



THE U.S. PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN, 2016:

A HISTORIC REALIGNMENT?

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This essay explores the 2016 election using 1964 for comparison. The central theme is that 1964 set the context for subsequent presidential elections. Issues and public policy revolved around the standards set by the 1964 converting election. Both race and religion played a role in the 1964 converting election that redefined the Democratic Party as the liberal political party for the nation, and the Republican as its conservative counterpart. This established a political regime that endures until the present day, but its endurance has had deleterious consequences for the discussion of new proposals. Change happens slowly and piecemeal. Both parties maintain high levels of spending as politics has been reduced to administration, a technocracy rather than representative democracy. The resulting pressures and frustrations manifest themselves with increasing frequency in the political system. The tumultuous 2016 campaign is the latest manifestation of this dissatisfaction among voters. Given the peculiarities of 2016, are we on the verge of a historic realignment, one that may set a similar standard for a generation?

POLITICAL PARTIES AS INSTRUMENTS OF CHANGE

Can a political party change its program dramatically during the course of a campaign? How could the Republican Party begin 2016 with the anticipation that former Florida Governor Jeb Bush might become its nominee, only to end up with a nominee whose programs run counter to party orthodoxy? While no long-term projection is possible, historical comparison might provide some insight. Converting elections are victorious election campaigns by the majority party. There is no shift from one party losing its majority status to the other. Rather, there is continuity

with the majority party retaining its dominance; however, the composition of the party coalition changes. Entering the election with one group of voters, by switching some of those voters it becomes programmatically different (Pomper 1967). The new iteration rejects the past. Whether there is such a thing as a majority party in American politics today is debatable. Yet looking at 2016 with some analytical constructs from political science might help make sense of a confusing, historic campaign.

The 1964 election between Lyndon B. Johnson and Barry Goldwater, at a dramatic point in American history, led to a redefinition of the Democratic and Republican Party coalitions. The contest laid the foundation for Ronald Reagan's victories in 1980 and 1984. It led to the exit of conservatives from the Democratic Party, and the dominance of the Democratic Party's liberal wing. In 1964, analogous to their puzzlement in 2016, Republican elites were surprised by the success of the Goldwater campaign. At the 1964 Republican convention, tensions were high between establishment Republicans and Goldwater delegates. Establishment candidate Nelson Rockefeller faced determined opposition from conservative forces. The struggle redefined the party. Former President Dwight Eisenhower publicly expressed reservations about Goldwater on the Republican side.

Similarly, the success of Donald Trump and Ted Cruz happened despite the opposition of Republican elites. As in 2016, in 1964 Republican leaders were concerned that Goldwater would lose badly to Johnson. One poll showed Goldwater losing to Johnson 62-29 percent (Jamieson 1996: 171). In 2016, establishment candidates Jeb Bush, Marco Rubio, and John Kasich failed to garner support from the base. As was the case some fifty years ago, Republican elites in 2016 viewed either a Cruz or Trump candidacy with concern (Burns 2016: A1). Although less pronounced on the Democratic side, voter dissatisfaction with Democratic Party elites propelled the candidacy of Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont, a democratic socialist. Sanders supporters expressed anger about the Democratic Party "super-delegates," a category of convention delegates consisting of party officials, elected officeholders, and long-time activists. The super-delegates overwhelmingly supported Hillary Clinton for the nomination, fueling voter frustration over a system perceived to be favoring status quo oriented candidates (Healy 2016: A1). Election campaigns illustrate the weaknesses of both parties.

E. E. Schattschneider famously said that “political parties created democracy,” and that “democracy is unthinkable save in terms of parties” (1942: 1). This statement became orthodoxy among political scientists. Four years after the publication of his book, the discipline officially endorsed this perspective. A classic Report by the Committee on Political Parties of the American Political Science Association, “Toward a More Responsible Party System,” a supplement to the *American Political Science Review* (APSA 1950), identified parties as the mechanism to effect change. Through parties, voters could vote programmatically. This call for the parties to offer clear ideological alternatives went beyond the Jacksonian project of mass mobilization. During the Jacksonian era (1820-1845), political parties mobilized voters on a large scale. Universal manhood suffrage became the standard. Property restrictions belonged to a bygone era. Political science practitioners now said that was not enough. Parties were the instruments for mobilization and transformation. The political system depended on parties to avoid stasis. The 1950 APSA Report was an extension of Woodrow Wilson’s earlier call in his *Congressional Government* (2006) for energetic action by the executive and legislative branches. Wilson carried his ideas into action, for as president he acted as party leader going so far as to meet with congressional Democrats in gaining support for his programs. For the first two years of his administration, Wilson was successful. Measures establishing the Federal Reserve System and providing for the federal income tax were both approved by Congress in 1913.

Yet, in calling for political parties to combine the role of mobilizing and bringing about policy transformation, the APSA Report created a conundrum that has led to the contemporary situation confronting the two major parties and, by extension, the entire political system. The logic of the APSA, and its call for ideologically coherent programs by the two major parties, left little room for internal ideological mixing. The desirability of conservatives, moderates, and liberals cohabitating in the same party became questionable. Viewed from the vantage point of the 1950s, liberals concluded that conservative opposition to FDR’s New Deal and Harry S. Truman’s Fair Deal was due to the presence of Southern conservatives in the Democratic Party caucus. FDR himself led an unsuccessful campaign in 1936 to purge conservative members of his party. Liberal opinion accordingly embraced the APSA Report. As the dominant ideology of the period, this action had profound implications. Combined with the emerging conservative movement of the 1950s, American politics was headed on a trajectory spelled out in political science’s 1950 manifesto. The success of William F. Buckley’s

National Review (1955--) was a measure of the flowering of American conservatism. The stage was set for conservative forces to themselves transform the GOP, which would happen in 1964. Similarly, the growing strength of liberalism in the Democratic Party pushed conservative influences aside. This would also manifest itself in 1964. The stage had been set for a combustible situation. American political parties were being primed for a realignment. In 1967, Gerald Pomper observed that: "The 1964 election represents a radical break from past results, and the statistics strongly suggest that it was a converting election, retaining the same Democratic Party as the majority, but on a new basis of popular support" (1967: 555).

PARTY REALIGNMENT: HISTORY OF A CONCEPT

The political science profession has had a long fascination with electoral realignment (Burnham 1970, Key 1955, Schattschneider 1942). Walter Dean Burnham (1970) defined "critical realignments" as sudden changes in political conditions happening every 30-40 years. In the 1950s, research by Angus Campbell and colleagues led to the publication of the seminal work, *The American Voter* (1960). This study identified party affiliation as a static factor shaping voter decisions. In this model, the Franklin D. Roosevelt realigning election of 1932 established an order that saw Democratic presidential candidates usually winning, with "maintaining" elections such as FDR's wins in 1936, 1940, 1944, as well as Truman's come-from-behind victory in 1948 and John F. Kennedy's razor-thin 1960 victory over Richard M. Nixon falling in this category. Party identification was presented as such a steady predictor that, unless the opposition Republican Party presented a candidate with personal appeal, it was claimed, the majority Democrats were positioned to win. In 1952 and 1956, Eisenhower's personal popularity propelled him to victory over the Democratic standard-bearer, Governor Adlai Stevenson of Illinois.

However, the electoral model presented in *The American Voter* overstated the case. Although it is true that Truman and Kennedy defeated their Republican opponents in 1948 and 1960, respectively, neither victory was convincing. Indeed, the victories were narrow, with both men winning by small margins. Kennedy's victory in 1960 was by 118,574 votes out of 68,334,888 total votes cast for Kennedy and Nixon (Meagher & Gragg 2011: 75). Far from being guided by party identification only, with personality overriding that variable occasionally, the voters came close to forcing "deviating elections" victories in 1948 and 1960, respectively, two

campaigns in which the Republican nominees lacked Eisenhower's personal charisma.

Neither Governor Thomas Dewey of New York, Truman's opponent, nor Nixon, possessed the warmth and attractive personality traits of "Ike" and JFK. Dewey's and Nixon's near misses happened even though the Democratic Party was the majority party and should have won handily in 1948 and 1960. In the context of the 1950s, however, FDR's four victories and Truman's over Dewey in 1948, albeit narrow, seemed to fit conditions. Eisenhower was the war hero whose personal charm was enough to upend FDR's coalition. Indeed, from the vantage point of 1956, the FDR wins in 1932, 1936, 1940, and 1944, plus Truman's in 1948, seemed to fit the realigning and maintaining categories, respectively. Kennedy's win, which exposed a weakness in the model's predictive capacity, had yet to happen.

As with many other things, the 1960s led to a revision of the model. The social and political upheavals of the decade stood in contrast to the stability of the 1950s. Roosevelt's realigning victory in 1932 was beginning to recede in memory (Pomper 1980: 96). President Lyndon B. Johnson's civil rights reforms changed the calculus of American politics. Accordingly, scholars sought to explain the time period's inability to conform to the model by adding to its three-part typology of realigning, maintaining, and deviating election, a new type, converting elections (Pomper 2003). This new election type entered the vocabulary of political science. With the changing composition of the Democratic party coalition brought about by social changes, civil rights reforms, and the emergence of new issues, and the seeming continued electoral dominance of the Democratic party in presidential elections, a view enhanced by LBJ's landslide victory in 1964, a new analytical construct was needed to account for the changes. In this connection, the role of party identification was retained as a continued source of partisan behavior.

The changes in American voting behavior led to a reevaluation of party identification explaining voter behavior. Morris P. Fiorina's *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections* (1981) re-defined party identification by keeping it as a central role in the vote act, but added an important role for issues in voter decision-making. No longer were voters cast as captives of party identification alone. The increase in split-ticket voting meant that the old definition had to change.

Democratic dominance at the presidential level came to an end shortly after LBJ's 1964 win. Nixon's 1968 victory over Vice President Hubert H.

Humphrey and independent candidate Governor George Wallace of Alabama ushered in a new period of Republican Party dominance at the presidential level. Nixon was re-elected in 1972, defeating George McGovern with 61 percent of the vote. It was a far-ranging victory, with only Massachusetts and the District of Columbia voting for McGovern (Burbank 2008: 26). The 1972 campaign revealed the extent of the changes in the Democratic Party that had happened since 1964. McGovern supported socially liberal stances on abortion, marijuana decriminalization, draft amnesty, and women's equality (Layman 2001: 43). Although an economic liberal who supported civil rights reforms, LBJ was not a social liberal in McGovern's sense. Four years later, the Democrats turned to the South for their nominee, a born-again Christian who was the contra McGovern.

Despite the trauma of Watergate (1974), President Gerald R. Ford overcame the shadow of his predecessor's scandal as well as a large deficit between himself and Jimmy Carter to almost defeat him in 1976. Carter received 50.1 percent of the national popular vote. Carter's win was the last hurrah for the Democrats in the South. Democratic elites were gleeful that Carter's victory in the South was a harbinger that FDR's New Deal coalition had returned the party to presidential dominance (Burbank 2008: 27). But that was not to be. Despite Carter's narrow victory, and the reappearance of Democratic Party control for four years, Ronald Reagan's landslide victories in 1980 and 1984, combined with George H. W. Bush's election in 1988, were clear indications of the GOP's strength at the presidential level. Nevertheless, Republican strength at the presidential level was not matched at the congressional level as the Democrats controlled the U.S. House of Representatives from 1955-1995, and the U.S. Senate from 1955-1981, and then regained control in 1987, holding it until 1995 (White & Shea 2004: 179).

Some observers began referring to a "split-level" realignment to explain the dissonance between Southern voters continuing to elect conservative Democrats to state and local and even congressional offices, while voting Republicans for president (Lublin 2004: 8). In returning Southern Democrats to Congress, Southern voters helped perpetuate Democratic control over Congress, something contrary to the ideological leanings of the Southern white electorate. By fielding winning candidates, the Democrats maintained Democratic majorities among the Southern congressional delegations long after the Democratic party had lost its popularity in the South (Fowler 1993: 35). This split-level realignment fit with Burnham's (1970) notion of secular realignment, which posited slow, gradual movement

of voters from the Democratic Party to the Republican, a program largely completed in the 1994 mid-term elections that elected a Republican majority to the House of Representatives for the first time since 1954. However, the movement of the traditionally Democratic evangelical vote to the GOP was not a given in the 1970s. The group was apolitical as far as activism was concerned. As Geoffrey Layman recalls: "Initial efforts of organizations such as the Moral Majority and the Religious Roundtable to mobilize conservative Christians into politics were met with suspicion and distaste by a large proportion of the evangelical clergy and laity" (2001: 44). This was not a group motivated by politics. When evangelicals did realign, the changes begun by the 1964 converting election were completed. By the time of the advent of the Clinton era, the party realignment initiated by the converting election was complete. Evangelicals and social conservatives had left their former party for the Republican Party, while the social liberalism of the McGovern campaign became orthodoxy for the national Democratic party. The coalition led by JFK and LBJ at the start of the 1960s no longer existed.

ISSUES AND PERSONALITIES, 1964 and 2016

Just as there were many in the Republican leadership supporting Jeb Bush in 2016, some Republican elites backed Governor Nelson Rockefeller of New York, the scion of one of the prominent families in the nation, ambitious and well-financed. Rockefeller had assembled a campaign apparatus ready to promote his candidacy in 1964, as had Dewey in 1948. In contrast, Eisenhower wanted his brother Milton to seek the nomination, or failing that, a military friend, Gen. Lucius Clay, or possibly Henry Cabot Lodge or Governor William Scranton of Pennsylvania. Rockefeller, however, was the preferred candidate of most Republicans in the elite, although they were not particularly fond of him personally. When Rockefeller and his first wife divorced in 1962, and he married his second wife Margaretta "Happy" Filer Murphy on 4 May 1963, following his second divorce, he went from being the number one choice among Republicans to second, following Goldwater. Prescott Bush withdrew his support, saying that Rockefeller was "the destroyer of American homes" (White 2010: 83). Conservative forces contra the Dewey and Eisenhower wings of the party were active in 1960. The divisions between the two wings of the Republican Party formed after the 1944 election when Thomas Dewey favored positioning the GOP as a pro-New Deal party. Dewey began referring to himself a "New Deal Republican." Dewey's strategy put him at odds with the conservatives led by Robert Taft of Ohio. Eisenhower's success

strengthened the Dewey elements in the party, much to the consternation of conservatives. Eisenhower's use of the term "Modern Republicanism" was particularly objectionable as Dewey supporters controlled Republican Party organizations (Shermer 2013: 89). Eisenhower developed Republican Party organizations in urban areas of the South amenable to his brand of moderate politics (Schickler 2016: 239). Following Nixon's close defeat by Kennedy, movement conservatives began organizing for a "takeover" of the Republican nominating process. Named for the office suite it occupied in New York, the Suite 3505 Committee began building an organization to achieve that goal. Rockefeller's nomination was not a sure thing even with his financial resources and the advantage of his name. A longtime conservative activist, F. Clifton White, became head of the National Draft Goldwater Movement in the summer of 1963. His goal was a Goldwater nomination in 1964 (Jamieson 1996: 215).

There were policy reasons why Rockefeller was unappealing to the Suite 3505 Committee. The New York governor favored the concept of Medicare, the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, spoke favorably of the United Nations, and had increased social spending in New York. The Chase Manhattan Bank, with close ties to the Rockefeller family and with his brother David as Chief Executive Officer, had provided a loan to the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, a controversial civil rights group of the 1960s (White 2010: 77). Although the Suite 3505 Committee became active after Nixon's loss, the effort to remove Dewey-Eisenhower forces from control of the party was more long-term in nature than just the early 1960s. As Elizabeth Shermer notes, the 1964 nomination of Barry Goldwater was not a sudden emergence of conservatism, as some claimed, but rather a product of this longstanding antagonism (2013: 89).

What is intriguing about 2016 is the inversion of what happened in 1964. The success of Trump's candidacy was not driven by any organizational prowess. In fact, his candidacy struggled organizationally. In some states, Trump was outmaneuvered by the Cruz campaign. That, however, distorts the larger issues, namely, the overwhelming support of Republican voters for antiEstablishment candidates like Trump and Cruz. Goldwater supporters in 1960 represented a "movement," according to Theodore White (2010: 92). Although the combined voter support for Trump and Cruz represents a similar repudiation of the Republican establishment's policy and political agenda, it was not an effort directed by an organizational structure as was the case in 1964. The Republican leadership had no inkling that a change in the nature of the Trump candidacy was going to happen. An

op-ed piece by George Melloan in the *Wall Street Journal* admitted that: "Some of us have assumed that the hotel and casino tycoon's populist demagoguery will ultimately blow itself out." It then asked, "But what if it doesn't?" (2015: A17). In the summer of 2015, Peggy Noonan opined, "Blowhards don't wear well" (2015: A11). Trump was, she said, "his own brand" who would make his competitors appear, "measured, thoughtful, and mature." Trump "puts individuals and groups down in a mean and careless way" (Noonan 2015: A11).

Yet Trump's anticipated collapse never materialized. His lack of a welloiled machine was not lethal to his candidacy. Nor were his policy stands. Trump's program supported protecting American industry from international markets, a stance often labeled protectionism. He was critical of American policy for failing to impose tariffs against foreign products coming into the U.S. Trump's campaign speeches and interviews referred to unfair Chinese subsidies for their products, and exclusion of American products and services from P.R. China. He presented a policy proposal for a 45 percent tariff on Chinese products, something unusual for a GOP candidate (Haberma in Burns 2016: A1). Trump called for less American involvement in international affairs, and raised the matter of reconsidering nuclear policy vis-à-vis South Korea and Japan. His foreign policy stands were oceans apart from those of Republican governing circles.

American elites embraced free trade in the 1930s, and after the beginning of the Cold War (1947), internationalism in foreign policy. A postwar consensus of anti-communism and open markets was bipartisan. In his final address to a joint session of Congress on 14 January 1969, President Johnson said that "for the future, the quest of peace, I believe, requires that we maintain the liberal trade policies that have helped us become the leading nation in the world" (1969: 676). The bipartisan consensus on foreign policy was shattered following the debacle in Vietnam. As the party in power before the escalation, the Democrats lost credibility with the public on foreign affairs. Foreign policy elites within the Democratic Party became reluctant to advocate for military intervention abroad. In contrast, the Republican Party maintained support for both free trade and strong anti-communist foreign policies, the latter leading the party to call for a large military buildup in the late 1970s. Coinciding with these currents was a change in U.S. economic standing. The number of manufacturing jobs started to decline in the middle to late 1970s. By the end of the twentieth century, commentators began referring to the industrial heartland as the "Rustbelt." Although the traditional party of labor unions, the Democratic

Party did not embrace protectionist policies even though some Democratic politicians did. Trump did so in 2016. This is an intriguing aspect of the 2016 election.

In office during the difficult years from 1966-1968, the Democrats were assigned blame for many of the afflictions of American life. Domestic unrest, disillusionment with LBJ's Great Society program, the Vietnam war, and the shocking news of assassinations, contributed to this feeling of a nation out of control. The killings of Robert F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr., combined with the violence at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in 1968, made that year one of the most difficult of the decade. Yet, despite these unsettling events, and shifting variables in domestic life, true structural change did not happen following the events of the late 1960s.

THE KENNEDY-JOHNSON YEARS: POLITICS OF CHANGE

President John F. Kennedy campaigned in 1960 on a civil rights platform while reaching out to white Southern voters. His selection of Senate Majority Leader Lyndon B. Johnson was intended to strengthen the appeal of the ticket in the Southern states (Schickler 2016: 230). The "Boston-Austin Axis" succeeded in carrying enough states, including Johnson's own state of Texas, to prevail in a close contest against Nixon. Having campaigned for a civil rights reform package, Kennedy did not act. A cautious and pragmatic politician, JFK was unwilling to take steps that might imperil his political stance vis-à-vis Congress or his standing among the public. During the campaign, Kennedy had pledged to end discriminatory practices in federal housing with the "stroke of a pen." Yet, by 1962, no executive order had been signed. Frustrated by the president's inaction, activists began a "pens for Jack campaign," and urged supporters to mail them to the White House. Following the 6 November 1962 mid-term elections, President Kennedy signed Executive Order 11063. For civil rights activists, his slowness in acting betrayed a lack of passion on the subject.

The year 1963 changed the President's policy on civil rights. Rising tensions in the South made it difficult for Kennedy to ignore political pressure to take action (Schickler 2016: 231). Birmingham, Alabama, was a watershed in the history of civil rights reform. The images of firemen using fire hoses as well as police dogs against children engaged in peaceful demonstrations focused national attention on the issue. Birmingham's Public Safety Director, "Bull" Connor, ordered his fire and police

departments to take these actions in full view of television cameras as well as journalists. The iconic film of the incident is one of the most memorable visual images of the civil rights period of the 1960s. In this environment, the Kennedy administration put together a civil rights bill designed to end discrimination in public accommodations. It aimed at ending separate drinking fountains, lunch counters, ending the ban on people of color from staying in hotels, using swimming pools, and was exceedingly unpopular in the South. In a nationally televised address on 11 June 1963, Kennedy described civil rights as a "moral issue." Indicative of the nature of the times, civil rights activist Medgar Evers was assassinated at his home the next evening, 12 June 1963.

One week later, the administration developed the proposal in fuller detail. It was to include a measure for job training programs to assist in developing the employment skills of black Americans. In this connection, Kennedy was relying upon Republican as well as Democratic support of the measure. The Democratic Party was divided as its still influential Southern conservative wing opposed the public accommodations measure as well as a job training program. Indeed, the job training proposal was unpopular among some Republicans but for fiscal reasons and not opposition to the civil rights measure. However, the Kennedy administration was looking at Republican support for the measure because opposition within its party was strong. Democratic conservatives were a force to be reckoned with (Kenworthy 1963: 1, 20).

Following his 11 June 1963 speech, Kennedy's standing in the public approval polls declined. At the beginning of his administration, 72 percent of Americans approved of the new president, but following the Bay of Pigs (1961) that number had increased to 83 percent. After the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, JFK's approval rating was 74 percent, but by May 1963, before his civil rights address, the number declined to 64 percent. The steepest decline happened after the unveiling of his civil rights proposal. Although a late June 1963 Gallup poll had Kennedy at 61 percent, a Lou Harris poll had the number at 54 percent, and internal polling for the administration showed only 47-48 percent public approval for the president (Weaver 1963: 73). By the late summer of 1963, following his civil rights proposals, speculation appeared that Kennedy could lose the key states of North Carolina and Georgia due to his civil rights policies (Loftus 1963: 175). By the fall of 1963, insiders said that Kennedy would lose all the states of "the Old Confederacy" in 1964 to Goldwater had the election happened in the fall of 1963 (Sitton 1963: 1). In 1963, the prospect that a Democrat

could lose the South was surprising to many. The area had been Democratic since Andrew Jackson's era, with Georgia voting Republican only once, in 1928. Currently, Georgia and most Southern states are solidly Republican in voting patterns. Yet, before the 1964 converting election, this was not thought possible.

The incomprehension that many felt with respect to Georgia and other Southern states voting Republican in 1964 was a consequence of long-term changes traceable back to FDR's New Deal (Schickler 2016: 3-4). Although Roosevelt's New Deal coalition contained liberal policy goals with respect to economics and the size of government, it did not touch upon divisive social issues. The Roosevelt coalition included Northern liberals and Southern conservatives as well as black voters in the North. It was an odd coalition, and its reach was limited by the presence of a strong conservative wing in the Democratic party. However, structural changes were taking place that would move both parties in the direction of greater policy differentiation. This change began in 1948 when, in response to his need for the votes of Northern black voters, President Truman broke from the New Deal understanding of focusing on economics only by sending an ambitious civil rights plan to Congress. Although it had no chance of being approved, it was nonetheless resented by Southern Democrats. This resentment was magnified when Truman signed an executive order desegregating the military. At the 1948 Democratic National Convention, Southern Democrats walked out and rallied behind the "Dixiecrat" candidate, segregationist Sen. Strom Thurmond (DSC). By the late 1950s, the Democratic congressional party began its movement in the direction of embracing both economic and civil rights liberalism (Maisel & Brewer 2012: 362).

The changing party composition posed serious challenges for aspiring presidential candidates. Kennedy attempted to seek the support of white Southerners as well as black voters. He reached out to Coretta Scott King during a moment when her husband was under arrest for his civil rights activities. That action gained JFK the support of the civil rights leader's father, Martin Luther King, Sr., with the older King saying that the Kennedy's act of consoling his daughter-in-law would gain him his support. Like many black Americans, King, Sr. voted Republican, a link back to the Lincoln memory of him as the Great Emancipator. Yet, by 1960, that old allegiance was beginning to weaken (Schickler 2016: 142-43). Kennedy's naming of Johnson as his vice presidential running mate was a nod to white Southern voters, for the inclusion of the Texan was seen as a way to bolster the standing of the Democratic candidate in the South. "Kennedy's personal

commitment to civil rights was limited at best,” says Eric Schickler, “and his search for an Electoral College majority led to the selection of Lyndon Johnson as vice president” (2016: 230).

Richard Nixon campaigned in the South sensing Democratic weakness. Writing in the *New York Times*, Claude Sitton said that Nixon’s trip to Jackson, Mississippi, was “the third attempt of his Presidential campaign to capitalize on Southern dissatisfaction with the Democratic Party” (1960: 21). Half a century later, another writer for the *New York Times* reported that a conservative business leader with well-known political ties indicated that he might support Hillary Clinton. In an interview, Charles Koch expressed reservations about the two leading Republican contenders, Trump and Cruz (Barbaro 2016: A11). As in 1960, when the presence of Lyndon Johnson barely secured Texas and other Southern states for Kennedy, and in the leadup to 1964, when followers of American politics were surprised that all the states of the Old Confederacy could go Republican, this remark by a conservative business leader surprised many.

Changes were occurring with respect to religion, too. Although evangelical Christians had voted Democratic, their loyalty to the party began to wane. Just as race would transform the Democrats into a more liberal party, the loss of evangelical support would push the party to the left, especially as new issues such as abortion, the role of women in society, prayer in schools, changing sexual mores, and homosexual rights became salient in American politics. When the converting election of 1964 happened, evangelical Protestants comprised 22.7 percent of the population. At the turn of the millennium, that number increased to 25.8 percent. Mainline Protestants declined precipitously from 25.5 percent to 13.9 percent (Smidt in Wilson 2007: 38). The internal composition of the two major parties changed as well. At the 1992 Democratic National Convention, 19 percent of delegates identified as atheists or agnostic and 55 percent rarely attended church (Layman 2001: 2). Conversely, 66 percent of Republican delegates attended church regularly and 22 percent identified as fundamentalist Christian (Layman 2001: 1). An important year in presidential politics, it brought about the defeat of a Republican president from the party’s traditional wing, the election of a Democrat for the first time since 1976, and presaged the loss of Democratic majorities in Congress two years later, most notably the ending of forty years of Democratic control of the House of Representatives. The nomination of Governor Bill Clinton of Arkansas in 1992 marked the assertion of the moderate wing of the Democratic Party in presidential politics, spurred by the centrist Democratic

Leadership Council (DLC), formerly headed by him. Clinton, a Southern Baptist, and one who invoked the term “New Covenant” and the concepts of opportunity, responsibility, and community, led a secular political party, one sharply different than that led by Johnson in 1964 (Bolce & De Maio in Wilson 2007: 264). Indeed, despite Clinton’s attempt to project a more culturally conservative image than previous Democratic nominees, his presidency witnessed a withering away of evangelical support for the Democratic Party. Despite this, “one study showed, surprising to many, that Bill Clinton invoked Christ in presidential speeches more often than Bush per number of years in office” (Bass & Rozell in Smidt 2009: 480).

In 1960, Kennedy won the overwhelming support of Catholic voters, a traditional group for Democrats, but a vote total enhanced by having a Catholic heading the national ticket. In that year, 83 percent of Catholic voters voted for Kennedy, and 63 percent identified as Democrats (Mockabee in Wilson 2007: 84). Johnson received 78 percent of the Catholic vote, with 58 percent claiming to be Democrats. By the time of the next Democratic presidential victory in 1976, Jimmy Carter won 55 percent of the Catholic vote, while 47 percent identified with the Democratic Party. Accordingly, the Democrats suffered drops of 24 and 11 percentage points among those who voted for the Democratic candidate and identified as Democrats, respectively, between 1964 and 1976. By the time of Bill Clinton’s election in 1992, only 38 percent of Catholics identified as Democrats, although he managed to receive 60 percent of the Catholic vote. In his 1996 re-election bid, 55 percent of Catholics supported Clinton, and 41 percent identified as Democrats (Mockabee in Wilson 2007: 84).

The behavior of Catholic voters is instructive. Although there has been a sharp decline in allegiance to the Democratic party among Catholics, the decline is more nuanced than that among evangelicals (McTague & Layman in Smidt 2009: 333). According to Stephen Mockabee, “White Catholics are slightly more Democratic than are non-Catholic whites, and Catholics’ movement away from the Democratic party has been a slower drift than has been the case among white Protestants” (in Wilson 2007: 94). Although Catholic clerics favor economic liberalism, the matter is more unclear with laity (Wilson in Smidt 2009: 203). Catholic leaders issued pronouncements critical of Reagan administration economic policies in the 1980s. More recently, Pope Francis has expressed reservations about capitalism.

In 1960, 51 percent of churchgoing evangelicals identified as Democrats, compared with 56 percent of non-regular churchgoing

evangelicals. In the converting election of 1964, evangelicals comprised a larger share of the Democratic vote, with regular attendees at 58 percent and non-regular attendees at 65 percent (Layman 2001: 171). By the time of the Reagan administration, evangelicals were overwhelmingly Republican. This change in allegiance did not happen suddenly. Following the Democratic Party's embrace of social liberalism in the 1970s, evangelicals moved from being Democrats to independents. According to Geoffrey Layman, "Between 1964 and the early to mid-1970s, there was a noticeable decline in the percentage of committed evangelicals identifying with the Democratic party." He adds that, "With the Republican party not yet presenting a clear culturally conservative alternative, there may have been stronger incentives for religious conservatives to leave the Democratic fold than to identify with the GOP" (Layman 2001: 176).

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Whites as a percentage of the electorate have declined markedly since the Clinton years. Given the propensity of non-whites to vote Democratic, this has ordered the outcome of presidential elections for three decades. Whites comprised 83 percent of the electorate in 1996, 81 percent in 2000, 77 percent in 2004, 74 percent in 2008, and 72 percent in 2012. The racial breakdown in 2012 for Obama by race: 39 percent white, 93 percent black, 71 percent Hispanic, and 73 percent Asian. As whites as a percentage of the national popular vote have declined from 83 percent in 1996 to 72 percent in 2012, so too have the fortunes of Republican nominees. President George W. Bush did better among Hispanic voters in 2004 (47 percent). Bush's performance in 2004 indicates that non-white voters are amenable to voting for a GOP candidate. However, even in 2004, the percentage was significantly lower than that received by John Kerry (Roper Center of Politics, Cornell University). Given the propensity of non-white voters to vote Democratic, and the continual decline of Republican-leaning white voters, Republican candidates must improve performance among non-whites to win presidential elections.

Running counter to this is the commitment of evangelical voters, continued support from some mainline Protestant voters, and a higher level of support from Catholic voters than in 1964 for Republicans. The movement of evangelicals was instrumental in transforming the formerly Democratic "Solid South" into a strong Republican region. Despite this, ever more members of mainline Protestant denominations, although a declining percentage of the vote, and secular voters, now lean to the

Democrats. Differences in turnout levels among faith traditions are an important factor in presidential contests, too. Groups with the highest turnout levels are (in order) Jews, mainline Protestants, Catholics, and evangelical Protestants. Lower turnout levels are found among (in order) black Protestants, Hispanic and black Catholics, and secular voters (Wielhouwer in Smidt 2009: 401). With divisions among religious faiths in voter turnout, the favorable trend for Republican nominees is not as strong as that among non-white voters for the Democratic candidate.

Non-white voters became ever more Democratic following the 1964 elections. This fits with the notion of 1964 being a converting election. As the percentage of non-white voters increased in the decades afterwards, the tendency of white working class voters to vote Republican offset the Democratic gain. As Democratic candidates won back some of the white working class vote, the party did better in national elections. The turning point was 1988 when, despite the victory of George H. W. Bush over Michael Dukakis, shifts in voting patterns back to the Democrats began. Although

Bush carried California, Illinois, Michigan, and Pennsylvania in 1988, no Republican has won those states since. Formerly competitive Illinois went for Bush in 1988, but is now a reliably Democratic state at the presidential level. The tectonic shift of these four states to the Democratic column has made Democratic nominees competitive again, something lacking in 1972, 1980, and 1984. All four are now regarded as solidly Democratic. The industrial state of Ohio went for Clinton in 1992 and 1996, returned to the Republican fold in 2000 and 2004, but supported Obama in 2008 and 2012.

What is true today of the Republican Party, and its need to appeal to non-white voters, was true of the Democratic Party with respect to evangelical, Catholic, and conservative Christian voters in the late 1980s and early 1990s. With the Democratic Party's embrace of social and lifestyle liberalism in the 1970s, this demographic moved to the Republican Party, propelling Reagan and Bush to landslide wins in 1980, 1984, and 1988. Centrist Democrats such as Bill Clinton, Al Gore, and other Southern Democrats played a role in establishing the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), an organization designed to reduce the influence of the party's liberal wing in the presidential nominating process. Although the DLC was not able to win back Christian conservatives to the Democratic party, it did assist Clinton in his two election victories. DLC policies made Clinton's candidacy appealing to enough middle-of-the-road and working class voters that he won over Bush and H. Ross Perot in 1992, and Bob Dole and Perot

in 1996. However, Clinton never won a majority of the national popular vote, winning with a plurality of 43 percent in 1992 and 49 percent in 1996 (Burbank 2008: 28-29). In the 2000 campaign, Al Gore won the national popular vote with 48.4 percent to Bush's 47.9 percent. After an excruciating recount battle in Florida, where the margins between Gore and Bush ranged from a few hundred votes to slightly over a thousand, Bush secured an Electoral College victory (Burbank 2008: 29). Clinton's inability to secure majority victories, and the close race between Gore and Bush, highlights the challenges faced by the Democrats in that era.

Writing shortly after the 1964 election, as he developed the concept of converting elections, Pomper posited that, "In the final analysis 1968 and 1972 will tell if the pattern of 1964 did constitute a true converting election" (1967: 555). No firm conclusions can be drawn about 2016. However, it is a historic contest. The election revealed a gap between Republican elites and the party's base. The Goldwater nomination in 1964 is analogous. Party elites did favor him as the GOP nominee. In 1964 and 2016, the Republican electorate seized control of the nominating process by repudiating Republican elites. Mitt Romney's call to reject Trump's candidacy was not heeded. Democrats, too, faced electorates that rejected elite preferences. George McGovern's 1972 nomination was opposed by Democratic elites. Results from 1964, 1972, and 2016 revealed gaps between elite and mass presidential preferences. More importantly, what V. O. Key called the party-as-organization was shown to be hollow.

A converting realignment did happen following the 1964 election, and contemporary American politics is shaped by it. Non-white voters have become Democrats, while evangelical Christians and wide swaths of Catholics have shifted to the Republican side. Non-white voters have taken formerly competitive states such as New York, Illinois, and California and made them Democratic, and made swing states out of states that previously voted Republican, while the South has become Republican. The Electoral College map has been transformed with New England, New York, the Mid-Atlantic states, much of the Industrial Midwest, and the Pacific Coast voting for Democratic presidential nominees, and the South, including the key state of Texas, supporting Republican presidential candidates. Race and religion have driven these changes.

CONCLUSION

Elections have consequences. Often, these result in policy changes. On rare occasions, they structurally alter the political system, as did Roosevelt's 1932 election and Johnson's 1964 victory. In 1964, the changes redefined the national life both positively and negatively. The passage of the civil rights reforms broke the system of racial injustice in the South. It opened new doors of opportunity to a previously excluded group. Medicare completed the New Deal project. The title of Robert Booth Fowler's book, *Enduring Liberalism* (1999), conveys the point. Not only did the changes brought about by the 1964 elections usher in programmatic changes in health care policy, education, environment, and civil rights, but the tenor of political discourse changed, too. According to Theodore J. Lowi, the programmatic victories of New Deal and Great Society liberalism produced a systemic stalemate. Politics became technocratic (Lowi 2009). Bruce Miroff writes that Kennedy praised this turn in his 1962 Yale Commencement Address: "In Kennedy's call for 'practical management' by a centrist, non-ideological, the views of left and right alike were declared irrelevant to economic debate" (1976: 184). This is not just an American phenomenon.

If Kennedy's call for a technocracy became real following LBJ's Great Society, as Lowi and Miroff aver, then what difference does it make whether the technocrats serve Republican or Democratic administrations? This is not to say that there are no differences between the two parties. There certainly are. However, a system that is in a condition of stasis does not permit elected officials from pursuing much in the way of policy innovation. This is especially true if divided government is the norm. Is there any wonder why voters in both parties expressed frustration in 2016? Trump's success garners the most attention. However, Democratic voter *angst* was also evident in 2016. The Sanders campaign ran a competitive race against Clinton.

Voter dissatisfaction is not confined to the United States. Fringe political parties have arisen in Europe that challenge establishment parties. The 24 April 2016 Austrian presidential election was the first time since the end of World War II that the candidates of the two major Austrian political parties did not advance to the final round of voting. Left-wing independent candidate Alexander Van der Bellen defeated Norbert Hofer of the nationalist Freedom Party in the Austrian presidential election. The emergence of the U.K. Independence Party (UKIP) influenced British Prime Minister David Cameron's 2015 decision to hold a referendum on 22 June

2016 regarding continued British membership in the European Union (EU). In Greece, Alexis Tsipras led his socialist Syriza Party to victory on 25 January 2016. A former communist, Tsipras formed a coalition government with a right-wing party and campaigned against austerity measures championed by the International Monetary Fund and the EU. Tsipras led a successful campaign against the austerity proposals in a national referendum on 27 June 2015. Subsequently, agreements were reached that prevented a Greek default and retained the EURO as the nation's currency.

Many Europeans view the European Union as an undemocratic institution. Administrative rules developed in Brussels are binding on member nations. An issue in the Brexit vote was British discomfort over EU law having supremacy over British law. As the supranational organization has assumed more governing responsibility in Europe, voter anger, unconventional voting trends, and unique personalities have emerged.

Transforming politics into a technocratic endeavor removes emotion from the political process, and emotions are an essential component of democratic governance. The cauldrons of ideas delayed or marginalized stir passions that cannot be seen to fruition. Politics is a tough endeavor, whether in Europe or the United States. The task of governing an economic and military superpower is a big one. Conflict is the inevitable result. The hurly-burly of politics is a healthy ingredient for a democracy. What is unhealthy is for the political struggle to occur, but existing policy to continue nonetheless. For instance, Social Security, Medicare, other entitlements and non-entitlement spending continue at fiscally unsustainable levels. The federal administrative machinery operates, and carries out the program independently of the day-to-day activities of the Congress or of election results. Significant entitlement or changes to other non-entitlement programs become problematic. What Charles E. Lindblom (1959) described as "The Science of Muddling Through" is an apt metaphor. After nearly a century of operation, the administrative programs of the government continue to muddle through. The elected branches of government are incapable of taming or tectonically altering them. Accustomed to the benefits, the public is loath to give them up. In Europe, the welfare state is being restructured and painfully so. In the American context, though, the restructuring proposed for decades has not begun. Indeed, the technocratic state has become ever larger with the enactment of the prescription drug benefit of Medicare under President George W. Bush and the Affordable Care Act under President Barack Obama.

The pattern set by the Great Society program continues five decades after its enactment. The triumph of technocratic liberalism applies a blanket over the implementation of new ideas discussed during the normal course of politics. The victory of technocracy over ideology, when it comes to programmatic management of problems, raises a policy and ethical dilemma. Seen by JFK and public administration calls for neutral-competence as an ideal situation, technology has the potential to morph from utopian vision to dystopian nightmare (Gruenwald 2013). Has the technological society of the New Deal and Great Society eras in the U.S., and in Europe of the European project through the EU, resulted in the enslavement of policy to technocratic inertia? To wit, the U.S. political party alignment set by the 1964 converting election simultaneously defined public policy for the ensuing decades. Seen in this light, public dissatisfaction with politics in 2016 is the natural consequence of ideas and concerns frustrated for decades. Are we, then, on the verge of a converting or realigning election? If we are, it might not be known immediately. Secular realignment takes place slowly, while it took several elections before the magnitude of the 1964 presidential election became apparent.

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