobile from others, but such processes have yet to be satisfactorily related to the politics of the era.⁴⁹

Other conundrums remain. One involves the role of the Supreme Court. It is remarkable how many major books on the Sixties simply ignore the Court, presided over by Earl Warren and responsible for an extraordinary range of decisions related to civil rights, the treatment of suspects, school prayers, pornography, and (post-Warren) abortion. The subtitle of Matusow's book is *A History of Liberalism in the 1960s*, but the Supreme Court does not figure at all. Godfrey Hodgson's analysis of consensus liberalism also makes little mention of the Court, desegregation decisions apart. The Court has received more attention in recent years, as political historians have become more sensitive to legal issues and as the "politicization of the judiciary" has attracted comment, but it continues to be something of a poor relation in the scholarship. In one recent synthesis, for example, the Supreme Court gets ten references and the New Left gets seventy five. Is this a fair reflection of their relative influence?⁵⁰

The liberal hypothesis has other problems too. Liberal itself is a slippery term, and it is sometimes made to stretch from Richard Nixon on the right to Eugene McCarthy and beyond on the left. Its very ambiguity militates against a coherent narrative. It could be said, for example, that far from collapsing at the end of the 1960s, as conventionally argued, the liberal project divided into its component parts and continued quite successfully under the different headings of black politics, feminism, identity politics, consumer and worker protection, environmentalism, public interest group activity and so on.⁵¹ (These movements also drew on the energies of former New Left activists). As the New Deal coalition fractured, and as Republicans gained control of the White House, it made some sense for progressives to abandon electoral politics for interest group politics and seek favorable action from legislative committees and the courts. James Patterson has advanced an important version of this thesis; he argues that—far from collapsing—liberalism transmuted into the "rights revolution" (a perspective that restores a role for the Supreme Court). The New Deal coalition may have come apart, but the moral passion of the civil rights movement had helped to unleash a burgeoning rights consciousness, which continued to secure progressive gains through the 1970s and beyond with the expansion of individual and group rights and the growth of governmental entitlements.⁵²

Another problem is that "liberal" tends primarily to have political connotations, even more than such terms as "radical" or "conservative," serving to narrow the focus to the political community. Thus social and cultural change risks being neglected, and many would argue that that is where the real significance of the Sixties lies (or that the focus on electoral politics misses the symbolic meaning of the "Sixties"). The liberal narrative has also to encounter some of the same difficulties as the radical narrative: which, if either, was the more influential in bringing about change, and how can the liberal measures of the Nixon administration be reconciled to it?

While the political history of the era has often been presented as dominated by the liberal project, in recent years a growing band of scholars has argued that this perspective too is mistaken. For them the real significance of the era lies on the right. The leftist narrative of the Sixties often begins with the founding of the SDS in 1960, the subversive seed from which the culture of protest grew, but it could be argued that the story of the Sixties should begin with the founding of Young Americans for Freedom, also in 1960, the seed of the great conservative revival which was ultimately to put Ronald Reagan in the White House.⁵³ According to this historiography, the leftist approach is a dead end, a false start; the most sustained trajectory can be found on the right. In this perspective, the "Sixties" represented little more than a blip in a predominantly conservative political culture.

Liberal scholars, of course, had to explain the reinvigoration of Republican conservatism, but they often attributed this unwelcome phenomenon to Democratic sins rather than to conservative virtues. Perhaps a lingering sense that liberalism should have prevailed encouraged them to dwell on the mistakes over Vietnam and Lyndon Johnson's bungled War on Poverty to explain the Nixon victory in 1968. Much of the literature, such as *Chain Reaction*, the influential book by Thomas B. and Mary Edsall, focuses on the disintegration of the New Deal coalition, the electoral coalition which gave the Democratic party its majority status for over thirty years. This approach tends to place responsibility on the Democratic leadership and its mistakes, alienating many of its white ethnic supporters by being overly solicitous to blacks and other minorities.⁵⁴ Where analysts did give attention to the right, they were slow to take it seriously, echoing the liberal treatment of Barry Goldwater in 1964. When running as the presidential candidate of the Republican party he was often depicted as the aberrant product of a hiccup that would disappear when mainstream liberalism resumed its onward march. Goldwater, it was intimated in the dismissive psychological theorizing of the time, was the candidate of little old ladies in tennis shoes who had somehow been corralled into the Republican party caucuses that chose delegates to the national convention.

But the notions of the rise of the right as a passing eccentricity or as the product of Democratic misjudgments could not be long sustained in the face of continued Republican successes at the polls. This encouraged a broad historical revisionism focused on American conservatism. Presidents like Dwight Eisenhower, Richard Nixon, and Ronald Reagan came to be afforded sympathetic treatments by at least some scholars, leaving Democrats John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson stuck in the sin bin, where Bill Clinton has recently joined them. As part of this reassessment, the origins of the New Right, once seen as a product of the 1970s, were pushed back to the 1960s. It is now argued that the New Right should be understood not simply as a

product of liberal mistakes but on its own terms and as part of the political mainstream and not a maverick eddy. Even before the Great Society, it has been clearly established, groups of conservatives were working to reclaim the republic. In this perspective, the ultimate strengthening of the Republican party owed more to a resilient conservative tradition than to the collapse of the New Deal coalition.⁵⁵

Major biographies of Barry Goldwater, George Wallace, and Richard Nixon have contributed to this re-evaluation of conservatism, but important too have been studies by a new generation of historians too young to remember the Sixties (paralleling the recent studies of the New Left decentering the SDS by a younger generation of scholars).⁵⁶ In the last few years Mary Brennan, Lisa McGirr, Jonathan Schoenwald, and Rick Perlstein have provided us with such accounts.⁵⁷ These scholars have uncovered legions of true believers, both libertarians and traditional conservatives, drawn from an expanding suburban middle class and an affluent working class chafing at governmental interference with their lives. Initially united by their virulent opposition to communism, these activists came to switch their fears from a foreign threat to internal decay. The new unifying force was a concern over crime and morality, as they decried the subversive impact of an intrusive federal state and liberal attempts to extend rights. Ultimately it was these conservatives, committed to a reaffirmation of property-owning individualism and the patriarchal family and increasingly animated by evangelical Protestantism, who proved the more skillful than Americans to their left in mobilizing grassroots passions.

Here we have the suburbs rising up against the streets. Actually, "rising up" is not quite the right phrase. While New Left groups often suffered from a suspicion of organization and leadership, conservatives by temperament were avid organizers, eschewing demonstrations in favor of the painstaking building and penetration of political institutions, a characteristic that may go a long way to explaining their eventual success.⁵⁸ The Wobbly Joe Hill famously marked his execution in 1915 by telling his comrades: "Don't mourn, organize!" Recent scholars have shown that it was American conservatives who took this dictum to heart following Barry Goldwater's devastating electoral demise in 1964.

These studies explain the conservative appeal in terms of worries over disappearing values and a growing distrust of big government liberalism, but a contentious variation has argued for the salience of race in American politics.⁵⁹ White males in both South and North tended to switch allegiance to the Republicans. Thus political historians like Dan T. Carter have argued that the 1960s began the process of the "southernization of American politics," meaning that the racial politics traditionally associated with the South spread to the whole nation.⁶⁰ Following Wallace's success in manipulating race, such Republicans as Richard Nixon adroitly used code words like "law and order"

and "busing" to attract white support. It remains a matter of scholarly dispute whether the rise of the right owed more to authentic worries that liberalism undermined community, family, and religious beliefs or to fears centered on race.⁶¹

Of course, a historiography that focuses too exclusively on an irresistible right-wing movement consummating in the triumph of Ronald Reagan itself risks being seen as perverse. Was Reagan's election in 1980 an ineluctable outcome of the Sixties or did other things happen on the way? Nonetheless, the depth of right-wing politics demonstrates that the Sixties was not just the liberals' decade after all. Conservative dissenters cannot be reduced to a flock of little old ladies in tennis shoes. Kennedy and Johnson were correct after all to worry about their right flank.

One of the problems of the leftist, liberal, and conservative narratives of the Sixties is that partisan sympathies infiltrate the scholarly process. Further, this historiography tends to rely on overly neat distinctions between radical, liberal, and conservative. American society may have been transformed by the Sixties, but there is no satisfactory way of measuring the relative impact of these various influences (which continuously bled into one another anyway). Do we simply give equal time to the three contenders, as if interpreting the Sixties as a television debate? This seems unsatisfactory as an overarching theme. In seeking a new framework, we could take a cue from the organizational school of historians, those who interpreted the Progressive era as a "Search for Order," a large-scale bureaucratic transformation which caught up radicals, liberals, and conservatives alike. The intellectual environment of the 1960s helped to produce the organizational school. Perhaps the approach should be applied to the history of the 1960s. For one thing, it would allow the reforms of the Nixon administration to be seen as part of a larger ongoing process.⁶²

Reinforcing the case for this approach has been recent scholarship in political science. In particular there is the school sometimes known as "historical institutionalism" or the "new institutionalism," which attempts to explain the evolving polity of the United States by focusing on such features as the functioning of the bureaucracy, the politicization of the judiciary, and the role of pressure groups, all parts of the political system not subject to elections, a power shift that seems traceable in part at least to developments in the 1960s. The processes examined in this literature, often linear in direction and incremental in impact, bear more than a passing resemblance to the themes of the organizational synthesis as it is applied to the Progressive era. Historians of the Sixties need again to take note of social science, and thereby perhaps in some measure loosen the hold of the pedagogic and the partisan.

It is not always recalled that between 1963 and 1973 dense thickets of bureaucracy spread across the United States. The Warren Court was partly responsible for this, as its decisions meant that uniform standards were extended into every village and hamlet. Instead of following local customs or their own devices, election officials, police officers, and school boards had to obey rules and regulations ultimately decreed in Washington. Legislative and executive decisions were responsible too. In those years a great regulatory wave swept through Washington. Congress established new agencies, like the Environmental Protection Agency and passed a host of laws affecting health and safety. Washington bureaucrats drew up plans for affirmative action and national standards for welfare payments. This tidal wave of regulation was soon being implemented, and direct federal spending on regulations increased five-fold between 1970 and 1975.⁶³

The radicals on both the left and the right glimpsed something of what was going on. The SDS railed against the growing impersonalization of the system and called for participatory democracy, and right-wingers inveighed against bearded Washington bureaucrats who couldn't even park a bike. At the University of Kansas one student simultaneously chaired the chapters of both the SDS and Young Americans for Freedom! Business historians like David Vogel and administrative historians like Hugh Davis Graham have probed aspects of this institutionalization.⁶⁴ A central concern for political historians is the relationship between state and society. What might be called "the Search for Order" in the Sixties remains the great, untold tale. To a large extent it is the story of the creation of the New Leviathan to replace the New Deal state (a story that cannot be neatly boxed within a decade). In the Sixties, the state was being restructured, in large part in response to the new currents and pressures of the era, from all political directions, but in accordance too with the agendas of those in authority at critical junctures. The experience of the Sixties also showed that individuals do matter, and any synthesis must find room for personalities. Figures like Martin Luther King, George Wallace, Ralph Nader, and Lyndon Johnson may have been constrained by the system, but they also knew how to touch and bend it. They and others did make a difference, leaving to the historian the difficult task of showing how individuals and groups variously resisted, accommodated, manipulated, and enhanced the evolving Leviathan.

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1. Hallbrook Jackson, *The 1890s* (1912–13).
2. Some argue that the real significance of the Sixties was cultural transformation, but the focus in this essay is on politics, other than foreign policy. A recent discussion of the Vietnam historiography is Kendrick Oliver, "Towards a Moral History of the Vietnam War," *Historical Journal* 47 (2004): 757–74.
3. Whether the somewhat mythological "Sixties" can properly be compared to a political project like the New Deal may be questionable, but pedagogically they are usually treated as equivalents.
4. An exception is Rick Perlstein, "Who Owns the Sixties?" in *Major Problems in American History Since 1945*, ed. Robert Griffith and Paula Baker (2nd ed., 2001), first published in 1996 in *Lingua Franca*, which focuses more on the radical movements of left and right than the mainstream. See also the brief essays in David Farber and Beth Bailey, eds., *The Columbia Guide to America in the 1960s* (2001).
5. Confusion has also arisen because of the difficulty of distinguishing between the Sixties as an era and the "Sixties" as zeitgeist. Here "Sixties" is occasionally used to refer to the ethos.
6. There is also the problem of sheer volume. A search of the Amazon.com website for books on the "United States in the 1960s" produced over 52,000 items.
7. *The Independent* (London), June 5, 2004.
8. Thernstrom, *Poverty and Progress* (1964). The standing of the social sciences was then extraordinarily high; in applying theories and techniques drawn from them historians were transporting Sixties' preoccupations back into the past.
9. One might also ask: where did it occur? Treatments of the American Sixties often offer only token references to convulsions elsewhere in the world. For an ambitious attempt to place the 1960s in an international perspective, see Jeremi Suri, *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Détente* (2003), which argues that political leaders around the world countered internal disruption by colluding in developing the policy of détente.
10. Jameson, "Periodizing the 60s," in *The 60s Without Apology*, ed. Sohnia Sayres, et al. (1984), 178–209; Marwick, *The Sixties* (1998); Martínez, "That Old White (Male) Magic," in *De Colores Means All of Us* (1998), 21–30; and Dohrn, "Sixties Lessons and Lore," *Monthly Review* 53 (Dec. 2001): 43–52.
11. We have it on the authority of Gingrich's mother that "Newty is a historian. Newty always knows what he's talking about." Hillary Clinton, *Living History* (2004), 263.
12. Andrew Hunt takes exception to the tendency to link the end of the Sixties with the disintegration of the SDS. Hunt, "When Did the Sixties Happen?" *Journal of Social History* 33 (Fall 1999): 147–61.
13. Margolis, *The Last Innocent Year* (1999); Schulman, *The Seventies* (2001); Allen J. Matusow, *The Unraveling of America* (1984) also ends abruptly in 1968. Edward P. Morgan, *The 60s Experience* (1991), 20, and Marwick, *Sixties*, 247, refer to these years as the "high sixties."
14. See, for example, David Farber, *Chicago '68* (1988); Charles Kaiser, *1968 In America* (1988); George Katsiaficas, *The Imagination of the New Left* (1987); Ronald Fraser, *1968* (1988); David Cate, *The Year of the Barricades* (1988); Carole Fink, Philipp Gassert, and Detlef Junker, eds., *1968* (1998); and Mark Kurlansky, *1968* (2004).
15. Marwick, "1968 and the Cultural Revolution of the Long Sixties," in *Transnational Moments of Change*, ed. Gerd-Rainer Horn and Padraic Kenney (2004), 81–94; Frum, *How We Got Here* (2000). Frum stretches the Sixties from 1965 to 1982. Frum, "Where Did the Sixties Come From?" <http://www.aei.org/bradley/b1060799.htm>.
16. The baby boom and the emerging economic difficulties were related. Some twenty-nine million workers flooded onto the labor market in 1965–80, occasioning increased unemployment, inflation, and stagflation. See John E. Schwarz, *America's Hidden Success* (1984), 124–34.
17. See, for example, Doug Rossinouw, *The Politics of Authenticity* (1998); Robbie Lieberman and David Cochran, "It Seemed a Very Local Affair" in *The New Left Revisited*, ed. John McMillian and Paul Buhle (2003), 11–27.

18. Burner, *Making Peace with the 60s* (1996).

19. There is also no real consensus over the reasons for political fragmentation. Opinions vary over whether to emphasize black protest, Vietnam, or the race riots and white backlash as the most important dislocating element in the polity.

20. Farber, *The Age of Great Dreams* (1994); Chalmers, *And the Crooked Places Made Straight* (1991). Marwick, *Sixties*, stresses the positive in cultural change; a conservative indictment is Roger Kimball, *The Long March* (2000). Myron Magnet, in *The Dream and the Nightmare* (1993, 2000), argues that a Sixties cultural revolution served to create an economic underclass, a book President George W. Bush has described as the most important he has ever read, other than the Bible, which may well be true.

21. Himmelfarb, *One Nation, Two Cultures* (1999). Still, they do not rub along overly happily. Surveys indicate that on a range of issues American values did continue to move in the direction espoused by the counterculture; simultaneously an increasingly vocal religious right resisted these trends.

22. Michael Novak, *The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics* (1972), 215; Chafe, *The Unfinished Journey* (3rd ed., 1995), 380.

23. See, for example, Lewis Feuer, *The Conflict of Generations* (1969).

24. See Bell, ed., *The Radical Right* (1963); and Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics* (1964). See also Kendrick Oliver, "'Post-Industrial Society' and the Psychology of the American Far Right, 1950-74," *Journal of Contemporary History* 34 (1999): 601-18.

25. Bloom and Breines, eds., *"Takin' it to the streets"* (1995); Chalmers, *Crooked Places*.

26. Bruce Schulman has charged that textbooks treat Sixties protest rather dismissively, though the texts he examines are general U.S. history surveys, not student-oriented books focused on the Sixties: Schulman, "Out of the Classroom?," *Journal of American History* 85 (March 1999): 1527-34.

27. Miller, *Democracy is in the Streets* (1987); Breines, *Community and Organization in the New Left, 1962-1968* (1982); Isserman, *If I Had a Hammer* (1987). Veterans like Gitlin and Miller have sometimes been accused of presenting a white male view of the protest movements, which cannot be said of Mary King, *Freedom Song* (1987).

28. James J. Farrell, *The Spirit of the Sixties* (1997) draws attention to the anarcho-communitarianism with roots in the Catholic Worker movement. For Protestant and working-class influences respectively, see Doug Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity* (1998) and Ken Heineman, *Campus Wars* (1994).

29. There is, of course, considerable debate within New Left historiography, including over the definition of the New Left. See the recent collection by authors mostly too young to remember the 60s, John McMillian and Paul Buhle, eds., *The New Left Revisited* (2003).

30. Anderson, *The Movement and the Sixties* (1995), xx. There are many studies of New Left groups, both sympathetic and hostile. Conservative, liberal, and radical scholars vigorously attack or defend legacies of the era in Stephen Macedo, ed., *Reassessing the Sixties* (1997).

31. Peter Collier and David Horowitz, *Destructive Generation* (1989).

32. As well as the student revolts in France, West Germany, Italy, and Mexico, particularly in 1968, by the 1970s there were substantial student movements in at least nineteen Third World countries. See Arif Dirlik, "The Third World," in 1968, Fink et al., 295-317. While studies of the year 1968 do commonly emphasize the international dimension, a subject that has not been accorded comparable attention is the subsequent right-wing reaction in many countries.

33. Hugh Heclo, "The Sixties' False Dawn," in *Integrating the Sixties*, ed. Brian Balogh (1996), 60n22; Stephan and Abigail Thernstrom, *America in Black and White* (1997), 179; Scammon & Wattenberg, *The Real Majority* (1970), 70.

34. Hodgson, *America in Our Time* (1978), 73. The term originated with John Higham, "The Cult of the 'American Consensus,'" *Commentary* 27 (Jan. 1959): 93-100. On the 1940s, see Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle, eds., *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930-1980* (1989); Brinkley, *The End of Reform* (1995).

35. Robert M. Collins, *More* (2000); Greg Calvert and Carol Neiman, *A Disrupted History* (1972), 69-70, 80-1, 111-2.

36. Hodgson's influence is reflected in some of the best syntheses of postwar America, such as Chafe, *Unfinished Journey*; and Iwan Morgan, *Beyond the Liberal Consensus* (1994).

37. Davies, *From Opportunity to Entitlement* (1996); Brinkley, "1968 and the Unraveling of Liberal America," in 1968, 228–30; Vaughn Davis Bornet, *The Presidency of Lyndon B. Johnson* (1983).

38. See, for example, Jonathan Rieder, *Canarsie* (1985); and Jim Sleeper, *The Closest of Strangers* (1990).

39. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis* (1996), and "Reassessing the History of Postwar America," *Prospects* 20 (1995): 493–510; Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto* (1983). Also stressing the fragility of the New Deal coalition is M. J. Heale, *McCarthy's Americans* (1998).

40. There has been considerable debate over the legacy of Great Society reform. For example, Charles A. Murray claims that Great Society programs created a permanently dependent population. Murray, *Losing Ground* (1984). Conversely, Schwarz, in *America's Hidden Success*, sees the programs as reducing poverty.

41. Blum, *Years of Discord*; Matusow, *Unraveling of America*, xiv. Also criticizing the Great Society for its failure to address income redistribution is Michael K. Brown, *Race, Money and the American Welfare State* (1999).

42. Piven and Cloward, *Regulating the Poor* (1971).

43. On the other hand, social histories adopting the bottom up approach tend to de-emphasize the particular significance of the 1960s, as in recent studies tracing the origins of civil rights.

44. To Matusow, these elites were largely composed of Harvard and Columbia academics and their intellectual friends. Others, including Daniel Patrick Moynihan, have emphasized the role of public policy experts, then gaining influence in government circle. Moynihan, *Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding* (1969), and "The Professors and the Poor," in *On Understanding Poverty* (1968), 3–35. See also Robert H. Haveman, *Poverty Policy and Poverty Research* (1987). An early analysis in this vein by Kevin Phillips identifies the "corporate welfarists, planners and academicians of the Liberal Establishment" with an unrepresentative "privileged elite." Phillips, *The Emerging Republican Majority* (1969), 469–70. Emphasizing the reforming initiatives of elites is John D. Skrentny, *The Minority Rights Revolution* (2002).

45. Rebecca Klatch discusses the affinities between young radicals and conservatives in *A Generation Divided* (1999).

46. Gareth B. Davies, "War on Dependency," *Journal of American Studies* 26 (Aug. 1992): 205–32.

47. James T. Patterson meticulously integrates the two in *Grand Expectations* (1996).

48. Compare, for example, Matusow, *Unraveling*, 232, 235, 240, and Thomas B. with Mary Edsall, *Chain Reaction* (1991), 11–2, 95, 182–3.

49. This tendency had been noted at the end of the 1950s. See, for example, Lance Packard, *The Status Seekers* (1959), 33.

50. David Steigenwald, *The Sixties and the End of Modern America* (1995). For a recent study of the Court, see Lucas A. Powe, Jr., *The Warren Court and American Politics* (2000).

51. The same point could be made about the protest movements. "National" organizations like the SDS may have disintegrated, but a mass of localized movements proliferated through the early 1970s.

52. Patterson, "The Rise of Rights and Rights Consciousness in American Politics, 1930s–1970s," in *Contesting Democracy*, ed. Byron E. Shafer and Anthony J. Badger (2001), 201–23. See also Michael Schudson, *The Good Citizen* (1998), 264–74; and Kenneth Cmiel, "The Emergence of Human Rights Politics in the United States," *Journal of American History* 86 (Dec. 1999), 1234.

53. Studies of YAF include John A. Andrew III, *The Other Side of the Sixties* (1997); Gregory L. Schneider, *Cadres for Conservatism* (1999); and Klatch, *Generation Divided*. On recent studies of the conservatives, see James A. Hijiya, "The Conservative 1960s," *Journal of American Studies* 37 (Aug. 2003): 201–27.

54. Edsall, *Chain Reaction*. Paul Buhle, in "How Sweet It Wasn't" in *New Left Revisited*, 257–72, takes exception to approaches that blame the failure of liberalism on the New Left and

black protesters whose actions alienated otherwise sympathetic liberals and mainstream Democrats. Adolph Reed Jr. and Julian Bond have also attacked interpretations that place responsibility for liberal failures on the willingness of liberals to identify too far with "special interests": "Equality: Why We Can't Wait," *The Nation*, Dec. 9, 1991, pp. 733-37.

55. Several of these studies began life as doctoral dissertations and tend not to trace the origins of right-wing movements much before the 1960s. It is not entirely clear whether the lesson should be that the Sixties were an aberration in an essentially conservative polity or that liberal failures and radical excesses were as important as underlying conservative resentments in explaining the rise of the New Right.

56. See, for example, Robert A. Goldberg, *Barry Goldwater* (1995); Dan T. Carter, *The Politics of Rage* (1995); Joan Hoff, *Nixon Reconsidered* (1994).

57. Brennan, *Turning Right in the Sixties* (1995); McGirr, *Suburban Warriors* (2001); Schoenwald, *A Time for Choosing* (2001); Perlstein, *Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus* (2001). See also William Berman, *America's Right Turn* (1998). One scholar of the older generation to anticipate this historiographical trend is Godfrey Hodgson, *The World Turned Right Side Up* (1996). Curiously, while there is a tendency to mark the rise of the New Right from about 1964, Congressional conservatives had generally been successful in obstructing liberal policies between 1938 and 1964, after which they were overwhelmed for a couple of years. What part did this sudden unaccustomed impotence, as distinct from Goldwater's inspiring debacle, play in the grassroots reinvigoration of the right?

58. Hijiya, "Conservative 1960s," 203-7

59. This emphasis on racism aligns these studies with the work of Sugrue and Hirsch on northern urban politics. Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, and "Reassessing the History of Postwar America"; and Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto*.

60. See Carter, *Politics of Rage*. One essay emphasizing the role of race in the undoing of 1960s liberalism is Tom Wicker, "Lyndon Johnson and the Roots of Contemporary Conservatism," in *Long Time Gone*, ed. Alexander Bloom (2001): 99-121. This essay holds that the overselling of and limitations to the Great Society programs made possible a white backlash that was more destructive of Democratic hegemony than frustrations over Vietnam.

61. Some scholars have drawn attention to the role of the West as well as the South in the growth of the New Right. See, for example, Goldberg, *Barry Goldwater*; Alan Brinkley, "The Problem of American Conservatism," *American Historical Review* 99 (1994): 417-9; McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*.

62. On the use of the organizational approach see Brian Balogh, ed., *Integrating the Sixties*; Schudson, *Good Citizen*, 264-74. A recent essay discussing the need for an integration of history and political science is Ira Katznelson, "The Possibilities of Analytical Political History," in *The Democratic Experiment*, ed. Meg Jacobs, William J. Novak, and Julian E. Zelizer (2003), 381-400.

63. David Vogel, *Kindred Strangers* (1996), 272. States added their own regulations; for example, laws requiring doctors to report child abuse cases were enacted in every state in the mid-60s. Schudson, *Good Citizen*, 268.

64. Klatch, *Generation Divided*; Vogel, *Kindred Strangers*, and "The Public Interest Movement and the American Reform Tradition," *Political Science Quarterly* 95 (1980-81), 607-27; Graham, *Uncertain Triumph* (1984), and "Legacies of the 1960s," *Journal of Policy History* 10 (1998): 267-88.