The Forum

Listening to the Coalition Merchants: Measuring the Intellectual Influence of Academic Scribblers

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Abstract

Following Converse's advice that ideology is the product of a "creative synthesis," conducted by a narrow group of intellectuals, this paper reports on attempts to study ideology at its point of creation. I develop a measure of ideology expressed among pundits, based on coded opinion pieces in magazines and newspapers from 1830 to 1990. I use this measure to test the impact of ideas on party coalitions. I argue that ideologies, as created by intellectuals, strongly influence the coalitions that party leaders advance. In three cases – the realignment on slavery before the Civil War, the Civil Rights realignment in the mid-20th century, and the party change on abortion more recently – there is evidence that intellectuals reorganize the issues before parties realign around them. This evidence suggests that the patterns of "what goes with what" that intellectuals design have an impact on the nature of political cleavages.

KEYWORDS: ideology, parties, intellectuals, coalitions, scaling

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 "[T]he ideas of economists and political philosophers, both when they are right and when they are wrong, are more powerful than is commonly understood. Indeed, the world is ruled by little else. Practical men, who believe themselves to be exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist. Madmen in authority, who hear voices in the air, are distilling their frenzy from some academic scribbler of a few years back. I am sure that the power of vested interests is vastly exaggerated compared to the encroachment of ideas."

— John Maynard Keynes *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* (1936, p. 383)

The modern study of ideology[1] in American politics might be traced to Philip Converse's 1964 article "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics." Converse's main finding was that most of Americans were not especially ideological, with few using ideological constructs to explain their opinions. And even though today, more voters may have opinions that are consistent with a liberal-conservative dimension (e.g., Abramowitz and Saunders 1998, 2005), most would still not fall into the most "sophisticated" category Converse identified.

It matters whether and how much voters are ideological. But if we want to understand ideology itself, Converse's finding suggests that voters are not the best place to look. In fact, elsewhere in his 1964 piece, Converse suggests an alternative. He wrote:

> First, the shaping of belief systems of any range into apparently logical wholes that are credible to large numbers of people is an act of creative synthesis characteristic of only a miniscule proportion of any population. Second, to the extent that multiple idea-elements of a belief system are socially diffused from such creative sources, they tend to be diffused as "packages," which consumers come to see as "natural" wholes, for they are presented in such terms ("If you believe this, then you will also believe that, for it follows in such-and-such ways"). (Converse 1964, p. 211)

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[1] (Converse eschewed the word "ideology" because of its political baggage. Today, it seems safe to say that many use "ideology" to mean what he meant by "belief system.")

Converse provides no concrete evidence for this claim, but it is plausible. And if this is true, then the place to look to understand ideology is with this miniscule proportion of the population that creates it. In this essay, I report on a larger project (Noel 2005, 2006a, 2007b) that attempts to do just that. I have collected the expressed opinions of pundits from 1830 to 1990, allowing us to examine what went with what among that miniscule proportion engaged in the creative synthesis Converse discusses. I argue that changes in party positions over the past half-century can be traced to changes in ideological arguments advanced by the pundits.

In other words, following Keynes, I argue that ideas matter. More specifically, I argue that one way in which ideas matter is that they organize the coalitions that parties later champion.

I make this argument in four parts. First, I spell out a theory of parties and ideologies and their interaction. Second, I suggest an approach to measuring ideology that would allow us to test that theory, by directly assessing the ideologies of elite thinkers such as those Converse identifies. In the third section, I report briefly on some findings from that measure. The fourth section discusses other findings in the literature the help augment this interpretation. The final section discusses the implications of looking at the creative synthesis of ideology.

A theory of parties and ideologies

Building on the literature (e.g., Gerring 1997; see Knight 2006 for a thorough review.), I define an ideology as a set of common issue positions held together by some sort of logic. An ideology then, provides "constraint or functional interdependence" across issues (Converse 1964, p. 207). If you believe one thing, you should believe another. Just what the logic is that holds issues together is not entirely clear to political science. It might be principles, it might be material interests, it might be personality traits. For the current project, I will be agnostic. Whatever the reason that it exists, ideology ties issue positions together. I do argue, however, that Converse is right that some small set of people, Keynes' "economists and political philosophers," do the organizing, through some creative synthesis that generates ideological "packages."

Departing from the literature somewhat, I argue that ideologies are shared among many people. If one person has a well-developed, interconnected belief system over a number of issues, this is not an ideology unless others also hold it. This is not so much a departure, since the way we measure ideology is usually to identify constraint across some set of respondents.

Conveniently, parties have a similar structure. They, too, provide constraint, but they do it in a different way. Ideology is held together issue by issue. Your position on, say, abortion implies a position on tax cuts. Parties are

held together actor by actor. If Hillary Clinton is an ally of Nancy Pelosi, then Ted Kennedy is also a Pelosi ally. Again, why they are allies is the subject of some debate. Partisans might just be teams trying to capture office (e.g., Downs 1957; Schlesinger 1995; Aldrich 1995b), or they might want to get things from government (Riker 1962; Bawn et al. 2006). They might even be motivated by a shared ideology. But in the end, they are teams working together to capture control of office.

Parties and ideologies, then, tell people who is on their side, and who is not, and what they should support, and what they should oppose. Parties are organized by politicians. Ideologies, by academic scribblers who engage in creative synthesis.

Since both ideology and party have similar features, it should not surprise us that they might influence each other. For instance, parties might be organized around ideological patterns. Teams form so that teammates have similar ideologies. When ideologies change, parties will have to adapt. Or ideologies might follow parties. Party coalitions might be formed for electoral reasons, and ideologies are developed to rationalize their platforms. As political calculations drive parties to change their positions, ideologies will evolve in echo.

This latter is the more common view in the discipline. Accounts of major party platform change almost always begin with changes in electoral demographics, which in turn cause parties to change their positions. Ideology is an afterthought. For instance, in the mid-20th century, the Democrats saw in the migration of African Americans to Northern cities an opportunity to capture those voters. Meanwhile, Republicans saw an opportunity with the jilted southern Democrats, and went hunting where the ducks were (e.g., Sitkoff 1971; Bass and De Vries 1995).

Relatedly, David Karol (2005) argues that parties change positions to respond to changing demands and waxing and waning influences of their coalition members. Party, then, comes first. Insofar as ideology and party reflect the same thing, ideology must have been created to sell the party (e.g., Downs 1957; Schwartz 1989). This last stage, where ideology comes to echo the party, I call **partisan justification**.

All of these accounts contain at least a kernel of truth. Parties are motivated by voters, and policy positions that have no electoral value are likely to be shunned. And yet, as much as the growing black population in the North might have been attractive to Democrats, they also knew that appealing to blacks would cost them southern whites. It seems unlikely that, from a strictly electoral calculus, this tradeoff seemed worth it. If, as legend has it, Lyndon Johnson remarked after signing the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that the Democratic Party "lost the South for a generation," () he was making an understatement.

The motivation for the Democratic Party to embrace Civil Rights and abandon the region that had been its core for over a century might be found in ideology. The other dynamic – ideologies shaping parties – would have it that Democrats embraced Civil Rights because liberals, after a period of internal conflict over race, embraced Civil Rights. This other dynamic, which I call **ideological marketing**, represents intellectuals marketing a coalition to parties, through the pressure they put on party activists. Ordinary voters are not very ideological, Converse found, but political activists are. They are also the most likely to hear about new ideological ideas, although they can be resistant to them (Zaller 1992). Finally, these activists are the building blocks of the party (Bawn et al. 2006). Thus ideological marketing works by converting partisan soldiers to an ideology. Those activists are then highly influential within political parties. Where possible, they will convert election-focused politicians to their ideology. Activists will want to implement their policy beliefs when they capture the reins of power.

As I suggest, both partisan justification and ideological marketing probably have some truth to them. However, the role of ideology in organizing party coalitions is, I think, underappreciated. It is not just that intellectuals offer new ideas. They also organize them together, into ideologies, which in turn shape and drive party coalitions. This has happened repeatedly in U.S. history, from the Civil War to the Civil Rights movement. Since race has repeatedly been kept off both the political and the intellectual agenda, it provides repeated examples of party coalition shifts, which we can examine for evidence of the interaction of parties and ideologies.

Detecting ideology among the intellectuals

Testing whether ideology shapes parties through ideological marketing or rationalizes party coalitions through partisan justification (or if some other dynamic is present) involves a number of questions. We would want to get a handle on the exact mechanisms of the intellectuals' "creative synthesis," and we would want to trace out each connection, from intellectuals to activists to party leaders to voters. But one simple issue is sequence. When party coalitions change, do ideologies herald or follow?

To examine this, we simply need measures of the coalitions the parties are advancing, and of the coalitions implied by ideologies. For the former, there are a number of ready measures, including party platforms (e.g. Gerring 1998) and congressional roll calls (e.g. Poole and Rosenthal 1997). For intellectuals, we have less. I have thus collected a dataset on intellectual pundit opinion for the period 1830 to 1990.

The pundit data is collected at 20-year intervals, in 1830, 1850, 1870 and so forth. For each year, the data includes every op-ed, editorial and opinion piece

in a number of political journals, magazines and newspapers. The data also includes some opinion pieces written shortly before and after the year in question, especially when a notable journal began or ceased publication just outside the year. Many pundits write on multiple issues in each period, allowing us to determine which issues went with which among those people engaged in the creative synthesis.

These data can then be treated the way that NOMINATE treats roll call votes. We can derive an underlying dimension that summarizes who votes with whom and identifies which issues divide them and which do not. And the results can be compared to NOMINATE, as well as to party platforms. However, we would like to go further. Since roll calls are binary data, NOMINATE treats them that way. You can be for a bill or against it. But ideological positions are more complicated.

One way you might express your ideology would be to be for or against something. But another way might be to argue with your ideological partners about an issue that the other side does not much care about. Yet another way might be to duck an issue that others care about. For instance, today, conservatives take the strongest positions both for and against a guest-worker program for immigrants. Liberals are more concerned about a path to citizenship or the civil rights of undocumented workers. On the floor of Congress, Democrats would still vote on a guest-worker bill. But liberal intellectuals are more likely to set their own agenda.

To pick up these nuances, we can modify the NOMINATE technique to include abstentions (Noel 2007a). That model would allow us find not only which issues divide liberals from conservatives because each group takes the opposite side of the issue, but also which issues are ignored by one group while the other group debates them internally. This additional information will be very helpful, especially in tracing how intellectuals evolve on issues over time.

I apply these methods to the intellectual data. In every case I have considered closely, cleavages develop first among intellectuals, and then are reflected in party competition.

Three examples – The Civil War, Civil Rights and Abortion

The first task, then, is to identify places where the parties changed their coalitions, then look at the timing of the change. In this section, I briefly discuss three examples. The first is the incorporation of slavery into the ideological dimension separating the parties before the Civil War. The second is the party polarization on race that occurred in the latter half of the 20th century. And the third is the recent polarization on abortion. All three are cases of an issue that the parties had essentially avoided coming to be highly related to the party cleavage. In the last

two examples, the issue was even aligned the other direction, at least to some degree, before the change.

And in all three cases, there is evidence that intellectuals organized that issue into their cleavage before the parties followed suit.

The Civil War: The antebellum party system was sustained largely because it kept slavery off the agenda. The cleavage between the Whigs and the Democrats was complex, and its precise nature can be debated. But by and large, the Democrats were an agricultural and working class party, while Whigs represented commercial interests and the upper class (For a more complete treatment, see for example Sundquist 1983; Gerring 1998; Holt 1999). Thus Whigs favored a National Bank and protective trade policy to protect nascent American industry, while Democrats felt those policies enriched already wealthy commercial leaders at the expense of the agricultural sector. Some ethnic, religious and social divisions also split the parties, but by the early 1850s, slavery was not among them (Gienapp 1988, p. 40).

Slavery was not on the party agenda because avoiding sectional issues was the lynchpin of the party system: "The existence of national political parties … necessitated alliances between political elites in various sections of the country" (Foner 1980, p.35; see also Remini 1959; Riker 1982; Sundquist 1983; Aldrich 1995b). For either party, the issue of slavery would have disrupred this balance. Anti-slavery candidates would lose across the South, while pro-slavery candidates could face trouble in the North. Slavery was thus as an orthogonal issue. Sundquist writes, "The slavery issue cut squarely across the two major parties that existed at the time" (p. 50).

Evidence that slavery cross-cut the coalitions can be seen in congressional voting patterns (Poole and Rosenthal 1997), and in the internal party institutions that acted to keep slavery off the agenda (Aldrich 1995a; Weingast 1998). It also shows up in electoral voting: In 1848, Whig Zacharay Taylor, won the presidency with seven free states and eight slave states. His rival, Democratic candidate Lewis Cass, won eight free states and six slave states. In 1852, the Franklin Pierce won the office for the Democrats with 14 free states and 12 slave states. Whig Winfield Scott, picked up just four states: two free and two slave.

But this balance did not last forever. Eventually, sectional issues became too significant to avoid. There were several ways in which this might have happened. Since the other issues defined the inter-sectional party system, the sectional issues might have created a new alignment that attempted to straddle the previous issues, as the old system straddled slavery. Or the new system might have just ignored those issues. Or it might have built an entirely new coalition, rearranging all the older issues into new packages. Or, slavery might have been grafted on to the existing ideological cleavage between the two parties.

The eventual disruption of the party system was driven by new parties. The Whigs and the Democrats were strongly committed to their cross-sectional strategy, but other parties were not. And so activists unsatisfied with the system's avoidance of slavery began their own parties. They tried different strategies to interact with the existing system. For instance, the Liberty Party tried to compete on the slavery issue alone. The Free Soil Party, its successor, was more strategic, trying to build a new coalition incorporating disaffected Democrats and Whigs. This required the party to try to split the difference, straddling some issues, and sometimes pleasing Whigs, sometimes Democrats, on others (Blue 1973). A party system with the Free Soil Party might have been split in entirely new ways on many issues.

The Republican Party, however, essentially joined slavery to the existing Whig ideology, with some exceptions. And it was the Republicans who were successful.

There are a number of reasons the Republicans were the party to emerge from among the pool of possible challengers. I argue that one important reason is that the Republican Party was advancing an ideology that was already developed before the party formed. In the pundit data, in 1850, the issue of slavery is not cross-cutting with the tariff or the other major issues that split the Democrats and the Whigs. Slavery was of equal importance and split the pundits in the same way as the tariff. If ideology is about what goes with what, opposition to slavery went with support for a tariff.

And, after the Republicans began to replace Whigs in Congress, that same pattern happened among the elected officials. The Republicans advanced exactly this ideology, as Foner describes in his *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War* (1995 (1970)). The pundit data confirm, then, that the divide Foner describes happened first at the level of intellectuals.

Table 1 illustrates this pattern. Table 1 shows the APRE for the pundits and for members of Congress in 1850 and then for Congress in 1860. The APRE, or aggregate proportionate reduction in error, measures how much of the error in voting is reduced by the first dimension of the scaling model. That is, if the NOMINATE scores measure the primary division among Members of Congress, the APRE for slavery bills measures how well those bills are explained by that primary division. High numbers then, show a strong relationship between the issue and the underlying ideological cleavage.

In 1850, the dimension in Congress is not about race, but clearly about trade and the tariff. By 1860, however, on the eve of the Civil War, Congress has come to look like the pundits.

**Table 1: Aggregate Proportionate Reduction in Error**

	Pundits 1850	31st Congress (1849-1850)	36th Congress (1859-1860)
Slavery issues	0.67	0.39	0.57
Trade issues	0.53	0.76	0.67

This evidence, however, is based on data from 1850 only, which is very close to point of change. The data on intellectuals in the early part of the 19th century is spotty, and yet the changes happen quickly. Because there is not a long period leading up to the party change, and because the party cleavage was never that well-developed, the evidence is less conclusive.

This is not the case for the change on Civil Rights.

Civil Rights: After the Civil War, the party alignment on race issues continued as it was before. Republicans were pro-civil rights, while Democrats opposed them. Into the early part of the 20th century, anti-lynching laws were introduced in Congress, mostly by Republicans seeking to embarrass Democrats by waving the "bloody shirt" of the Civil War. These votes were highly partisan, and consistent with the ideology that emerged before the Civil War.

Looking at the intellectual arguments of this period shows a different pattern. In the 1910 sample, race is not related to the primary ideological dimension. **Figure 1** shows the APRE for race issues among pundits and among voters in the U.S. House (adapted from Poole and Rosenthal 1997). In Congress in the early part of the 1900s, the primary division strongly predicts positions on race. But in 1910 and 1930, race is not part of the primary division among intellectuals. In that period, race is also not a very common issue to be discussed by pundits, who are more concerned with economic issues and foreign policy.
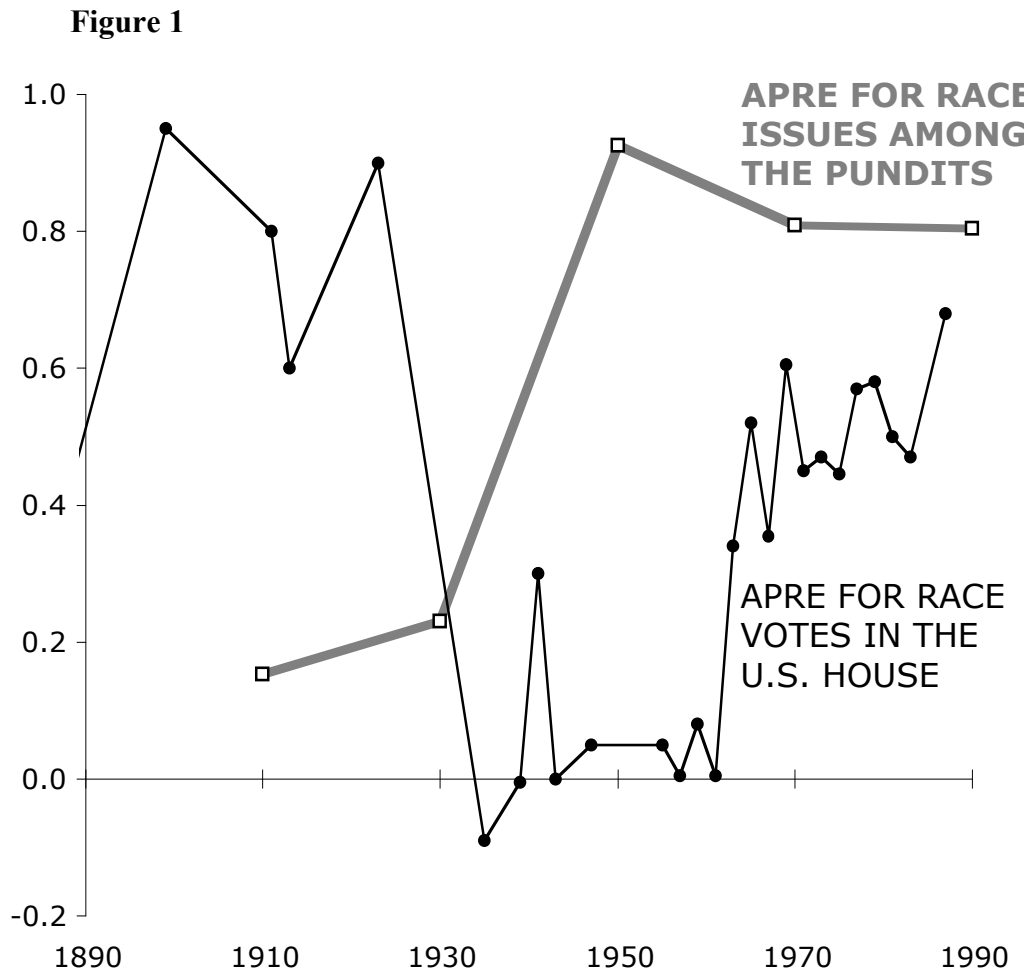
Figure 1

What is not clear from Figure 1, but becomes clear with closer analysis (see Noel 2007b for more details) is that race is related to ideology, but not in a straightforward way. In 1910, economic conservatives are unlikely to discuss race at all. But economic liberals are equally likely to take pro-civil rights and anti-civil rights positions. In other words, there is an internal debate about race taking place among liberals at this time. For instance, the progressive movement was very skeptical of poorly informed and manipulated voters. Some saw blacks as incapable of handling the vote, or other social responsibilities. Others had embraced sociological theories that justified their commitment to helping the disadvantaged, but those theories also had racist implications (see e.g., Stocking 1994; Gossett 1997).

By 1930, the pundit data shows no signs of this internal debate. Economic conservatives continue to avoid the issue, but liberals are largely in favor of civil

rights. Very few pundits speak out against blacks, possibly because civil rights ideas pose little serious threat. But those who do advance those ideas are economic liberals.

By 1950, however, liberal activists have brought civil rights onto the intelletual agenda, and those who oppose the civil rights movement – for a variety of reasons – are articulating their opposition. Civil Rights policies – from fair employment laws to desegregation policies – are all highly related to the main ideological dimension, and the APRE in Figure 1 rises and stays high into the 1990s.

But the pattern in Figure 1 for the House lags behind. The last anti-lynching vote in Congress for some time is in 1923. After that, racial issues fall completely off Congress' agenda until 1935. Now, midway into Roosevelt's first term, race is cross-cutting the party cleavage. The New Deal coalition includes both southern states, who oppose civil rights, and northern liberals, who support them. The Republican Party is also divided. This internal conflict continues into the 1960s, before the well-known reversal (e.g., Carmines and Stimson 1989; Petrocik 1987).

It is meaningful that we call the cross-cutting voting pattern of the 1950s and 1960s the Conservative Coalition. It was an ideological coalition that was exerting itself in the Congress, undermining a party alignment that was not keeping up with ideological changes on race.

This Conservative Coalition seemed bound to disrupt the party system, but it is not obvious that it had to happen the way that it did. Southern Democrats had long and deep ties to the Democratic Party. They did not relinquish it quietly. The southerners who walked out of the Democratic Party convention in 1948 saw themselves as the true Democrats. They held on to the party label, calling themselves the States' Rights Democratic Party, recalling an issue that had been fundamental to the party since before the Civil War. Meanwhile, the Republican Party had been founded on Civil Rights issues. The Republican platform was in favor of Civil Rights before the Democrats' platform was (Johnson and Porter 1973; Carmines and Stimson 1989). But the reversal was hard to resist, even for leaders, such as Lyndon Johnson, who saw its long-term negative consequences. What made it hard to resist, I would argue, was the ideological developments, dating from the beginning of the 1900s, that made civil rights an important element of liberalism.

The evidence on the Civil Rights movement is quite strong, because we can see the issue of race develop among the intellectuals over a long period of time, and because the shift takes place almost a generation before the change among elected leaders. The change is also probably closely related to another issue change between the parties, on abortion.

Abortion: During the height of the civil rights realignment, the issue of abortion was far from the political agenda. But the parties were at least weakly divided on it. Since Catholics were much more likely to be in the Democratic Party, and Catholics were the group most reliably opposed to abortion, Democratic politicians were also most opposed. Beginning in the 1980s, members of Congress began to switch on the issue, followed by voters about a decade later. (See Adams 1997 for a more complete analysis.) Today, abortion is a signature cleavage between the parties, and in the opposite direction. Republicans are Pro Life; Democrats Pro Choice.

Evidence on the development of the issue among the pundits is spotty. Before Roe v. Wade, few pundits discuss the issue, so it is hard to get reliable estimates of its relationship to ideology. However, what few mentions we have in 1950 or 1970 are almost entirely consistent with the new cleavage, not the old one. The only exception is an editorial in *The Wall Street Journal* in 1970 that lukewarmly extends the small-government rationale to abortion. There are, however, articles from as early as the 1930s in *The New Republic* taking a liberal position on abortion and birth control, and every anti-abortion position taken in the dataset is from a pundit otherwise identified as conservative.

Such evidence specific to abortion is spotty, but abortion is not an issue in isolation. Most political activists' positions on abortion are tied up in their attitudes toward religion. And the role of religion and other religious issues does divide along the liberal and conservative direction at a much earlier period.

Linkages: From Thinkers to Activists to the Party

In all three of these examples, pundits seem to move before elected officials. What is more, in all three examples, it is plausible that, absent a coalition proscribed by intellectuals, the party system might have shifted in other directions. In this, Carmines and Stimson may be right to say, of the civil rights realignment, that "if we could restart the process from where it was, say, in the 1930s, that it is exceedingly unlikely that we would witness the same result" P.192-3. It is at least possible that things could have worked out differently. But the argument here suggests that the events that locked us into the path history took occurred much earlier than the 1960s. While these data do not establish that the intellectual coalitions were the source for the party coalitions, they do come first, and they do accurately forecast what comes after them.

Nevertheless, more evidence is needed on the mechanism linking elite opinion and party leaders. To be explicit, the argument is that intellectuals organize issues together. That organization is transmitted to the most politically aware and active, who in turn make up the major decision makers in political

parties. The parties then listen to these activists as much or more than they listen to voters.

There is ample evidence for the first stage of this process. Political activists tend to be more ideological than most citizens (McCloskey et al. 1960; Verba et al. 1993; Brady et al. 1999; Carsey et al. 2003). They are the consumers of the opinion-journalism and writings of the academic scribblers. In Zaller's model of opinion formation (1992), the more politically aware are those most likely to hear new messages. They are also most likely to resist when new messages conflict with past messages. But on new issues, or issues on which the earlier signals have been mixed, they will be most likely to change.

There is also evidence for the second stage of the linkage. Much of the drive for change comes not from the electorate but from ideologically committed activists. The Democratic Party first began to feel the pressure of the pro-civil rights liberals in 1948, when Harry Truman sided with them on a civil rights plank. Truman took this risk in part because he thought he might win more votes than he would lose (Sitkoff 1971), but it was still a risk. And it was activists at the convention, notably Americans for Democratic Action, a group of activists seeking to change their party, who pressured Truman to take the risk. And they had to pressure him, because Southern Democrats were resisting the change. The battle in the Philadelphia convention was not fought over the merits of the strategy, but over the merits of the policy.

The battle continued after Truman's decision. Southern Democrats stormed out of the Democratic Convention in 1948, but they were back in 1952. The third party Southern Democrats formed for the purposes of contesting the presidency in 1948 was tellingly called the States Rights Democratic Party, or Dixiecrat Party, to maintain their connection to the Democratic Party. The Southerners' strategy in 1960 of nominating slates of unpledged electors made an even stronger claim on the Democratic Party. And Strom Thurmond served as a Democrat in the Senate for twelve years after his third party bid in 1948. He did not give up on the Democrats until 1964, when Lyndon Johnson supported the Civil Rights Act and Barry Goldwater ran for president as a Republican. That is a decade after the ideological switch shown among the pundits in the data above.

What we see, then, is a battle among the activists in the Democratic Party. One group, the ADA, was ideologically comfortable with the liberal coalition offered by the intellectuals. The other group did not match the new coalition. But they were still Democrats, and they had ties to other Democrats. They would not leave quietly.

This ideological conflict was likely brewing in the party for some time. Feinstein and Schickler (2007) show that state party platforms in the Democratic Party began to move in a racially liberal direction as early as the mid-1940s. These platforms, likely crafted by activists, shifted even in states where there was

little African-American vote to pursue. This would suggest that the change begins with ideological activists and not with strategic national leaders.

Implications: How does creative synthesis work?

The evidence presented so far strongly suggests that something happening at the level of pundits is leading changes that happen elsewhere in politics later. But nothing here explores the mechanisms of "creative synthesis." What is it that the pundits are doing, when they are organizing issues?

On this we must be more speculative, but there are clues. We might begin by noting that many intellectuals seem to be actively interested in building a movement. *The New Republic*, for instance, was founded in part to provide a forum for a growing group of progressive intellectuals (Levy 1985). William F. Buckley's *National Review* has a similar history. (Nash 1996)

Second, these scribblers do tend to end up speaking to a common voice. Different individuals of course have their own views, but a school of thought tends to emerge. Buckley even encouraged National Review writers to focus on their differences with the left, rather than their differences among themselves. They eventually represent a movement that is larger than any one thinker. Finally, these movements are broad and their members hope for them to spread. They do not form electoral alliances, but intellectual ones.

Individual issues, then, would seem to become part of the movement's core through individual thinkers. A progressive thinker, for example, who cares about race, for example, will begin to discuss it. If the intellectual movement does not agree with his position, they will respond. They will argue. They will debate whether progressivism ought to care about the welfare of blacks or not.

And possibly, one side will win. If the argument becomes bitter, one side may find it hard to get access to space in the more respected publications, as editors begin to enforce their views. Or one side might splinter off to form its own movement, and either become isolated or merge with a different intellectual community. Anti-civil rights voices that lost in the debate among progressives eventually found a home among conservative thinkers.

Intellectual positions in these debates are no doubt influenced by many of the things that influence politics. Indeed, it may be that, pace Keynes, many important "ideas" have developed in the service of "the power of vested interests." And if interests can precede ideas, so can other incentives. Some thinkers may have personalities or cognitive styles more suited to some arguments than to others (e.g., Amodio et al. 2007; see also Jost et al. 2003). Whatever their motivation, however, I think intellectuals will always seek allies, if only to have the approval of at least some peers. The only political influence that would not

directly affect these thinkers is the need to have those allies add up to 50 percent plus one (or the relevant plurality) of the voting public.

This sketch of a mechanism of creative synthesis is deliberately limited. A more rigorous model is called for. It is beyond the scope of this project to provide one, but such a model would work out the incentives for intellectuals in developing political ideas (Noel 2006b). In the end, such would be a model of political philosophy, a model of political theory, a model of academic scribblers.

In short, it might be a model of ourselves – or at least those political scientists who participate in the policy debates, both specific and general. And that, perhaps, might cut too close to home for some. But if we think that what academics say matters, then we should ask how academics come to say what they say.

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