

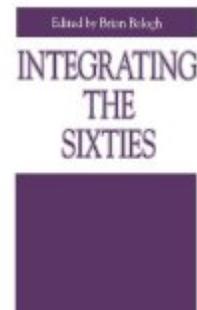
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Brian Balogh, ed. *Integrating the Sixties: The Origins, Structures, and Legitimacy of Public Policy in a Turbulent Decade*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996. viii + 182 pp. \$13.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-271-01624-5.

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The Ghost of Max Weber

A spectre is haunting modern America—the spectre of Max Weber. Ever since the incisive German sociologist and theoretician drew our attention to the state and society nexus, scholars have wrestled with the problem of how to explicate the relationship between the modern state and civil society. Haunting the writing of modern American history, this problem has never been fully addressed, although practitioners of the organizational school of interpretation first begun by Samuel P. Hayes and Robert H. Wiebe and younger disciples of the new social history have made serious inroads into dealing with this lacuna.[1] In this fascinating, but uneven, collection of essays, seven scholars attempt to bring our understanding of U.S. history in the troubled decade of the 1960s up-to-date through theoretical, institutional, and policy case studies. The volume began as papers presented at a conference sponsored by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C., which also funded publication of this paperback book format after the essays initially appeared in the *Journal of Policy History*, Volume 8, No. 1 (1996).

Editor Brian Balogh begins the collection with a thoughtful essay based on the Weberian view that “the Sixties emerge as a distinctive yet unexceptional episode in the long history of struggle between individuals, civil society, and the state” (p. 3). He introduces each of the six following essays and places them into the context of interest-group liberalism in order to synthesize what we have come to call the organizational and new social history approaches to modern American history which until

very recently have dealt in detail with the pre-1945 period, leaving the post-1945 years to analysts of the contemporary scene.[2] Balogh argues that the 1960s saw multifaceted challenges to the “consensual, pragmatic, and expert-driven policy-making” (p. 23) state, what he has termed the “proministrative state” in an important monograph on the post-1945 nuclear power debate.[3]

In this thought-provoking introduction, Balogh suggests that the Sixties brought forth a new generation of voluntary associations in civil society that made the civil rights movement, the New Left, the second stage of the women’s rights movement, the welfare rights movement, and a host of other protest movements the regnant challengers to the previously dominant Cold War liberalism forged in the aftermath of World War II and the America’s emergence of America as the leading world economic power. He suggests that the organizational synthesis and the new social history can move beyond the implicit call for revival of New Deal liberalism found in the influential works of Alan Brinkley and William Chafe who work in the older Progressive tradition of historical writing.[4] Yet throughout the essay, Balogh suggests there was an implicit tension between individualism and liberation on the one hand and institutional change and challenge to established authority on the other hand that these social movements never fully resolved. Six essays follow Balogh’s introduction which promises to shed new light on the state-society nexus on America in the 1960s.

In perhaps the most startling and provocative piece in the volume, Hugh Heclo spins out the postmodernist implications of the movements of the decade as parts of a religious awakening to take up an idea first proposed by religious historian William G. McLoughlin in 1978.[5] Participants in these movements sought personal liberation, egalitarian inclusiveness, and participatory openness that would create “free space” between their private lives and modern large-scale institutions. Yet ironically, with the decline of a religiously-inspired American sense of unity, postmodern movements led to a proliferation of radically plural activist groups, built in rights-based group conflict, made policy claims that were inherently confrontational and hence not resolvable via political compromise, and expanded group conflict making for a permanent state of domestic cold war. Heclo concludes that while these protest movements led to a more open society, they also left a legacy of “a dangerous dissociation among government, policy politics, and the public” (p. 57) which left post-Sixties Americans looking for a moral order in public policy that no longer existed, its legitimacy and credibility having been undermined by the Awakening of the Sixties.

In “Crossing Thresholds: Federalism in the 1960s,” political scientist Martha Derthick suggests that American federalism shifted its balance away from a state and local emphasis toward an increasingly national one. She summarizes key congressional legislation and Supreme Court cases to argue that a new federalism emerged that proved quite unlike earlier incarnations. She quickly reviews the impact of not only such well-known court cases as *Baker v. Carr* (1962) and *Miranda v. Arizona* (1966), but also the policy shifts engendered by the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, the Medicaid program created in 1965, the Water Quality Act of 1965, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to argue that these changes in federalism were “more profound than any that occurred in the New Deal” (p. 76).

Drawing on his 1994 Stanford University dissertation, Daryl Michael Scott suggests that the post-release controversy over Daniel Patrick Moynihan’s *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action* (1965) ignored the complex pre-1965 debate between racial liberals in the NAACP and social science circles and class-conscious liberals who used postwar images of psychologically damaged blacks to pursue their own policy goals by playing on white middle class attitudes. But policy positions adopted in the 1945-1960 period shifted in the mid-1960s

in ways that led class-conscious liberals to denounce the Moynihan report, liberal and conservative critics to ignore its call for government jobs for unemployed black men, and allowed conservatives in the aftermath of the Watts riots that broke out as the report was released to argue that black social and personal pathology, rather than inadequate social programs, could best explain the racial violence in the nation’s cities. Unfortunately, Scott never clarifies the broader meaning of this complicated social science policy debate relative to parallel debates over the course of the decade. His argument suggests the need for reevaluation of economic, social, urban, and race relations policies in the Kennedy and Johnson administration that are only beginning to be done.

Following through on his earlier *Berkeley at War: The 1960s* (New York, 1989), W. J. Rorabaugh provides a preview of his current research on the social history of that decade to argue that the New Left, the Black Power movement, and feminism presented certain common elements of a social critique based on challenging authority, seeking community, and wishing for empowerment. His narrative and notes provide an excellent summary of works-to-date on these three key social movements, their mixed legacy, and long-term disillusionment that led to institutional dysfunction in the post-1960s period. His skeptical suggestion that sociopolitical movements “have caused political paralysis rather than producing solutions” (p. 135) may win him few friends in the academy but is worthy of further research and debate.

Martha F. Davis, expanding on her previous work, *Brutal Need: Lawyers and the Welfare Rights Movement, 1960-1973* (New Haven, 1993), reveals the class, racial and gender tensions between the National Welfare Rights Organization founded in 1966 by activist George Wiley and the educated, white, middle class experience of most National Organization for Women members that forestalled a viable alliance that could have identified welfare rights as a women’s issue rather than a lower class or black one. Hence the maternalist framework first enunciated in the Progressive era that centered social welfare programs on poor widows and divorced mothers continued rather than recognize a significant shift in the needs of lower class, black, and working women of the 1960s. Unlike many of the other essays in this volume, this one is based on research in primary sources rather than drawing on the secondary literature which has emerged in the last twenty years.

Finally, Louis Galambos provides a useful review of the long-term economic impact of the Vietnam War. Due

to bad government policy decisions and their own focus on defense contracts rather than research and development for the future, private sector business leaders ignored the overarching problems of price inflation, global competition, and declining American productivity in the 1965-1975 years. Galambos argues that while the \$167 billion financial cost and the human costs to Americans of 58,130 deaths and 153,000 casualties may not have compared with the costs of the two world wars, the long-term costs in not concentrating on global economic changes may have made the Vietnam war the “ ‘most debilitating’ in our history” (p. 175). We are still dealing with the economic costs of the war today, but only after losing a decade of time to right the economic ship that rode high on international waters in the immediate post-World War II years.

Like many such collections of essays, *Integrating the Sixties* is a mixed qualitative bag. Balogh’s historiographical introduction and Helco’s postmodernist view that the movements of the 1960s sought both to challenge and to benefit from the interest-group liberalism that they ultimately undermined suggest we may be on the verge of an entire new wave of scholarship on the 1960s. Scott’s and Davis’s more narrowly focused case studies on the controversy over the Moynihan Report and the welfare rights movement based on careful research in primary sources allow for careful qualification rather than broad generalizations, hinting at the need for many more such case studies. Rorabaugh and Galambos provide good, brief accounts of existing knowledge on the social movements and economic impact of the Vietnam war which are not path breaking but do bring together information otherwise found scattered among secondary accounts that most readers do not have the time to pursue. A final chapter by Balogh on avenues for further research might have been added to provide a sense of closure to the volume.

Perhaps not surprisingly, these essays work best when they draw on an already sizeable literature on the social protest movements of the 1960s best reviewed in Rorabaugh’s notes. Derthick’s argument that federalism crossed a new threshold in the decade reminds us that Weber’s idea of “civil society” must be seen not only in terms of social protest movements or twentieth-century variants on Alexis de Tocqueville’s voluntary associations, but also as concomitants of normal post-1945 political and institutional life as well. Hence, one wishes that changes in government economic policies such as the New Economics of the Kennedy/Johnson Council of Economic Advisers; in social welfare policies through

the explosion of agencies under the Office of Economic Opportunity as part of the War on Poverty; in the revival of conservative politics through Young Americans for Freedom, the Goldwater movement, and the rise of the New Right in the nation’s suburbs; and in the religious revivals among youthful counterculturists, advocates of Eastern religions, and Protestant fundamentalist groups might have been addressed as parts of the broadly defined “civil society” raised in Balogh’s introduction. As Louis Galambos suggests in the collection’s final essay, perhaps the most significant impact of the decade’s changes stemmed from the breakdown of institutional mechanisms, the short-sightedness of established leaders, and the hubris of protest movements so anxious to tear down authority that the resulting lack of legitimacy, faith in institutions, and fragmentation of socially disenfranchised groups into mini-camps of interest-group liberals or societal dropouts left American civil society in serious disarray.

The ghost of Max Weber continues to hover over the writing of modern U.S. history in ways that we scholars rarely acknowledge. How one defines “civil society” can effect how one interprets the significance of different institutions, time periods, events, and individuals. Are not large-scale institutions such as business corporations and labor unions part of civil society? Are political parties part and parcel of civil society or are they mediating institutions between civil society and the state? Are social protest movements democratic representations of civil society or aggrieved parts of the broader public? In a time of disruption such as the Sixties, which people, which institutions, which movements could legitimately claim to speak for civil society as a whole, or could any of these even make such a claim? An entire school of interpretation of modern America presumes the usefulness of Adam Smith’s classical economic model based on individualism, a carefully circumscribed state, and the operation of the invisible hand of the free marketplace. Smith’s eighteenth-century theory divided a nation’s political economy into “private” and “public” sectors, while his latter-day disciples celebrate the strength of an anti-statist tradition over the broad sweep of American history which now reigns supreme in post-Sixties America. Yet modern-day scholars working within the Progressive tradition of historiography, as Balogh notes in his introduction, suggest that only a revived, centralized state can bridge the state/society nexus. Meanwhile, left revisionists have suggested that with the decline of the New Deal state a powerful “corporate liberalism” has taken control of the twentieth-century American state to dic-

tate regressive social policies.[6] Weber knew that powerful currents of religion—remember *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism?*—and charismatic leaders made capitalism more resilient than Marxist class-based analysis would conclude. But neither Weber nor Marx envisioned the emergence of social protest movements based on age, gender, race, ethnicity, or religion let alone the complicated kinds of institutional mechanisms found throughout the landscape of modern U.S. history.

The essays in *Integrating the Sixties* hint that American federalism in the wake of the disruptive changes of the 1960s would not be historically restricted to a statist path controlled by Cold War liberals. Other, less-often studied traditions of voluntary association and new, twentieth-century institutions that freely crossed over and between private and public sector boundaries remain open for study. The most useful contribution these authors make lies in reminding us that the time has come for scholars in a variety of disciplines and subdisciplines to revision the state and society nexus so as to come to a more complex, historically nuanced view of the 1960s that places that era into a longer time frame, helps us to understand continuities as well as breaks with postwar America, and suggests multiple legacies to post-Vietnam America.[7]

Notes:

[1]. Samuel P. Hayes, *The Response to Industrialism: 1885-1914* (Chicago, 1957); Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York, 1967); and essays by Robyn Muncy, Leon Fink, and Martin J. Sklar at the panel on “Robert Wiebe’s The Search for Order: A Thirty-Year Retrospective,” American Historical Association, New York City, January 3, 1997 which can be found online at the H-SHGAPE (H-Society for Historians of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era) web site located at <http://h-net2.msu.edu/~shgape/wiebe/index.html>. Summaries of the organizational school include Louis Galambos, “The Emerging Organizational Synthesis of Modern American History,” *Business History Review* 44 (1970): 279-290; Robert D. Cuff, “American Historians and the ‘Organizational Factor,’” *Canadian Review of American Studies* 4 (Spring 1973): 19-31; Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., “The Organizational Interpretation of American History: A New Synthesis,” *Prospects* 4 (1979): 611-629; Galambos, “Technology, Political Economy, and Professionalization: Central Themes of the Organizational Synthesis,” *Business History Review* 57 (1983): 471-493; and Brian Balogh, “Reorganizing the Organizational Synthesis: Federal-Professional Relations

in Modern America,” *Studies in American Political Development* 5 (1991): 119-172. The best overviews of the new social history can be found in essays in *The Reinterpretation of American History and Culture*, eds. William H. Cartwright and Richard L. Watson, Jr. (Washington, D.C., 1973); *The Past Before Us: Contemporary Historical Writing in the United States*, edited for the American Historical Association by Michael Kammen (Ithaca, 1980); “The Promise of American History: Progress and Prospects,” special issue, *Reviews in American History* 10 (December 1982); *The New American History*, edited for the American Historical Association by Eric Foner (Philadelphia, 1990) and *The New American History*, Revised and Expanded Edition, edited for the American Historical Association by Eric Foner (Philadelphia, 1997).

[2]. Alan Brinkley, “Writing the History of Contemporary America: Dilemmas and Challenges,” *Daedalus* 113 (Summer 1984): 121-141. Important exceptions to this generalization include *Reshaping America: Society and Institutions, 1945-1960*, ed. Robert H. Bremner and Gary W. Reichard (Columbus, 1982); Kim McQuaid, *Big Business and Presidential Power: From FDR to Reagan* (New York, 1982); McQuaid, *The Anxious Years: America in the Vietnam-Watergate Era* (New York, 1989); McQuaid, *Uneasy Partners: Big Business in American Politics, 1945-1990* (Baltimore, 1994); and essays in *The New American State: Bureaucracies and Policies Since World War II*, ed. Louis Galambos (Baltimore, 1987).

[3]. Brian Balogh, *Chain Reaction: Expert Debate and Public Participation in American Commercial Nuclear Power, 1945-1975* (New York, 1991).

[4]. Alan Brinkley, *The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War* (New York, 1995) and William H. Chafe, *The Unfinished Journey: America Since World War II* (New York, 1986).

[5]. William G. McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform: An Essay on Religion and Social Change in America, 1607-1977* (Chicago, 1978), p. 179-216.

[6]. In the most ambitious attempt to synthesize the new social history with the older Progressive tradition, Alan Dawley suggests just this in *Struggles for Justice: Social Responsibility and the Liberal State* (Cambridge, Mass., 1991) for the 1890-1938 period, while Brinkley hints at a shift after 1945 from a state-centered New Deal liberalism to a “rights-based liberalism” in *The End of Reform*, p. 10-11, 270-271.

[7]. Essays in the special issue devoted to “Loss of

Confidence: Politics and Policy in the 1970s,” of the *Journal of Policy History*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (1998) pick up where *Integrating the Sixties* leaves off.

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