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The aim of this paper is to analyze the transformation of modern American liberalism in the 1960s in terms of its advocating policy agenda and issue positions, to examine subsequent change in the distribution of ideological preferences among the nation, and to consider the implications of these changes for the direction of politics in that country after the 60s. In the analysis of the transformation, my focus is to be on the changes in the policy agenda claimed by a liberal political organization, the Americans for Democratic Action, which is considered to have been well representative of modern American liberalism since 1947.

1. New Deal and Vital Center Liberalism

At the outset, reference must be made to New Deal liberalism from which most problems of liberalism in the 1960s derived. As the definition of American liberalism in general terms is a formidable task, my argument shall be confined to twentieth-century liberalism, particularly the
were a small but most politically active component of the New Deal coalition as a new political majority of the nation in the 30s composed mostly of the beneficiaries of the New Deal—lower-middle-class working people and ethnic minorities. And it would be fair to say that the dominance of contemporary liberalism over conservatism during that period was sustained thereafter to be enhanced to the "public philosophy"(2) of America.

Yet the death of President Roosevelt, the resurgence of conservative Republicans in the mid-term election of 1946, and the start of the Cold War urged the New Dealers to redefine liberalism and to reshape their political movement. Although most New Dealers agreed to push the succeeding Democratic president Harry Truman to continue and develop New Deal domestic policies, they disagreed on his foreign policy. The broad liberal-left movement which had supported the Roosevelt administration divided on the attitude toward the Soviet Union and the American communists who had got into the coalition itself. In 1947, moderate and centrist New Dealers formed a new liberal political organization, the Americans for Democratic Action (the ADA), "rejecting any association with Communists or sympathizers with Communism in the United States". (3) After the failure of the leftists' presidential campaign for the third party candidate Henry Wallace in the 1948 election, the ADA established
sopher and ADA member Reinhold Niebuhr, which underlay ADAers' criticism of socialist leftism. (5)

But a more important implication of Schlesinger's redefinition was that by stressing its commitment to anti-Communism, post-war liberalism attempted to restore and hold the center of the political spectrum between conservative plutocracy on the right and appeasers of Communists on the left. According to Schlesinger, it was imperative for the liberals to catch the center as "the center is vital". (6) Thus, the vital center version of the New Deal liberalism took form and soon prevailed as the model of post-war liberalism. It can be said that the liberals' effort to hold the center was mostly successful even when the political mood became more conservative in the early 1950s with the emergency of a Republican administration and McCarthyism. Their claims for the welfare state and anti-Communism reflected the consensus of the Americans in this period. This is one reason why the Republican administration of Eisenhower could not curtail the New Deal welfare system.

With regard to the development of Vital Center liberalism, it should also be noted that it further acquired new ideas on public policy as ADAers practiced politics in the 1950s. And one of these ideas became the most distinguished feature of post-war liberalism — strong advocacy of economic growth. In their attempt to pressure the Eisenhower
pressing demand by the ADA liberals as an alternative to the tight-financing policy of the Republican administration. Tax cuts for the middle and lower income strata and a budget deficit as their inevitable outcome were also advocated for their primary agenda of growth. Here, it is interesting to note that the liberals' advocacy of increased federal spending for economic growth combined with their anti-Communist belief led to their demand for more funds for national defense, criticizing Eisenhower's policy to reduce military spending. In retrospect, this is the very reverse of the positions the liberals and the conservatives have taken on military spending since the 1970s.

Incidentally, let me remark on the strategy of analysis of American liberalism before proceeding to observations on its development in the 1960s. In analyzing the change of contemporary liberalism, it is essential to focus on what policy agenda those who espouse liberalism set and what issue positions they take, and to follow how these agenda and positions change over time. Fundamentally, liberalism is not a coherent world view, nor a comprehensive set of integrated doctrines to prescribe goals and the means to achieve them, though they are centered around its traditional base value of individual freedom. Therefore, in a strict sense, liberalism is not qualified as a political ideology. According to Giovanni Sartori, liberalism is not an ideology
theoretical development. As we have seen, the conspicuous ideas of American liberalism toward the end of the 1950s were the faith in economic growth as a cure-all for domestic problems and the commitment to U.S. military strength in foreign affairs. Intrinsically, these ideas were rather conservative. Nonetheless, these were the liberal policy agenda and issue positions at that time. And they might have something to do with the reason why American liberalism was still dominant, holding the center when it lacked access to the White House under the conservative political climate of the 1950s.

2. Liberal Reform and RadicalMovements in the 1960s

It would be reasonable to call the 1960s the age of liberalism. First, two consecutive Democratic presidents, whose administrations were considered by themselves and others to be liberal, governed America during most of this decade. The ADA admitted these administrations were both liberal and supported most of their policy programs except for Johnson's Vietnam policy, though it criticized some of their policies as not liberal enough.

Secondly, whether it was one of the causes or the outcomes of the election of President John Kennedy, the public mood swung from inclination to maintain the status quo to greater receptivity to reform at the beginning of the
age of liberalism generated the causes for its own decline. In their heyday, the liberals became too bold in their effort to advance reforms to hold the center and consequentially paved the way to their own atrophy.

As a result of Kennedy's victory in the presidential election of 1960, the ADA obtained access to the White House. His appointment of Arthur Schlesinger Jr. as a special assistant symbolized the friendly relationship established between the new Democratic president and the ADA, though the organization's influence over actual policymaking in this administration was limited.

Many ADA members were attracted by Kennedy's liberal rhetoric and activist political style. Yet they were soon disappointed at his poor accomplishments in governance. The ADA criticized Kennedy, asserting that his administrative actions and legislative initiatives were not liberal enough to satisfy the standard of liberalism derived from its policy agenda and political beliefs. Far from the standard were Kennedy's slow response to the civil rights movement that called for strong legislation to ban the segregation system in the South and his adherence to fiscal conservative policy that failed to commit itself to positive federal spending for economic growth.

Interesting to note here is the subtle change found in the liberal standard of the ADA itself in light of Vital
From the latter half of the 1950s through the early 60s, far-reaching development of the media of communication and transportation exposed the racial conflicts in the South as a salient issue for the nation. The black protests against the racial segregation systems in southern states known as the civil rights movement attracted idealistic white students who joined in direct actions with blacks, gaining moral support and sympathy from the broader liberal-labor community. And from there the new radical movements by white youth emerged. Many of the participants were once stirred by President Kennedy's liberal rhetoric, involved in the civil rights movement and other reform activities, but were disillusioned by the halfhearted behavior of the liberal administration toward racial injustice. Becoming critical of the hypocrisy of rhetorically liberal leaders who ran the country, they organized various movements on and off their campuses independently from liberal political forces to seek moral purity in politics and social reform by the mid-1960s.

In their radicalization, they also found objects for criticism in the American society of the day - new structural strains characteristic of industrialized mass societies such as lack of individual power and a sense of alienation under the dominance of the dehumanized bureaucracy of big organizations. The radicals' claim for "participatory
radicals advocated to change their liberalism, though they still disagreed with the radicals on how to get the values realized.

It is not surprising to observe this toleration of the liberals toward the radical attack, as tolerance of and openness to novel and dissenting ideas of the minority has been the hallmark of American liberalism. Moreover, the mainstream of the radicals and their young followers in the 1960s were not socialist left but rather libertarian extremists who shared a basic belief in individual freedom and rights with the liberals. Paying attention to this aspect of the radicals, Edward Shills called them antinominans, and asserted that the liberals even regarded them as "like-minded allies". (12)

The implication of Johnson's governance (1963-69) for American liberalism is paradoxical. In terms of its accomplishments in domestic policies, it was the most liberal administration since the New Deal era, as the ADA admitted. Yet the same administration brought disastrous effects on liberalism mostly through its foreign and military policy behavior. And, ironically, even some of its liberal programs that were purported to be successful helped to discredit liberalism. The ADA's attitude toward the Johnson administration was more ambivalent and fluctuating than toward the previous Democratic administration, oscillating
After his landslide victory in 1964 election, Johnson launched a series of more large-scale domestic reform programs named the Great Society to improve education and housing and again to abolish poverty in the nation. The ADA tried to press Congress for the Great Society's legislative success. The ADA praised Johnson's commitment to liberal domestic programs and rated his achievement in civil rights and social welfare highly. Still, the ADA's posture toward his administration lacked an air of satisfaction in those years. One can argue that the dissatisfaction of the ADA with Johnson's liberal reform legislation was due to its rising expectations enhanced by his very success with the legislation, by the same token that the implementation of reform raised the expectations of the beneficiaries higher to an extent that the administration could no longer satisfy.

Yet another possible explanation is that the dissatisfaction was a consequence of the change in the economic policy agenda of the ADA, which was moving leftward to positions far beyond the reach of liberal political leaders while their reform programs were being legislated in the mid-1960s. Partly influenced by the new radical movement, the advocates of the policies of redistribution and structural reform grew in number within the ADA. And when they outnumbered those who held to Keyserling's theory, the faith
3. Vietnam War and the Rise and Fall of New Politics

Liberalism

Almost in the same year, around the mid-1960s, a more significant shift in the policy positions of the ADA appeared in the area of foreign-military policy issues. Having to do with the conversion of its established belief in the role of the United States in world politics, this policy change engendered more clear-cut divisions in the ADA and the liberal movement, more bitter criticism of the Johnson administration, more serious damage to liberalism than in domestic policy change, and a critical electoral defeat to the Democratic party in 1968.

The ADA's criticism of the commitment to anti-Communist containment policy had come in sight already in the Kennedy years. The younger and more idealistic liberals in and around the ADA who shared the same disillusionary experience toward Kennedy rhetoric with the new radicals began to criticize his aggressive Cuban policy and its underlying Cold War thinking, and his lack of understanding of nationalism in the third world. Although they did not go far toward radicalism due to their faith in the American political process and governmental institutions, the younger liberals were more moralistic and action-oriented, like the new radicals. It was these liberals who were more likely to support Galbraith's redistributive approach to socio-
of the Johnson administration would divide the organization decisively. But their objection was finally overwhelmed. At the outset of a series of primaries for the presidential election of 1968, the ADA decided to make an unusual pre-Convention endorsement of the candidacy of Senator Eugene McCarthy, who was challenging the incumbent President of the same party and criticizing his Vietnam policy bitterly.\(^{(16)}\)

This was a critical decision for the ADA and American liberalism, for it not only broke its ties with the White House but also alienated moderate liberals and labor leaders in and outside the organization, eventually leading to the loss of labor and middle class support. In other respects, the McCarthy endorsement was a manifestation of the increased power of the younger anti-war liberals who proclaimed the "New Politics". Their intention for the endorsement was to present a viable alternative to radicalism for the young discontented with the war and political systems. In fact, after the decision for McCarthy, new younger people came into the ADA as well as the McCarthy campaign, which gained momentum at the early stage of the primaries and forced Johnson to withdraw from the race in March 1968.

After McCarthy was defeated by Vice-President Humphrey, who was backed by the labor and mainstream Democrats at the party Convention in the summer of 1968, the ADA reluctantly endorsed Humphrey as a better candidate than Nixon. But
an impetus to the realignment of the liberals and thereby realigned the American party system as a whole.

At least up to 1972, the liberal realignment seemed to go on according to the scenario of New Politics liberals. Under the national chairmanship of Galbraith, who was sympathetic with their anti-war cause, New Politics liberals controlled the setting of policy agenda of the organization after 1968 and had younger and more radical fellow members appointed chairman in 1970 and 1971.\(^{18}\)

In terms of the policy change, the ADA's policy papers and checklists of Congressional voting around 1970 indicate how far its policy positions and their underlying values moved from the center during the 1960s. The policy agenda for the 70s proposed by the national chairman called for a bold reallocation of resources by cutting military spending by 20\% to reduce overseas commitment on the one hand, and increasing government investment in public service programs for full employment on the other.\(^{19}\) Dramatic change of the means to the goal of full employment—from stimulating economic growth to creating public service jobs—should be noted. This change manifests that the liberals came to seek more redistributive and social democratic solutions, moving leftward on the continuum of economic policy positions. Simultaneously, it also implies that they accepted the new values critical of economic growth and materialistic
ism, stating in 1972 that "In retrospect, I think many of us accepted a little too easily the idea that the stimulation of economic growth through the magic of fiscal policy could solve our main economic problems. Structural reform, a price-wage policy, income redistribution, public service employment, the rationing of gross growth and the protection of environment against uncontrolled technology will all be necessary if we are to move toward a decent society". And he continued, "We have not favored the policy of indiscriminate global intervention. We have stood for an internationalism in which America should seek to influence others through the power of its ideas and ideals and through economic and cultural relations and not through the flourish or exercise of military power". (21)

With respect to the development of liberal realignment, New Politics liberals tried to extend their dominance far beyond the ADA, encouraging ADAers and like-minded citizens to participate in the activities of the Democratic party at every level and locality to build a new majority coalition in national politics as well as in that party. Taking advantage of the party reform in progress, participatory actions by New Politics liberals were successful, and their influence increased remarkably in the Democratic party in 1971 though 1972. The year 1972 was the heyday of New Politics liberalism. Although the ADA did not give its
buted to McGovern's defeat and the following decline of New Politics liberals, because they were still a minority even if a growing minority, on each of such issues as new lifestyle, violent protest and crime, busing, and affirmative action. (23) The first two issues were brought about by the radical movement, and the later two were the output of liberal reform by the Johnson administration. And New Politics liberals were responsible for all of these issues by tolerating the radical agenda and encouraging liberal reforms. Yet for the Americans in the middle, including the working class, social disorder caused by the radicals' new lifestyle and violent protests and the equalization of socio-economic conditions enforced by the liberal reform legislations in the 60s were far beyond their tolerance.

By the same token, New Politics liberalism was a minority ideology even when the political climate was the most liberal, at the beginning of the 1970s. Its influence was basically limited to liberal political groups like the ADA and many other social movements, such as environmentalism, consumerism, and feminism, and to liberal campus communities, though it gradually infiltrated into a part of upper-middle-class young professionals.

Nevertheless, it was no longer possible to revive New Deal liberalism, the demise of which had already been declared. Thus the fall of obsolete New Deal liberalism, and
thereafter was that the vacuum at the center left by the liberal deserters was filled with the conservatives.

Originally, the post-war American conservative movement had a marked inclination to ideological concerns, sharing some moral causes with the Right in the 1950s and the early 1960s. The nomination of Barry Goldwater as the Republican candidate for president in 1964 was a surprising political success for the ideological conservatives. Yet the disastrous electoral failure of the Goldwater campaign, which proclaimed extreme conservative agenda, taught the American conservatives lessons. After 1964, the conservative movement became more concerned with politics and elections than with ideological purity and more likely to compromise with public opinion. Most conservative politicians in the Republican party cautiously avoided a frontal attack on the American welfare state. Although they modified their economic agenda, the conservatives rather adhered to their own stands on socio-cultural issues, advocating traditional American values in opposition to the rising radicalism and New Politics liberalism. Such combination of economic moderatism and social conservatism was politically effective for conservative Republicans in the circumstances of the late 1960s.

Thus, Richard Nixon successfully appealed to the anxiety of the American middle by emphasizing law and order and
of the Reagan's governance, the majority of Americans demanded that the government maintain the level of social spending for the welfare state and further called for more governmental actions in the fields of the nation's health, the aged, and education. (27) The people were generally less favorable to racial discrimination or anti-communism in the 1980s than in the 50s. Even on socio-cultural issues, of which the conservative Republicans often took advantage in elections, the trend is toward liberalization, though the pace of change is slow and gradual. For example, we can see a slight but steady increase in the ratio of those who support the women's right of choice on abortion in the past two decades. (28)

In the final analysis, the basic policy preferences of the American middle have not changed substantially throughout the decades since the 1950s, in spite of the cyclical fluctuation of public mood from conservative to liberal and again to conservative preeminence in the 80s. Their primary demand for economic security and growth and their deep-rooted desire for preserving U.S. military strength have been perpetuated. On the contrary, what have changed are the policy agenda of liberalism and conservatism. The former moved leftward on the ideological continuum, leaving the center, and the latter, in its centripetal effort, occupied that vantage point, which enabled it to form the
Notes

(1) Louis Hartz, The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought Since the Revolution, (Harcourt, 1955), passim


(5) ibid., pp. 165-166, 170

(6) ibid., p. 255


(9) ADA World (the monthly, later by-monthly, newsletter of the ADA), May 1960, p. 3


(14) ADA World, November 1956, p. 1

(15) ADA World, October 1955 - October 1968

(16) ADA World, June 1968, July 1968

(17) Bunzel ed., op. cit., p. 155; Gillon, op. cit., p. 226

(18) ADA World, February 1970, May-June 1971

(19) ADA World, February 1970


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