

## *Interim report on research-in-progress*

# **The Ideological Migration of Intellectuals**

by Daniel B. Klein and Theodore M. Balaker, based on a project pursued also with Steven  
Davies

Incomplete working draft

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*Note to MPS readers:* This document reports on formulations and investigations that Ted Balaker, Steve Davies, and I pursued in years past but have lied dormant since about 2003.

The thoughts offered here are tentative and in progress. At the August 09 conference I will mention something not mentioned in the text that follows, namely, a survey I conducted to test the conjecture offered here. In 2003 I surveyed academics about their policy views “now” and their policy views when they were 25 years old. Looking at those who moved significantly, there was no overall tendency: The incidence of significant statist migration about equaled incidence of significant libertarian migration. I will speak briefly about why the results of that investigation do not necessarily falsify the conjecture (though obviously failed to support it). In brief, it was a survey of members of scholarly associations, mostly professors, and the academic context of the past several decades arguably has been one that tends to push its denizens toward social-democratic views. Also, reported migrations were simply small in numbers – the vast majority of respondents, according to their own reports, simply did not move significantly (supporting the “lock-in” theory).

What should government do? In addressing that question people have produced copious argumentation. One form of argument is the appeal to authority. To support a particular point, a writer might quote John Stuart Mill, saying in effect: "Mill was a wise man, and you should trust his judgment." But challengers will quote other authorities, such as Mill's critic James Fitzjames Stephen, and claim Stephen to be an even wiser man. Does Stephen trump Mill? Does Mill trump Stephen?

Suppose Authority 1 and Authority 2 disagree on some public issue. If we had some reason to believe that Authority 2 is wiser than Authority 1, that would be a reason to entertain Authority 2's position more seriously than otherwise. If we had a practical and unbiased way of pairing authorities and ranking their wisdom, we would have a new indication of how seriously we should entertain certain public policy positions.

It is difficult to argue that Mill trumps Stephen or vice versa. But we believe that there is a reason for saying that the John Stuart Mill of 1865 -- call him Mill<sub>2</sub> -- trumps the Mill of 1840 -- or Mill<sub>1</sub>. In this study we explore the idea of pairing one person's earlier beliefs with the same person's later beliefs and ascribing greater wisdom to the later beliefs. Although people do not retain all the knowledge they had once had, they tend not to forget important arguments on important matters. There is reason for saying that Mill<sub>2</sub> is wiser than Mill<sub>1</sub>, because there is reason to say that Mill<sub>2</sub> knows what Mill<sub>1</sub> knows and more.

Individuals who change their policy views may be said to migrate along an ideological spectrum. Each such migrant furnishes us with a pair of positions which he or she has come to rank. If almost all intellectuals who migrate along an ideological spectrum move in the same direction, such a pattern of migration might constitute an argument for taking more seriously positions further down the side of the spectrum toward which migrants move.

We undertake the investigation because we believed that the evidence constitutes a sound argument for taking libertarian reform more seriously than one otherwise would. Although the migration of intellectuals is not uniformly in the libertarian direction, one might be able to make

a case that a preponderance of it is in the libertarian direction. Our own libertarian tendencies should raise concerns of bias in the investigation. We have attempted to exclude ideological bias from our methods and have attempted to address the ways in which bias may have crept in. We hope that the study will elicit constructive and critical feedback from all quarters.

## FRAMEWORK AND METHOD FOR STUDYING IDEOLOGICAL MIGRATION

Here we set out the conception of ideology used in the study, the conception of ideological migration, the chief qualifications for historical cases of ideological migration, and methods of empirical investigation.

### **Ideology**

*Ideology Is Boiled Down to Positions on Policy Issues.* We treat ideology as a set of policy positions. We are not concerned with the abstract or philosophical features of an ideology except insofar as those features translate into positions or tendencies on policy issues.

*The Ideological Spectrum: Small Inactive Government Versus Big Active Government.* For many policy issues, such as schooling, drugs and occupational licensing, one may draw a spectrum for each issue, locating the more laissez-faire policies on the left and the interventionist policies on the right. Although many policy issues, such as term limits and campaign finance, are not amenable to such treatment, and although there are holes and gray patch in the very distinction between laissez-faire and intervention, many issues are amenable to such treatment, and those are the kinds of issues we are most concerned with in this investigation. Given all the issues amenable to the less-state/more-state spectrum, one might collapse all into a single composite spectrum of laissez-faire versus interventionism. Although we do not literally plot ideologies along a line, the reader may find it useful to think in those terms. At the extreme left

is “minarchism,” in which governments initiate little (or no) coercion, government property is scant, and restrictions on voluntary exchange and association are virtually nonexistent. At the extreme right is totalitarianism, where the state exerts maximal intervention in the lives of the citizenry, private property is scant or severely attenuated, and restrictions on voluntary exchange are severe and pervasive. The spectrum is not meant to capture all facets and dimensions of political ideologies. Many dimensions of ideology are simply not pertinent to this investigation. The only aspect of ideology charted here is the degree of statism it represents or endorses.

### **Ideological Migration**

*Migration Alone Concerns Us.* This study concerns itself with intellectuals who migrated along the spectrum, from an earlier position to a later position. We try to characterize the changes and judge whether the extent of migration may be deemed significant.

*All Migration Falls into One of Two Categories.* Movement along a horizontal line must be either to the left or to the right. All migration is categorized as movement toward minarchism or toward totalitarianism. The former cases will be described as *libertarian* migration, the latter as *statist* migration. Those labels refer not to positions, but rather to the *direction* of migration. For example, the social philosopher Sidney Hook migrated from socialist to social-democrat. His previous support for Marxist regimes, complete with the instruments of a command economy, was supplanted by his endorsement of democratic welfare-statist policies (Kurtz, 11). Hook's importance to this study is his libertarian migration. The reader should understand that Hook's migration is labeled libertarian even though his views are not libertarian. Similarly, an individual who migrates from libertarianism to conservatism (favoring, say, drug prohibition) is considered a statist migrant. Our framework accommodates any intellectual who at different times after the age of 25 held different ideologies, both of which being translatable into public policy positions and compared on a spectrum of less or more government control.

### **Restrictions Placed on the Population of Ideological Migrants**

Four restrictions are placed on the population of ideological migrants in this study: the migrant must be an intellectual, must not be heavily involved in politics, must have migrated after the age of 25, and must be writing in the English language and born after 1800.

*The Ideological Migrant Must Be an Intellectual.* To focus on the most meaningful cases of ideological migration, we limit the population to those who work in a setting that puts a premium on intellectual consistency and integrity. The people who face the strongest incentives to be conscientious in their reasoning are career intellectuals. An intellectual is understood as someone whose work consists in developing and expressing ideas and whose policy judgments are made public by publication. Academicians, researchers in policy institutes or think-tanks, authors, and journalists are included in this category.

Intellectuals face a relatively high degree of accountability for their pronouncements. An intellectual will likely face challenges to his positions, so he must anticipate possible counter-arguments and take care to avoid hasty conclusions. He devotes a great deal of his life to refining his arguments. His peer groups and activities create reputational incentives for serious argumentation, consistency, and integrity. If an intellectual changes positions frequently, he develops a reputation for wayward thinking and loses credibility. One of the most damning criticisms is that of self-contradiction. If an intellectual opponent can reproduce one's past quotations and show the contradiction with one's present statements, then one's credibility takes a blow.

If an intellectual has been an ardent supporter of position A, his identity and, he believes, his happiness are linked with his belief in A. He has made large commitments, in terms of study, thought, and reputation in his defense of A. He has strong incentives to prove that new criticisms of A are unsound or insignificant. Intellectuals do not want to discover that they have exerted so much effort defending the wrong side. Relative to non-intellectuals, intellectuals have

the strongest incentives not to espouse positions whimsically and not to waver in their opinions.

Because journalists in the major media must appeal to the masses, secure the cooperation of government officials, and consider the immediate effect they may have on public opinion, we discount their importance. We exclude novelists, dramatists, poets, film-makers and other artists unless they also have done substantial nonfiction writing on public issues.

*The Intellectual Cannot Be Heavily Involved in Politics.* Consider the incentives of those involved in politics: politicians, civil servants, and others who have, or hope to have, an influence on those in office. Politicos advocate policy positions publicly, but many incentives bear on their decision-making. Their analyses of issues often give way to factors that have little to do with the intellectual merits of particular positions. They face fluctuating, diverse and often idiosyncratic pressures. Those who would serve as “enforcers” of politicians’ intellectual integrity, voters, have weak incentives and little capability to perform the task assiduously. The individual voter recognizes that his vote counts for little in the political process, and therefore does not expend effort to cast it wisely. Unlike the intellectual, whose policy conclusions are scrutinized and challenged by her peers, who are often rivals, politicians lives in an environment of comparatively little intellectual accountability. The desire to win or keep office, to appeal to voters and lobbyists, to receive appointments, to influence the ebb and flow of affairs, and to become a political player all mean that the decision processes of politicians are subjected to rather weak reputational incentives for ideological consistency and integrity. The only arguments that really count in political discussions of policy are arguments that can be passed off to the public. Except in crisis situations, political discussions of policy rarely get beyond the “40-yard lines” of status quo policies. The incentives of politicians favor platitude, loose thinking, and intellectual opportunism. Even if the politico is, or was, an intellectual, his erstwhile intellectual peers recognize the generally crude and idiosyncratic nature of politics and do not hold him to high standards of intellectual accountability. For these reasons, we tend to exclude from consideration intellectuals who hold office, seek office, or hover around government. When we

do include such intellectuals, we discount their case accordingly.

*Ideological Migration Must Occur After the Age of 25.* Many famous intellectuals developed positions at an early age and then renounced those positions while still at a very young age.<sup>1</sup> Because we wish to focus on intellectuals who migrated away from positions that had gained maturity, we generally look for migrations that occurred after the intellectual reached his or her mid-twenties. The age of 25 is used as a rough minimum, not a rigid requirement. An ideological migration occurring at the age of 30 is more significant, *ceteris paribus*, than one occurring at 25.

*The Intellectual Must Write in English and Be Born after 1800.* The population we wish to consider to “test” our ideas is confined to English-language intellectuals born after 1800. The reasons for the English-language requirement are two. First, as a practical matter, we need to circumscribe the investigation and we are not competent in any other language. Second, we think that intellectuals are only adequately insulated from political forces in relatively large countries with a strong tradition of freedom of discourse. Anglosphere intellectuals are effectively our “official” population. Intellectual life is considerably more detached from politics in America than in Britain. In Britain, historically, there has always been much heavier intercourse between politicians and intellectuals than in the US. For this reason, we think that British cases of migration ought to be discounted to some extent.

We have chosen the cutoff birth year of 1800 so as to include intellectuals active during the age of transformation in liberalism, and specifically to include the complicated case of John Stuart Mill. We do not want to go further back in time because we need to circumscribe the investigation and because the farther back we go the more anachronistic becomes the entire conception of singling out policy issues and identifying positions along the lines of *laissez-faire* versus interventionism.

We go beyond the English-language and 1800-birth year confines in a few cases to

explore certain statist migrants (Bertil Ohlin, Sismondi, Henry Carey). These supplemental cases are included for curiosity's sake. They do not bear on the "official" test of our ideas.

### **Mode of Empirical Research**

We provide intellectual profiles on xx subjects, documenting ideological migration in each case. Is our sample a random sample? We have no grounds for claiming so. Our mode of research may be described by the following points:

- 1) As we proceed, we intend to have asked hundreds, of people, particularly through mass e-mail queries, to provide leads on cases of ideological migration. We may create a website soliciting data. We inquired first of our friends and intellectual associates, who belong especially to scholarly classical-liberal circles. A great many of them are historians, intellectual historians, political philosophers, and economists who devote their professional lives to subjects relating intimately with our own. Our call for leads fanned out to various additional ideological circles and internet lists. We will have presented our tentative findings at numerous academic forums open to all (at the American Economics Association, the Philosophy Department at Bowling Green State University, the Economics Department at George Mason University, the Sociology Department at Stockholm University, the History Department at Princeton University, the Mont Pelerin Society), and at several small group and nonacademic forums.<sup>ii</sup> In every case we called on attendees to search their minds and be on the look out for cases of migration in either direction. Our questionnaire addressed to ideological migrants ends by asking if the respondent can suggest other cases of ideological migration.
- 2) We have consulted scores of books in intellectual history in search of leads on ideological migrants. Several books deal directly with the topic (Crossman [1949], Diggins 1975,

Nash 1976, O'Neill 1982, Bunzel 1988, Eberstadt 2007). We pay great attention to works on the intellectual trends of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

- 3) We researched intellectuals who, according to the leads or our own investigation, appeared to show *the strongest migrations*. Some intellectuals showing only mildly significant migrations we investigated simply because they were especially prominent and therefore of general interest. In investigating an intellectual, we examined his or her work, focusing especially on statements and judgments that can be roughly translated into positions on public policy issues, or stances on the size and reach of government. We strove to confirm ideological characterization with published evidence. Mere reminiscence to the effect of “when I was 25 I was a socialist” are not necessarily given much weight when not backed up by published evidence or other confirming evidence from the time described. We also relied on secondary sources for guidance. No doubt, our reading is sometimes wanting in depth and nuance, but for our purposes it is not necessary to make bullees. The sample size is large enough to allow a residual of (unbiased) error to wash out overall. The important issue is not precision in reading, but the possibility of bias. We are hopeful that any biases in our reading will be discovered and corrected. We regard this work as being perennially in progress.
- 4) Even within the bounds we set, the population of migrants or possible migrants is vast and unwieldy. To sift we give special importance to the individual's *prominence*. Thus, we feel especially obliged to cover and profile English-language statist migrants *who are or were prominent*. The prominence criterion for sampling will bring greater accountability to our efforts.
- 5) We feel that we have paid special attention to leads about statist migrants. As our profiles show, we have already investigated and written profiles for several individuals

who were suggested to us as being possible statist migrants, but who, upon investigation, were found not to be.

As scholars, we have strong incentives to overcome biases in our methods. All our efforts would be for nothing if someone were to respond to our project by providing five cases of prominent figures who migrated significantly in the statist direction. Our methods might be described as unsystematic. Yet in raking up leaves or painting a barn, one can be fairly confident that even unsystematic efforts, if diligent and extensive, will get the job done tolerably well. We are confident that we have not overlooked numerous cases of prominent intellectuals who experienced significant statist migrations. Such cases would be known to intellectuals of any stripe, and the novelty of statist migrants in fact gains much notoriety among those in the forsaken camp. We discuss possible problems in our empirical methods...

The profiles are not biographies or summaries of the subject's thought. Most events in a subject's life would have no bearing on our topic. We do not attempt to provide detailed accounts of the countless factors that contribute to an intellectual's ideological migration. The chief aim is to show that ideological migration occurred. We have waded through material in an effort to present only what seems most pertinent to that migration.

Intellectuals rarely offer a catalog of position changes on a number of specific issues. Often an author will describe his history in terms of leaving one school of thought for another. For example, Irving Kristol migrates from socialism to neoconservative. Specific policy shifts can be found, but to a certain extent, the researcher must attempt to infer the shift in policy positions. William Henry Chamberlain originally accepted the communist economic creed. After his migration, he opposed price fixing (Chamberlain 1959, 5-8). Though Chamberlain does not specifically mention his earlier position on price fixing, we assume that, given the nature of communist command economies, his opposition to price fixing represents an ideological shift.

Intellectuals often speak in terms that avoid the "brass-tacks" of public policy. An

intellectual may favor freedom of association, but may not make clear whether that means he opposes anti-discrimination laws. After his migration, Max Eastman wrote that he accepted the inequality of wealth. Yet it would be tenuous to claim that the later Eastman favored the abolition of specific welfare programs.

Sometimes broad terms may have to make way for another imperfect method of assessing ideological migration: group association. If, today, someone works as an editor of *The Nation* we may hazard to assume that he favors more government intervention than someone who works for the Cato Institute. Even so, we can not be sure these two people will have differing views on a given issue, such as drug legalization. We have found that some intellectuals are quick to furnish their new, post-migration policy positions, but refer to their past beliefs in associational terms. They may make mention of groups they supported or journals for which they wrote, but do not refer in detail to pre-migration policy positions.

EMPIRICAL CONJECTURE:

IDEOLOGICAL MIGRATION GOES PRINCIPALLY IN THE LIBERTARIAN DIRECTION

The tentative finding is that the cases of libertarian migrants are copious and seemingly unending, whereas the cases of statist migrants are rather few and often highly qualified. Ideological migration seems to go principally in one direction.

The tables on the following pages show that, thus far, we have recorded 22 significant cases of libertarian migration, yet only 6 significant cases of statist migration. “Significant” here accords with our various standards in reviewing a case: age of migration, decidedness and concreteness of earlier views, documentation and media of earlier views, ideological “distance” traveled, decidedness and concreteness of later views, documentation and media of later views, intellectuals setting, and involvement in politics. It should be noted that our standard for “Significant” (or “Mildly Significant”) *does not include an assessment of intellectual character or quality of the individual*. We feel that it is up to the reader to decide whether the few particular cases of statist migration display dubious character.

### **LIBERTARIAN MIGRANTS**

\* indicates profile as of June 2009

#### **Significant Migrations**

\* Baird, Charles  
 \* Brittan, Samuel  
 \* Brudnoy, David  
 \* Carolan, Matthew  
 \* Chamberlain, John  
 Chamberlain, William H.  
 \* Chambers, Whittaker  
 \* Cox, Harold  
 Collier, Peter  
 \* Eastman, Max  
 Flew, Antony  
 \* Flynn, John T.  
 Fox-Genovese, Elizabeth  
 \* Heilbroner, Robert

\* Greenleaf, W.H.  
 Herberg, Will  
 \* Hess, Karl  
 \* Hook, Sidney  
 \* Horowitz, David  
 \* Kristol, Irving  
 \* Lane, Rose Wilder  
 \* Lieberman, Myron  
 \* Lippmann, Walter  
 \* Meyer, Frank S.  
 Novak, Michael  
 Podhoretz, Norman  
 Radosh, Ronald  
 \* Schuyler, George  
 \* Steele, David R.

#### **Less Significant Migrations**

\* Brown, Grant  
 \* Buckley, Willaim F.  
 Burnham, James  
 Epstein, Joseph  
 \* Genovese, Eugene  
 \* Hayek, Friedrich A.  
 \* Herbert, Auberon  
 \* Narveson, Jan  
 \* Solzhenitsyn  
 \* Stossel, John

**More Research  
Required**

Barnes, H.E.  
 Barrett, William  
 Day, Dorothy  
 Ferns, H.S.  
 Fischer, Louis  
 Friedman, Milton  
 Fogel, Robert  
 Gide, Andre

Hentoff, Nat  
 Hospers, John  
 Ignazio, Silone  
 Koestler, Arthur  
 Lyons, Eugene  
 Medved, Michael  
 North, Douglass C.  
 Oglesby, Carl  
 Passos, John Dos  
 Popper, Karl  
 Shactman, Max  
 Sirico, Robert

Stein, Harry  
 Trilling, Lionel  
 Will, George  
 Wright, Richard

MANY OTHERS

**STATIST MIGRANTS****Significant  
Migrations**

\* Cole, G.D.H.  
 \* Gray, John  
 \* Gurley, John  
 \* Laski, Harold  
 Rapping, Leonard  
 \* Robinson, Joan

**Less Significant  
Migrations**

\* Erb, Scott  
 \* Lind, Michael  
 \* Nozick, Robert  
 \* Robbins, Lionel  
 \* Scruton, Roger  
 \* Villard, Oswald Garrison

**More Research  
Required**

Bork, Robert  
 Brock, David  
 Feder, Don  
 Foley, Duncan  
 Hymer, Steve  
 Loury, Glen C.  
 Tucker, Benjamin  
 Wollstein, Jarret  
 Yarros, Victor S.

MANY OTHERS

### **Non-migrants investigated as possibly being statist migrants**

- Beveridge, William
- Buchanan, James
- \* Carlyle, Thomas
- Comte, August
- \* Dickens, Charles
- \* Garrison, William Lloyd
- Green, T. H.
- Hobson, J. A.
- Hodgskin, Thomas
- Keynes, John Maynard
- Marshall, Alfred
- \* Martineau, Harriet
- \* Mill, John Stuart
- Newman, Stephen
- \* Prowse, Michael
- \* Ruskin, John
- Senior, Nassau
- Shaw, George B.
- Spencer, Herbert
- Tawney, R. H.
- Tuccille, Jerome
- Twain, Mark
- \* Webb, Beatrice
- \* Wills, Garry

### **Statist Migrants or Possible Statist Migrants Outside the Designated Population**

- \* Carey, Henry
- Fichte, Johann Gottlieb
- Humboldt, Wilhelm von
- \* Jouvenal, Bertrand de
- Lagercrantz, Olaf
- Molinari, Gustave de
- \* Ohlin, Bertil
- Pareto, Vilfredo
- Saint Simon, Henri de
- \* Sismondi, Jean C. L. S.

There is no sense in trying to do a statistical evaluation of the results. We think that the findings are striking enough to merit reflection. If someone flipped a coin 25 times, and the coin came up heads 22 times and tails 6 times, one might suspect that there was a causal force towards heads.

*The Congruence of Our Findings with Other Indications.* We are pretty confident that

the libertarian trend is representative of ideological migration of English-writing intellectuals born after 1800. Our conjecture concords with some other indications of the pattern of migration.

Several books also explore cases of ideological migration: *Political Passages*, edited by John H. Bunzel; *The God That Failed*, edited by John H. Crossman; *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America* by George H. Nash, *Up From Communism* by John P. Diggins, and *Why I Turned Right* edited by Mary Eberstadt. The migrations treated by these books are mainly from the left-wing to some brand or other of American conservatism -- a pattern congruent with our findings. Our study goes beyond these treatments in documenting movement toward libertarian ideology. We find many moderates and conservatives who became highly libertarian (Karl Hess, Robert Kephart, Matthew Carolan, William F. Buckley, Auberon Herbert), and many persons on the left who became highly libertarian (Rose Wilder Lane, John Chamberlain, Charles Baird, Nat Hentoff, David Brudnoy).

Our conjecture concords also with anecdotal impressions of the pattern of ideological migration. People often repeat the remark by Winston Churchill about those who had never been socialists lacking a heart and those who remained so lacking a head. In correspondence two intellectuals made related comments. Thomas Sowell wrote to us about our project: "I hope you will also address the question as to why migrations seem to be in one direction-- away from the political left" (Sowell 1996). John Gurley, who migrated, as he puts it, "from liberal-Democrat to left-wing," remarked to us in correspondence: "There have been many cases of people moving from left-wing to right-wing (former communists) in the past 50 years. It would be hard to find instances of the reverse" (Gurley 1998).

In a few scholarly sources the author seeks to cite cases of statist migrants and the results are telling. In his book on the change of ideological opinion in Britain during the nineteenth century, A.V. Dicey seeks to exemplify the change "from individualism to collectivism . . . by the lives of . . . leaders of thought and action. My meaning is well illustrated by the careers of Harriet Martineau, of Charles Dickens, and of John Mill " (Dicey, p. 415). Dicey proceeds to

profile those three figures, suggesting that each was a migrant to “collectivism.” We find, however, that careful study of these figures goes against Dicey’s impression. We provide profiles of the three figures and conclude that neither Martineau nor Mill was a statist migrant (Dickens was not an intellectual in our sense). That Dicey could not come up with stronger examples of statist migrants indicates that the task was not an easy one. Likewise, when the economist Leonard Rapping was interviewed in 1982 about his own “defecting” from mainstream economics and its supposed pro-market orientation, he said, “There were actually four economists that I know of who ‘defected’,” and mentions Ellsberg, Conrad, Steve Hymer, and himself. [Need to flesh this out.] Again, that a “defector” who was active in the Union of Radical Political Economists did not come up with more striking cases of migrants from free-market thinking might be significant.

Our research has found no hint of a migration pattern toward philosophies of bigger government. Only as more intellectuals are profiled can we gain greater certainty that ideological migration is largely unidirectional.

## WHY IDEOLOGICAL MIGRATION MIGHT TELL US SOMETHING IMPORTANT

To help one decide whether to pursue some object, he might find out about its qualities and characteristics, and try to imagine what experiencing them would be like. Yet foresight is limited, and the imagination falls short of genuine experience. La Rochefoucauld recommends a different approach:

Before strongly desiring anything we should look carefully into the happiness of its present owner. (La Rochefoucauld 1959, p. 109)

An endorsement from a trusted friend or authority often deserves more weight than one's own neophyte images about consequences.

This study follows the lead of La Rochefoucauld in the matter of ideological belief. Political ideology is, to some extent, a matter of choice, and each ideological view may be considered an alternative object of choice. La Rochefoucauld's maxim suggests that objects that fail to satisfy others will also fail to satisfy us. If we observe a pattern of people switching, for example, from one software program to a competing software program, that might lead us to suspect that the first software program is inferior to the newly-embraced software program. Perhaps we ought to draw similar conclusions when we observe people systemically discontinuing their adherence to certain political ideologies.

We develop a model that recognizes the historical-dependence of one's own thinking. One's thinking is an network of ideas, values, beliefs, attitudes, interests, attachments, commitments, judgments -- all of which have developed historically, one upon the other, shaping those to follow. They evolve from personal experience, and personal experience derives from one's upbringing, family life, schooling, friends, reading, television watching, work environment, and so on. The individual's system of thought is, as economists say, "path dependent" -- beliefs that suit one best at the moment depend on the path of one's beliefs up to

that moment. The path dependence of one's thinking complicates the application of La Rochefoucauld's advice. To clarify the issues at hand, we provide two examples of decision making.

### **Migration Patterns Can Inform One's Choice**

Consider a young man from Iowa pondering whether to live in San Francisco or Los Angeles. His hometown in Iowa has basic cultural features in common with both San Francisco and Los Angeles, but lacks many of the features that are distinctive to each. The decision is an important one for the young ponderer, because he knows that taking up residence will be costly and will set him on a new course. In either city he will make new relations and new attachments that will come to be important to him, to be, even, essential parts of him. So he ponders carefully.

We may distinguish between several planes of comparison available to him. The fundamental plane is to learn about the qualities and characteristics of each city. He may research the quality of the schools, the statistics on neighborhood security, the cultural amenities, and so on. Ponderer may visit each city and listen to what real-estate agents have to say. Suppose that upon such basis, Ponderer develops some favor for San Francisco over Los Angeles.

The information gathered in such fashion would, however, provide only a surface-level account of what living in the city would be like. Deeper qualities and hidden characteristics are discovered by and known only to those who actually experience living in the city. Economists make a distinction between "search characteristics," which can be known before experiencing the good, and "experience characteristics," which can be known only by actually experiencing the good (Nelson 1974). Ponderer realizes that many facets of living in a city fall into the "experience" category, that his study of the city's characteristics does not reveal many of the important deeper qualities.

To expand the basis for comparison, Ponderer might wish to consult a second plane of

inquiry: the actions chosen by those who have gone before him. Suppose that many precursors also started in Iowa and had to choose between San Francisco and Los Angeles. He learns that 90 percent of such precursors chose San Francisco, while 10 percent chose Los Angeles. He might conclude that the precursors perceived the superiority of San Francisco over Los Angeles. This information bolsters his decision for San Francisco over Los Angeles.

Ponderer recognizes two reasons, however, to refrain from putting too much weight on the rate at which Iowans chose San Francisco over Los Angeles. First, they had not in fact experienced San Francisco or Los Angeles in a living manner at the time of decision, so their choice did not flow from a deep personal knowledge of the two cities. They were not the sophisticated mavens one would prefer to get market advice from; rather, they also were young, naive shoppers. Second, perhaps the precursors decided to choose San Francisco simply because *their* precursors had chosen San Francisco. Choosing San Francisco may have been what economists call an “informational cascade,” in which the nearly-blind lead the nearly-blind (Bikhchandani, Hirshleifer, and Welch 1992), possibly in choosing the wrong alternative.

The third plane of inquiry, therefore, would be at the level suggested by La Rochefoucauld: to observe the choices of the more knowledgeable choosers. Do those who move to each city decide to remain there? The borders between the cities are open and malcontents are free to migrate. Suppose 95 percent of those who take up residence in San Francisco remain there their entire life. That fact is certainly a sign of satisfaction with San Francisco, for, if people were deeply dissatisfied by San Francisco, they could freely move to Los Angeles. But there is one problem with this evidence for the superiority of San Francisco.

Although individuals are free to move to Los Angeles, such a move is not the same as moving to Los Angeles from the original position. Residing for years in San Francisco alters one’s values in ways that are irreversible. One develops attachments, relations, affections, routines and habits. One’s life adapts to the environment. In the jargon of economics, the current “utility function” depends on one’s personal history. Preferences are path dependent. Economists and experimental psychologists have indeed amassed considerable evidence that

people often favor what they have got merely because it is what they have got. They quickly develop strong biases in favor of the status quo (Kahneman, Knetsch, and Thaler 1991).

Therefore, the 95 percent retention rate at San Francisco may not be very telling. The high retention rate may reflect the status quo bias and path dependent preferences, not the superiority of San Francisco. Can we find a basis for comparison that controls for the status-quo/path-dependence effect?

Of the precursors who chose San Francisco, 95 percent chose to remain in San Francisco for their entire life. Suppose also that of the precursors who originally chose Los Angeles, 99.5 percent chose to remain in Los Angeles their entire life. Ponderer feels safe in assuming that the status-quo/path-dependence effect works on residents of Los Angeles at least equally strongly as it does on residents of San Francisco, so a comparison of the rates of out migration would control for the status-quo/path-dependence effect. Now suppose that the rate of out migration from San Francisco is *ten times greater* than the rate of out-migration from Los Angeles.

Those who migrate from one city to the other are the only ones who have a personal knowledge of both cities. Only they base their choice on the living experience of what each city has to offer. Ponder has found three pieces of information which indicate the superiority of San Francisco:

- it has amenities that seem to him to be superior to those of Los Angeles
- it consistently wins much greater support than does Los Angeles
- it succeeds in retaining 95 percent of its supporters.

Against these three items, Ponders sees a reason to favor Los Angeles:

- Los Angeles's rate of out-migration is only one-tenth that of San Francisco's.

In comparing living conditions between the old East and West Germany, we could try to

measure amenities and imagine life as they existed in each place. But another important consideration is the direction of emigration that the construction of the Berlin Wall prevented.

### **Ideological Migration Patterns Can Inform One's Choice**

Let us now turn from geographic residence to ideological “residence.” There are many dimensions to political ideology, and many ways to fashion a political ideology of one’s own. Let’s suppose, however, that a young ponderer has narrowed down his choice to just two ideologies, which we will simply call Smaller-Government philosophy and Bigger-Government philosophy. Ponderer begins with only very general ideological attitudes, attitudes common throughout the culture of the entire society. The ideological location of origin has basic ideas in common with both the Smaller-Government and Bigger-Government philosophies, but lacks many of the features that are distinctive to each. For example, the original set of beliefs maintains that government ought to provide assistance to the needy, but it does not specify a position on minimum wage laws, occupational licensing, or single-payer health care. Although this example allows Ponderer to decide between only two ideologies, we subsequently consider the full range of ideologies.

Examining his two relevant alternatives, Ponderer recognizes that the decision of ideological residence will be one that will be difficult to reverse. In either ideology he will become part of a distinct community with new relations and attachments. We may speak of a “community of mind” -- the realm where one’s beliefs take shape and develop toward a coherent and useful ideology. Nascent ideas are nurtured, modified or abandoned. One’s knowledge, practices, activities and interests intermingle and become beliefs. The community of mind is specific to each person but it is not without significant outside influences. Interaction with family members, friends, teachers, authors, the media and political figures represent some of the influences coming from the outside world. The various factors gather within the community of one’s mind to form an ideology, perhaps conflicted and fragmentary. Individual consciousness

serves as the border or container of the community of mind. Inside the borders reside beliefs and, like individual residents, they combine to form a community of mind that we will recognize as an ideology.

Ponderer learns about the qualities and characteristics of the two ideologies. He considers the arguments for each. He focuses on the areas of disagreement between the two ideological positions and reads literature on each side. Suppose he finds the Bigger-Government philosophy to have more direct appeal. The information he gathered is valuable, but the knowledge he now has is limited because he has never actually lived these ideologies. A richer and more sophisticated knowledge of an ideology is known only to those who dwell in the ideology.

Ponderer considers a second form of comparison: the actions chosen by those who have preceded him. Suppose that many precursors also started from the original position and had to choose between the two philosophies. If 90 percent chose Bigger-Government, while 10 percent chose Smaller-Government, that might suggest that others perceived the Bigger-Government philosophy to be superior to the Smaller-Government philosophy.

But this form of support is of limited importance. First, those choosing the Bigger-Government philosophy did not make their decision on the basis of a living knowledge of either ideology. They had not dwelled in either ideology, rather they were young, naive choosers when making their decisions. Second, maybe the precursors decided to choose Bigger-Government simply because their precursors had done so. The choosing of Bigger-Government philosophy may have constituted an informational cascade. This possibility is captured by Mark Twain in his *Autobiography*:

In religion and politics people's beliefs and convictions are in almost every case gotten at second-hand, and without examination, from authorities who have not themselves examined the questions at issue but have taken them at second-hand from other non-examiners, whose opinions about them are not worth a brass farthing. (Twain, quoted in

Carruth and Ehrlich 1992, p. 99)

Ponderer seeks to get beyond the cascade of “non-examiners.” He considers a third type of comparison: Do those who choose each ideology decide to remain there? Suppose that of those who originally select the Bigger-Government philosophy, 95 percent remain there their entire life. This might seem like a high degree of satisfaction with the Bigger-Government position. But this evidence of a superiority of the Bigger-Government philosophy has its own limitation. There is reason to believe that ideological belief, like geographic residence, is marked by path dependence, lock-in and the status quo bias. Let us turn now to these concepts as they apply to the mind.

## CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF ASSUMPTIONS AND METHODS

Our investigation, in a nutshell, suggests that we attribute greater wisdom to the later, revised positions held by ideological migrants, and that on this basis the historical record points to wisdom being on the side of libertarianism. Here we raise points that might challenge our investigation. We raise 12 points, and comment on each in turn.

There are a number of points that might be raised about the one-dimensional spectrum, which ranges from little government control to much government control.

- 1) *Is it appropriate to ascribe “statism” to positions?* It might be argued that we ascribe levels of “statism” to thinkers who do not think in those terms, and who would protest our ascriptions. For example, John Gurley, who describes himself as moving “from liberal-Democrat to left-wing,” might balk at our attributing greater statism to his later position, which explicitly favors socialism. Gurley may insist that he doesn’t favor statism at all. In this matter we assert our own judgment about what a position comes to in practical terms. Our approach conforms to that employed by Hayek in *The Road to Serfdom*: a political agenda or philosophy, such as central planning or state socialism, is understood in terms of its actual methods and manifestations, not its ideals or promises (see Hayek 1944, pp. 33-34).

Statism is measured as departures from the principle of private property, freedom of contract, and the minimal state. Someone who advocates anti-discrimination laws is advocating statism to that extent, because he is advocating a governmental apparatus to contravene the principle of freedom of contract. Similarly, someone who advocates government welfare programs is advocating statism, to that extent, because he is advocating tax-financed activities. We recognize that the contours of property rights and contract are sometimes ambiguous, incomplete, and dependent on culture and custom.

And we recognize that our one dimensional spectrum does not capture many important facets of political philosophy. We maintain, however, that, as far as it goes, the spectrum does provide a coherent framework.

- 2) *Some intellectuals move away from one position but don't really move toward a new position.* During the twentieth century there has been a heavy flow of intellectuals moving away from the left. As intellectuals came to recognize that the ideals of communism and socialism do not actually play out in practice, many repudiated their old views, but did not move toward definite new views. In this study a migration consists of a pair of differing views or positions held at different points in time. We have tried to ascertain whether those repudiating their old views clearly take up some new position, even if it is just centrism. We have excluded many intellectuals (particularly former leftists) who abandoned their former views but refrain from identifying or elaborating new views. In our tables, we have classified Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Eugene Genovese and Joseph Epstein as "Less Significant" migrations because, despite their repudiation of their former views, they do not clearly elaborate a new view.
- 3) *What about someone who moves in one direction on one issue and in the other direction on another issue?* William F. Buckley, for example, migrated significantly in the libertarian direction on drug policy, but may have become mildly more statist in his long-standing proposal for national service. A thinker can go in both directions at once, in which case the several movements have to be weighed for the degree and definiteness of changes. We have classified Buckley as a libertarian migrant (on the "Less Significant" list), because his change on drug policy is drastic and explicit (and because in 1993 he describes himself as a "Libertarian Journalist" in the title of one of his books).
- 4) *What about foreign policy?* Foreign policy does not fit neatly into our framework.

Suppose that a relatively free country were to intervene militarily into a less free country and thereby make that country freer. In one sense that intervention is anti-statist, because it reduces the state coercion in the target country. Yet the action increases taxes and state power in the home country. The issue is important for intellectuals who move from the left, which has tended to be opposed to military interventions, to Cold War conservatism. The best example may be James Burnham (1905-1987), who had been a Trotskyite leftist and switched during his thirties to a tough anti-communist position. Burnham was perhaps the leader in moving American conservatism from an isolationist “Old Right” philosophy to militaristic anti-communism, represented by the magazine *National Review*. Burnham, furthermore, never embraced free-market economics to the extent that most of his conservative colleagues did (see Nash pp. 91-95, 128, 378). In our study we recognize that views on foreign policy may blur the question of migration. We have classified Burnham’s case as “Less Significant” migration, despite his repudiation of the left, because he evidently became more militaristic on foreign policy issues.

- 5) *What about anarcho-capitalism?* The extreme point at the libertarian end of our spectrum is not clearly defined. Many leading libertarian thinkers, including Murray Rothbard and David Friedman, have espoused an ideal of no government at all. In “anarcho-capitalism,” property rights and contracts would, supposedly, be protected and enforced by private security, private mediation, reputational social norms of shunning and moral suasion, and moral integrity. The issue is relevant because there are numerous cases of intellectuals, such as Gustave de Molinari (correct?) and Roy Childs, who migrated from an anarchist position to a minarchist (or Nightwatchman) position. It is not uncommon for young libertarians to take up the anarchist position, but gradually to stop talking and thinking about it as they get older. We have opted to focus on the Nightwatchman State as the extreme point of the spectrum, because the very definition of the “state” or “government,” it seems to us, evaporates in the context of a society of

private defense agencies. (One could argue that the term “government” could be reasonably used to describe such agencies, in which case the society described amounts to a kind of Nightwatchman-state society.) But we do profile intellectuals who migrate from anarchism to minarchism, while putting little overall weight on their migrations.

It may be added that within libertarian circles, there is a not uncommon pattern of intellectual evolution along the following lines: At a young age the intellectual embraces, often under the influence of Ayn Rand or Murray Rothbard and his school, the idea of liberty (private property, consent, and contract) as an absolute first principle or universal ethical *axiom*, though he or she may be well aware of the ambiguities of the concepts of property, consent, and contract; later the libertarian intellectual concludes that the idea of an ethical axiom is silly, and comes to regard the idea of liberty as a political *maxim* or *presumption*, worthy of support in almost all cases of public-policy discourse. Thus, libertarians sometimes start with a youthful ethical extremism which later subsides, but only rarely does the evolution amount to substantive or significant changes of opinion on public issues on which the distinction between liberty and government intervention is reasonably unambiguous.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, rarely does the evolution fail to occur by the age of 25 or 30.

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<sup>1</sup> Young libertarians often come to moderate their thinking in learning to appreciate the variety and extensiveness of the gray areas between liberty and government intervention. A youthful, rationalistic libertarian might, for example, insist that government restrictions on the private ownership of atomic bombs treads on liberty and is (therefore) illegitimate. Yet later the libertarian comes to appreciate that the principle of liberty admits of the coercion not only of those who have transgressed private property rights, but also those who pose an imminent danger of doing so, as in the case of someone swinging a club at a victim. Accordingly, a neighbor with an atomic bomb might be reasonably regarded as an imminent danger, and hence police power used against such ownership might be deemed compatible with liberty. Another, more important, example of a gray area is the continuum that inheres between voluntary agreement, such as the contractual terms of a proprietary community, and local government. Local government restrictions on, for example, signage or sex commerce, ought perhaps to be deemed as less interventionist than the same restrictions issuing from a less local level of government. Libertarians are not necessarily becoming more statist when they become more agnostic on such hoary and highly particularistic issues.

Another common sort of softening if for libertarians for become more willing to endorse piecemeal reform. But here again there is no necessary or substantive change positions. As the libertarian anarchist David R. Steele wrote in his response to our questionnaire: “I would still ultimately like to see an anarchist society, and can see no reason it wouldn’t work, but I am more accepting of the need to advocate second-best policy improvements within the framework of the nation state. I am comfortable with ‘half measures’ (I mean things like school vouchers) than I used to be” (Steele 1998). Thus, although libertarians may migrate toward publicly supporting half-measures, that does not contradict their original preference for whole measures (such as the separation of school and state).

Points numbered 6 - 10 concern the logic of the theory.

- 6) *Perhaps lock-in is a hazard for only a fringe of intellectuals.* Our position may be simplified as follows:

Deep within the culture of western societies is a primordial intellectual sensibility, a sensibility that all members of those societies share. That sensibility is best satisfied intellectually by the ideology of pragmatic libertarianism. In as much as that sensibility progresses intellectually, it moves towards libertarianism. But in individuals' personal histories, that sensibility often gets shunted down inferior paths and gets locked into statist views and positions. In the rare instances in which lock-in is overcome, we (usually) observe progress in the libertarian direction.

Granting for the sake of argument our empirical conjecture, one might challenge the importance of that finding by denying a common sensibility. One might argue that young intellectuals can sample ideologies freely and without great hazard -- like shopping for a new shirt and trying on those that are for sale. One could argue that there is nothing really to explain: intellectuals have different primordial preferences in ideology and they usually successfully pick the one that best suits them for a life time. All the talk about the path dependence of belief is irrelevant. Ninety percent of intellectuals pick out an ideology the way people pick out a shirt, and only ten percent suffer from uncertainty and face the hazard of lock-in.

Our reply is, first, that even if the challenge is correct, our study would at least be relevant to the ten percent who develop ideological beliefs in the penumbra of uncertainty. But more fundamentally, we should like to affirm, to the greatest extent

reasonable, the notion of a common sensibility among those who disagree, because that notion is a necessary precondition for political discourse, a sense of intellectual advancement, and the mutual hope of persuasion.

- 7) *Perhaps intellectuals like to change their mind.* Earlier we likened choice of ideology to choice of residence, and argued that people get locked into their place of residence. But people also get bored with their place of residence and sometimes move just for the sake of moving. Might the same be true of ideological belief? Perhaps some intellectuals will migrate, even to worse positions, just to experience a sense of renewal or refreshment. We acknowledge this possibility. However, it would not vitiate our basic thesis unless one were to argue further that the boredom effect was especially strong for more statist positions. We see no grounds for that additional claim. (Furthermore, someone maintaining that additional claim would have to distinguish the boredom effect of positions from the basic inferiority of positions; maybe the feeling of ennui is simply a symptom of the inferiority of the position.) The boredom effect, indeed, could bolster our basic thesis, as it would add “noise,” or random migration, to the population of intellectuals, and thereby could serve to explain away the observed exceptions to the general pattern.

*“People naturally get more conservative as they get older.”* One might argue that the libertarian pattern of migration does not reflect the superiority of more libertarian positions. Rather, it reflects other components of the aging process. It is often said that “people get more conservative when they get older.” This could mean several things. Points 8, 9, and 10 are various interpretations of the “people get more conservative” point.

- 8) *Gravitation toward the Status Quo.* The “people get more conservative” claim could

mean that as people age they become more reconciled, accepting, or even supportive of the status quo, regardless of what the status quo is. In that case, if a majority of intellectuals start out, for some reason, with views that are more statist than the status quo, then gravitational pull to the status quo would produce a libertarian pattern of migration. There may be something to this point, but it would also suggest that those intellectuals who start off with views less statist than the status quo should also move toward the status quo, but we do not find many such cases. Indeed, we find small-government intellectuals becoming even more libertarian (and even further from the status quo).

- 9) *“People become more independent and critical.”* Another possible interpretation of the “people get more conservative” point is that as people get older they attain more financial and personal security, and security allows them greater freedom to criticize institutions of power. We acknowledge this possibility, but two points must be kept in mind: 1) this increased freedom to criticize the powerful must, again, be distinguished from a gain in wisdom, and 2) becoming more established in the world often makes one more dependent upon, and more polite towards, institutions of power; the unestablished have little to lose in being highly critical of power.
- 10) *“People oppose the welfare state as they get older.”* In responding to our inquiries about his own migration, Gerald Scully wrote:

You might note also, that the young are relatively poor and have more to gain from a system that takes from the better off. As they age, just by human capital theory, their income (wealth) rises, and they have more to lose. Perhaps, economics tells us a little something about philosophy of life (ideology) and its evolutionary path. (Scully 1998)

As people age they usually attain higher incomes and therefore pay more taxes. People might become more critical of government, especially the welfare state, because they come to see themselves as the ones paying for the benefits.

Again we acknowledge the point, but there are a couple of problems with Scully's suggestion. First, if we were to suppose that the personal circumstances of intellectuals colors their political views, then we should keep in mind that a large portion of the intellectuals considered here are (or were) employed at colleges and universities which receive their funding, in whole or in part, from the state. In that sense, they might feel themselves to be dependent on, or benefitted by, the welfare state. But second and more importantly, even if an established intellectual drawing a handsome salary would benefit by reductions in taxes and the welfare state, there is no reason for him to think that what he thinks, says, or does will perceptibly change such policies. The narrow motivations of self-interest would not lead him into denouncing the taxes and the welfare state. Third, we are concerned exclusively with intellectuals, whose perspectives on public issues are presumably larger and less personalized than Scully's point would have to ascribe to them.

11) *Perhaps some ideologies are more path dependent than others.* It would be logically sound to say that if some intellectual communities were less tolerant of deviance among their members, lock in might be more likely in those communities. But to vitiate our results one would have to claim further that the more-libertarian philosophies are more prone to cultural lock-in, and we see no grounds for such a claim. Also, in as much as someone were to insist that certain ideas are inherently more likely to be self-reinforcing and path dependent, that inherent path dependence would, again, have to be distinguished from the effects of plain wisdom.

12) *The theory is self-invalidating.* In so far as people attribute greater wisdom to later, revised views, an intellectual might be able to attract a certain amount of attention and notoriety simply by migrating, especially in the uncommon direction. Our theory might to some extent be self-invalidating, in that the more widely it is accepted, the stronger is the incentive for certain kinds of intellectuals to trade on being a migrant. This point certainly complicates our model, but it might also serve to explain away certain migrants whose character of thought suggests opportunism of just that kind.

Points 13, 14, and 15 involve the empirical methods of our investigation.

13) *The research is biased toward recent times.* During the past few decades leading up to 2000 or so, political thought has moved significantly in the libertarian direction. Because the recent past is more available to us than the distant past, our research may be biased in the direction which characterizes the change of thought in recent times. From 1880 to 1960 the intellectual trend was statist, and the information of the migrants of that time are less available to us now. One could maintain, therefore, that our research has uncovered more libertarian migrants than statist migrants simply because the information on the libertarian migrants tends to be more available.

We feel that this challenge is important and deserves much consideration. Information about recent events certainly is more available, and recent intellectual trends certainly have been in a libertarian direction. Our empirical findings are, no doubt, to some extent biased by these factors. But we believe that the bias is not large enough to vitiate our results. Two points to consider:

- Although the intellectual trend from about 1960 or 1970 to 2000 may have been in a libertarian direction, it would be difficult for one to maintain that the intellectual trend in the U.S. and Britain during the period from 1930 to 1960 was libertarian, and many of the migrations profiled here occurred

during that period, most of which are libertarian migrations. During that period, the universities, the press, and the intellectual world generally were becoming increasingly statist. The libertarian bias of the 1960-2000 period exists for only about two generations.

- We have studied the period of 1870 to 1920, when liberalism underwent its transformation from a rather libertarian philosophy to a more statist and collectivist philosophy. We have investigated leading figures of the liberal transformation and of Fabianism and the Labour Party, thinkers including J. S. Mill, T. H. Green, J. A. Hobson, L. T. Hobhouse, G. Wallas, W. Beveridge, J. M. Keynes, G. B. Shaw, S. Webb, B. Webb, G. D. H. Cole, R. H. Tawney, A. Toynbee, J. L. Hammond and H. Laski. Except perhaps for Laski, these leaders do not provide meaningful cases of ideological migration [note: we still need to make sure of Cole and Hammond]. We have researched the transformation of liberalism in Britain, and several sources indicate quite clearly that the transformation was a *generational shift* in thought, not a change of mind on the part of the old liberals. The appendix here provides textual evidence that supports the conclusion that the sparseness of observed cases of statist migration from the earlier period is due more to an actual sparseness of such cases than to the unavailability of information about them. As for the transformation of political thought in America during this period, we have found only one case of statist migration -- Oswald Garrison Villard -- and we do not regard his case to be highly significant.

14) *The findings are biased by the authors' agenda and social networks.* The final challenge maintains that our research is biased by our methods of research and our reading of the

individuals investigated. For example, we assiduously pursue leads about libertarian migrants but neglect those about statist migrants. Or our sources may have been biased towards suggesting libertarian migrants rather than statist migrants.

The hazard of bias always exists and that is why we have standards, institutions, and practices for scholarly research. If a researcher can identify several additional intellectuals of prominence who demonstrate significant statist migrations, that will damage the credibility of our research, and will make an important contribution to the topic. We don't think we've been biased. But we can't be more sure until our research is put to the test of open challenge by other scholars. An wiki-type website on ideological migration may be a good way to see if we have been biased.

- 15) “*Ratios of migration, not absolute magnitudes, are what matter.*” Earlier we gave the example of a ponderer choosing between two philosophies, one of Smaller-Government and one of Bigger-Government. If, as in our example, ideological choice were between just two positions, and if 90 percent of the choosers initially chose the Bigger-Government philosophy, then showing empirically that the number of migrants from Bigger to Smaller was ten times as large as the number of migrants from Smaller to Bigger would not suggest any superiority of Smaller, because ten times as many people started out in Bigger. Such a finding would show *equal* rates of out migration. One might criticize our results for showing failing to show anything about relative *rates* of migration.

This criticism is spurious because in real life intellectuals do not make a binary choice in ideology. They may start anywhere on the spectrum, and move, slightly or greatly, incrementally or dramatically. Our findings show that intellectuals starting anywhere on the spectrum show a tendency to move in the libertarian direction (except for the complicated case of those starting at “anarcho-capitalism”).

**Appendix:  
Ideological Trend in Britain from 1865 to 1910 as Generational Shift**

Insert: Passages congruent with the claim that statism was a *generational shift* can be found at: Wolfe pp. 3 (n.7), 24 (n.3), 51, 180, 193, 218, 221, 271, 272, 273. Pierson pp. 28, 106, 107, 155, 249.

Several sources support the claim that the ideological trend in Britain, from a more libertarian philosophy to a more collectivist or statist philosophy, was a generational shift, rather than a change of mind. A. V. Dicey portrays the broad change in ideology as having been a generational shift:

It is to-day [1905], at any rate, perfectly clear that from 1848 onwards an alteration becomes perceptible in the intellectual and moral atmosphere of England. A change we can now see was taking place in the current of opinion, and a change which was the more important, because it influenced mainly the then rising generation, and therefore was certain to tell upon the opinion of twenty or thirty years later -- that is, of 1870 or 1880. Nor can we now doubt that this revolution of thought tended in the direction of socialism. (Dicey 1905, 245)

Dicey particularly stress the role of J. S. Mill, whose attitudes and apparent migration “deeply affected the generation which came under [his] teachings” (ibid, 448; see also p. 428, 431-32, 445). (Dicey believes Mill to have migrated, but we dispute that claim.)

Thomas P. Neill, author of *The Rise and Decline of Liberalism*, was sympathetic to the new liberalism, yet he too indicates a generational shift:

Old men like Bright and Spencer . . . remained true to the principles of classical liberalism . . . Young liberals were not satisfied with the society their predecessors had established, of course, and they set about finding new bases for further reform . . . Classical Liberalism had created big business, we have seen, and the younger Liberals saw that this had become the real danger to individual freedom. (Neill 1953, pp. 250-51; see also 230)

William Clarke, a Fabian writer, urged in the 1894 that a generational shift was underway:

Laissez-faire individualist political philosophy is dead. In vain does poor Mr. Spencer endeavor to stem the torrent. His political ideas are already as antiquated as Noah's ark. I do not know a single one of the younger men in England who is influenced by them in the slightest degree, though one hears of one occasionally, just as one hears of a freak in a dime museum. (Clarke 1894, p. xxxiii; quoted in Greenleaf 1983, p. 82)

Clarke's taunts are extreme, but the thrust of his derision is supported by Elie Halevy, in Volume V of his *History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century*:

[Gladstone's] retirement [in 1894] left the leaders of his party [the Liberal party] a prey to disunion. On one side were those who remained faithful to his tradition, convinced opponents of expenditure and war, of bureaucracy and state socialism. On the other were the younger men, who vied with the Conservatives in their zeal for the consolidation of the Empire and who at the same time, as though with the deliberate intention to appear, in contrast with the old-fashioned Gladstonians, progressive, displayed leanings towards collectivism, of an indefinite and very moderate character it is true. (Halevy 1951, p. 6)

As stated earlier, we have found no significant cases, during the nineteenth century in Britain, of ideological migration away from the old liberalism. From the time of the transformation of liberalism the earliest statist migrants we have found are Harold Laski (whose migration came after 1920) and the American Oswald Garrison Villiard (whose migration began

around the time of the First World War).

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#### Endnotes

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<sup>i</sup>Some prominent economists who experienced significant libertarian migrations at an early age include Ludwig von Mises, Friedrich Hayek, James Buchanan, Ronald Coase, Aaron Director, Jack Hirshleifer, Robert Fogel, Douglass North, Thomas Sowell, and Deirdre McCloskey.

<sup>ii</sup>City Univeristy (Stockholm), Institute for Civil Society, and Laissez-Faire Books forum.