

**The Once and Future Coalition: Evincing the
Ideological Diversity of 1960s Conservatism in
America**

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate the ideological heterogeneity of conservatism in the 1960s. Typical academic narratives portray conservatism as a coherent ideology, unified around racial conservatism, fiscal conservatism, or both.

My research disputes this. My qualitative work demonstrates that the leading conservative politicians of the era—Barry Goldwater, Richard Nixon, Strom Thurmond, and George Wallace, to name a few—held widely divergent views on economic and civil rights issues. Further, my research investigating Senate voting patterns in the 88th and 89th Congresses demonstrates that conservative Senators were widely split over economic and civil rights legislation. Based on voting records, I established the existence of three economic voting blocs and two civil rights voting blocs, thereby postulating the existence of six potential “crossover voting blocs.” I then assigned each Senator included in the analysis to one of the six voting blocs. While Non-Southern Democrats (liberals) were almost entirely in voting bloc “A”—liberal on economics and liberal on civil rights—the remaining Senators, or Southern Democrats and Republicans (the Senators comprising the conservative coalition), exhibited significantly more variance. On economics, Southern Democrats and Republicans voted in surprisingly substantial numbers for Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society. These conservatives voted in lockstep with fiscally liberal Non-Southern Democrats, even as other Republicans and Southern Democrats virulently opposed Johnson’s economic agenda. And on civil rights, Republicans voted almost uniformly in favor of the two crucial pieces of legislation—the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965—aligning them with Non-Southern Democrats in opposition to the Southern Democratic bloc. That these Republicans existed side-by-side in the conservative coalition with Southern Democrats

evinces conservatism's heterogeneity. My variance calculations of the voting patterns of the Non-Southern Democrats, Southern Democrats, Republicans, and Southern Democrats plus Republicans offer further confirmation of conservative heterogeneity.

Finally, this thesis briefly examines the modern-day implications of this thesis on conservative politics. I note that although conservative homogeneity has increased in the past several decades, conservatism continues to contain greater potential for ideological variance than liberalism. This potential was partially borne out in the 2016 Presidential election; indeed, through a calculation of ideological scores of the Presidential candidates from each party, I demonstrate that the Republican candidates demonstrate higher levels of variability on social issues.

Chapter 1

Introduction

American political scientists and historians have long fought over the core principles and beliefs that unite conservatives in America, and have tended to hone in on the 1960s as a pivotal period in the creation of conservative ideological coherency and belief. Historians and political scientists alike have pinpointed the tumultuous time of Nixon and Wallace, Vietnam and Woodstock, and MLK and RFK as the fiery torch that welded together various demographic and ideological factions into the modern conservative coalition. As Joseph Crespino noted in his insightful *Strom Thurmond's America*, “The signal events of the 1960s helped precipitate the conservative takeover of the GOP, one consolidated by Ronald Reagan.”¹ Therefore, this thesis will concentrate on the political alignment and realignment that occurred during the 1960s as a tool for, ultimately, examining the ideological origins of American conservatism. I find that there existed numerous “crossover voting blocs” within the conservative coalition in the 1960s, and that these blocs held divergent and varied views on both economic and civil rights issues. This demonstrates that the narrative of American conservatism as a particularly cohesive group, at least in the 1960s, is essentially false; American conservatism, at its modern genesis in the 1960s, was marked by ideological conflict. Finally, this thesis will examine the modern day homogeneity of the parties, and note that although both parties² are currently stable ideological groups, the possibility of fissure is greater for Republicans than for Democrats.

¹ Crespino, Joseph. *Strom Thurmond's America*. Macmillan, 2012, p. 3

² And, by proxy, both ideological groups, since conservatism has become synonymous with the Republican Party, and liberalism with the Democratic Party

What is a Conservative?

In this thesis, I use the term “conservative,” in the first two chapters, to apply to politicians who are commonly understood to have been “conservative” by historians, by their political peers, and by themselves. I use no ideological litmus test to define conservatism, since this thesis begins with the premise that a certain group of politicians were, indeed, conservative, and proceeds from this foundation towards an understanding of conservatism as an ideology.

Throughout this thesis, I also use the term “conservative” as an adjective to describe views on civil rights and economics. For instance, I frequently refer to views held by Southern Democrats as “racially conservative.” I do this not to imply that this was the de facto conservative position, but simply because this is often the term used to describe such racial views. It is certainly possible for someone to be “conservative” (or, perhaps better put, to be a member of the conservative coalition) and not hold conservative views on civil rights or economics.

In chapter four of this thesis, I note that conservatism has, in contemporary understanding, come to be seen as indistinguishable from the Republican Party.

The Ideological Makeup of 1960s Conservatism: A Literature Review

In this literature review, I will offer an overview of three schools of thought that describe the intellectual foundations of 1960s-era conservatism. The schools emphasize conservatism as racial conservatism, conservatism as racial conservatism *plus* fiscal conservatism, and conservatism as a color-blind ethos. As I will later demonstrate, the first

two claims stand in stark opposition to the claim put forth by this thesis, namely, that conservatism in the 1960s was marked by ideological heterogeneity, and that conservatism contained strong and clear elements of civil rights liberalism and even economic liberalism.

1. Conservatism as Racial Conservatism

Accounts of American political realignment in the 1960s and 1970s tend to be characterized by the weight that they grant racial animus in forging the conservative political coalition. Many accounts consider racial conservatism to be the primary factor uniting American conservatives in the 1960s. Political scientist Eric Schickler, author of *Racial Realignment*, sees race as essential to the formation of both the modern liberal and conservative coalitions. Schickler essentially argues that the transformation of political parties in the 1960s was inevitable because of grassroots shifts uniting economic liberalism (i.e. the belief that government ought to play an active role in economic regulation and wealth redistribution) and racial liberalism (i.e. the belief that government ought to ameliorate racial inequalities and dismantle Jim Crow). These issues became intertwined as early as the 1930s, Schickler writes, as Democratic Party actors—in particular labor unions—“worked to undermine the supposed bargain between northern liberals and southern racists.”³ These actors pushed the Democrats to create a platform based both on entitlement programs and civil rights bills. This reading flies in the face of traditional historiographical accounts which depict the New Deal coalition as one in which “Northern Democrats agreed to avoid addressing civil rights policy in return for southern Democrats’ cooperation in building the

³ Schickler, Eric. *Racial Realignment: The Transformation of American Liberalism, 1932-1965*. Princeton University Press, 2016, p. 9

New Deal welfare state.”⁴ But the traditional reading, according to Schickler, fails to grasp that political actors were indeed pushing to include civil rights reform in the Democratic Party platform—something that presaged and paved the way for later Democratic liberalism on civil rights issues. Indeed, by 1948, “support for civil rights had become a litmus test for liberalism,”⁵ and Schickler notes that Southern Democrats were essentially the albatrosses of their party, with their eventual move towards the Republican side of the aisle all but preordained. As he writes in the book’s conclusion, “The civil rights realignment was rooted in changes in the constituency base of the Democratic Party that took place during the 1930s.”⁶

Schickler writes that economic conservatives increasingly found that their political arguments, which emphasized self-sufficiency and individual autonomy, possessed an easy appeal to supporters of Jim Crow segregation. He notes that, “starting in the late 1940s, Republican advocates of a coalition with the South emphasized the fit between their anti-statist, limited government attacks on the New Deal and southerners’ interest in defending Jim Crow.”⁷ He writes that Republican rhetoric emphasizing “states’ rights” was essentially code for defending what he identifies as the twin pillars of conservatism: laissez-faire economics and support for segregation. These appeals resonated in the South. Schickler writes that, “Political entrepreneurs...saw the coalition opportunity created by southern opposition to the labor-infused direction of the New Deal and articulated a conservative vision...well suited to appeal in the South.”⁸ However, such racial animus was apparently not restricted to the South; Schickler notes that, “In the North, economically conservative

⁴ Ibid., p. 8

⁵ Ibid., p. 96

⁶ Ibid., p. 271

⁷ Ibid., p. 240

⁸ Ibid.

Republican voters had long shown skepticism towards civil rights initiatives.”⁹ Schickler portrays this unification of racial and economic conservatism as an outgrowth of the Democrats’ shift towards linking economic liberalism with racial liberalism, but he seems to imply that many conservatives were ready to see racial policy linked with economic policy.

Other accounts of political realignment go even further than Schickler’s, and suggest that economic issues hardly mattered a whit in forging the conservative coalition, but that conservative political rhetoric focusing on economic policy was de facto code language that communicated racial conservatism or outright racial prejudice. Historian Kevin Kruse seems to tack this line in his work, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism*. In this well-received account of the changing demographic patterns of the metro Atlanta area, Kruse writes that conservatives were forced to speak in a new language in order to propagate the segregation (in this case, residential segregation) that they desired. Kruse writes that such coded language was a direct response to the Civil Rights Movement, which he says made overt racial appeals politically untenable: “Because of their confrontation with the civil rights movement, white southern conservatives were forced to abandon their traditional, populist, and often starkly racist demagoguery and instead craft a new conservatism predicated on a language of rights, freedoms, and individualism.”¹⁰ In fact, Kruse quite literally links the rise of white suburbia to white supremacist movements, on the apparent basis of their mutual economic views aimed at racial segregation. “To be sure,” Kruse writes, “white suburbia looked little like the world of white supremacy. But these worlds had much in common—from remarkably similar levels of racial, social, and political hegemony to their shared

⁹ Ibid., 241

¹⁰ Kruse, Kevin M. *White flight: Atlanta and the making of modern conservatism*. Princeton University Press, 2013, p. 6

ideologies that stressed individual rights over communal responsibilities, privatization over public welfare, and ‘free enterprise’ above all else.”¹¹

The thrust of Kruse’s argument centers on the idea that segregationist resistance prompted the formation of new conservative causes, primarily tax breaks and privatizations allegedly aimed at buttressing white pocketbooks and restricting black advancement. Chief among such policies were “homeowner rights” policies, which gave residents of certain communities wide latitude in determining who was permitted to buy property in the community. “Homeowner rights” policies, defended on the basis of individual freedoms and the protections of private property, effectually barred blacks from purchasing property in select neighborhoods and municipalities. Kruse writes that other institutions tried this tactic, too. For instance, he notes that Atlanta’s prestigious Lovett School barred black children from attending on the basis of the school’s “right to freedom of association.”¹² Kruse also writes that growing anger over both taxes and social services programs, hallmarks of modern conservatism, took on a decidedly racial appeal in Atlanta in the late 1960s. Writing of white Atlantans, he states, “As they saw it, whites paid the vast majority...of taxes in the city...this supposed disparity between the tax burden of whites and blacks took on a strongly racist tone as whites charged that they unfairly bore the financial burden for a welfare system that catered to blacks.”¹³ Thus, Kruse essentially argues that economic conservatism became a rhetorical front for prevailing racial animus in the South and in the conservative movement in general.

Accounts of race-based political realignment tend to emphasize a handful of flippant and off-the-cuff remarks by politicians in the midst of the Civil Rights Movement. For

¹¹ Ibid., p. 8

¹² Ibid., p. 175

¹³ Ibid., p. 126

instance, Kruse notes that, after signing the Civil Rights Act eliminating segregation in businesses and public accommodations, Lyndon Baines Johnson apocryphally declared, “We just delivered the South to the Republican Party for a generation.”¹⁴ This, Kruse seems to imply, is evidence that Southerners are regarded to have voted solely on their racial views. Historian Dan Carter, though his account of the origins of modern conservatism is perhaps more nuanced than Schickler’s and Kruse’s racially centered explanations, falls into a similar tendency in his *The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, the Origins of the New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics*. He opens his book with evidence that Wallace’s racial prejudice lay at the center of his political orientation, as he quotes Wallace’s infamous 1963 inauguration speech. Wallace famously shouted from the steps of the Alabama statehouse, “In the name of the greatest people that have ever trod this earth, I draw the line in the dust...and I say...segregation now...segregation tomorrow...segregation forever.”¹⁵ In another instance, Wallace apparently said about his 1958 gubernatorial loss to Alabama Attorney General John Patterson (who ran with the outright support of the KKK), “Well boys, no other son-of-a-bitch will ever out-nigger me again.”¹⁶ Carter also uses this quote as proof that, if Wallace himself did not feel racial prejudice, then he at least recognized the need to appeal to racial prejudices to win over voters.

Contemporary journalistic accounts also make ample use of such quotations as proof that the key to political realignment lay in race baiting. A 2001 *New Yorker* article by Louis Menand, appropriately titled “He Knew He Was Right: The Tragedy of Barry Goldwater,” wrote that although Goldwater “hoped his personal opposition to discrimination would win

¹⁴ Ibid., 231

¹⁵ Carter, Dan T. *The politics of rage: George Wallace, the origins of the new conservatism, and the transformation of American politics*. LSU Press, 2000, p. 11

¹⁶ Ibid., 96

him the votes of black people,” he recognized the need to go after white Southern voters, and in doing so, actively cease “chasing the votes of African-Americans.”¹⁷ Moreover, Menand notes that Goldwater himself told a group of Georgia activists in 1961 that Republicans “ought to go hunting where the ducks are.”¹⁸ The article helpfully follows up on this quotation by noting that, “the ducks...turned out to be white Democrats in revolt against integration.”¹⁹ And hordes of journalists and scholars have examined the notorious 1981 recording of political strategist Lee Atwater explaining how Republicans can win the votes of racists, and used it as evidence that Republican and conservative political strategy is indeed aimed directly at appealing to racial prejudices. In the recording, Atwater, speaking off-the-record to a handful of reporters, said the following:

*“You start out in 1954 by saying, “Nigger, nigger, nigger.” By 1968 you can’t say “nigger”—that hurts you, backfires. So you say stuff like, uh, forced busing, states’ rights, and all that stuff, and you’re getting so abstract. Now, you’re talking about cutting taxes, and all these things you’re talking about are totally economic things and a byproduct of them is, blacks get hurt worse than whites....”*²⁰

This, according to historian Rick Perlstein, has become a sort of “smoking gun” for liberals convinced that conservatives deliberately utilize racial appeals.²¹ Indeed, the quote has been scrutinized and analyzed in a number of works of political theory and analysis, including Corey Robin’s *The Reactionary Mind*. Perlstein also notes, perhaps pertinently, that Atwater did proudly declare in the same interview that his generation of Southerners

¹⁷ Menand, Louis. "He Knew He Was Right: The Tragedy of Barry Goldwater." *New Yorker* 26 Mar. 2001: Web.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Perlstein, Rick. "Lee Atwater's Infamous 1981 Interview on the Southern Strategy." *Nation* 13 Nov. 2012: Web

²¹ *Ibid.*

“will be the first generation...that won’t be prejudiced.”²² Nevertheless, Atwater’s quote retains its shock value, and its prime place in the shrine of evidence used to implicate Republicans for the supposedly hyper-racial foundations of their party and their political conservatism.

2. *Conservatism as Economic Conservatism and Racial Conservatism*

Other authors offer more nuanced accounts of the development of conservatism. For instance, the aforementioned Dan Carter, in *The Politics of Rage*, argues that modern conservatism was a veritable alchemy of “racial fear, anticommunism, cultural nostalgia, and traditional right-wing economics.”²³ In arguing for a multifaceted basis for modern conservatism, Carter gives more credence than the likes of Schickler and Kruse to the idea of conservatism as a coalition of various demographic groups and ideological interests. For one, Carter notes that the ascendant conservative coalition had nationwide appeal, and moreover, had appeal to divergent social classes of Americans. “The typical Wallace voter,” Carter writes, equating Wallace voters with conservatives, “was just as likely to be a suburban member of the Rotary Club as a regular at the Union Hall.”²⁴ Moreover, the varied policy positions of this new conservative coalition forced politicians to walk “precarious tightropes.”²⁵ Carter writes that Richard Nixon, perhaps the most important politician to the process of conservative political realignment, “was conservative, but not too conservative, a defender of civil rights, but always solicitous of white southerners’ concerns” in trying to

²² Ibid.

²³ Carter, p. 12

²⁴ Ibid., p. 208

²⁵ Ibid., p. 327

preserve and shore up the conservative coalition.²⁶ Carter writes that Nixon frequently pivoted away from racial issues to “more traditional themes of economic conservatism and limited government,” but that “more often, he stood on the lofty ground of foreign policy.”²⁷ Carter’s portrayal of Nixon thus focuses on Nixon’s ability to unite these various ideological strands under a somewhat coherent umbrella.

Carter’s argument differs from Kruse’s in that he does not view economic arguments as a ruse aimed at covering up or hiding racial prejudice from public view. Historian Joseph Crespino also tacks this line in his work, *Strom Thurmond’s America*. In this nuanced portrait of the origins of modern conservatism, Crespino essentially argues that economic conservatism and racial conservatism went hand-in-hand in the conservative movement. His account differs slightly from Schickler’s in that he does not necessarily portray the merger of these two beliefs under a single political umbrella as a specific and concerted reaction to the political merger of racial and economic liberalism. Rather, like Kruse, he views economic and racial conservatism as intensely compatible beliefs, but unlike Kruse (and like Carter), he views them as separable. It is the linkage of the two beliefs, Crespino argues, that undergirds conservatism.

Crespino argues his thesis primarily through arguing that Strom Thurmond embodies this linkage of economic and racial conservatism, and that it was this vision that prevailed in the Republican Party. He calls Thurmond’s brand of politics, “Sunbelt conservatism,” and writes that, “Scholars make facile distinctions between Sunbelt conservatives, who are figured as modern, principled, and broadly ideological, and southern conservatives, who are

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

figured chiefly as backward and racist.”²⁸ Sunbelt conservatives, according to Crespino, are largely portrayed in literature such as Matthew Lassiter’s *The Silent Majority* as suburbanites who largely wanted to ignore racial issues, and move towards a post-racial, economically focused brand of politics. But Crespino argues that distinguishing Sunbelt conservatives from their political affiliates who were apparently motivated more by racial prejudices is to ignore that the two elements were complementary and mutually reinforcing. It is for this reason that Strom Thurmond emerges as such a pivotal figure in Crespino’s telling.

Crespino notes that Thurmond was one of the first Southern politicians to broadly reject the New Deal agenda in favor of a fuller embrace of free-market capitalism. He notes that Thurmond was “one of the Senate’s most determined foes of labor unions and one of its greatest friends to business interests...his disdain for labor bosses became interchangeable with his loathing of civil rights leaders.”²⁹ Indeed, Thurmond’s support for business interests came decades before he switched from the Democratic to Republican Party. “Years before his party switch,” Crespino writes, “Thurmond was already emerging as a leading member of an economically postwar conservative coalition.”³⁰ Thurmond was also a leader of the Senate’s “Southern Wall,” a collection of Southern Senators who, as Robert Caro artfully describes in *Master of the Senate*, utilized legislative tactics and machinations in order to block the passage of federal civil rights legislation. Thurmond was one of just one of the broader group of Southern conservatives committed to protecting Jim Crow. As eminent Georgia Senator Richard Russell said in 1957, “I would gladly part with what remains of this life...if it would guarantee the preservation of a civilization of two races of unmixed blood in

²⁸ Crespino, p. 8

²⁹ Ibid., p. 103

³⁰ Ibid., p. 121

the land I love.”³¹ Thurmond was similarly unapologetic; his twenty-four hour filibuster against the largely ineffective Civil Rights Act of 1957 broke a Senate record. For Crespino, the culmination of Thurmond’s political ascendancy (and the political ascendancy of his ideology) was his endorsement of Richard Nixon in 1968. According to Crespino, “Thurmond’s endorsement...represented the new political marriage that [Nixon] made with the politics of the Sunbelt.”³² This endorsement, Crespino seems to think, was a logical step in Thurmond’s progression towards embodying conservatism himself, a progression begun in his quixotic 1948 campaign for President under the banner of the Dixiecrat Party, which argued not only for segregation (as it did famously), but also railed against labor unions, regarding them as a threat to the American capitalistic order.

3. *Conservatism as Colorblindness: The Suburban Ethos*

The historians and political scientists discussed up to this point are united by their belief that shared racial views were integral to the development of modern conservatism. Some scholars, however, somewhat mitigate the effects of race in establishing both the liberal and conservative coalitions. For instance, James Glaser, in his *Race, Campaign Politics, and the Realignment in the South*, argues that the dearth of racial issues in the political arena, at least in the 1970s, prevented Republicans from consolidating support in the South. Glaser notes that, “Although the Republican Party has grown enormously [in the South] since the 1960s, it has not achieved the full scale electoral success many expected.”³³ While the South tended Republican in Presidential elections (with the exception of

³¹ Fite, Gilbert C. *Richard B. Russell, Jr., Senator from Georgia*. UNC Press Books, 2002, p. 116

³² Crespino, p. 227

³³ Glaser, James M. *Race, campaign politics, and the realignment in the South*. Yale University Press, 1998., p. xii

Democratic native son Jimmy Carter in 1976), Republicans struggled to win local and statewide elections, and until 1994, Democrats held the majority of Southern Congressional seats. Indeed, “The Democratic Party’s fate [in the South] was not sealed by the civil rights movement and the political changes it engendered.”³⁴ This, he argues, is because the Democrats were able to keep the political spotlight on explicitly nonracial issues; in this manner, he writes, they successfully assembled coalitions of black voters and moderate suburbanites. “Democrats have blunted the edge on racial issues.”³⁵

Glaser’s argument essentially concedes some of the points that would later be made by the likes of Kruse, Crespino, and Carter regarding the modern Republican Party’s racially based origins. However, he argues that the consolidation of the Republican Party under a racially conservative umbrella was not permanent and nor was it complete. In his study of successful Congressional Democratic campaigns across the South (primarily campaigns occurring in the 1980s), Glaser observes that, in instances where the Republican candidate and Democratic candidate held similar or identical views on racial policies (or, more pertinently, were perceived to have similar views on racial policies), then the idea that Republicans could unite around racial issues went completely out the window. Other eminent political scientists have proffered similar arguments. For instance, Earl and Merle Black’s 2002 book *The Rise of Southern Republicans* tackles the same puzzle as Glaser: “If the old solid Democratic South has vanished, a comparably solid Republican South has not developed.”³⁶ Their work concludes that Republicans actually have begun to approach one-party control of the South (at least since 1994), but that ardent Southern conservatism

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 27

³⁶ Black, Earl, Merle Black, and Earl Black. *The rise of southern Republicans*. Harvard University Press, 2009, p. 3

reduces the national political viability of the Republican Party. For this reason, their work is not entirely relevant to this paper, but their observations that racially moderate Democrats found political success in the 1970s and 1980s in the South helps to buttress Glaser's argument. So too does Alexander Lamis's *The Two Party South*, which, as the title implies, investigates the modern predominance of a two party structure in the South. Similar to Glaser, Lamis concludes that the Democrats' ability to play down political differences on racial issues contributed to their continued success.

Again, Lamis, Glaser, and the Black brothers all acknowledge the role of race in sparking partisan realignment. But they add that alignments are not absolute, particularly when race is eliminated as a political issue. The scholar who perhaps comes the closest to minimizing the prevalence of race in conservative political alignment is Matthew Lassiter, author of *The Silent Majority*. Lassiter writes, "Many scholars and pundits have embraced a top-down thesis of electoral realignment that credits the regional base of the Republican Party to a race-driven Southern strategy."³⁷ However, Lassiter argues that the scholarly focus on race as a political unifier and consolidator is mistaken, and further argues that voters susceptible to top-down racial appeals were only on the fringes, and did not constitute a significant political group. "While numerous GOP campaigns have featured 'dirty tricks' and veiled appeals to the racial resentments of a subset of the white electorate," he allows, "accounts of regional transformation that highlight these stories often conflate the fringe with the middle and invert the sequence of political change in the South."³⁸ Instead of conservative political elites forging a political coalition on the basis of shared racial animus,

³⁷ Lassiter, Matthew D. *The silent majority: Suburban politics in the sunbelt south*. Princeton University Press, 2013, p. 5

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 227

in other words, it was the grassroots, color-blind politics of modern suburbanites that changed the political face of the South and of the entire country.

Such voters were more motivated by class considerations and economic issues than racial politics. Lassiter writes, “The suburban politics of middle-class warfare charted a middle course between the open racism of the extreme right and the egalitarian agenda of the civil rights movement, based on an ethos of color-blind individualism.”³⁹ Suburban political activism revolved around “a color blind defense of the consumer rights and residential privileges of middle-class white families,” which, he says, proved a more viable political pursuit than the “overtly racialized tactics” of the Southern Strategy.⁴⁰ Moreover, Lassiter postulates that the dominance of this suburban ethos paved the way for the persistence of a two-party system in the modern South. “Third way” Democrats in the mold of Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton, who preached a color-blind social and fiscal moderation, proved immensely successful. If political realignment had indeed been solely about race, Lassiter seems to imply, then it would have offended the sensibilities of suburbanites (driving them into the waiting, moderate arms of the Democratic Party).

Conclusion: Most of these accounts, while divergent, emphasize the ascendant conservative coalition as an essentially cohesive group. Certainly, Schickler, Kruse, Carter, Crespino, and Lassiter seem to think so, though Lassiter diverges from the rest in that he emphasizes a nascent suburban ethos, as opposed to racial concerns, as a primary unifier. Glaser, Lamis, and the Black brothers lend credence to the idea that, were race removed from the picture, the conservative coalition would collapse. Their accounts imply that the idea that the

³⁹ Ibid., p. 4

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 228

conservative coalition was not, in fact, stable at all, despite Nixon political strategist Kevin Phillips's assertion that the Nixon's 1968 election to the Presidency heralded the advent of an "Emerging Republican Majority." But even in noting that the conservative political coalition was liable to collapse in given elections, the accounts of Glaser, Lamis, and the Black brothers fall short in noting precisely how unstable the conservative coalition was at its inception, at least from an ideological perspective.

The Ideological Diversity of Conservatism in the 1960s

The conservative coalition that thrust Richard Nixon into office in 1968 and 1972 was an inherently unstable coalition, marked by ideological heterogeneity. Its key members possessed divergent views on economic and civil rights issues. The ideological coalition that elected Nixon was marked more by a shared opposition to liberalism than any comprehensive, shared commitments to political goals. Such instability meant that the coalition was liable to collapse as soon as Democrats neutralized politically fraught issues that benefitted conservatives. Indeed, Jimmy Carter successfully did precisely this in 1976, on his way to winning states throughout the conservative Deep South and the Mountain West on his way to the White House. The electoral and political implications of the extreme heterogeneity of the conservative coalition are significant, as it effectively falsifies the common refrains about race and political alignment that point to racial conservatism as the single pivotal characteristic in forging the conservative coalition.

Contemporary scholarship also emphasizes conservatism as an ideologically diverse coalition. Notably, University of Virginia politics professor James Ceaser has written that conservatism consists of at least four ideological strains. He writes, "The assumption of

theoretical unity [in American conservatism] is, however, false, and the various efforts to arrive at the one position of American conservatism are therefore doomed to failure. American conservatism is a remarkably disparate movement.”⁴¹ He argues that the four “heads” of American political conservatism are paleo-conservatism, neo-conservatism, libertarianism, and the religious right, and that these heads “embrace principles so different that, in other places...those holding such principles have become the bitterest of foes.”⁴² In the United States however, these various strands are united by a common hatred of liberalism. “Were liberalism to cease to exist tomorrow,” Ceaser writes, “conservatism as we know it would surely begin to break apart the next day.”⁴³ Of course, not all who oppose contemporary American liberalism can be said to be conservative; only those who fit in one of the four conservative strands and oppose liberalism can, according to Ceaser, claim the conservative mantle. Eminent historian George Nash also notes the disparate intellectual trends within conservatism in his seminal *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945*. In this 1976 work, Nash writes that American conservatism consisted of three primary groups: libertarians, traditionalists, and anticommunists. He argues that these three groups were united under the leadership of William F. Buckley into a coherent political movement, but that the fusion of these strands is not absolute; like Ceaser, he argues that these intellectual currents are at least partially contradictory.

But Ceaser and Nash are largely speaking of conservatism as an intellectual movement, as distinct from modern conservatism as a political movement. Yet these intellectual contradictions did seem to manifest themselves in policy differences among

⁴¹ Ceaser, James W. "Four Heads and One Heart: The Modern Conservative Movement." In *APSA 2010 Annual Meeting Paper*. 2010.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

prominent conservative politicians in the Nixon era. The remainder of this chapter will serve to qualitatively highlight the disparate positions on civil rights and economics held by prominent conservative politicians of the era.

Divergent 1960s-era Conservative Views on Economics and Civil Rights

1. Conservatism's Varied Economic Views

Conservatives were intensely split on economic issues during the 1960s. On one hand, some conservatives lined up behind free-market individualism, opposition to labor movements and the New Deal, and antagonism to federal entitlement and welfare programs. Barry Goldwater epitomized this strand of conservatism; in many instances he advocated for policies “well outside of the political mainstream.”⁴⁴ While he was not a pure libertarian, Goldwater did come out in favor of making Social Security voluntary, in favor of abolishing the quite-popular Tennessee Valley Authority, and against a whole host of federal entitlement programs, including Medicare and Medicaid. Goldwater also emerged, in the 1950s, as a leading opponent of President Dwight Eisenhower’s moderate governing record and “affirmation of New Deal programs.”⁴⁵ As early as his first campaign for office, a successful 1952 Senatorial run from Arizona, Goldwater espoused the sort of free-market ideals that would become his hallmark. Biographer Robert Alan Goldberg notes that, “He pledged to halt the ‘expanding governmental bureaucracy, government-created inflation, and...the highest taxes ever extracted from the American citizen.’”⁴⁶ His animosity towards organized labor was also evident from his early political activism in Arizona, where he advocated for right-to-work laws that freed workers from being forced to join unions.

⁴⁴ Goldberg, Robert Alan. *Barry Goldwater*. Yale University Press, 1995, p. 218

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 118

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 93

Goldwater's economic conservatism made him an ideal political ally to the Southern conservatives who opposed organized labor interests and were friends to the American business community. Crespino notes that South Carolina Senator Strom Thurmond in particular was inclined towards Goldwater's brand of economic conservatism. He writes that by 1958, Thurmond was a member of "a bipartisan coalition of business interests that waged their own campaign of resistance against the New Deal and its legacies."⁴⁷ Thurmond also worked to curb the power of unions. According to Crespino, Thurmond's "disdain for labor bosses became interchangeable with his loathing of civil rights leaders."⁴⁸ He worked with business leaders in the South to support a healthy business climate, with low corporate taxes and minimal union power. Thurmond sought to unburden American businesses from regulations, and he was joined in this effort by other Southern conservatives, such as George Wallace. Thurmond and Wallace spouted free market ideals by the mid 1960s. But as we shall see, their economic policy backgrounds are somewhat more complex; each supported generous government welfare policies in the 1940s and 1950s that place them starkly at odds with the burgeoning Sunbelt coalition that emphasized deregulation. These earlier positions actually placed them in concordance with many of their Southern conservative colleagues, who advocated for government spending and entitlement programs.

In the middle of the conservative economic spectrum sat relative moderates such as George Romney and Richard Nixon. These men advocated for and enacted policies that balanced a business-friendly, free market ethos with generous social welfare spending. Romney's governorship of Michigan was marked by corporate tax reform and income tax reductions, while simultaneously increasing state spending on education and benefits for the

⁴⁷ Ibid., 121

⁴⁸ Ibid., 103

poor. Meanwhile, during his Presidency, Nixon pursued a handful of economically complex and even contradictory policies, and therefore, categorizing Nixon as either an economic liberal or economic conservative is practically impossible. Nixon's New Federalism attempted to lift restrictions on federal grants to states, giving states and municipalities more control over spending, yet he simultaneously became the first President to enact significant environmental regulations, proposed a universal national income, and fought for the federalization of Medicaid benefits for poor families. Commentator Garry Wills famously labeled Nixon a liberal, and historian Bruce Schulman also questions whether Nixon was the "first conservative President" or "the last liberal."⁴⁹ Regardless of semantics and labeling, Nixon clearly fell to the left of the laissez-faire conservatism that Thurmond and Goldwater desired.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, a collection of conservative Southern politicians voiced consistent support for government expansion of entitlement programs. Conservative Southern support for federal entitlement programs extended back at least to the New Deal era. This is extremely well documented; Ira Katznelson's *Fear Itself* is particularly informative in demonstrating how crucial Southern Democrats were to creating the New Deal order. Such support continued into the 1960s as politicians regarded as conservative lined up to support crucial aspects of President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society legislation. The leader of the Southern Caucus in the Senate, Democrat Richard Russell of Georgia, epitomizes such support. Biographer Gilbert Fite notes that as early as 1962, Russell had favored a national health care program for the elderly. Russell was also "an early supporter of

⁴⁹ Schulman, Bruce J. *The seventies: The great shift in American culture, society, and politics*. Simon and Schuster, 2001, p. 25

federal assistance to education,⁵⁰ and he backed the Appalachian Regional Development Act of 1964 that provided federal aid to poverty-stricken regions of the Southeast. Russell was hardly a liberal—Fite notes that Russell “generally believed that Congress was passing more legislation than was needed”—but his support for Great Society programs that expanded federal aid and entitlements placed him in opposition to Goldwater and other members of the conservative coalition.⁵¹

Strom Thurmond and George Wallace also, interestingly, supported relatively liberal economic agendas early in their careers. When Wallace was a member of the Alabama House of Representatives, “He quickly gained a reputation among parsimonious conservatives as a dangerous liberal,” for his push for taxes on liquor sales to create state-funded schools.⁵² Carter notes that Wallace’s state legislature record “remained squarely within the mainstream of the kind of ‘business progressivism’ common since World War I.”⁵³ Wallace also attacked Eisenhower for his “reactionary” economic policies. Thurmond also put together a relatively progressive early economic record. Crespino writes that Thurmond “was an ardent New Dealer,” supporting federal relief programs. And as governor of South Carolina in the 1940s, his politics were considered labor-friendly.

2. Conservatism’s Varied Civil Rights Views

Conservatives of the era were also far from monolithic on civil rights issue. On one end of the spectrum, conservatives such as George Romney supported both federal and local efforts to intervene in civil rights. As Governor of Michigan, Romney stated, “Michigan’s

⁵⁰ Fite, p. 425

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Carter, p. 76

⁵³ Ibid., p. 78

most urgent human rights problem is racial discrimination—in housing, public accommodations, education, administration of justice, and employment.”⁵⁴ He would go on to push for legislation prohibiting residential segregation, and he took care to appoint blacks to positions of power within the Michigan government. From a federal standpoint, Romney was also a progressive on civil rights. He famously walked with protesters in Detroit in support of the 1965 Selma-to-Montgomery march to support federal protection of black voting rights, and he also supported the 1964 Civil Rights Bill. Richard Nixon supported federal legislation on civil rights, too, in the lead-up to his 1968 Presidential Campaign. He publicly voiced support for the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act. Detractors argue that Nixon could hardly be considered a civil rights supporter due to his Presidential administration’s public opposition to desegregation busing, but Nixon’s support for federal civil rights legislation was evident. Moreover, his and Romney’s support for federal legislation on civil rights placed them in opposition to many of their conservative colleagues. Relatively moderate Republicans looked with dismay at the racial conservatives flocking to their political side; according to Crespino, in 1964, “Moderate and liberal Republicans...urged the party to embrace its civil rights heritage and leave to the Democrats the problem of what to do with racist Southern reactionaries.”⁵⁵

In the middle of the spectrum sat Barry Goldwater. Goldwater was a personal opponent of segregation and Jim Crow. As a businessman in Phoenix, Goldwater “was one of the first Phoenix merchants to employ blacks, and he had integrated the Arizona Air National Guard.”⁵⁶ He also was a member of the Tuscon NAACP. He declared, in 1957, “I don’t like

⁵⁴ Fine, Sidney. *Expanding the Frontiers of Civil Rights: Michigan, 1948-1968*. Wayne State University Press, 2000, p. 218

⁵⁵ Crespino, p. 128

⁵⁶ Goldberg, p. 89

segregation...in any form, in any place, amongst any people.”⁵⁷ Goldwater was also not afraid to speak out against fellow conservative politicians whom he viewed as racist or demagogic. In 1966, when avowed segregationist Lester Maddox was elected Governor of Georgia, Goldwater lamented, “Georgia was a most progressive southern state and all of a sudden they have a fellow that belongs back in the Stone Age.”⁵⁸ Indeed, up to that point, Maddox was perhaps best known for chasing a group of black teenagers away from his Atlanta restaurant with an ax handle. Goldwater also voiced support for the 1965 Voting Rights Act (though he was, by this time, out of the Senate), due to his belief that the federal government should actively enforce the right to vote. “The right to vote is in the Constitution,” he said at the time. “There the federal government should act even if it means with troops.”⁵⁹

Yet there were limits to Goldwater’s activism; his constitutional conservatism prevented him from supporting most federal civil rights legislation. In his 1960 *Conscience of a Conservative*, Goldwater argued that, “the federal government must withdraw promptly and totally from every jurisdiction reserved to the states,”—including civil rights.⁶⁰ As Goldwater biographer Robert Alan Goldberg noted, “Southerners were particularly interested in Goldwater’s...position on civil rights. It offered them a defense of states’ rights and a narrow interpretation of federal responsibilities.”⁶¹ Goldwater thus was something of a mixed bag: a personal opponent of segregation, yet viewed by many African-Americans as “an apologist for segregation,” due to his votes against federal civil rights legislation.⁶²

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 233

⁵⁹ Ibid., 154

⁶⁰ Goldwater, Barry Morris, and C. C. Goldwater. *The conscience of a conservative*. Princeton University Press, 2007, p. 23

⁶¹ Goldberg, p. 140

⁶² Ibid.

Fully on the racially conservative end of the spectrum sat segregationist politicians such as Strom Thurmond, George Wallace, and Richard Russell. Several of the most ignominious quotes from these men have already been put forth in this chapter, but the fact remains that these men were virulently opposed to federal, state, and local civil rights legislation. These men were segregationists, though it is true that their federal positions were couched in Goldwater-style language of constitutional concern for states' rights. Wallace defended his anti-civil rights position by saying, "We were against big government. What we were really talking about was states' rights or state responsibilities and so forth, we were never against black people."⁶³ Gilbert Fite notes that Senator Richard Russell "denied that he was a racist, that he favored discrimination of any type, or that he held any ill will against blacks."⁶⁴ Russell professed that he simply desired to protect the rights of his constituents—including the right to run or operate a segregated business.

Conclusion

Thus, the conservative coalition of the late 1960s was comprised of politicians who held inherently contradictory views, making it obviously unstable. This chapter qualitatively demonstrates the contradictory ideological strands that existed under the conservative umbrella in the 1960s. In the following two chapters, I will demonstrate this trend quantitatively, through Senate voting records.

⁶³ Carter, p. 109

⁶⁴ Fite, p. 409

Chapter 2

Introduction

Congressional voting records can be used to chart the conservative movement's ideological heterogeneity in the 1960s. In this chapter, I compare voting records on three selected pieces of economic legislation and two selected pieces of civil rights legislation. I argue two primary points; first, that on economic policy, there existed three primary ideological groups: liberals who supported the Great Society (most of whom were Democrats, but some of whom were northern Republicans), conservatives who opposed the Great Society (almost all of whom were Republicans), and moderates, who were at least partially supportive of the Great Society's economic agenda. This moderate economic group largely consisted of Southern Democrats. Second, I argue that there existed just two ideological groups on civil rights legislation: liberals who supported federal action on civil rights (a group consisting of Non-Southern Democrats and Republicans), and racial conservatives (most of whom were Southern Democrats). As I will demonstrate in subsequent chapters, the conservative ideological coalition was not neatly aligned on economic and civil rights legislation, disproving the common narrative that conservatives were consistent in their views on economic and civil rights issues.

The Economic Legislation

I chose three pieces of economic legislation for my analysis, in order to measure the economic policy positions of Senators in the 88th and 89th Congresses. Each bill sparked political controversy. These divergent reactions highlight the ideological splits that characterized the Senate (and by proxy, the United States) in the 1960s.

My first choice of economic legislation for analysis, the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, was among the centerpieces of Lyndon Johnson's "unconditional war on poverty."⁶⁵ The legislation aimed at providing jobs and benefits to poor Americans; it included a jobs corps program for young people, extensive grant programs for nonprofits, loans to rural families, and federal funding of student work-study programs. This Act was met with considerable conservative opposition, as a coalition of Southern Democrats and conservative Republicans voted against it. According to a July 1964 *New York Times* report, conservatives believed that liberals had shoved the legislation "with undue haste as an election-year vehicle for President Johnson."⁶⁶ According to the *Times*, conservatives also objected to the authority that the bill would grant the federal government in undertaking economic development and poverty alleviation programs—efforts they believed would come at the expense of state and local authority. Regardless, the bill was among the most significant in the Great Society's "War on Poverty" due to its scope (\$947.5 million) and the sheer variety of programs it funded.

The second economic bill included in this analysis is the Social Security Amendments of 1965. This legislation created Medicare and Medicaid, subsidized hospital and medical provider expenses, and provided hospital insurance. The culmination of a decades-long liberal push for a semblance of national health insurance in the United States, this legislation essentially provided government-sponsored health insurance for the poor and the elderly. Its importance to the Great Society cannot be overstated, as Medicare and Medicaid alone account for about a quarter of contemporary federal spending. Yet this legislation's relevance to this thesis lies outside of its modern implications; its inclusion is necessary because, like

⁶⁵ Caro, Robert A. *The Passage of Power: The Years of Lyndon Johnson IV*. Vol. 4. Vintage, 2012.

⁶⁶ Weaver, Warren. "Poverty Bill Sent to Senate Floor." to *The New York Times*. 1964. *New York Times Archives* (1923-Current file), Jul 08, 1964.

the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, it represents a significant government foray into the economy, guaranteeing the right of the poor and the elderly to health insurance. The Social Security Amendments differ from the Economic Opportunity Act on at least two primary accounts; first, they were passed in 1965, not 1964, and so conservatives could not blame President Johnson for election-year political posturing; and second, that the legislation helped not only the poor and destitute, but also the middle class, meaning the legislation could hardly be attacked under the charges that the law was removing money from middle-class taxpayers and handing it to the poor. Indeed, Medicare guaranteed the right of *all* Americans aged 65 or older, regardless of income or wealth levels, to government-sponsored health insurance. Yet it still obviously represented a significant government intervention into the economy, and so a handful of conservatives on both sides of the aisle lined up in opposition.

The Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 is the final economic legislation subject to analysis in this chapter. I selected this legislation for two primary reasons. First, as with the Economic Development Act of 1964 and the Social Security Amendments of 1965, this legislation constituted an important part of the overall Great Society legislative package. While not as glamorous as the passage of the Social Security Amendments (which merited a signing ceremony with former President Harry Truman in his hometown of Independence Missouri), nor as impactful to the federal government's bottom-line (in the sense that it quite literally cost less), the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 nevertheless expanded the reach of the federal government in funding infrastructure projects, harkening back to the New Deal tradition of federal infrastructure investment.⁶⁷ In his speech just prior to signing the bill into law, President Johnson framed the bill as a method of connecting isolated communities with capital,

⁶⁷ Caro, n. pag

bringing the fruits of the post-war economic boom to all corners of the nation. He waxed poetic, saying the bill would bring prosperity to “the old textile towns of New England... the railroad centers of Pennsylvania where the coal trains no longer run... and the timber settlements of the far west.”⁶⁸ And second, the bill is important because of the opposition it incurred. Most Democrats and moderates supported the bill on the grounds that it allocated government spending to needy communities. But a handful of conservatives objected on the grounds that it handed too much authority to the federal government and required too much government intervention in the economy. The bill did, after all, create the Economic Development Administration, the sole purpose of which is to use federal funds to invest in infrastructure and public works projects across the country.

Establishing Economic Ideological Groups⁶⁹

An analysis of voting patterns across the three economic bills reveals the existence of three ideological constituencies on economic issues.⁷⁰ The analysis of voting patterns will proceed by examining overall voting trends on the three selected pieces of legislation.

The following chart (figure 1) demonstrates the number of Senators (among Senators present in both the 88th and 89th Congresses) who voted for all three of the selected bills, for two of the bills, for one of the bills, and for none of the bills:

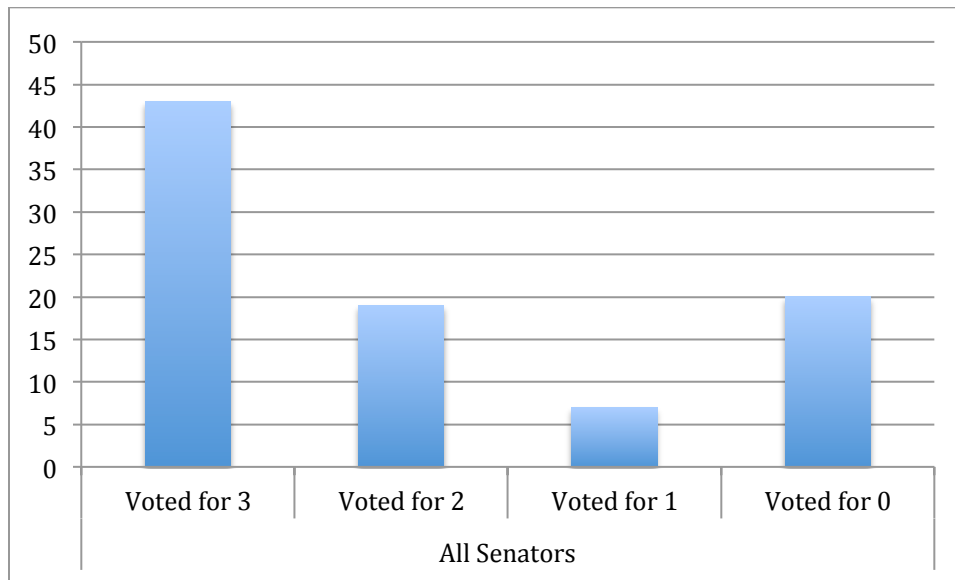
⁶⁸ Dallek, Robert. *Flawed giant: Lyndon Johnson and his times, 1961-1973*. Oxford University Press, 1998, p. 227

⁶⁹ To avoid cumbersomeness, for the remainder of this chapter, I only footnote the data selected when utilizing a source for the first time. All data not directly cited stems from a previously-cited GovTrack page. It should be obvious, based on the bill discussed, which GovTrack page is utilized in any given instance

⁷⁰ "S. 2642. PASSAGE. -- Senate Vote #452 -- Jul 23, 1964." GovTrack.us. GovTrack, n.d. Web. Jan. 2017. "TO PASS H.R. 6675, THE SOCIAL SECURITY AMENDMENTS OF 1965. -- Senate Vote #151 -- Jul 9, 1965." GovTrack.us. GovTrack, n.d. Web. Jan. 2017.

"TO PASS S. 1648, THE PUBLIC WORKS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ... --Senate Vote #82 -- Jun 1, 1965." GovTrack.us. GovTrack, n.d. Web. Jan. 2017.

Senators who served in both 88th and 89th Congresses: Votes on Selected Economic Legislation (figure 1)

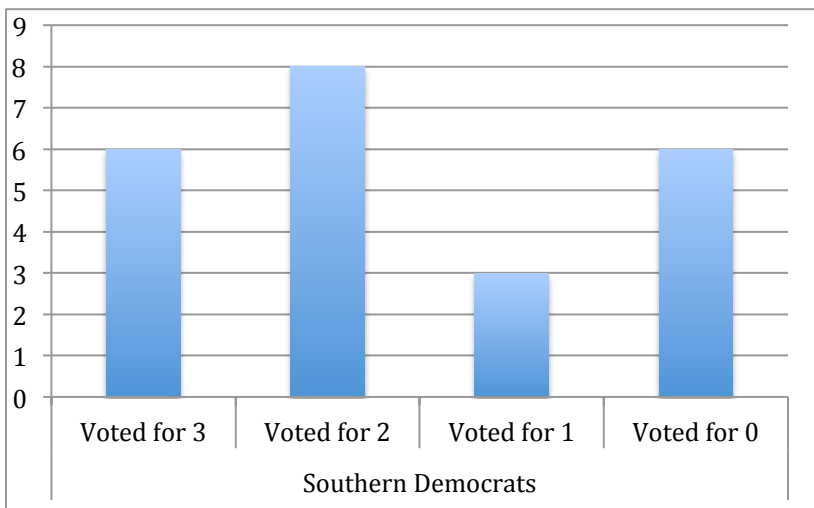


This chart demonstrates several points about the 88th and 89th Congresses. First, the Great Society was overwhelmingly popular; 43 of 89 (48%) cast votes in favor of all three bills included in this analysis. Second, the group of Senators who fell in the “Goldwater” camp opposing nearly all federal intervention in the economy was comparably small; only 20 Senators (22%) voted against all three acts, compared to 43 voting for all three. And third, there existed a sizable bloc of Senators (26, or 29%) who were willing to vote for one or two of the pieces of legislation, indicative of ideological flexibility.

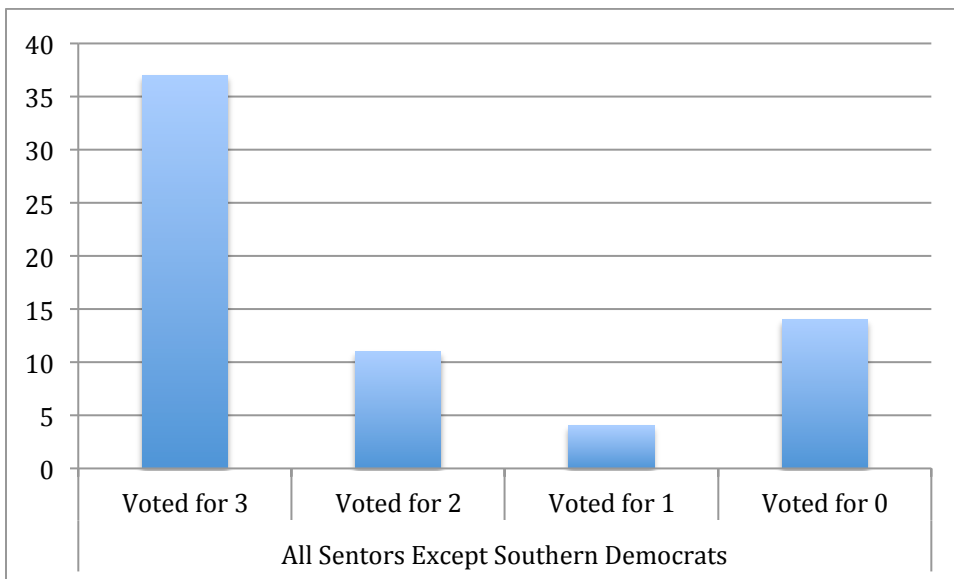
A sizable of those who showed some variance on their economic positions—in other words, most of those who voted for one or two of the three bills—were Southern Democrats. Indeed, Southern Democrats were significantly more likely to support one or two bills (as opposed to all three or zero bills) than all other Senators. The following charts demonstrate the number of Southern Democrats who voted for three, two, one, or zero of the bills, as well

as the number of all Senators *except* Southern Democrats who voted for three, two, one, or zero of the bills.

Southern Dem. Senators who served in both 88th and 89th Congresses: Votes on Selected Economic Legislation (figure 2)



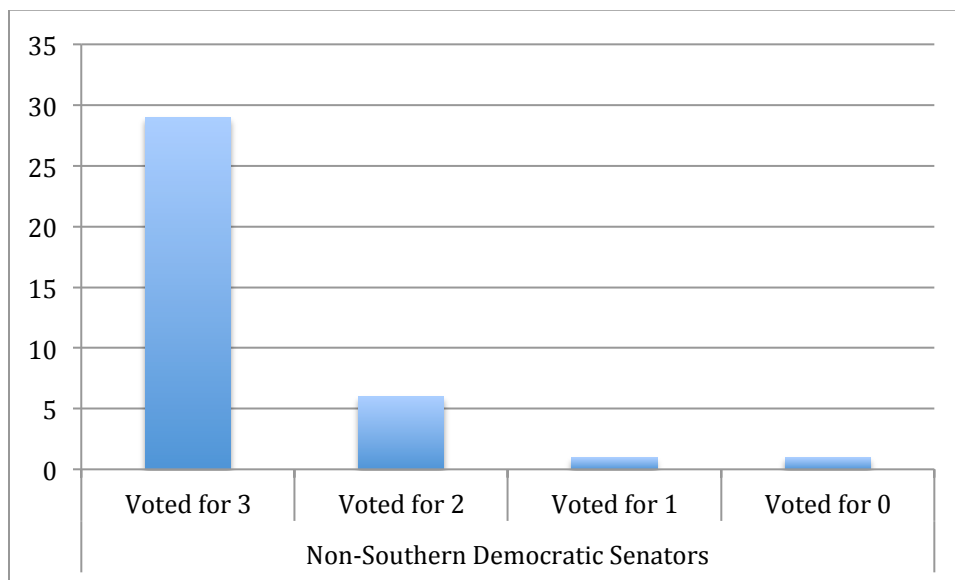
Senators, except Southern Democrats, who served in both 88th and 89th Congresses: Votes on Selected Economic Legislation (figure 3)



Among Southern Democratic Senators, 11 out of 24 (46%) voted for either one or two of the bills, compared to 15 out of 66 (23%) of all other Senators. Moreover, equivalent numbers of Southern Democrats voted for all three bills as the number of Southern Democrats who voted for zero of the three bills. This is indicative of significant ideological variance on economic issues within the Southern Democratic caucus. The casual observer might expect that the votes would be heavily skewed towards or against the totality of these three pieces of legislation, but the fact that one is a Southern Democrat is not predictive—at all—of voting patterns on the legislation.

On the other hand, one's status as a non-Southern Democrat is indeed predictive of votes on the legislation, as the following chart (figure 4) demonstrates:

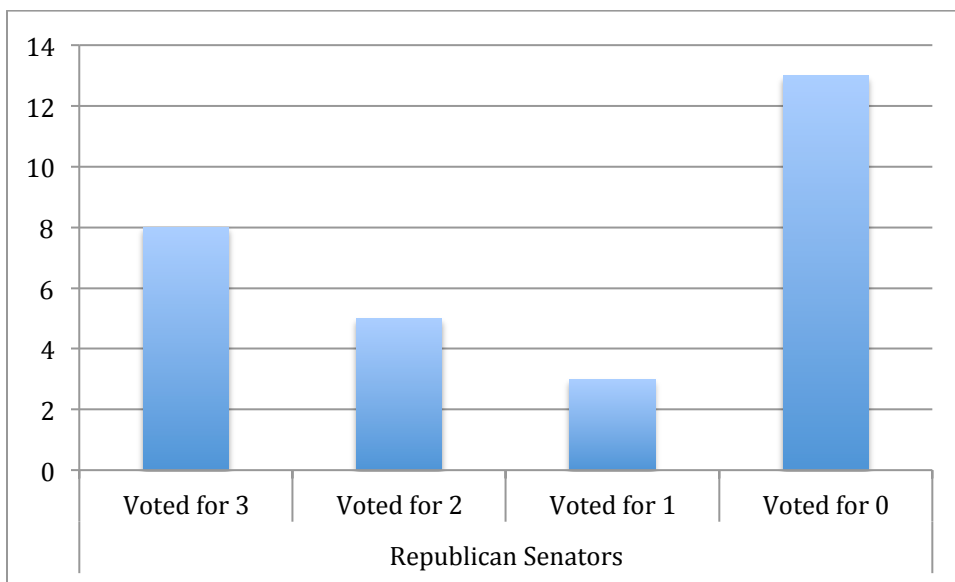
Non-Southern Democratic Senators who served in both 88th and 89th Congresses: Votes on Selected Economic Legislation (figure 4)



29 out of 37 (78%) voted for all three pieces of legislation, and another 6 out of 37 (16%) voted for two, indicative of a clear ideological skew towards federal intervention in the economy. Non-Southern Democrats clearly, therefore, made up an economic voting bloc.

A group of liberal Republicans joined the non-Southern Democrats in this bloc. While membership in the Republican Party is not quite as predictive of voting behavior on Great Society legislation as membership in the Democratic Party as a non-Southerner, Republicans were likely to support either all three or zero pieces of legislation, demonstrating ideological consistency on the bills. The following chart demonstrates Republican voting patterns on the three pieces of legislation:

Republican Senators who served in both 88th and 89th Congresses: Votes on Selected Economic Legislation (figure 5)



21 out of 29 (72%) of Republicans supported either three or zero pieces of legislation, leaving only 8 out of 29 Republicans (28%) supporting one or two pieces of the legislation. The 21 Republicans demonstrating full ideological consistency on the three pieces of

legislation are split into two camps, as the chart demonstrates. 8 of the 21 could be classified as “liberal Republicans,” as they supported all three bills. These Republicans, who included on their ranks a number of northeasterners such as George Aiken of Vermont and Margaret Chase Smith of Maine, voted identically to liberal Democrats on economic issues, and thus combined with liberal Democrats to form a voting bloc. On the other hand, 13 of the 21 could be classified as “conservative Republicans,” who stood alone among Senators (with the help of a few Southern Democrats) in their unilateral opposition to the Great Society. These conservative Republicans formed a voting bloc of their own.

Conclusion: It is clear, therefore, that three distinct economic voting blocs existed within the US Senate in the 88th and 89th Congresses. There was a liberal voting bloc, mostly of liberal Democrats, but also of liberal Republicans, with a few Southern Democrats thrown in for good measure. There was also a conservative voting bloc, consisting of conservative Republicans whose opposition to the federal intervention prescribed by Great Society programs was fierce. A handful of Southern Democrats also joined this voting bloc (some, such as Strom Thurmond, would soon become conservative Republicans themselves). Finally, there existed a “moderate” voting bloc, consisting of Senators who cast votes for either one or two of the pieces of legislation. These Senators hardly would have considered themselves a cohesive group, yet they are linked by their somewhat ambiguous attitudes towards the Great Society and liberal economic policy. Republicans and Democrats alike were members of this moderate group, but it is Southern Democrats who were most likely by far, among the three groups of Senators included in this analysis (Southern Democrats, non-Southern Democrats, and Republicans) to be members of this “moderate” voting bloc.

Civil Rights Legislation

I compared votes on the two most pivotal civil rights bills of the 1960s—the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965—in order to establish the existence of distinct ideological constituencies that voted for and against civil rights legislation. I chose these particular bills because of their monumental importance to civil rights and economic life in America, and for the divergent reactions they provoked.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 eliminated discrimination in public accommodations, such as hotels, restaurants, and retail stores. It also barred governments at all levels from engaging in discrimination based on race, color, religion, or national origin, threatening to withhold federal funds from any noncompliant governments. Politicians at the time believed that the legislation had the potential to completely reorient American party politics; for instance, as previously mentioned in this thesis, President Lyndon Johnson said that the bill would “cost [Democrats] the South.”⁷¹ Indeed, the Senate’s Southern Caucus reacted with vitriol towards the bill, both before and after its passage. Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina compared the bill to Reconstruction measures that were still loathed in the South 80 years on; he called the Civil Rights Act, “beyond the realm of reason,” and “the worst civil rights package ever presented to Congress.”⁷² The Southerners would launch a filibuster that extended 60 days through the summer of 1964 before Johnson and the Senate’s liberal leaders found the votes for cloture; Robert Byrd of West Virginia alone stood on the Senate dais for over 14 hours in protest.⁷³ I include the 1964 Civil Rights Act in my analysis largely because of the vitriol it provoked, and because it threatened to wreak havoc on both parties.

⁷¹ Noah, Timothy. "Why Democrats Should Write off the South." *Slate Magazine*. Slate, 27 Jan. 2004. Web. Jan. 2017.

⁷² Purdum, Todd S. *An Idea Whose Time Has Come: Two Presidents, Two Parties, and the Battle for the Civil Rights Act of 1964*. Henry Holt and Company, 2014, p. 62

⁷³ *Ibid.*

Most of the Southerners who opposed the bill were Democrats, but a handful of Republicans—including Republican Presidential Nominee Barry Goldwater—joined the Southerners in their opposition to the bill.

I choose the 1965 Voting Rights Act as the other civil rights bill of my analysis, again because of its importance to the story of civil rights in America. This bill eliminated barriers such as literacy tests to African-American voting, and upped federal oversight of southern elections. A 2009 Department of Justice report calls the act “the single most effective piece of civil rights legislation ever passed by Congress.”⁷⁴ It is this act which inspired Robert Caro to write, “It was Abraham Lincoln who struck off the chains of black Americans, but it was Lyndon Johnson who led them into voting booths, closed democracy’s sacred curtain behind them, and placed their hands upon the lever that gave them a hold on their own destiny.”⁷⁵ Immortalized by the 1965 civil rights march from Selma to Montgomery, the fight for the Voting Rights Act inspired vitriolic opposition that recalled the battles over the Civil Rights Act the year before—yet it differed from the fight over the 1964 Civil Rights Act in that conservative coalition opposing to the Voting Rights Act was considerably narrower than the conservative coalition opposing the Civil Rights Act. Goldwater, for instance, while he regarded the public accommodations provisions in the 1964 Civil Rights Bill to be unconstitutional, agreed that enforcement of voting rights—even federal enforcement—was guaranteed under the 14th and 15th Amendments.⁷⁶ Though Goldwater was no longer in the Senate, he did voice public support for the bill—support that echoed through the Republican

⁷⁴ "Introduction To Federal Voting Rights Laws." The United States Department of Justice. June 2009. Web. Jan. 2017

⁷⁵ Caro, p. 569

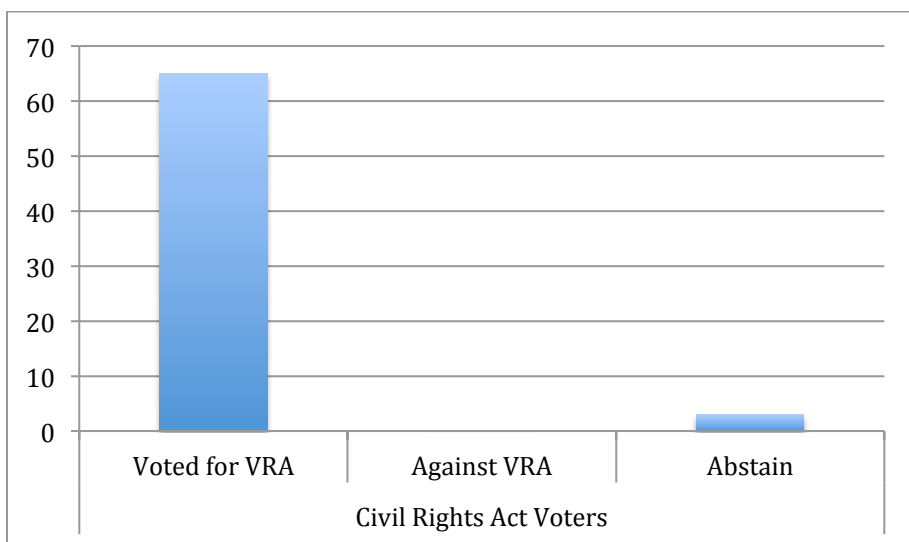
⁷⁶ Goldberg, n. pag

minority in the Senate. As I shall demonstrate, the difference in conservative opposition to these two civil rights bills is emblematic of the broader conservative split in the 1960s.

Establishing Civil Rights Ideology Groups

Voters on the two most important civil rights bills of the 1960s displayed remarkable consistency. The following charts display the votes on the Voting Rights Act of those who voted for the Civil Rights Act:

Senators who voted for the Civil Rights Act: Votes on the Voting Rights Act (figure 6)⁷⁷

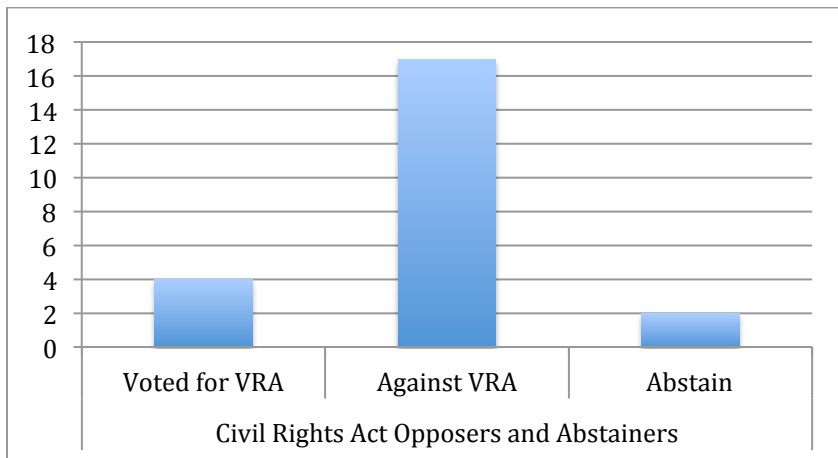


A whopping 65 out of 68 possible voters cast their ballot for the Voting Rights Act as well—a rate of about 96%. Clearly, a vote for the Civil Right Act was predictive of a vote for the Voting Rights Act. *Republicans and Democrats alike who voted for the Civil Rights Act were virtual locks to vote for the Voting Rights Act.*

⁷⁷ "HR. 7152. PASSAGE. -- Senate Vote #409 -- Jun 19, 1964." GovTrack.us. GovTrack, n.d. Web. Jan. 2017; "TO PASS S. 1564, THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT OF 1965. -- Senate Vote #78 -- May 26, 1965." GovTrack.us. GovTrack, n.d. Web. Jan. 2017.

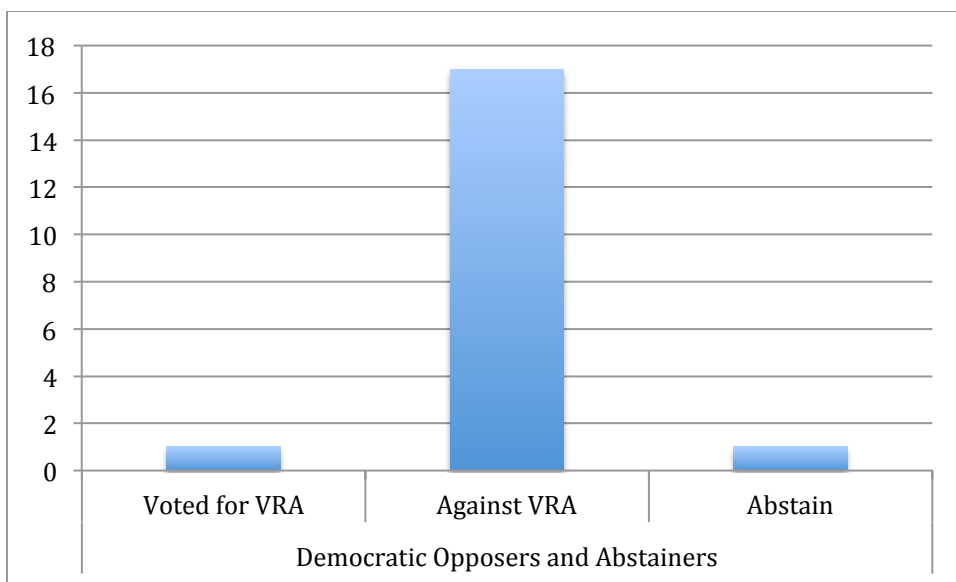
The record of those who opposed the Civil Rights Act is only slightly more nuanced. As this chart demonstrates, a vote against the Civil Rights Act was indeed predictive of a vote against the Voting Rights Act as well:

Senators opposed/abstained on Civil Rights Act: Votes on the Voting Rights Act (figure 7)

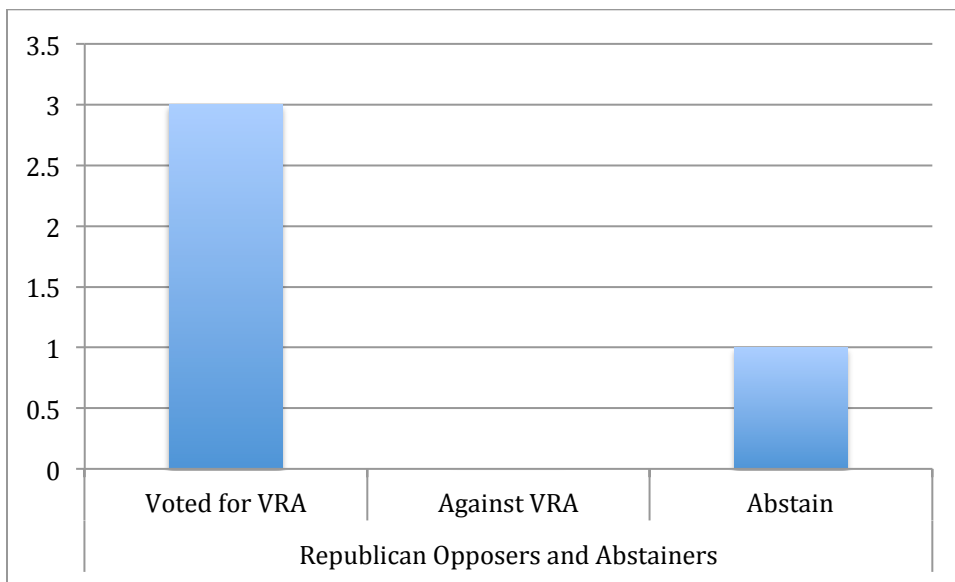


19 out of 23 (83%) Senators who did not vote for the Civil Rights Act also opposed or abstained from voting on the Voting Rights Act. Of these, the vast majority were Democrats:

Democratic Senators opposed/abstained on Civil Rights Act: Votes on the Voting Rights Act (figure 8)



Republican Senators opposed/abstained on Civil Rights Act: Votes on the Voting Rights Act (figure 9)



These charts convey a number of interesting points. First, they demonstrate that the Senators most fully committed to stemming federal intervention on civil rights were Democrats, as none of the Republicans who voted against or abstained from voting on the Civil Rights Act also voted against the Voting Rights Act. This indicates that Republicans who were opposed to the Civil Rights Act were not wholesale against integrationist goals, but were perhaps motivated by the fear of federal incursion into individual rights that they thought the Civil Rights Act would entail. This position is perhaps epitomized by Barry Goldwater's civil rights stances. Goldwater broke with the vast majority of Republican Senators in opposing the Civil Rights Act of 1964, but declared that his opposition to the legislation was based on his belief that the public accommodations portion of the Act was unconstitutional, and that he supported integrationist goals in general. As this paper has noted, Goldwater was a member of the NAACP and widely touted local efforts at integration around the country. Moreover, though he was no longer in the Senate at the time, he was a vocal supporter of the Voting Rights Act (as were most Republicans, as the above charts

demonstrate), believing it to be constitutional in its enforcement of the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments.

On the other hand, the committed opponents of federal civil rights legislation were Democrats (as the above chart demonstrates). Of the 17 members of the Senate who cast votes against both the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act, every single one was a Democrat. Of these 17 Democrats, every single one was from a former slaveholding state. Every single one was a Southern Democrat.

Therefore, voting patterns on the two most important civil rights bills of the 20th century indicate that there were two primary voting blocs on civil rights. The first, comprised of nearly all Republicans and all liberal Democrats, was supportive of utilizing federal legislation to accomplish civil rights goals. Within this group there was some nuance or variation in opinion—epitomized by minor Republican aversion to the perceived abrogation of constitutional principles that they feared some legislation might entail—but the fact of the matter is that this bipartisan group was broadly supportive of civil rights legislation, and the group voted as such. On the other hand were Southern Democrats, who alone opposed federal civil rights legislation. Though they claimed their opposition was rooted in concern for states' rights and an aversion to federal power, and not in racial animus, their votes have become a black mark on Southern history.

Conclusion: Republicans and Democrats alike supported federal civil rights legislation, demonstrating a clear, bi-partisan ideology group that voted liberal on civil rights. On the other hand, Senators opposed to federal civil rights legislation were almost entirely Southern Democrats.

Conclusion

In the 1960s, there existed three distinct economic ideology groups in the United States Senate: conservatives, moderates, and liberals. Simultaneously, there existed two distinct civil rights ideology groups: racial conservatives and racial liberals.

Chapter 3

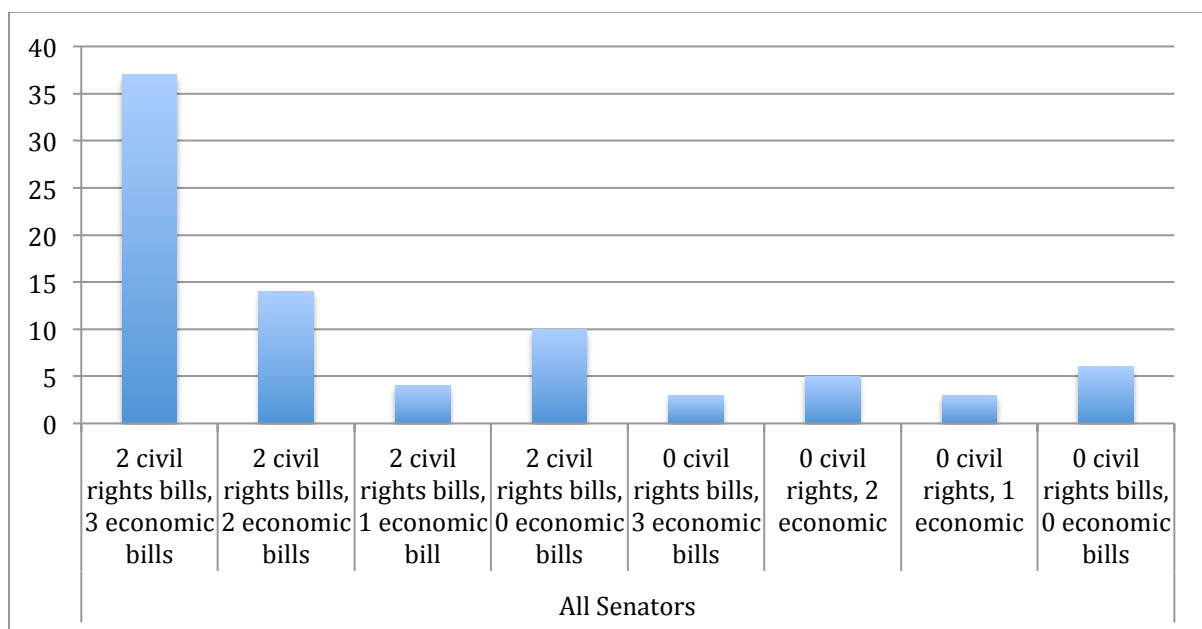
Introduction

Given that there existed three distinct voting blocs on economic legislation and two distinct voting blocs on civil rights legislation in the 88th and 89th Congresses, one can postulate the existence of at least six distinct “crossover voting blocs,” as I will call them, with regards to the combination of economic and civil rights legislation. The possible blocs are as follows: a) Liberal on economics and civil rights, b) moderate on economics and liberal on civil rights, c) conservative on economics and liberal on civil rights, d) liberal on economics and conservative on civil rights, e) moderate on economics and conservative on civil rights, and f) conservative on economics and conservative on civil rights. This chapter will classify Senators into these six groups, and will demonstrate that the first three groups were comprised a majority of United States Senators in the 88th and 89th Congresses—basically all Republicans and Non-Southern Democrats—and that Southern Democrats were split fairly evenly among the final three groups (groups d, e, and f). Next, this chapter will calculate ideological scores for Republicans, Non-Southern Democrats, Southern Democrats, and Republicans plus Southern Democrats. Finally, this chapter will calculate the variance in voting patterns exhibited by Republicans, by Non-Southern Democrats, by Southern Democrats, and by Republicans plus Southern Democrats. I find that the final group, Republicans plus Southern Democrats, exhibits high variation on both economic and civil rights issues. This evinces the ideological heterogeneity of the modern conservative movement.

Crossover Voting Bloc Membership: From Voting Patterns to Classification

As stated in this chapter’s introduction, there exist six potential “crossover voting blocs” which encompass the range of opinions on economic and civil rights legislation. The following charts breaks down the manners in which the totality of Senators who sat in both the 88th and 89 Congresses voted on the aforementioned legislation:

Members of both the 88th and 89th Senate: Votes on selected legislation (figure 1)

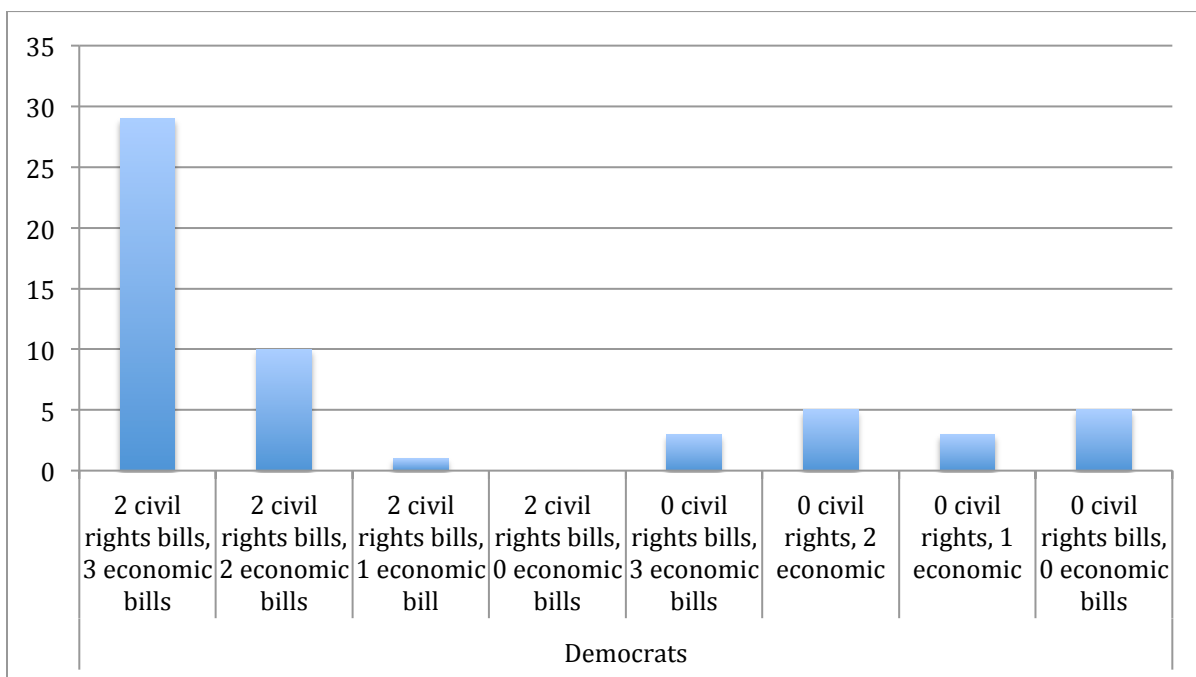


This chart is cumbersome; it reveals little other than the fact that the three primary groups represented are “2 civil rights bills, 3 economic bills,” “2 civil rights bills, 2 economic bills,” and “2 civil rights bills, 0 economic bills.” I should note that not included in this analysis are the seven Senators who were “split” on civil rights, and voted for either the Civil Rights Act of 1964 or the Voting Rights Act of 1965, but not both. I did not include these Senators in this analysis because their split votes can be explained on a case-by-case basis, taking into account nuances such as Goldwater’s general support for civil rights measures yet his vote against the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (which he regarded as unconstitutional).

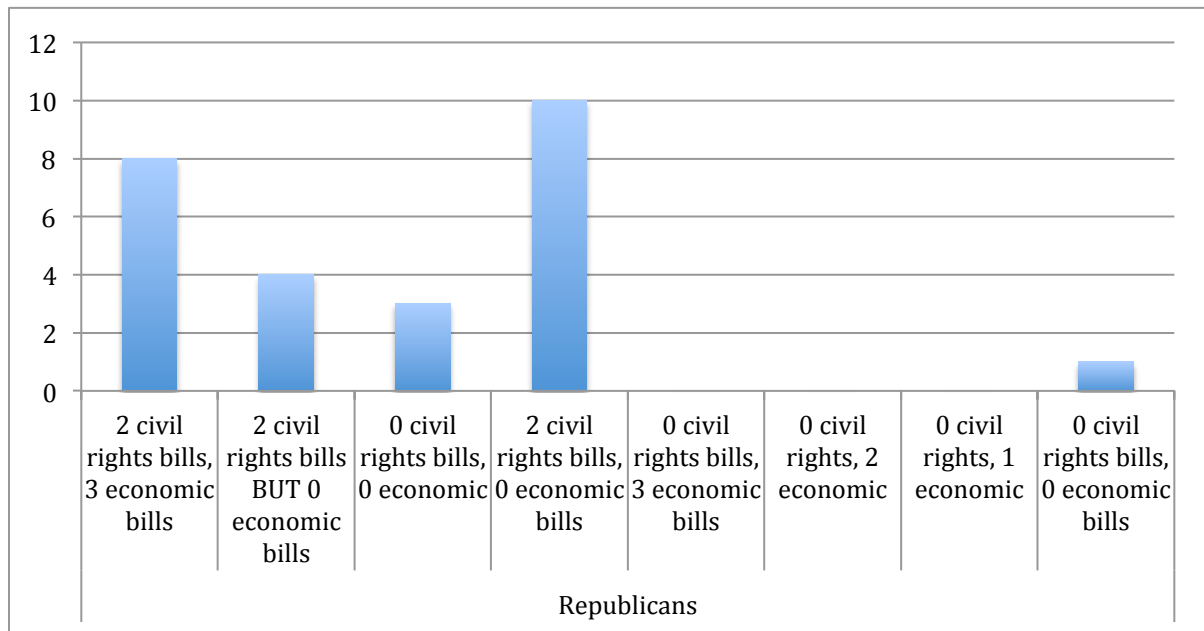
Essentially, I disregard their votes because including them in the analysis would disguise from the fact that there existed two basic ideological groups on civil rights: liberals and conservatives. Including these “split” Senators, or forcing them into one voting bloc or another, would serve only to muddle the analysis.

A party-line examination of crossover voting blocs yields more easily digestible results. The following charts show the voting patterns of Democratic and Republican Senators respectively:

Democratic members of both the 88th and 89th Senate: Votes on selected legislation (figure 2)



Republican members of both the 88th and 89th Senate: Votes on selected legislation (figure 3)



These charts are extremely revealing. The Democratic chart reveals that Democratic Senators were, by a considerable majority, liberal on both economic and civil rights issues. My analysis indicates that 39 out of 56 (70%) of Democrats fell into this category, category “a” under the schema listed in this chapter’s introduction. I will allow that my classification of the 10 Democratic Senators who voted for both civil rights bills and two out of three economic bills may be fraught. What makes these Democrats liberal on economics, as opposed to moderate? The answer lies in simple deduction; because Democrats who supported civil rights leaned so heavily to the left on economic issues (as demonstrated by the above chart), one can tentatively assume that the 10 Senators who voted for both civil rights bills and two out of three economic bills leaned liberal on economics, at the very least. Indeed, a simple glance at the Senators who fall in this category reveals some of the Senate’s most notable liberal luminaries of the 20th century, such as Ted Kennedy (D-MA) and Mike

Mansfield (D-MT). We can therefore place at least these 39 Democratic Senators in the “liberal on economics and liberal on civil rights” category.

A glance at the Republican chart reveals that many Republicans also fall into this category; a full eight voted for all five pieces of legislation, and thus can be safely placed in the “liberal on economics, liberal on civil rights” category. But what of the four who supported both civil rights bills and two of three economic bills? The simple trick used to classify Democrats who held this voting pattern as “liberal on economics and civil rights” hardly works with Republicans of the 88th and 89th Congresses, who held no comprehensive or coherent economic platform. These four Republican Senators were J. Caleb Boggs of Delaware, Frank Carlson of Kansas, Thomas Kuchel of California, and Leverett Saltonstall of Massachusetts. The economic record of these men is difficult to discern; Saltonstall, for instance, cut taxes as Massachusetts governor in the 1940s, but seemed generally supportive of New Deal programs and federal entitlements. Kuchel was a lifelong Republican, but was often associated with the Nelson Rockefeller wing of the party, which was nothing if not economically liberal. Therefore, I leave these men unclassified for now. However, one can certainly add the eight aforementioned Republicans who voted for all five pieces of legislation to the “liberal on economics and civil rights” category, and so we can safely assume that at least 47 Senators of the 88th and 89th Congresses (39 Democrats and 8 Republicans) fall into this first category.

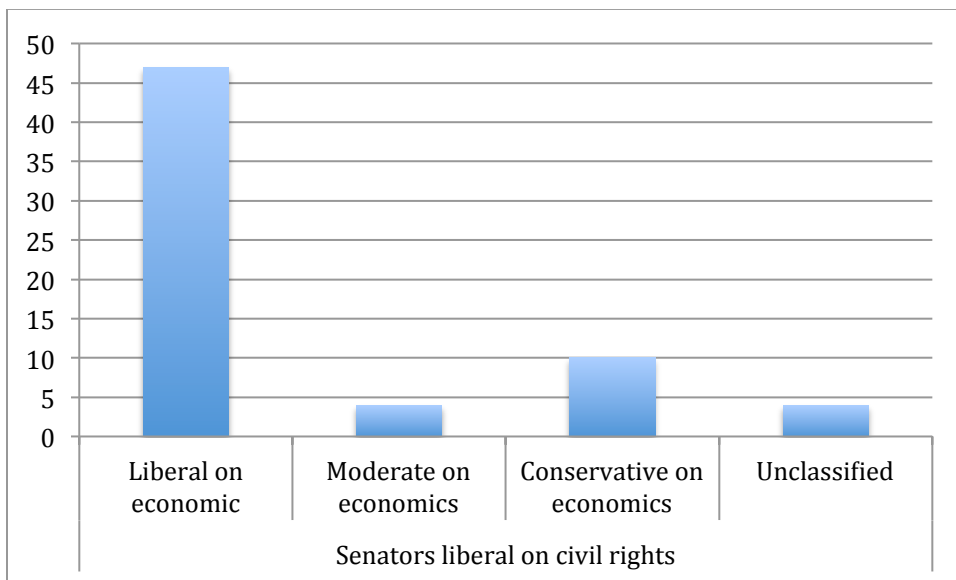
Glances at these charts also reveal a sizeable membership in category “c”, “conservative on economics and liberal on civil rights.” Though no Democratic Senator voted for both civil rights bills but against all three economic bills, 10 Republican Senators did so. Their opposition to Great Society welfare and entitlement programs combined with

their support for federal legislation addressing civil rights issues places them firmly within the “conservative on economics and liberal on civil rights” category. Thus, membership in this category is at least 10.

The four Senators—one Democrat and three Republicans—who voted for both pieces of civil rights legislation and for only one economic bill are classified in category “b”: “moderate on economics and liberal on civil rights.” These Senators’ liberal record on civil rights is self-evident, but what factors distinguish these Senators as moderate, as opposed to conservative (since they failed to cast votes for two of the three bills)? In essence, their moderation is defined by their willingness to consider supporting Great Society programs as opposed to utter disavowal of them (i.e. the Senators in category “b”). Because they failed to vote for at least two of the programs, they could hardly be considered liberal, either. They must be classified as economic moderates.

Thus, a clear picture emerges of the economic views held by Senators who were broadly supportive of federal civil rights legislation. The economic votes of Senators who supported both pieces of civil rights legislation analyzed in this thesis are contained in the chart immediately below, followed by a chart classifying these Senators into crossover voting blocs for the schema utilized by this paper:

Economic Voting Patterns: Senators in 88th and 89th Congress who voted liberal on Civil Rights (figure 4)

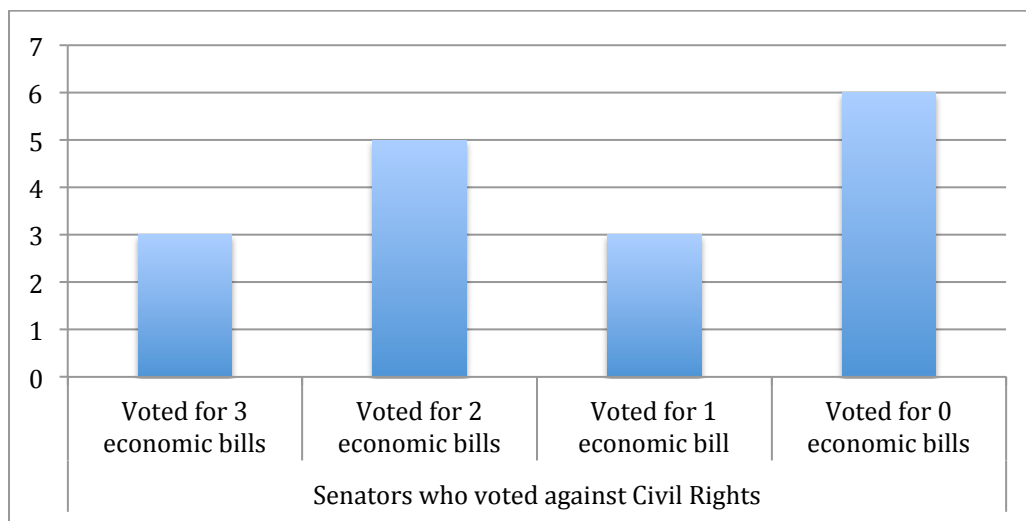


An initial read of this chart seems to indicate that liberal votes on civil rights were predictive of a liberal voting record on economic issues. Indeed, out of 65 Senators whom I classified as “liberal” on civil rights issues, 47 (72%) were also liberal on economic issues. However, one must remember that membership in the Senate itself was essentially predictive of a liberal economic record in the 1960s. Indeed, simple American citizenship may have been predictive of a liberal economic record in the 1960s! For one, Democrats in the 88th and 89th Congresses held massive majorities in the Senate, and Great Society bills ordinarily flew through the Senate with at least 65 votes. Democratic majorities in the Senate, combined with Johnson’s landslide victory in the 1964 Presidential election, is indicative of the widespread support Americans lent to liberal economic legislation. Moreover, of Republicans who were liberal on civil rights, a greater number voted for 0 economic bills than three bills. Instead of a strictly predictive measure, what emerges in this analysis of voting patterns of Senators

who were liberal on civil rights is a picture of at least 3 groups, ideologically differentiated on economic issues.

An analysis of the economic votes of Senators opposing civil rights legislation (i.e. conservative on civil rights) is necessary to complete the formation of these “crossover voting blocs.” A glance back at the original two charts used in this chapter’s analysis of voting pattern reveals no discernible economic voting pattern among Senators who were conservative on civil rights. The following chart better reveals the economic voting patterns among Senators who did not vote for the two civil rights bills included in this analysis:

Economic Voting Patterns: Senators Conservative on Civil Rights in 88th and 89th Congresses (figure 5)

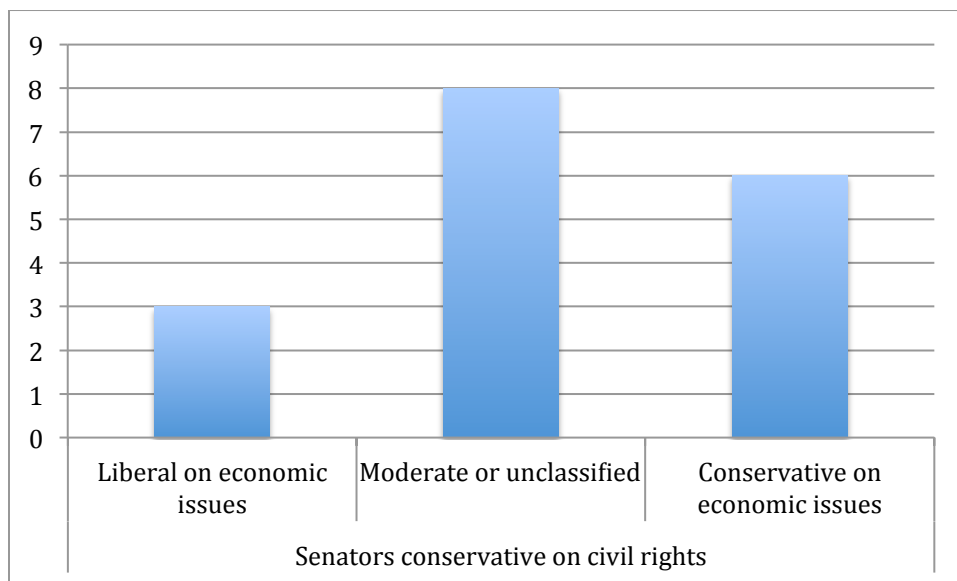


This chart proves that no discernible pattern of economic voting existed amongst those who were conservative on civil rights issues. *Civil rights conservatism was no guarantor of economic conservatism*; in fact, the two are hardly linked, based on this chart. Out of 17 voters opposing federal civil rights legislation, only six, or 35%, could definitively be classified as economically conservative under the analysis employed earlier in this chapter. three of the 17 (18%) could be definitively classified as liberal economic voters. But

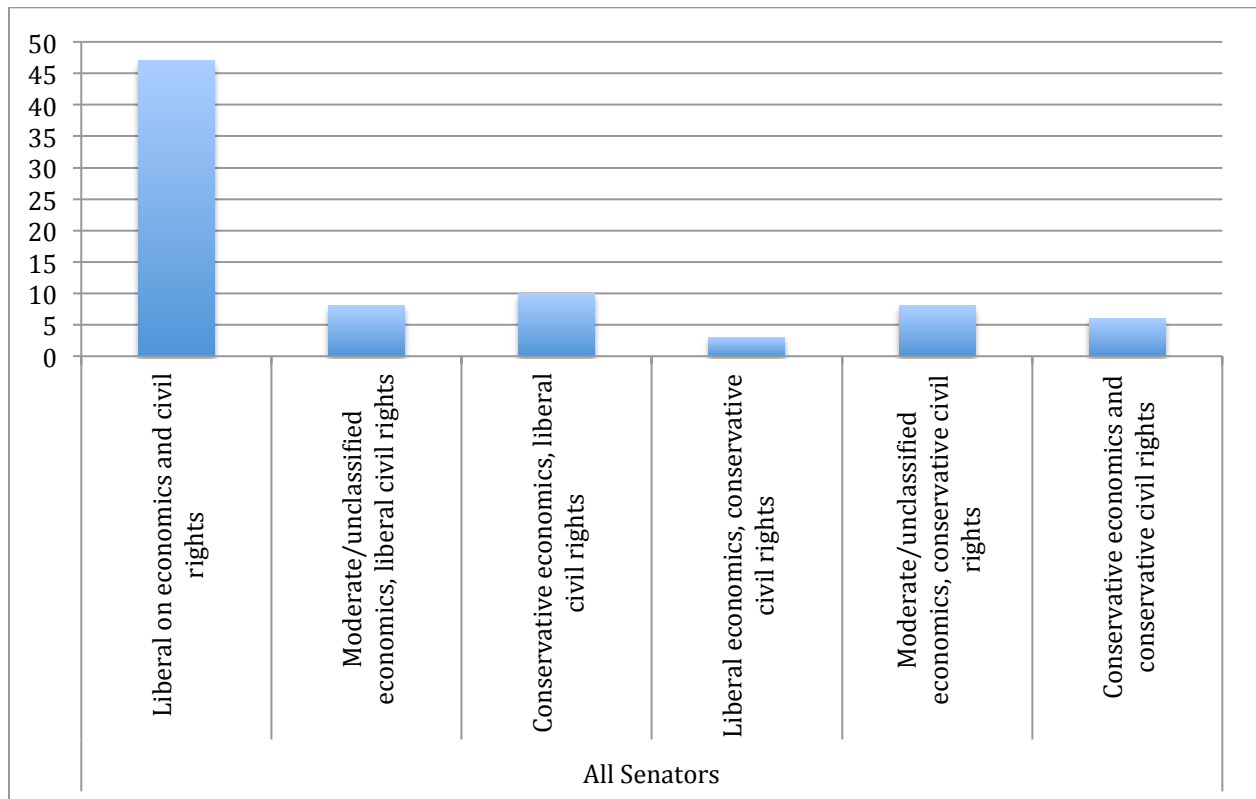
the remaining eight out of 17 (47%) appeared to be moderate on economic issues. The following chart classifies these 17 Senators based on their economic votes according to the schema employed earlier in this chapter:

Economic Ideological Classification: Senators Conservative on Civil Rights in 88th and 89th Congresses

(figure 6)



Having completed an analysis of the six “crossover voting blocs” present in the Senate in the 88th and 89th Congresses, one can revisit the relative strength of the voting blocs:

Crossover Voting Bloc Classification (figure 7)

Thus, this chart demonstrates the existence of six crossover voting blocs. But with which ideology, broadly speaking, did each bloc align, liberal or conservative? And what does each bloc's alignment with a political ideology convey about the nature of that ideology?

Constructing the Liberal and Conservative Coalitions

In order to analyze the ideological makeup of liberalism and conservatism in the 1960s, I assigned each of the Senators (whose voting records are discussed above) to one of three blocs: the "Republican bloc" consisting of all Republican Senators, the "Southern Democratic bloc," consisting of all Senate Democrats from Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, Florida, Arkansas, South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia, and "Non-Southern Democrats," consisting of all Senate

Democrats who did not hail from one of those three states. I also established a fourth category, consisting of “Republicans plus Southern Democrats,” as the link between these groups embodies the foundations of conservatism in the 1960s. The voting patterns and variance of this fourth group, especially in comparison to the Non-Southern Democrats (the liberal group), will inform this understanding of conservatism’s diverse ideological foundations in the 1960s.

I then replaced each Senator with a label marking their voting pattern on economic and Civil Rights Issues. The six categories detailed in the above chart represent the six possible voting labels. The categories are as follows:

- Group A: Liberal on Economics and Civil Rights
- Group B: Moderate on Economics, Liberal on Civil Rights
- Group C: Conservative on Economics, Liberal on Civil Rights
- Group D: Liberal on Economics, Conservative on Civil Rights
- Group E: Moderate on Economics, Conservative on Civil Rights
- Group F: Conservative on Economics, Conservative on Civil Rights

Next, I counted the number of Senators of each category belonging to each voting bloc.

The results of this tabulation are enclosed in the data table below:

Senatorial Group Counts in “voting blocs” (fig. 12)

	Republicans	Non-Southern Democrats	Southern Democrats	Republicans plus Southern Democrats
Group A	8	33	1	9
Group B	7	1	0	8

Group C	9	0	0	9
Group D	0	0	9	9
Group E	0	0	3	3
Group F	1	0	6	7
Total	25	34	19	45

I then developed a scale to determine the economic, civil rights, and dual-issue positions of the Senators in each Presidential voting bloc. In order to do this, I assigned scores for each Senator depending on his or her grouping, and assigned that score to the given presidential voting bloc. The scores that I assigned are as follows:

Scores assigned to each Senator in Groups A-F

Group	Economic Points	Civil Rights Points
Group A	2	2
Group B	1	2
Group C	0	2
Group D	2	0
Group E	1	0
Group F	0	0

Higher scores are indicative of more liberal positions, and lower scores are indicative of more conservative positions. I assigned two points to Senators with liberal economic positions, one point to those with moderate economic positions, and zero to those with conservative economic positions. I then assigned two points to Senators with liberal civil rights positions and zero to those with conservative economic positions (keeping in mind that no Senator in my analysis could truly be considered a Civil Rights moderate).

I then calculated the average economic and civil rights positions of the Senators in each Presidential voting bloc. The results of my calculation are tabulated below:

	Republicans	Non-Southern Democrats	Southern Democrats	Republicans plus Southern Democrats
Group A	8	33	1	9
Group B	7	1	0	8
Group C	9	0	0	9
Group D	0	0	9	9
Group E	0	0	3	3
Group F	1	0	6	7
Total	25	34	19	45
Total Econ Score	23	67	23	47
Avg. Econ Score	0.92	1.970588235	1.210526316	1.044444444
Total Civil Rights Score	48	68	2	52
Avg. Civil Rights Score	1.92	2.0	0.105263158	1.155555556

The results of this calculation are telling; it informs us that, as expected, the Non-Southern Democratic Senators are obviously liberal on both economics and civil rights. Interestingly, it also informs us that the Republican Senators were nearly as liberal on civil rights as the Non-Southern Democratic Senators, though much more conservative on economic issues. Meanwhile, the Southern Democratic Senators were slightly more liberal than the Republican Senators on economic issues, though obviously conservative on the issue of civil rights.

Finally, the “Republicans plus Southern Democrats” bloc appears moderate on civil rights issues and economic issues. This bloc’s economic score is more conservative than that of the Southern Democrats, and more liberal than that of Republicans. Simultaneously, their

civil rights score is more conservative than that of Republicans, and more liberal than that of Southern Democrats.

This account confirms the anecdotal understanding of modern American conservatism and liberalism that I argued for in the outset of this thesis, namely, that liberals were fairly lockstep in their support for liberal civil rights legislation and economic legislation, whereas conservatives were much more varied in their relative support for both federal economic legislation and federal civil rights legislation. This implies that conservatism is, by nature, more heterogeneous than liberalism. Moreover, academic accounts of conservatism’s ideological coherency seem incorrect in light of this evidence.

Variance Among Liberalism and Conservatism

One way of confirming this is by testing the variance of the policy positions of Senators in each voting bloc; ideological strands that are lockstep in their beliefs should exhibit low levels of variance, whereas strands that are comparatively diverse in beliefs should experience high variance. The following table displays the variance of the economic and civil rights positions of the senators in each voting bloc, as well as the “Republicans plus Southern Democrats” voting bloc that combines the candidates to ascertain a clearer view of the broader conservative coalition.

	Republicans	Non-Southern Democrats	Southern Democrats	Republicans plus Southern Democrats
Economic Variance	0.743333333	0.029411765	0.842105263	0.78858351
Civil Rights Variance	0.16	0	0.210526316	1.00422833

The results of this table are extraordinarily telling. On the issue of economic variance, we can see that, as expected, Senators in the Non-Southern Democrat bloc exhibit significantly less ideological variance, from an economic standpoint, than Senators under the Republican, Southern Democrat, or Republican plus Southern Democrat voting blocs. Each of these three voting blocs—though especially the Southern Democratic voting bloc—exhibits relatively high levels of variance, particularly when compared to the relative homogeneity of the Non-Southern Democrats. On the issue of civil rights, all three groups show low levels of ideological variance. However, the resulting variance of the Republican plus Southern Democratic coalition is clear evidence of the wildly divergent views on civil rights within the broader conservative coalition. This contradicts conventional narratives of conservatism’s uniformity on civil rights issues in the 1960s.

Conclusion

There existed six potential “crossover voting blocs” on economics and civil rights within the 88th and 89th Congresses. I classified Senators into these six voting blocs, and assigned economic and civil rights “points” to each Senator based on the ideological lean of his or her voting bloc. I then assigned each Senator to a voting bloc based on his or her party identification (and geography, in the case of Southern Democrats). I then tabulated the average economic and civil rights scores of the Senators within each voting bloc. I found that the Non-Southern Democrat voting bloc exhibited liberal behavior on economics and civil rights, while the Republican voting bloc exhibited almost-as-liberal behavior on civil rights, while exhibiting relatively conservative behavior on economics issues. I also found that the

Southern Democratic voting bloc exhibited practically uniformly conservative behavior on civil rights, while exhibiting moderate-to-conservative economic behavior.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the Republican and Southern Democratic bloc exhibited significantly more variance on both economic and civil rights issues than the Non-Southern Democratic bloc. This, above all else, evinces the ideologically diverse nature of the conservative coalition of the 1960s.

Chapter 4

Introduction

The first chapter of this thesis argued that conventional academic narratives surrounding 1960s-era conservatism are incorrect, in that they do not account for ideological diversity among conservatives. The second and third chapters demonstrated that considerably more ideological variance existed among conservatives in the 1960s than among liberals. The purpose of this chapter is to assess contemporary ideological diversity amongst the liberal and conservative coalitions, and then assess possibility for future diversity. Drawing on the research of Howard Rosenthal and Keith Poole, I note that ideological homogeneity has increased within both parties. The Republican Party has essentially become the sole home for conservatives, just as the Democratic Party has become the sole home for liberals (with a few high-profile exceptions in the United States Senate). This marks a break from the ideological heterogeneity that characterized conservatism in the 1960s. I further demonstrate this ideological homogeneity through a study of variance in Senate voting patterns from 2013 through 2016. I then turn towards contemporary measures of ideology. After briefly critiquing the NOMINATE scoring system developed by Rosenthal and Poole, I utilize alternative ideological scoring of the 2016 Presidential candidates to argue that of the two parties, existential fissure (i.e. fissure at a national level that threatens to break off one wing of the party) is more likely in the Republican Party, or, synonymously, among conservatives. This is consistent with my finding that in the 1960s, conservatism exhibited considerably greater ideological diversity than liberalism.

Contemporary Parties as Coalitions? Not Quite

Political scientists Keith Poole and Howard Rosenthal argue that two simultaneous trends have gripped American legislative behavior since the 1970s. The first is that political polarization has increased significantly since the 1970s. Within this first broad trend, there are two sub-elements, writes Nolan McCarthy, co-author of *Polarized America* along with Poole and Rosenthal. “First,” he writes, “At the level of individual members of Congress, moderates are vanishing. Second, the two parties have been pulled apart.”⁷⁸ The result of this polarization is that the parties have become synonymous with political ideologies—conservatism with Republicans and liberalism with Democrats—as opposed to the antiquated model in which the parties acted as broad political vehicles, home to various ideologies and sub-ideologies. The second of the two broad trends that Poole and Rosenthal identify is that ideological homogeneity among the parties has increased alongside of polarization. In other words, within the conservative tent, most conservatives look alike. This means that, in contrast to the instability that characterized conservatism in the 1960s, 21st century American conservatism seems a largely stable constituency (at least according to the voting habits of Republican members of Congress).

Poole’s and Rosenthal’s rationale for arguing that polarization and homogeneity have increased in the last half century lies in the development of scoring systems to track the ideological profiles of members of Congress. Their first stab at developing such a system came in 1984, when they published “The Polarization of American Politics.”⁷⁹ In this system, they measured ideological scores using interest group ratings from groups such as the United

⁷⁸ McCarty, Nolan, Keith T. Poole, and Howard Rosenthal. *Polarized America: The dance of ideology and unequal riches*. MIT Press, 2016, p. 4

⁷⁹ Poole, Keith T., and Howard Rosenthal. "The polarization of American politics." *The Journal of Politics* 46, no. 4 (1984): 1061-1079.

Auto Workers, the American Conservative Union, and a handful of other groups. Each interest group that they picked publishes scorecards (out of 100) for Congressmen and Senators based on a handful of roll call votes that the interest group itself collects. For instance, the United Auto Workers might take into account roll call votes on organized labor, trade, and tax breaks for American manufacturers in developing their score sheet. Poole and Rosenthal simply collected the score sheets on each member of Congress and “combined all the ratings to give a single liberal-conservative score to each member.”⁸⁰ As early as 1984, Poole and Rosenthal noticed that the overlap between the ideological scores of members of each party had shrunk, indicative of polarization and homogeneity.

Poole and Rosenthal later elected to develop a more comprehensive scoring system, in order to account for the limited roll call votes selected by interest groups, as well as the possibility that the interest groups themselves may have become increasingly polarized, leading to them doling out increasingly extreme ratings. They therefore developed the NOMINATE system, a procedure that scores politicians ideologically based on roll call voting records, using all recorded votes. The purpose of the system is simple: figure out “who votes with whom, and how often.”⁸¹ The NOMINATE system is, according to Poole and Rosenthal, “a quite precise measure of each member’s position on the liberal-conservative spectrum.”⁸²

Poole and Rosenthal’s calculations of ideological scores for each member of Congress have allowed them to reach their conclusions about the increased polarization and increased homogeneity exhibited by the parties over the last several decades. They have concluded that practically every political fissure can be expressed as a division between the

⁸⁰ McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal, p. 5

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 6

⁸² *Ibid.*

two parties. In the words of McCarthy, “most roll call votes can be interpreted as splits on the basic liberal-conservative dimension. Other dimensions, such as a civil rights dimension, have all but vanished, as the coalitions on those issues have increasingly begun to match those of the liberal-conservative dimension.”⁸³ Rosenthal and Poole are suggesting that the heterogeneity that I identified in the conservative coalition in the 1960s has vanished in contemporary America.

One potential drawback is that their NOMINATE scorecard, because it only incorporates roll call votes, seems incomplete, as it does not reward Senators and Congressmen for efforts at bipartisanship or ideological flexibility that do not result in roll call votes. For instance, although Republican Senators Mike Lee and Rand Paul voiced their support for the Democrat-sponsored Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act (that would have reduced federal mandatory minimums and reduced the disparity between sentences for crack-powder and cocaine), their support for this bill would not have been tabulated under the NOMINATE system, as it did not appear in front of the entire Senate for a roll call vote. Moreover, the NOMINATE system—and closely related systems, such as GovTrack’s “Ideology Score,” which measures similarity in legislative behavior amongst Senators and Representatives—fail to account for the possibility that some votes might be more important than others in developing an ideological scale. For instance, although Marco Rubio received a “.83” ideological score from GovTrack in 2013, making him among the top 20 conservative Senators by its metrics, his vote for the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act belies this record.⁸⁴ After all, Rubio was one of just 14 Republicans who joined the 52 Senate Democrats (and two Senate Independents) in voting

⁸³ Ibid., p. 25

⁸⁴ “2013 Report Cards: All Senators.” GovTrack.us. GovTrack, 2014. Web. Mar. 2017;

for this comprehensive immigration reform bill. The public nature of this stance ought to give Rubio a significant credit towards moderation. Yet this moderation is not reflected in his ideological score. Overall, however, the NOMINATE system, and similar measures such as the GovTrack system, have indeed proved relatively successful and comprehensive metrics for articulating the rising polarization and homogeneity amongst the two parties.

Confirming Partisan Homogeneity

GovTrack has published ideological scores for United States Senators each year since 2013; it is possible, therefore, to calculate the variance among Republicans and Democrats for each of the last four years, in an effort to determine a) if one party's Senators exhibit greater variance than the other, and b) if the parties exhibit high or low levels of variance.

Using the GovTrack's ideological scores (which are between 0 and 1, with the most liberal Senator earning 0.0 and the most conservative earning 1.0), I calculated variance for Senate Democrats and Republicans for each year dating back to 2013 (the first year that data was published). The results are as follows:⁸⁵

Ideological Variance among US Senators		
	Democrats	Republicans
2013	0.015946921	0.016627088
2014	0.014672541	0.013216198
2015	0.023097618	0.00953003
2016	0.022517042	0.008671614

⁸⁵ "2013 Report Cards: All Senators." GovTrack.us. GovTrack, 2014. Web. Mar. 2017; "2014 Report Cards: All Senators." GovTrack.us. GovTrack, 2015. Web. Mar. 2017; "2015 Report Cards: All Senators." GovTrack.us. GovTrack, 2016. Web. Mar. 2017; "2016 Report Cards: All Senators." GovTrack.us. GovTrack, 2017. Web. Mar. 2017.

These statistics reveal very little. They reveal that Republicans demonstrated slightly more variance than Democrats in 2013, slightly less variance in 2014, and more variance in 2015 and 2016. It is difficult to draw conclusions from this data, as it conveys such a limited sample size. One might be tempted to conclude that Republicans on average demonstrate *slightly* more homogeneity than Democrats, but again, the GovTrack scorecard does not give greater weight to ideological flexibility that is politically significant (i.e. Senator Rubio's one-time support for comprehensive immigration reform), and this fact, combined with the closeness of the variance exhibited by each party, indicates that it is impossible to determine which party demonstrates greater ideological heterogeneity.

Identifying Future Fissures

But given that the NOMINATE system only scores Senators and Congressmen on their voting records relative to one another before placing them on a single-dimension, left-right scale, how can we predict the possibility of a future fissure? One method might be to investigate the extent to which Republicans and Democrats are aligned on specific issues, or else broad groups of issues, in order to determine where cracks in each respective political coalition might arise. As the NOMINATE system works on a single-dimension scale, as does the GovTrack system (which develops an ideological scale based off the number of bills that a given Congressman cosponsors with each other Congressman), this analysis requires an alternative strategy. Luckily, such an alternative exists; OnTheIssues.org, a nonpartisan nonprofit dedicated to publicizing and measuring the policy stances of individual politicians, publishes both a social and economic ideological score for each contemporary politician.

The site combines the legislative voting records of candidates (if accessible) with public statements and proclamations in order to arrive at a social and economic ideological score for each politician. 538 utilized this scale in its ideological analysis of 2016 Presidential candidates. The advantage to the approach of OnTheIssues.org, according to 538 Writer Harry Enten, is that it “can get us a little further than a simple left-right scale.”⁸⁶ This is particularly important when politicians, such as President Donald Trump, defy the ordinary left-right spectrum and, in the words of 538 Editor Nate Silver, combine “extremely conservative stances on issues such as immigration with surprisingly moderate (or even leftist) ones on other issues such as trade.”⁸⁷

In order to chart the potential for the breakdown of the conservative and liberal coalitions, I compiled the scores from OnTheIssues of each Republican and Democratic Presidential candidate in 2016. The results, unsurprisingly, were that the Democratic candidates exhibited much more liberal attitudes on social and economic issues than Republicans. The chart below lists these scores; higher social scores indicate social liberalism (and lower scores indicate social conservatism), while higher economic scores indicate economic conservatism (and vice versa).

OnTheIssues Scores, 2016 Presidential Candidates⁸⁸

Democrat	Social	Economic
Bernie Sanders	98	5
Lincoln Chafee	80	25
Martin	68	20

⁸⁶ Enten, Harry. "We've Never Known Less About An Incoming President's Ideology." FiveThirtyEight, 28 Nov. 2016. Web. Mar. 2017.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ "2016 Presidential Candidates." OnTheIssues, Nov. 2016. Web. Mar. 2017.

O'Malley		
Hillary Clinton	75	3
Jim Webb	65	23

Republican	Social	Economic
Donald Trump	35	78
Jeb Bush	20	75
Ben Carson	23	80
Chris Christie	48	70
Ted Cruz	18	95
Carly Fiorina	23	78
Lindsay Graham	18	83
Mike Huckabee	18	73
Bobby Jindal	18	90
John Kasich	35	83
George Pataki	48	63
Jim Gilmore	15	65
Rand Paul	63	85
Rick Perry	10	80
Marco Rubio	13	80
Rick Santorum	5	88
Scott Walker	13	83

	Social	Economic
Republican Average	24.485	79.353
Democratic Average	77.2	15.2
Republican Variance	246.485	70.618
Democratic Variance	169.7	108.2

These charts are hardly conclusive. They indicate that Democratic Presidential candidates have higher levels of variance on economic issues, while Republicans have higher variance on social issues, but the sample sizes in this analysis are obviously minute.

Additionally there are many reasons to suspect the accuracy of these results. For one, Hillary Clinton received a score of “3” on economics, while Bernie Sanders received a score of “5”, yet even the most casual political observer would probably assume that Sanders’s record on economics was significant to the left of Clinton’s. One can assume that Clinton, in her march leftwards in order to win the Democratic nomination, made statements and proclamations that inspired OnTheIssues to award her a more liberal rating than Sanders. And even putting the comparison with Sanders aside, the idea that her economic record is significantly more conservative than even Martin O’Malley is dubious.

Nevertheless, these statistics, taken at face value, offer a small snapshot into the natures of the modern Democratic and Republican parties. Specifically, the Democratic Party exhibits higher levels of cohesion on social issues than Republicans, but is split over economic issues (is it the party of democratic socialist academics who pull the party leftwards, or the party of rank-and-file unionists?), while Republicans are split over the social questions of the day (abortion, immigration, and criminal justice, to name three), while generally accepting or giving credence to free-market economics. Within these intraparty divisions, the Republican split seems, broadly, more existential or threatening to its cohesion. After all, the Democratic disagreements on economics are largely a matter of scale (precisely how high should taxes on the wealthy be?), whereas Republican differences on social issues are value-based (should an illegal immigrant ever have an opportunity to attain American citizenship?). Moreover, the qualitative research of James Ceaser, describing modern conservatism as an ideological coalition, similarly comports to the idea of Republicans existing with more fundamental disagreements amongst their ranks than liberals.

The crucial question seems to be: what conditions could cause an issue to develop into a fissure issue? A key may lie in the classic polling question proffered by Gallup since the 1930s: “What do you think is the most important problem facing this country today?”⁸⁹ Only on issues of critical importance to the American public would an intraparty fissure be viable. Should an issue not be granted weight by the public, the issue has no potential to divide one of the parties. Say, for instance, that Republicans disagreed amongst themselves about whether or not to raise the capital gains tax. Such an issue would only likely cause dissenting Republicans to leave the party—or consider leaving the party—if voters consider the issue to be crucially important. Without such a mandate from the public, no electoral incentive exists for intraparty fissure.

But on an issue that divides one of the parties, and that the American public writ large considers crucially important, then one of the parties may splinter, just as the Democratic Party splintered during the Civil Rights Movement. Indeed, upon Lyndon Johnson’s election to a full Presidential term in 1965, a significant plurality of voters ranked “civil rights and race relations” as the most important issue facing the United States; no wonder, then, that the Democratic Party’s fissure broke into open warfare! But in recent years, the American public’s answer to the “most significant problem” question has not been prone to provoking intraparty warfare. In 2013, upon the commencement of President Barack Obama’s second term, a small plurality of voters listed “budget” as their primary concern. But, as the contemporary parties behave in a relatively unified manner on budgetary issues, the issue had no potential to cause fissures in either party. Likewise, at the advent of President Obama’s first term, voters declared that “the economy in general,” was the most important issue facing

⁸⁹ Aisch, Gregor, and Alicia Parlapiano. “What Do You Think Is the Most Important Problem Facing This Country Today?.” *The New York Times*. The New York Times, 27 Feb. 2017. Web. 15 Mar. 2017.

the country; again, here, we see an issue on which the parties act in a unified manner, leaving no potential for infighting. At the outset President Bush's second term, in 2004, voters declared that the Iraq War was the most pressing issue on their minds; this had some potential to provoke controversy, as numerous Senate Democrats (among them Hillary Clinton and Joe Biden) voted in favor of military action in Iraq, but by this point, Democrats had turned solidly against it.

Is there a potential for any issue in the spring of 2017, or anytime in the next few years, to develop into a fissure issue? It is impossible to predict the future, but the current results from Gallup's "most important problem" poll do offer an interesting possibility for a split in the Republican Party. According to the poll commissioned at the time of President Trump's inauguration, a small plurality of Americans declared that "dissatisfaction with government" amounts to the most significant problem facing the nation. Presumably, such dissatisfaction with government is intimately connected to questions about Trump's fitness for office; on this issue, fissures have been bubbling near the surface for over a year now, with Republican elites such as Senator Ben Sasse and former Secretary of State Colin Powell questioning Trump's fitness to serve, and hinting at the need for Congressional investigations into potential ethics violations. It is unlikely, however, that this particular issue would develop into intraparty warfare, given that national Republicans largely unified around Trump in the contentious 2016 Presidential campaign.

Instead, the best potential for fissure seems to be the possibility that a crucial social issue on which Republicans are divided (such as immigration, or criminal justice reform) comes to be understood as the most important issue for the voting public. But barring this, unified parties seem here to stay.

Conclusion

Ideological heterogeneity within the two major American political parties seems to be a thing of the past. The research of Poole and Rosenthal demonstrates this point, as does my calculation of variance among Senate party caucuses in the years 2013-2016. However, between the two parties, Republicans seem more likely to undergo partisan fissure, as Democratic differences center on matters of scale on economic questions, which are comparatively minor to Republican differences centered on value-based social questions.

Conclusions and Implications

Summary of Research:

This paper reassesses academic narratives concerning the ideological composition of conservatism in the 1960s. Traditional narratives focus on conservatism's homogeneity, and in particular, on its homogeneity on economics issues, and most especially on its homogeneity on civil rights issues. Only a few narratives (key among them Matthew Lassiter's *The Silent Majority*) give credence to the idea that there simultaneously existed, within the broader conservative coalition, both a suburban, color-blind political ethos as well as a potentially racist (or at the very least segregationist) mentality.

In fact, my research demonstrates that *within the 1960s conservative coalition, there existed significant ideological heterogeneity on both economic issues and civil rights issues*. This conclusion is supported by both qualitative and quantitative research. Qualitatively, it is telling that the leading conservative politicians of the day supported drastically different economic and civil rights goals. On economics, libertarian-leaning Barry Goldwater existed side-by-side with de facto New Deal Southern Democrats such as Richard Russell. On civil rights, moderates such as Richard Nixon and Goldwater balanced out racial liberals such as George Romney and racial conservatives such as George Wallace and Strom Thurmond. That these six men were perhaps the six most significant conservative politicians of the 1960s, and that they held such diverse views on perhaps the two signature policy areas of the day, evinces conservatism's ideological heterogeneity.

Quantitatively, too, my research indicates that conservatism was essentially a diverse ideological coalition. Through examining Senate voting records on key civil rights bills and Great Society economic legislation, I established the existence of two civil rights voting blocs ("liberals" and "conservatives") as well as three economics voting blocs ("liberals,"

“moderates,” and “conservatives”) within the United States Senate, which I take to be broadly representative of the spectrum of political ideology in the United States. I found that Republicans and Non-Southern Democrats both fell, by and large, into the “civil rights liberals” camp, whereas Southern Democrats (whom I consider members of the conservative coalition) were almost uniformly civil rights conservatives. On the economic issues, Non-Southern Democrats were uniformly liberal, whereas Southern Democrats and Republicans exhibited ideological diversity, with liberals, moderates, and conservatives among the camp.

The two civil rights voting blocs and the three economic voting blocs were then combined to create six “crossover voting blocs,” each of which pairs a particular economic ideology with a particular civil rights ideology. I found that Non-Southern Democrats belonged, practically uniformly to the “liberal on economics, liberal on civil rights,” group, whereas Republicans and Southern Democrats were relatively split among the six groups (with Republicans always belonging to “liberal civil rights” groups and Southern Democrats belonging to “conservative civil rights” groups). The divergent group membership is evidence of ideological diversity amongst the conservative coalition. Further, I calculated the variance of economic voting patterns amongst Republicans, Non-Southern Democrats, Southern Democrats, and Republicans plus Southern Democrats. I found that Non-Southern Democrats exhibited comparatively low variance on economic issues compared to Republicans and Southern Democrats. I also found that Non-Southern Democrats, Southern Democrats, and Republicans all exhibited unsurprisingly low levels of variance on civil rights issues. However, the group representing the conservative coalition—Republicans plus Southern Democrats—exhibited high levels of variance (relative to Non-Southern

Democrats) on both economics and civil rights issues, evincing the ideological heterogeneity of conservatism in the 1960s.

In the fourth chapter of this thesis, I assessed the current state of ideological heterogeneity in modern liberalism and conservatism. By drawing on the research of Poole and Rosenthal, I note that the Democratic Party has become inseparable from liberalism and the Republican Party has become inseparable from conservatism. Further, both liberalism and conservatism have become increasingly ideologically homogeneous (at least in terms of Congressional voting), as demonstrated through Poole and Rosenthal's research and through my variance calculations of Senate ideological scores. Though a fissure in one of the two ideological groups seems relatively unlikely, the potential for a fissure in conservatism seems comparatively higher. This is demonstrated by a variance calculation of the ideological positions of 2016 Republican and Democratic Presidential candidates. Although the Democratic candidates exhibited slightly higher levels of economic variance, Republican candidates clearly demonstrated more social variance. And whereas Democratic economic disagreements largely concern matters of scale, Republican social disagreements values-based, and Republicans hold seemingly incompatible positions on many social issues. For instance, Rand Paul's fundamental disagreement with many mainstream Republicans over the potential decriminalization and legalization of marijuana seems unlikely to be resolved easily.

A Look Back, and a Look Forward

My research on conservatism in the 1960s also informs my conclusion that modern conservatism has a greater potential for ideological fissure than does modern liberalism. For

one, although modern conservatism apparently exhibits slightly less variance on economic issues than modern liberalism, conservatism in the 1960s possessed much greater variance on economic issues. Does this indicate that modern conservatism could once again exhibit greater variance than liberalism on economic issues? Perhaps. After all, Donald Trump's 2016 campaign at times expressed support for economic policies totally anathema to the traditional conservative agenda—policies such as single-payer health care, and unequivocal support for social security as it is currently constituted—and he suffered no ill effect from conservative voters. Moreover, Trump's disavowal of free trade has upended a traditional conservative consensus on the merit of free or relatively free trade. Ultimately, it is difficult—nay, impossible—to discern precisely what 1960s conservatism's economic variance indicates about modern conservatism and the future of conservatism, for it is impossible to tell whether such economic variance has simply lain latent and dormant among conservatives or has gone extinct entirely. Yet Trump's enthusiastic defense of entitlement programs traditionally anathema to conservatives, the enthusiastic response Trump's defense generated amongst rank-and-file Republicans, and Trump's constant invocations of 60s-era conservatism as his political model (i.e. "the silent majority") do provide circumstantial evidence that ideological heterogeneity could once again come to bear on conservative economic thought. In other words, perhaps conservative economic heterogeneity, dormant since the 1960s, has been reawakened through the Presidential campaign and election of Donald Trump.

And what of conservatism's ideological heterogeneity on civil rights issues in the 1960s—does such heterogeneity come to bear on conservatism's modern makeup? Not directly; certainly no mainstream elected official openly advocates for an abrogation of

integration and a return to segregation. Although race relations are certainly at the forefront of America's modern political consciousness, there are very few issues that appear before Congress that are explicitly racial in nature. The actual modern implications of 1960s conservatism's ideologically diverse civil rights positions are twofold. First, it disproves the common refrain, often repeated gleefully by liberal pundits, that modern conservatism's origins are essentially racist, or even race-based. As my research demonstrates, nearly all Republicans in the 88th and 89th Congresses voted identically to Non-Southern Democrats on civil rights legislation.

Second, it highlights the way in which a social issue can separate one wing of one party from the remainder of mainstream politics. While nothing perfectly analogous to Southern Democratic disavowal of federal civil rights legislation exists in modern American politics, there are a number of social issues on which the entire country seems to be moving in the opposite direction from a portion of the Republican Party, or from a portion of conservatism itself. One can easily foresee a scenario in which the hot social cause of the day—say, death penalty abolition or criminal justice reform—is adopted by liberalism and by components of the conservative coalition, but not by the entire conservative coalition. Social values held amongst conservatives are, to generalize vastly, difficult to alter! This is precisely the point that my calculation of 2016 Republican Presidential candidates' variance on social issues was intended to demonstrate. Thus, while the civil rights heterogeneity of conservatism in the 1960s may not have any bearing on modern politics, it does provide a case study for the manner in which a social issue might split conservatives. Conservatives seem eminently more likely than liberals to be split over such an issue.

Future Research

My research is not comprehensive; I qualitatively analyzed conservative politicians in the 1960s and quantitatively analyzed Senate voting records on five bills in 1964 and 1965. It is hard to draw definitive conclusions from such research! I would encourage future researchers of this topic to delve deeper into voting records from the 1960s, and possibly incorporate Congressional voting records into the analysis as well. Secondly, I would advocate for an ideological scoring system more akin to the OnTheIssues score than the NOMINATE or GovTrack score. In this manner, academics might approach what I think is a more accurate read of conservatism: one that acknowledges its ideological diversity. Ultimately, I think that my research offers hope that in the future, historians of the conservative movement will take care to recognize the disparate strands of thought that characterized 1960s-era conservatism, that continue to affect modern conservatism, and that have important implications for our political system today.

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