

6-2015

# Structural Limitations to the Success of Third Parties in the American Political System: A Study of the life Cycle of the Republican Party

Louis Fierro

*Union College - Schenectady, NY*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalworks.union.edu/theses>



Part of the [American Politics Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Fierro, Louis, "Structural Limitations to the Success of Third Parties in the American Political System: A Study of the life Cycle of the Republican Party" (2015). *Honors Theses*. 301.

<https://digitalworks.union.edu/theses/301>

This Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Work at Union | Digital Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of Union | Digital Works. For more information, please contact [digitalworks@union.edu](mailto:digitalworks@union.edu).

Structural Limitations to the Success of Third Parties in the American Political System: A  
Study of the life Cycle of the Republican Party

By

Louis Fierro

Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for  
honors in the department of Political Science

UNION COLLEGE

June, 2015

## ABSTRACT

FIERRO, LOUIS    Structural Limitations to the Success of Third Parties in the American Political System: A Study of the life Cycle of the Republican Party  
Department of Political Science, June 2015.

ADVISOR: Clifford Brown

American Politics has been dominated by the Democratic and Republican Parties for much of its history. Third parties, those bodies representing a challenge to the political system from outside the Democratic and Republican structures, have been largely unsuccessful in challenging for power. The sole exception to this rule was the Republican's ascension to a main party following the collapse of the Whig Party in 1860, no other third party has been able to replicate this maneuver due largely to structural characteristics associated with American politics and the winner-take-all voting system it employs in most elections.

Despite not directly posing a threat to major parties in serious elections, third parties have been able to affect change through the increased saliency they give to various issues and their role in turning elections as a result of attracting major party constituents. This paper examines not only limitations that have hampered the development of third parties, but also prominent third party campaigns of the 20th century and their effect on the development of American political history, as well as the trajectory of the Republican Party starting with its rise to main party prominence and ending with its partial takeover by Dixiecrats, Bryan populists, and the Tea Party movement.

## Table of Contents

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Page Number</b>
<b>Title Page</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Abstract</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Chapter 1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 2</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Chapter 3</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Chapter 4</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Chapter 5</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>Chapter 6</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>Bibliography/Works Cited</b>	<b>95</b>

## **Chapter 1: Theoretical Arguments as to why Third Parties do not succeed in the American Political System**

### **Introduction**

Third parties have long since struggled to assert their place at the national table in the American political system. Historical success stories such as the Republican Party in the 19th century, and to a lesser extent, the Progressive party in the early 20th century, have been few and far between. More typically, third parties fail to affirm themselves on the national stage and struggle to challenge the hegemony that the two main American parties have on the nation's politics. There are a host of reasons for this, and understanding these challenges faced by third parties is essential to understanding both American election and voter behavior. Through the entirety of this paper, the argument will be made for the growth of the Republican Party, having been established as a third party before most recently being taken over to an extent by the Tea Party movement which in itself can be considered a third party. Furthermore the theme will be developed, (through the providing of case studies of prominent third party candidates throughout the 20th century) that the Tea Party's behavior and decisions were not only rational but represent the most legitimate way for third parties to make a political impact in the contemporary American political system.

### **Single Member District Plurality Voting System**

Many of the challenges faced by third parties are built into the American system, such that their poor showing is no accident but rather a result of the structures currently in place. The operation of most elections as a single-member-district plurality system is the

prime example of these restrictive structures. Under this system, parties in a given election compete for one seat, be it at the Senate or House level for example, and the party that obtains a plurality wins that election. An individual is said to have a plurality when he or she is simply the largest vote getter, this is to say there is no need for a majority to be obtained. A crucial distinction must be made between this order of operations and a more traditional proportional voting system, in that unlike a proportional voting system where a percentage of the votes entitles a party or individual to that proportion of seats in a House, 20 percent of the vote in America would win those same parties or individuals nothing unless it was a plurality.

The choice as to whether or not a state will divvy out its electoral votes proportionately or using a winner-take-all system is set at the state level and does not require a constitutional amendment to change. States have elected to use the winner-take-all method because it increases a given state's clout. The winning party in a particular state will get all the electoral votes that state has to offer rather than with a proportional system which could conceivably send the same amount of electoral votes to all participating parties.

This presents a particular challenge to third parties which, (facing a host of other challenges) struggle to win support from the typical voter as they view third parties as a lost cause. Third parties often viewed as lacking quality candidates then, have no way of winning prestige and attention to thereby attract a higher level of candidate. Conversely, Major parties begin to function as predatory entities who will either attempt to absorb minor parties into their agenda or delegitimize them, to ensure the reaching of a plurality (Rosenstone et al, 16).

To look at this system in play in the real world, let us examine the presidential election procedures. The Electoral College assigns electoral votes based on the candidate receiving a plurality in a given state or the District of Columbia. A candidate finishing in second or third in a particular state does not receive electoral votes in proportion to the percentage of votes received. Winning a presidential election then is extremely difficult for a third party pursuing a national platform (Rosenstone et al, 17). Historical examples of relatively successful third party campaigns are those that have centered on regional issues, such as Strom Thurmond's Dixiecrat's in 1948 which was able to secure 7.3 of the electoral vote based off his states' rights platform that was popular in Southern states (Rosenstone et al, 17).

### **Duverger's Law and Duverger's Hypothesis**

This propensity for two party systems to arise in areas in which single-member-district plurality voting is the norm has come to be known as Duverger's law, named after French social scientist Maurice Duverger (Gillespie, 21). Similarly, Duverger put forth a hypothesis that suggested that multiparty systems will arise in areas where proportional representation exists. Both Duverger's law and hypothesis make sense intrinsically given what has been discussed to this point, and real world examples can be seen of these phenomenon taking place in not just the United States but Canada and Great Britain as well. In both Canada and Great Britain where there is single-member-district plurality voting, there are two prominent national parties in any given election. Voters in these countries are said to demonstrate a pattern of behavior known as "strategic voting" which is the avoiding of "wasted" votes by voting for frontrunners to ensure their vote maximizes its potential. This practice is common in the United States as well, however a

crucial difference between the United States and both Canada and Great Britain lay in the structuring of ballot access laws which affects whether a voter will perceive his vote to be a waste.

### **Platform Cooptation**

Cooptation which was mentioned briefly already, refers to the practice of major parties swallowing up the platforms of smaller parties to win votes. Because the Democratic and Republican parties are often competing only against one another for a plurality in any given election, a party's ability to be all encompassing can be the difference between a win and a loss. The major parties often realize the need to acknowledge special interests presented by third parties, and adopt their agenda as their own. This is in a sense, the best way for third parties to make their presence felt, as despite ultimate electoral defeat, the concerns of the party will reach the wider audience they sought.

### **Campaign Finance Laws**

Even if the political system was not quite so opposed to the flourishing of third parties, the campaign finance laws as currently designed make it difficult for third parties to successfully raise money. The Federal Election Campaign act (FECA) passed in 1971 was seen as a pro-two party policy passed by Congress. FECA allows for candidates from the two major parties to bypass private funding in favor of public contributions, which in 2008 numbered roughly 84 million per presidential candidate (Gillespie, 32). As the law currently stands, any candidate whose party amassed more than 5 percent of the previous election's vote is entitled to a portion of funds, but is significantly smaller in number than



what the major party candidates receive. Third party candidates must meet this quota, appear on the ballot in at least 10 states, and can only receive this funding after the November election. Grants are determined based on a parties vote tally as a percentage of the average votes of the two major parties. FECA does provide for the matching of private funds with public funds, but this often does little to help the third party candidate as private funding is minimal at best.

Democratic and Republican committees are able to raise unlimited funds to help finance lawyer and accounting fees to help comply with this act, and local party committees operating as grassroots programs for the major candidates can spend indefinitely in get-out-the-vote drives and other volunteer activities (Rosenstone et al, 24). Major parties are able to receive personal contributions of up to \$20,000 while minor parties cannot, and the large gap in access to these public funds ensures that third party candidates will have to spend a majority of their time raising funds just to receive a modicum of media coverage (Rosenstone et al, 25). The money that is raised often does not go as far as the money of main party candidates, as a large portion of it is used to fund ballot access drives, and the little remaining funds means campaign staff members are often let go or campaign trips are canceled. Former President Theodore Roosevelt, the most accomplished third party candidate, was only able to raise 60% of what his main party candidates received.

### **Media Coverage**

Because raising finances is often so difficult, it is hard to attract serious candidates who will in turn capture serious media coverage. This vicious cycle ensures a status quo will continue in each subsequent election. The huge disparity in media

coverage between major parties and all others is a central driving force behind the lack of legitimacy third parties receive in the eyes of the voter. Rosenstone et al in illustrating this phenomenon explain that in the 1980 election, Carter and Reagan received 10 times more media coverage than all 11 third party candidates combined (33). The little coverage third party candidates do receive is often broadcast in the context of the hopelessness these candidates face in their pursuit of a victory, as in the case of John Anderson's campaign in 1976. This framing only helps to undermine the campaign of the candidate.

### **Presidential Debates**

One of the major avenues for presidential campaign coverage is through participation in the debates. Debates have historically excluded third party candidates, and in the rare cases in which a third party candidate does gain access to this national forum of participation as in the case of John Anderson in 1980, it is not a guarantee that both major party candidates will be in attendance (Carter did not debate, in an effort to delegitimize Anderson). Often, in order to participate in a national presidential debate, a candidate must meet a certain threshold in popular polling. However, these thresholds are often as archaic as individual state ballot access laws which will be touched upon. Lack of access to the national debates by third party candidates is due primarily to the fact that the standard set for participation is set by the bipartisan Commission on Presidential Debates. This Commission is led by former chairs of the two major parties and took over operations in 1988 from the prior organization that ran the debates which was the League of Women Voters. This shift in management of the debates took place only because the League of Women Voters felt as though they were complicit in the major parties' attempt

to make the debates a staged and closed event. In 2000, a mandate was passed by the Commission on Presidential Debates to not allow any individual to participate who was not polling at least 15% in five major opinion polls.

### **Ballot Access Laws**

Ballot access laws in the United States are set at the state level and often confusing and discriminatory against third parties, in Canada in Great Britain candidates must only comply with a very modest set of standards to receive placement on ballots. As a result, third parties have the ability to replace a major party in parliament as the Leftist New Democrats did in 2011 by capturing 102 of the 308 Canadian parliamentary seats (Gillespie, 2). There have been instances of proportional voting in the United States, but this has often occurred on the city level as in the case of New York City and Cincinnati. In both these cities, members of third parties such as the communist and progressive parties were able to gain access to the city council (Gillespie, 22).

Third party candidates must face ballot access laws that are often labor intensive and that vary by state. While major party candidates in presidential elections automatically qualify to be placed on the voting ballots in all 50 states and Washington D.C., third party candidates must navigate a system of rules stipulated by each individual state. By not appearing on ballots in a specific state, a candidate is preventing their self from winning Electoral College seats. Seats are highly valued given that 270 is needed for a majority, so being ruled ineligible for a number of seats before voting even begins will put an individual at a distinct disadvantage. In some cases, a voter is able to cast a write-in ballot and place of the name of their choice for the presidency on their ballot card, however in states such as Hawaii and Oklahoma this is not an option. In other states

such as Ohio, impossibly high signature quotas have been put into place, with the explicit goal of preserving the two party structure (Gillespie, 27).

These ballot access laws were not an issue prior to the 1890s, given that before this time ballots had not been used. Political parties rather than the individual states prepared their ballots. This meant that while it would be on the shoulders of a specific third party to develop and distribute ballots throughout the country which would be a daunting task, there were at least no hurdles needed to be cleared prior to this distribution which cost a considerably more amount of money and time. This system had limitations, principally in the openness with which voters submitted ballots, opening them up to intimidation from outside forces. In addition to this, without considerable effort on the part of the voter, a submission of a ticket for the support of the Democratic Party presidential candidate would mean support for all Democratic participants unilaterally (Rosenstone, 20). This system was replaced by the Australian ballot which allowed for States to prepare official listings of individuals running for office, but from this the question of who should make the ballot list to keep the ticket relatively short, was posed. As a result, states began to impose restrictions on third parties such that by 1900, 90 percent of state's had some sort of ballot access law.

### **The German System**

While it is easy to point out examples from the realm of politics to prove that a particular system does not work for third parties, can examples of electoral systems be found that support the growth of third parties in a strong democracy? For an answer to this, one should look no further than the electoral system in place in countries such as New Zealand and Germany. The Personalized Proportional system, otherwise known as

the Mixed-Member Proportional system, awards seats on the national level according to a proportional principle. In a post WWII Germany, opinion was divided on whether or not to go to a pure proportional system like the one present in the Weimer Republic or to pursue a plurality voting system. In the hybrid system that developed, individuals had the option to cast votes in two separate rounds to the national parliament.

The first ballot selects a candidate by plurality in a single seat district, the second ballot is filed based on closed party lists, for each of the 16 federal states. In order for a party to participate in this second (list) phase of voting, a minimum of 5% of the popular vote must be amassed. The proportion of the list phase votes a party receives will determine the amount of seats it receives in parliament. Each party receives its plurality won seats plus its proportional won seats. The results of this system produce winners of a race for the single seat districts winning half the seats, while the remaining seats are filled with closed state party lists starting with the candidate ranked the highest (Shugart and Wattenberg, 281).

Given that the threshold is set is so low for the access to ballots, third parties do not have as difficult a time of gaining support and universal access to voters. Furthermore, because proportional representation helps to alleviate fears of wasted votes, the need to strategically vote does not persist. What does come about as a result of this system, is regionally concentrated parties mobilizing on a narrow swath of social and sometimes ethnic issues.

### **Instant Runoff Voting**

Another form of voting that would help to aid third parties is instant runoff voting (IRV). IRV refers to the process by which several individuals compete against one another, while voters rank the candidates according to preference. Should no voter obtain a majority of first preference votes, the individual with the lowest vote total is eliminated and his votes are redistributed until one candidate wins the election. This form of voting will encourage individual third parties as voters will be able to list third parties on their ballots without feeling as though they are throwing votes away. In each subsequent round that a third party candidate survives, his or her chances of winning an election would increase as other candidates are eliminated and their votes redistributed.

The problems facing third parties are many, and exist in many different avenues of politics. Uneven footing through lack of quality candidates, media coverage, debate participation, and lack of funding both private and public. Institutional biases built into the American system such as difficult ballot access laws and the Australian ballot make campaigning and amassing votes troublesome and time consuming. There are solutions, or at least alternative systems that have worked to support third parties, however it seems these differences would be regarded as un-American by most. Certainly then third parties have and will continue to face difficult challenges in their pursuit of political recognition and victory. The coming chapters will identify some of this third party history, its successes and failures.

### **The Unraveling of the Republican Party**

Immediately following the American Civil War and for 100 years afterwards, America was dominated by strong political parties which provided services for their constituents in exchange for voter loyalty. The strength of the major parties during this

period of time gave little room for third parties to breathe and operate and so third party movements were simply absorbed by the Republican and Democrats, as their platforms were coopted. Because of the efforts of groups such as the Progressives who worked to weaken city bosses, restructure election protocol, and push for reform packages like the New Deal, major parties began to slowly weaken.

By the 1950s and 1960s, the Republican Party had become weak enough due to a loss of support, that third parties were able to exploit this weakness in the form of movements from within the major party. Towards the end of this period and leading up to the present day, third party movements began to slowly work from inside the Republican Party, first through the efforts of Strom Thurmond and George Wallace who lured away voters and politicians from the Democratic Party, changing the Republican constituency by reestablishing it in the South. The ideological changes established within the Republican Party were cemented through the administrations of Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan who pushed the party's base right of center through policy initiatives. Today's increasingly polarized and ideologically driven politics has again left room for third party movements to grow from within weakened major parties, the most significant example of this in the 21st century being the Tea Party Movement that has continued the legacy of cooption from within the Republican Party as first established by Thurmond and Wallace.

### **Slow Change**

By the 1960s it had become clear that the Republican Party had taken a back seat to the Democrats, whom had characterized themselves as the Party that got the nation through the Great Depression and World War II. Because the traditional power structure

of parties provided services in exchange for votes, this language proved extremely persuasive to the average voter. Between 1932 and 1964, all but two presidential elections went the way of the Democrats, however because of the saliency of the Civil Rights this trend appeared to be one that would not last. As mentioned previously and as will be explained in more depth in future chapters, Strom Thurmond and George Wallace (thanks largely to disagreements over the liberalization of the Democratic Party) helped to lead constituents and congressmen away from the Democratic Party and into the Republican Party. Charles O. Jones in his book *The Republican Party in American Politics* written in 1965 argued that for the Republican Party to become the dominant American Party it must identify nonnative or disenfranchised voters and lure them to the Republican Party (141). Jones, (more accurately than he realized at the time) was describing the exact processes that would take place within the Republican Party in the coming decades.

Perhaps the earliest example of a political movement operating from within the Republican Party can be traced back to the 1900 and 1906 Congressional elections which saw many Progressive candidates elected to positions within the Republican Party (Mayer, 295). Because the existing structure of the Republican Party in the early 20th century was characterized by wide spread corruption and was run by a small group of wealthy individuals in the form of industry tycoons and city bosses, the Republican Party had become a target for institutional change amongst Progressive ideologues such as Theodore Roosevelt, Robert La Follette, and Hiram Johnson. La Follette started his campaign to legitimize party politics by working through his own state of Wisconsin, spreading awareness on issues such as the regulations of industry and the implementation



of direct elections (Mayer, 294). Soon Progressive Republicans had become such a large part of the Republican Party that they produced a rift within the party as the Progressives and more traditional oligarchs whom had lost significant power, represented opposing wings within the same organization.

Successful political contests throughout the Midwest in states such as Iowa and Kansas helped draw attention to the Progressive movement, while a short economic crisis in 1907 produced anti-wall street sentiment that sullied the image of big business (Mayer, 298). Unions began to grow in power and size, and mobilized for political power such that the American Federation of Labor began to lobby for the defeat of anti-union congressman. By 1908 Progressivism had become an unstoppable force producing change through the Republican Party, establishing a tradition in the form of tactics that would be replicated by George Wallace and the Tea Party.

### **The New Deal**

The election of Franklin Roosevelt and the passing of New Deal legislation began the push of the Democratic Party towards the realm of liberalism which in many ways threatened portions of its working class and southern constituents. Direct subsidies for groups such as the agricultural sector, migratory workers, labor unions, homeowners, the elderly, and especially the unemployed were seen as the government overstepping its boundaries and directly interfering in private life (Mayer 431). It should be noted that while economically liberal, Roosevelt did little that could be considered liberal with regards to social change for minorities. Still future Democrats such as President Harry Truman would push for social reform where Roosevelt did not which threatened the Southern wing of the Democrats.

While George Wallace was undoubtedly concerned with limiting the voting power of the African American community in the South and the progression of the Democratic Party as the face of the minority vote, he mobilized his campaign on state's rights suggesting that the government should leave most decisions to state legislatures (which would help to limit the spread of the civil rights movement on a federal level). In many ways, new deal legislation and President Truman's role in expanding civil rights in the 1940s and 1950s were the catalytic agents of change that helped to transform the constituencies of the two major parties into their current form. Thanks to the aforementioned new deal legislation and the diminished role of the major party structure in operating as political bosses, the Republicans were weak enough for Thurmond and Wallace to begin a takeover of the party which started from outside as a third party movement under Thurmond's Dixiecrats, before moving into the Republican Party itself.

### **The Tea Party**

The Tea Party movement will be discussed at length in later chapters because of its work as a quasi-third party spurring change from within a weakened Republican Party which has afforded it the room to operate as a wing of the party. As one can see, this tactic is in no way unprecedented as past examples have now been given of similar initiatives. The Republican Party has gone through several changes throughout its history, the Tea Party movement is merely the most recent version of one of these shifts. However, the large impact the Tea Party has had on the Republican Party poses the question of whether or not the Republican Party, (which initially started as a third party movement that eventually took over the Whigs) has not come full circle in that it itself may have been hijacked by a third party. This give-and-take in the form of a political

dance, (in which the Tea Party seeks a balance with the larger Republican structure) is certainly not finished playing out. Should history serve as any indicator however, the Republicans may be headed for a significant transition.

### **Looking Forward**

With the theoretical arguments laid out for challenges to third party development as well as a basic grounding in the development of major parties using the Republican Party as a case study, one can now turn to the next portion of the paper. The reader should note that the basis of research material for this thesis has come from secondary sources of scholarly material on the history of the Republican Party, Democratic Party, and Tea Party Movement. Chapter 2 will contain the actual analysis of historic third party movements to familiarize the reader with the interplay between theory and real world politics. By tracing the history of many significant third parties, context as well as a face can be put to many of the limitations mentioned earlier in this chapter. Chapter 2 will focus primarily on movements leading up to the new deal era. Chapter 2 then serves as a bridge which will deliver the paper to the analysis of the central thesis of this work given that through reading this work, one should understand the life cycle of the Republican Party with regards to its interchange both as and with third parties.

Chapter 3 which will discuss the candidacies of many third party nominees in-depth and in chronological order. This chapter will start with Henry Wallace and Strom Thurmond in 1948 before moving on to George Wallace. These candidates represent the early stages of the Republican Party's transition from the party of the professional class and beneficiary of the legacy of Abraham Lincoln, to the party of both the Southern Democrats and Plain State Populists.

Chapter 4 will open with the career of John Anderson, first looking at his participation through the Republican Party as a candidate in the primary of 1980 before shifting to his run as an independent and fairly liberal candidate, representing the last stand of traditional Progressivism in the Republican Party. From John Anderson will then follow Ross Perot in 1992 and 1996 before giving way to Ralph Nader's Green Party candidacy of 2000. The methodical and incremental study of these politicians will allow for a complete historical view of the Republican Party's development, providing for a crystallization of the thesis that is easy for the reader to follow.

With individual candidacies broached, Chapter 5 will follow with a focus on the birth and development of the Tea Party as it has transitioned within the Republican Party and changed the Republican platform. Carrying on in the tradition of the Dixiecrats and Plain State Populists, the Tea Party has become the latest version of a movement functioning from within the Republican Party.

Chapter 6 will revisit some of the initial arguments of the 1st chapter before transitioning to the present day in American politics, using all that has been discussed throughout this work to summarize and reiterate the thesis' central arguments. The goal before the final conclusion of this paper will be for the reader to have understood and been provided with sufficient resources to not only comprehend the shortfalls of alternative political parties in the United States, but more importantly how this relates to the development of the Republican Party as it has progressed throughout its history.

## Chapter 2: The History of Third Parties in America

### Introduction

Despite the bounty of challenges that Third Parties face in America as outlined in the previous chapter, throughout the country's history there have been prominent third party movements that have contested two party hegemony. Notable challenges on a national stage occurred through the efforts of the Populist, Socialist, Progressive, and Dixiecrat Parties to name a few. Unbeknown to most Americans, the Republican Party initially started as a third party movement and would replace the Whigs as the Nation's other major party alongside the Democrats by 1860. In all cases other than the Republican example, these parties have failed to emerge as major players but have made significant contributions to America's political landscape. Platforms of third parties are often coopted into the agenda of the major parties, as was the case with President Franklin D. Roosevelt's embracing of the Progressive Party's ideals through his participation as a Progressive Democrat with the passing of the New Deal legislation during the Great Depression. This chapter will examine some of these noteworthy third party movements, individual party ideals, and will explain the unusual success of the Republican Party relative to all other new party movements.

Following Independence, America's political system was dominated by the Federalists and Democratic-Republican Parties. These were the parties of the political elite in Washington, and were created not out of a desire to democratize a new nation, but rather out of necessity. The founding fathers, especially James Madison, viewed parties as a destructive force, referring to them as "factions". The earliest elections featured a restricted electorate, and the main parties represented the beliefs of either Thomas

Jefferson (Democrats) or Alexander Hamilton (Federalists). By 1816, the Federalists were too weak to challenge the Democrats and so the elections of 1820 seemingly functioned as a one party contest. The Democratic-Republicans that were left would eventually splinter into separate groups so that by 1832, a real political contest would arise. The Democratic-Republicans would divide based on an individual's alignment with Andrew Jackson, specifically on whether or not they were in support of Jacksonian Democracy. The new parties would come to be known as the Democratic Party and the Whig Party (Gillespie, 39).

### **The Whigs**

The early years of the Whig and Democratic Party power structure was challenged by third party movements such as the Know Nothings who mobilized around issues concerning anti-Catholic fervor as a response to the first massive wave of Immigrants the United States was facing. The Know Nothings would fail to cement their place as a major party however, as the issue of religion would take a back seat to sectionalism in the years leading up the Civil War. Along these lines, the Whig and Democratic Parties would experience serious difficulties in keeping their parties intact, as the matter of succession from the Union on the part of the South would divide both parties. The Whig Party would face more difficulty in remaining a united organization than would the Democrats, to the extent that by the mid-1850s, they would lose their place as a major party.

Formed on the premise of limited Executive power, (a direct shot at Andrew Jackson's presidency and what many considered to be tyrannical rule) the Whigs pushed for expanded Congressional power coupled with modernization and government

protection of business, a tradition they inherited from the Federalists. Representing the interests of the elite, especially in the south, the Whigs failed to diversify their platform to one that encompassed the interests of a diverse set of issues and win the support of the farming community. The Whigs competed successfully in two presidential elections, with both William Henry Harrison and Zachary Taylor winning a position at the head of the Executive branch. The Whigs were unsure as to how to deal with the issue of slavery as the party was formed on economic and governmental issues, such that official policy on whether or not to allow for the expansion of slavery into new territories was constantly debated. Millard Fillmore took over for Taylor following Taylor's death in office, but his nomination by the Whigs for the 1852 election was complicated given his own stance on slavery. Leadership structure within the party began to disintegrate after the sound defeating of the party in the 1852 election, and individuals began to leave the party for either the Democratic or newly formed Republican Party (Edinburgh University Press, 2010). In 1856, for the first time, an election would take place between a Republican Candidate John C. Fremont, and a Democrat James Buchanan. Fillmore would run as a Know Nothing with the support of the Whigs. The Democrats would win the election but the Republican Party managed to secure 38 percent of the U.S. House seats in 1856 (Gillespie 40).

### **The Republicans**

As pointed out earlier, the Republicans were able to gain a footing in politics thanks to the decimation of the Whig Party on sectional lines dividing the party on the issue of slavery in particular. The Republicans picked up the pieces of the disintegrated Whig Party and challenged the Democrats for national dominance. Republican success

in its early years centered on its ability to develop a strong, cohesive rhetoric centered on slavery. A lack of ambiguity on the issue helped to prevent splintering and dissenting by party leaders. Abraham Lincoln, a former Whig, was able to win the presidential election of 1860 against Stephen Douglas, securing 180 seats, thanks in large part to his stance on slavery. Republicans benefited from an environment that was conducive to political ideological shifts, strong party leadership, and a lack of cohesion by challengers. The Republicans as a result of inheriting their political tradition from the Whigs, embodied the opinions of the nation's elite and would continue to do for much of the 20th century.

With the Civil War looming on the American political horizon, this period of time was said to be the first of the four American political realignments, which according to Gillespie is, "a rare electoral event...may occur during a single election cycle or during a lengthier but brief critical period. Voter turnout rates are uncharacteristically high... realignment may alter the strength of the major political parties or bring a new party into the company of the majors" (41). The Republican Party from its onset was very much an incorporation of prominent members of other parties of the time. Anti-slavery Whigs such as William Seward, as well as members of the Know-nothings, Abolitionists, and Free-soilers made up its membership. The early party platform reflected this amalgamation of various interests by calling for a high protective tariff, free homesteads, and a transcontinental railroad; which won support among westerners, farmers, and eastern manufacturing interests. Thanks in part to the wider support base that the Republicans had when compared to the Whigs, and the backing of the agricultural sector, the Republicans had the tools necessary to build up a party fairly quickly.

### **The Populists**



The Populist Party which is sometimes referred to as the People's Party, represented another significant challenge to the American two party system. Born out of the frustration of independent farmers concerning agricultural difficulty in the 1880s, the Populists adopted an anti-industrial and pro-labor reform rhetoric. As a result of westward expansion following the end of the Civil War, immigrants and working class families from the east borrowed from banks in order to purchase land in these new underdeveloped areas, to take advantage of the abundant rainfall and pleasant conditions of the period. At the suggestion of these eastern banks, western settlers borrowed more credit than was needed, and following a period of drought in the mid-1880s, were faced with serious debt. At the same time, Southern farmers in need of capital but struggling in an economic climate in which the southern banking industry had collapsed, turned to merchants. Farmers received capital for a future portion of crops in an oppressive system that entrapped them in an unescapable cycle (Rosenstone et al, 68).

The National Farmers' Alliance (Northern Alliance) and the National Farmers' Alliance and Industrial Union (Southern Alliance) were formed on the premise that a flexible currency needed to be created that would pump more money into the system, feeling this would be the solution to the average debt ridden farmer's problem. After an unsuccessful attempt to unify under one coalition in 1889, the two alliances then began to set about actively participating in politics. The Southern Alliance hoped to align with the Southern Democrats thereby keeping the white vote base intact, while the Northern Alliance hoped to pursue politics through a third party (Rosenstone et al, 70). In 1890, Alliance backed candidates won 52 Congressional contests but were unable to push state level legislation due to fragmentation. Alliance leaders hoped to push government to

participate in a subtreasury plan that would entail the storing of large quantities of farmed crops while fronting farmers 80 percent of the crop value to artificially raise the price of crops and lower their debt (Rosenstone et al, 70). This sort of plan on a national scale left the Alliance open to calls of socialism by opponents.

In 1892 the Alliances finally convened as one body, pushing for Government owned railroads, a graduated income tax, and free silver coinage. The Populists hoped to attract Judge Walter Gresham, a prominent Republican at the time, as the face of the party, but were unsuccessful. The party under the leadership of James Weaver, received heavy support in the Western “silver” states, but little support elsewhere. By 1894 midterm elections saw an increase in vote totals from around 9 percent to over 11. It seemed as though the Populists were on the path to political relevancy as the Democrats stance on free silver severely hurt their vote. However, by 1896 Democrats had endorsed free silver while condemning their own Incumbent President Grover Cleveland (Rosenstone et al, 72). The Democrats backed William Jennings Bryan who many Populists saw as favorable to their cause. As a result, the Populists also supported Bryan, placing him on the Populist ticket thus shrinking the amount of political space for the party. The Populist movement itself would be split into both Northern and Southern movements which were themselves further divided. Populists would compete in three subsequent Presidential elections but never as a true threat to the two major parties. The Democratic Party through the endorsing of Bryan, essentially swallowed the platform of the Southern wing of the movement which has contributed to today’s Republican Party agenda. In this way the Populists would live on, albeit in an altered existence.

### **The Progressives**

Born out of a desire to once again regulate the economy on a national scale, and advocating for the wellbeing of the common man in a similar vein as did the Populists, the Progressives were the first noteworthy third party of the 20th century. Under the leadership of Robert La Follette and Theodore Roosevelt, the Progressives would push for national dominance and help to spread Liberal ideas that would shape the country as a whole for years to come. Founded on the principals of La Follette as Governor of Wisconsin, the Progressives would use social science to help aid in the pursuit of the expansion of their ideals. La Follette would secure a seat in the Senate in 1906 and would remain in this position until 1925, where he attempted to place the Progressive Platform on a national stage. The Progressive Party's platform would be adopted by the major parties of its time, essentially incorporating its principals into the mission statements of major party politics.

The Progressives in the early twentieth century helped to push for reform on child labor, women's rights, the environment, and helped to establish the direct election of United States Senators as a staple of the American political system. Progressives helped to change politics on a city level from a mayor-city system to a commission and council-manager system that was intended to weaken the strength of city bosses that had corrupted politics in America's large urban centers (Rosenstone et al, 102).

Environmental reform, trust busting through government regulation to restore the market, worker's rights, and the modernization of the education system were some other prominent initiatives of the Progressives. In the 1912 election, Incumbent William Howard Taft of the Republican Party only amassed 23 percent of the electoral vote. Bull Moose Progressive candidate Theodore Roosevelt secured 27 percent of the vote placing

him second behind Democrat Woodrow Wilson. The Progressive movement under the charismatic Roosevelt in the 1912 election was able to split the Republican Party which guaranteed a Democrat victory

Roosevelt had served as President from 1901 until 1908 after the assassination of President McKinley saw him take over from his Vice Presidential position, stepping down to allow for William Howard Taft ascension to power as the Republican nominee in 1908. Originally a supporter of Taft, the two drifted apart ideologically which resulted in Roosevelt's running for Republican nominee in 1912. Despite Republicans winning popular contests in 9 out of 10 states against Taft, Taft was given Republican backing by party heads who were still in charge of the decision. This choice is what would produce a breaking off from the Republican Party by the Progressive Republicans under the leadership of Roosevelt and his Bull Moose Party (Gillespie, 102). The Progressive convention met in Chicago and saw California Governor Hiram Johnson being named as Vice Presidential candidate. It should be noted that a Progressive wing in both the Democrat and Republican parties would continue to exist, but as separate from this new third party.

Campaigning on Progressive ideals like the ones previously mentioned, Roosevelt also pushed for a minimum wage for female workers, antitrust laws, and an employer based insurance program that would provide American employees with health care. Realizing the futility of the Taft's campaign, Republicans turned their attention towards the delegitimizing of the Roosevelt campaign. While issuing a speech, Roosevelt was shot in the chest by John Shrank, and despite being seriously wounded, insisted on finishing his speech (Gillespie, 104). Roosevelt would finish with 88 electoral votes,

carrying many of the western states. In 1913, a senator and nine elected representatives took office as Progressives but their success was to be short lived. Roosevelt refused the offer to rerun as Presidential nominee in 1916, spelling the end of the Progressive movement. Roosevelt would die soon after, but would have possibly returned to politics as a Republican candidate for President had his health not failed him. La Follette would attempt to revive the Progressive movement in 1924 when the Conference for Progressive Political Action (CPPA) tipped him as their presidential candidate. Labeled a Socialist, La Follette's reentry into politics was considered a Socialist party maneuver, and labels of him as communist severely hurt his chances of success. He would ultimately finish third in the 1924 election with 16.6 percent of the electoral vote (Gillespie, 108).

As mentioned, the Progressives would serve as an early example of cooption as did the Populists in the previous decade. The party's ability to be successful rested squarely on the shoulders of Roosevelt, which would prove to be both a blessing and a curse. Indeed a man of such celebrity would help to garner legitimacy, however the centering of the party upon one individual opened the party up to its eventual collapse. With Roosevelt's declining of the offer to run for President a second time for the Progressives, any sense of momentum or popularity was forfeited almost immediately. The party managed to live on through ideals manifested in the work of later politicians, but it is only through this altered state that the Progressives could pass on their legacy.

Prior to the rise of Franklin Delano Roosevelt as a political candidate within the Democratic Party, the Republican Party seemed to embody more Progressive ideals than did their major party counterpart. The core of the Democratic party of the 1930s was comprised of city bosses and Southern Democrats. The embracing of Franklin D.

Roosevelt's new deal agenda by this core group slowly shifted the focus of the party such that the regulatory reform advocated for under the "New Deal" resulted in the undoing of the city bosses. The liberal shift of the party's agenda would continue under President Truman so that Southern Democrats (Dixiecrats) led by Strom Thurmond in 1948 would begin to leave the party as civil rights became an increasingly salient issue. The party would also see the splintering off of the Progressives under Henry Wallace during this same election, representing an ideological break from Truman.

### **The Dixiecrats, Henry Wallace, and George Wallace: Shifting Constituencies**

#### **The Dixiecrats**

Under Strom Thurmond in 1948, right leaning southern Democrats otherwise known as Dixiecrats, hoped to challenge Incumbent Harry Truman, with the goal of poaching enough voters away from him to cost him the election. They would ultimately prove unsuccessful in their pursuits. The Dixiecrats came about as a response to the Democrat's liberal agenda in pushing for Civil rights and increased federal governmental power. Due to the regional concentration of their voters, the Dixiecrats were able to win electoral votes despite a low popular vote total. The 1948 election saw the Dixiecrats come away with 38 electoral votes from the states of Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina and one vote from Tennessee (Gillespie, 111).

The Dixiecrats were created out of anti-Truman sentiment after a gathering of top Southern Political figures assembled in Birmingham, Alabama to plan the Dixiecrat Campaign. Arkansas Governor Ben Laney and Alabama Governor Frank Dixon were approached with the offer of Presidential nominee prior to Thurmond accepting the bid.

Despite spending much of his time campaigning against civil rights reform, the Dixiecrats also mobilized on issues from the New Deal that they felt disproportionality favored northern urban centers and minorities. Because a significant portion of the white southern vote went to the Dixiecrats in 1948 and because Truman had a difficult time enacting any of his civil rights reforms, the Democratic party was forced to soften their racial stance in future elections and attempt to entice Democratic defectors back into the party to contest the Republicans. This is perhaps the Dixiecrats' most significant immediate impact on the political landscape of the time (Rosenstone et al, 108).

### **Henry Wallace and the Liberal Vote**

Protests of big business under Henry Wallace's new Progressive movement through a partnership with the Communist party condemned racial policies such as the "Jim Crow" laws. Wallace's Progressives would eventually be engulfed by the Communist Party which would ultimately hurt its vote in its attempt to unite the far left contingent of the Democratic Party against Truman. Acting as the counterweight to Thurmond, Wallace's efforts did succeed in costing Truman the electoral votes of New York, Michigan, and Maryland (Gillespie, 113). Thurmond himself would eventually return to the Democratic party in 1952 before switching parties to back Republican Presidential candidate Barry Goldwater in 1964 (Gillespie, 114). Thurmond would come to represent a typical trend amongst Southern Democrats of jumping ship to the Republican Party throughout the 60s as the major parties would begin to evolve into their present day models.

### **George Wallace's American Independent Party**

Then Governor of Alabama, George Wallace and his unsuccessful attempt to run in the Democratic Primaries of 1963 with a platform that was largely anti-civil rights became a prime example of an ever clearer ideological shift. Wallace would elect not to run in 1964 because of the similarities between himself and Republican elect Barry Goldwater, but would eventually run as an independent in the 1968 as head of the American Independent Party. The threat Wallace's campaign posed to Nixon and the Republicans in the 68 election forced Nixon to adopt a softer stance on desegregation, which further separated him from the Democratic nominee Hubert Humphrey. Once in office Nixon's administration would attempt to take an anti-desegregation stance in the Supreme Court case of *Brown v. Board of Education*, cementing the Republican Party's place as the face of the new Conservative movement in America (Rosenstone et al., 114).

In many ways, the current Republican Party is an example of the ascension of a third party to major party politics, as it is comprised of mostly Southern Democrats and Populists who first began their switch from Democrat to Republican under Thurmond and Wallace. Its connection to its original Republican roots of the 19th century are largely based only in the retention of the party's name. Furthermore today's Republican Party has, (through the Tea Party Movement) been coopted by a third party movement. The Republican Party then seems to have come full circle as it was born out of the political vacuum left by the faltering of the Whigs, and has since been itself, swallowed up by another party while shifting from left to right on the political spectrum. Looking at these occurrences then, one can clearly see the impact third party movements had on the shaping of today's major parties and their political identities.

## **Conclusion**



It would seem that in addition to the aforementioned theoretical arguments given in the previous chapter, history plays a strong role in how successful third parties have become. Without the tensions caused by state slavery laws, perhaps the Whigs would have remained a more cohesive unit, thus shutting out the Republicans. Similarly, the absence of an assassination attack on Theodore Roosevelt may have left him confident and healthy enough to run in 1916, pushing the Progressives to major party status. These unforeseeable climatic events are often ignored when considering the current state of American politics.

From a structural standpoint, it appears as though Duverger's law has held true throughout the history of the United States. In every case of new party movements, only Jefferson's Democrat-Republicans and today's Republican Party have been successful in reaching a place of prominence as a major party. In both these cases Duverger's law is not violated as the Democrat-Republicans assume power through the challenging of a single party, and the Republicans assume the role of a major party through the replacement of the Whigs. Outside of these examples, established major parties have actively participated in Duverger's law to limit the space of third parties through cooption of parties such as the Populists, Progressives, and Dixiecrats. The need for a plurality produces a necessity to integrate attractive platforms of weaker parties into the agenda of the larger organizations.

Today's Tea Party movement is a prime example of Duverger's law and its ability to alter politics within the country. The Tea Party has realized that while it would be ideal to run their own candidates as their own party, doing so would take votes away from the current Republican Party, thus increasing the Democratic Party's chances of achieving a

plurality. Because the Tea Party shares more of an ideological overlap with the Republican Party than they do with the Democrats, they have assigned themselves the role of competing for recognition through an active cooption into the Republican Party. This symbiotic relationships has featured a give-and-take from both sides so that the Republicans have adopted many of the ideas of the Tea Party movement while the Tea Party has benefited from mainstream media exposure as a benefit of aligning themselves with a dominate party.

With both the theoretical and historical ground work laid out then, the focus of this paper can now shift to individual case studies of prominent third party politicians in the 20th century. The intent of this scholarly work in the chapters immediately following this one is to test exactly how and to what extent party alignment and institutional biases have affected real world political campaigns in American politics. The ultimate goal is to show that the structural forces at work have made an impact on the Democratic processes of the United States and have shaped the course of political history as a result, particularly with regards to the ways in which third parties must operate to be effective. This will be important for understanding the development of the Tea Party as it has functioned within a major party, influencing the Republican Party's current identity and future development.

### **Chapter 3: Henry Wallace, Strom Thurmond, and George Wallace**

#### **Introduction**

President Franklin Roosevelt's ability to simultaneously take up the mantle of Progressivism while retaining within the Democratic Party the Southern Democrats, would create an unsustainable model that would begin to show its weaknesses following his death. The extremely successful Democratic Party of the Roosevelt era contained within it both the Progressive segments of American society as well as the individuals who took the hardest stance against civil rights. These conditions were ones that proved to be conducive to the formation of third parties such as the Henry Wallace's Progressives, Strom Thurmond's Dixiecrats, and George Wallace's Independent Southern Populists which would threaten the very fabric of the Democratic Party.

By the 1948 Democratic Convention it had become painfully obvious that the Democratic Party could not simultaneously retain the Progressives and the Southern Democrats. On July 14th, 1948 upon voting to adopt the then mayor of Minneapolis, Hubert Humphrey's Civil Rights Platform, the entire Mississippi Delegation and a portion of Alabama's delegates would walk out of the convention in protest (Hamby, 1). In the coming weeks, Truman would issue a Presidential mandate regarding equal opportunity in the armed forces and in the federal civil service which prompted the Segregationists to form the States' Rights Party, (otherwise known as the Dixiecrats) led by South Carolina Governor Strom Thurmond as Presidential nominee (Hamby, 2).

Still despite the desertion of the party by any Southern Democratic politicians, Truman managed to win presidential contests in the Deep South states of Arkansas,

Texas, and Georgia ("1948 Presidential Election"). Simultaneously, Henry Wallace would break off from the Democratic Party and run at the head of the Progressive Party's ticket, taking with him some of the most liberal members the Democratic Party had to offer.

While the Dixiecrats would return to their seats in 1949 following their failed foray into national politics, the initial seeds for dissent put into place by Strom Thurmond and Henry Wallace in 1948 and 52 would have massive consequences for the Democratic Party's future. Civil Rights would once again become a major issue in the 1960s, constituting the final push needed for the Southern Democrats to abandon the party in favor of the Republicans (Hamby, 2). Simultaneously, the nomination of Adlai Stevenson II as the Democratic Presidential Nominee in 1952, all but solidified the fact that the Democratic Party would continue down a more liberal road in the coming decades. This would have important implications for the Republican Party which would gradually be absorbed by the Southern Democrats and Populists, shaping its political agenda into what it is now so that it would only represent the policies of the classic Republican Party in name.

This chapter examines the Presidential campaigns of Henry Wallace, Strom Thurmond, and George Wallace so as to begin the analysis of the Republican Party's transformation into its present incarnation. This synthesis of historical and political events will be necessary to conclusively show how the Republican Party has now come full circle, initially starting as a third party that swallowed the remnants of the Whig Party in the 19th century, then itself being consumed by splintered groups of third party movements.

**“We cannot fight to crush Nazi brutality abroad and condone race riots at home”,**

**Henry Wallace, Vice President, Speech to the Free World Association, 1943**

Quotes such as the one listed above typified the ideology of Henry Wallace during his tenure as Vice President under Franklin D. Roosevelt. Originally a Progressive Republican, Henry Wallace received his first invitation into national politics in 1933 as the Secretary of Agriculture. One of three Republicans in the Roosevelt cabinet, Wallace represented a shifting of the traditional Democratic Party line from a city-boss dominated, urban working class political base, to that of the enlightened professional. Wallace would grow in his career advancing to the position of Vice President before attempting a run at running for President in 1948, he would establish himself as anti-fascist, spiritually liberated, anti-segregationist whom would frequently come into conflict with Southern Democrats.

Henry Wallace would be succeeded as Vice President by Harry Truman in 1945, narrowly missing out on the Presidency following the death of Franklin Roosevelt by 83 days. Realizing the future of Franklin Roosevelt, the prominent City Bosses' of the time forced out Wallace in favor of Truman who represented a more favorable option as President. One month prior to the death of Roosevelt, Wallace would be appointed Secretary of Commerce where he would receive criticism from both the Left and Right of the Democratic Party due to his decisions regarding Soviet Russia. Conservatives believed he was soft on the Soviets and Communism in general as he argued against military intervention, while the more liberal wing of the Democratic Party objected to

criticism he would direct towards this group. In 1946, Truman would fire Wallace from his cabinet, which would lead to Wallace's eventual focus on a Presidential run.

### **1948 Presidential Election**

Running on a platform centered on the opposition of Truman's foreign policy and popular opinions of the time concerning racial issues, Wallace set himself apart early on for his radical ideas. Campaigning as the Presidential nominee of the Progressive Party with Vice Presidential candidate Senator Glen H. Taylor of Idaho, he failed to receive any electoral votes and finished with only 2.4% of the popular vote. Wallace believed that "domestic fascism" rather than communism was a bigger threat to the American way of life and pushed for a peaceful resolution to the Cold War at a time in which many Americans feared the spread of Communism, this made him an extremely controversial figure (Divine, 9). Wallace accepted Communists into his campaign under the principles of Jeffersonian Democracy, while never officially denouncing the support he received from the Communist Party (USA) which led to accusations of espionage and suggestions that Wallace had been compromised by the Kremlin (Devine, 9). Continuing along this thread of radical progressive ideas, Wallace campaigned in the South while proclaiming segregation to be a sin.

Wallace was challenged early on for his Utopian ideals as someone who had lost touch with reality. His attacks on the evils of Wall Street as a political machine that would attempt to take over the world were viewed as detached from reality and were never truly taken seriously. In this way, Wallace was never regarded as a threat in his challenge for the Presidency, and perhaps his most concrete contributions to American politics was his continuation of Progressivism. Indeed Wallace's supporters believed him

to be the lone torch bearer from Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal era who could make peace with the Soviets and advance the goals of the nation as developed during World War II (Devine, 10). Wallace's Campaign was seen as the last bastion for liberal Democrats who had become disillusioned with Truman's centrist policies and alarmed with the trend of the dominance of the political Right in American politics.

As the final election results were tallied, the optimism of the Progressives under Wallace quickly faded. Wallace's Progressives would finish fourth behind the Democrats, Republicans, and Strom Thurmond's Dixiecrats, managing to only poll large numbers in the states of New York and California. His total vote in New York was most likely responsible for providing Republican Thomas E. Dewey with the win in that state as Wallace hurt Truman's vote get. Aside from that one instance of indirect impact however, Wallace's legacy from the 1948 election was anything but memorable (Devine, 286).

The Progressives would have taken solace in a Republican win at the very least, as perhaps it would mean the Democrats would be forced to coopt some of the Wallace Platform into their own agenda, however Truman commanded a significant amount of the electoral votes, 303 to Dewey's 189. Upon realizing the significant defeat he had been handed, Wallace lamented the role the Communist Party played in his campaign, endorsing him and using the media attention applied to Wallace to further their own agenda. For Wallace, the Communist only succeeded in detracting from his intended message (Divine, 288).

### **Henry Wallace's Impact**

Desperate to slant the election's results in a positive light, the supporters of the Progressive Party suggested that Wallace had in fact made an impact on the Democratic Party that he had been ousted from by Truman, whether or not the Democratic Party formally endorsed aspects of the Wallace platform. Progressives argued that Truman owed his victory in large part to Wallace's campaign which forced Truman to move "Left" in order to ensure he retained voters. In actuality, it seems as though Truman's stance on policy issues changed little since the start of his campaign, but it can be argued that Wallace's introduction into the Presidential race did force a shift in Truman's opinions on Civil Rights (Divine, 289).

This change in ideology would have profound impacts on the future of the Democratic and Republican parties in the coming decades as Southern Democrats would begin to flee the Democratic Party, shifting the image and goals of the Republican Party. The support Wallace received from Pro-Soviet Democrats helped Truman to draw in Catholic voters, helping Truman draw a record high vote among Catholics (Divine, 289). Wallace also helped to protect Truman from the Republican's attacks on him for being soft on Communism, giving Truman an outlet to voice his militant stance on communism thus helping to paint Truman as militantly anti-communism.

In many ways, Henry Wallace's candidacy was a classic example of third party failure. Wallace suffered from a lack of legitimacy from main stream news outlets, lacked a qualified running mate, and his ideas (at least with regards to Civil Rights) played an influence on the Democratic Party's policy stance going forward. Wallace was criticized for being an idealist, too narrowly focused in his pursuits, and unprepared for the position of President. Similar to the fashion in which the Progressive Party withered following



Theodore Roosevelt's run with the Progressive Party, Wallace's Progressives would largely die off following the conclusion of his Presidential run.

It can be argued that much of the Progressive platform would be revived by Adlai Stevenson II as the Democratic Presidential nominee in 1952 and 1956, however Stevenson regarded himself as a Liberal rather than Progressive, but in any case was twice soundly defeated by Dwight Eisenhower. Some might also suggest that Progressivism may have been continued by Truman and John F. Kennedy during their time as President; given that both were socially progressive while being strong on Foreign Policy. Still, in many ways the Progressive Party made its last stand with Wallace, and for a time threatened to, (along with the Dixiecrats) split the Democratic Party at its seams.

**"The white people of the South are the greatest minority in this nation. They deserve consideration and understanding instead of the persecution of twisted propaganda.", Strom Thurmond,**

Strom Thurmond's Dixiecrats played a central role in the development of the Republican Party as it stands to be recognized today. Under Thurmond's leadership, a coalition of Southern Democrats deserted the Democratic Party in response to the aforementioned Civil Rights platform that was adopted in 1948. While these Southern Democrats would return to the party, it had become clear by that point that the voting base of America's major parties were headed for major upheaval, with the Republican Party essentially being hijacked by third party movements out of the Democratic Party

such as the Southern Democrats. Because this has had a large impact on today's political landscape and is a noteworthy political phenomenon given that it represents the completion of the Republican Party's journey from third party movement to a party that has been coopted by third parties, Thurmond's career warrants closer examination.

Thurmond's first major foray into national politics came in the form of South Carolina Senator in 1932. Thurmond defeated Republican B.R. Tillman and at the young age of 29, wasted no time in establishing himself as a staunch segregationist in the Jim Crow Deep South (Crespino, 36). While a supporter of federal relief programs, Thurmond did so usually along racial lines, and so while a staunch supporter of New Deal era reforms, Thurmond consciously made an effort to frame these programs in a Jim Crow South context.

Following time as a circuit judge, Thurmond enlisted in the United States Army during World War II before attempting a run at Governor of South Carolina. In order to establish himself as the proponent of change in the one-party state of South Carolina, Thurmond advocated for a stronger gubernatorial seat with greater transparency. Thurmond presented himself as the most progressive of the competing candidates, which helped him defeat Dr. James McLeod in a runoff round (Crespino, 46).

### **The 1948 Democratic Convention**

Reaction from Southern Democrats to the passing of Truman's 173 page resolution To Secure These Rights was significant to say the least. Through careful planning, Thurmond was thrust to the forefront of the Dixiecrat movement, established in opposition to the Democratic Party's pursuit to improve its record on Civil Rights. The

1948 Democratic Convention marked the beginning of the end for a united Democratic Party given the grievances displayed by the Southern Democrats and Henry Wallace's Progressives. Thurmond's States Rights party would succeed in sending a message to the Truman administration about the position of Southern political leaders.

### **The 1948 Election**

Though ultimately unsuccessful in winning the election, Thurmond did manage to finish third in the presidential election behind both Truman and Dewey with 39 electoral votes (Oshinsky). Thurmond presented himself as a regional candidate, winning seats in only Southern states, before returning to the Democratic Party for a Senatorial election.

### **Other Political Endeavors**

Following his defeat in the Presidential election, Thurmond was barred from serving a second term as Governor and so turned his attention to the competition for the position of Senator against fellow Democrat Olin Johnston (Crespino, 89). Both candidates heavily criticized the decisions of Truman, attempting to distance themselves from his policies while paradoxically competing for a position in his party. Both candidates attacked the other on their record as a segregationist, vying for the title of staunchest "Anti-Truman" Democrat. This battle was in no way an irregularity, in fact many of the contests for Senate positions throughout the South featured Anti-Truman candidates challenging "New Deal" Democrats through a racial lense (Crespino, 91). Successes of the segregationists included elections in North Carolina and Florida.

Thurmond's relationship with the Democratic Party would become increasingly strained. In the 1952 Presidential election, Thurmond would choose to back the

Republican candidate Dwight Eisenhower rather than Democrat Adlai Stevenson II. This decision resulted in the Democratic Party blocking Thurmond from running in the 1954 South Carolina Senate race. Despite this move, Thurmond would enter the race as a write-in candidate and win overwhelmingly (Crespino, 99). Thurmond would go on to play a pivotal role in the drafting of the Southern Manifesto, a list of grievances leveled at Congress from Southern Senators in response to the Supreme Court's decision on the *Brown v. the Board of education* case (Crespino, 106). Thurmond would attempt unsuccessfully to filibuster the 1957 Civil Rights Act, and would increasingly find himself protesting Democratic decisions within the Senate. In 1964, Thurmond switched his party allegiance, helping to resurrect the Republican Party in the south by endorsing Republican Nominee for the 1964 Presidential Election, Barry Goldwater.

### **Thurmond's Impact**

This singular event, the switching of party affiliation by one Southern Senator marked a monumental occasion in the history of American politics. With Thurmond leading the way, a trend would be established that would soon establish itself as the political norm of the South, that being that southern states would constitute the base of the Republican constituency. Thurmond offered an outlet to the disaffected white voters of the South while also preaching an anti-union, pro-business future for America. These sort of characteristics are part and parcel of the party line of the contemporary Republican Party, and were put into place thanks to the work of "Sun Belt" conservatives such as Reagan, Goldwater, and Thurmond (Oshinsky).

**“Segregation today, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever”, George Wallace,  
Governor of Alabama Inaugural Address, 1963**

George Wallace made a political career out of playing into the fears of the working class, white voter of the American South during the 1950s and 60s. His hard stance on segregation and feelings on civil rights were aggressive even when compared to his contemporaries. While Wallace seemed to many to be the very embodiment of the old white South, he initially got his start in politics through the Alabama National Assembly as a Progressive politician, and did not align himself with Strom Thurmond and the Dixiecrat movement of the time period. Following a 1958 defeat in the Democratic Primary for the position of Governor of Alabama, Wallace vowed to adopt his new persona as a staunchly conservative Democrat so as to advance his political career in subsequent elections (Rohler, 3).

Whereas the Wallace of 1958 who was competing for the position of Governor against John Patterson depended heavily on his reputation as a fair and honest judge who would push to improve schools, raise pensions and salaries, improve infrastructure, and facilitate conservation efforts around the state, the over 64,000 vote difference that resulted in his losing of the race forced Wallace to adapt. In the years between the 58 and 62 gubernatorial elections, Wallace used this time to build up his reputation as an anti-establishment, political outsider. He contested a federal order to turn over voter information in Alabama largely for show, and made a habit of standing at school doors to prevent desegregation. Wallace was able to prepare better for the 62 election, allocating more funds to advertising and speech writing than he had previously. He would go on to defeat Ryan de Graffenreid in a runoff, thanks to the support of his voting base which

rallied around the slogan, “Vote Right- Vote White- Vote for the Fighting Judge” (Rohler, 7).

Wallace’s insistence on making race a central issue of his campaign and career as Governor generated a large amount of public interest, (standing in contrast to the Kennedy Administration) and catapulted him to national prominence. Invitations to act as speaker throughout the United States convinced Wallace to consider the feasibility of running for President in 1964. He tested the waters by running in primaries in Maryland, Wisconsin, and Indiana, doing well in each contest. As mentioned in the previous chapter, 1964 would not be an optimal time for him to fully launch a presidential campaign, but he would reconsider in 1968 (Rohler, 8).

Due to Alabama Constitutional law, Wallace could not run again for Governor in 1966 and so supported his wife Lurleen as she cruised to an easy victory. As first gentleman of Alabama, Wallace bypassed the Democratic Primaries running as an independent and succeeding in getting on the ballot in all 50 states, a rare accomplishment for a third party candidate. Wallace secured 13.5 percent of the popular vote and 5 states, nearly throwing the election into the House of Representatives as decider of the election. He defeated Albert Brewster in the 1970 Alabama Gubernatorial election and ran in the 1972 Democratic elections, starting strong before an attempted assassination plot left him paralyzed from the waist down and helped George McGovern to secure the Democratic nomination. In 74 and 82, Wallace again won gubernatorial elections in Alabama, but by 82 had departed from his hard racial stance on separation and exclusion. Realizing the time for racial politics was ending, Wallace shifted, coming

full circle and attempted to lead the state on the merits of his abilities as a politician as was his desire at the start of his career (Rohler, 8-9).

### **1964: First Run at the Presidency**

After issuing a speech at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, Wallace was approached by a member of the John Birch Society about the possibility of running for President in the upcoming election. Wallace had to this point amassed a large deal of public recognition thanks to confrontations with the Kennedy administration and his physical actions to prevent black students from entering a desegregated University of Alabama. The political tide was not one of favor for Wallace in 64, as Lyndon Johnson, (successor to the Kennedy presidency) was able to rally the country and was viewed as an uncontested option in the upcoming election. Theoretically speaking, the lack of challenger on the Republican's side and no real contesting within the Democratic Party meant that voters wishing to not vote for Johnson would be making a "protest" vote if anything. The American voting phenomenon of "pursuing the lesser of two evils" which was discussed in Chapter 1, arises in precisely this situation. Hoping to maximize the perceived worth of an individual's vote, he or she will vote for the likely winner rather than the unlikely, (yet personally preferred) option.

Wallace's first foray into national politics was poorly planned and funded and was done so with the hopes of generating publicity that could be used for his first serious run at President in 1968. Wallace relies heavily on undeveloped themes and an amorphous platform revolving around the denunciation of the Government and Communism, attempting to associate these perceived negatives with race. Lloyd Rohler in his biography on George Wallace entitled, "Conservative Populist" describes the

undeveloped nature of Wallace's 64 campaign as he describes his opening speech given at the Appleton Rotary Club in Appleton, Wisconsin as he writes, "this speech lacks the simple colloquial style he will adopt in the 1968 campaign speech... He was aware that he did not have the cultural background that students at Harvard, Brown, UCLA, and Wisconsin had, and so he tried to impress them with a more literary style than was typical in his usual campaign speaking" (36).

### **Examining Early Rhetoric**

Rohler's writings on the first Wallace campaign identify the two broad goals Wallace attempted to push which was the successful demonization of big government and the arguing that limited resources suggest that politics is very much divided by class vs class, race vs race battles. In these ways Wallace can scarcely be said to represent the Democratic Party he would temporarily depart from to run as an independent. His push for state's rights against the federal government was a theme referred to time and again in the aforementioned inaugural address given in Wisconsin. Wallace argued that the federal government represented an alien body that was trying to push legislation that favored the interests of far "left-wingers", and criticized the New Deal for the social policies it enacted. His appeals fell upon supportive ears, as working class whites, especially in the south, felt resentment towards similar black workers who were perceived to be making great strides as result of the civil rights movement at the expense of whites (Rohler, 37).

Early polling numbers in the Democratic Primaries reflected the consensus that Wallace's message was no longer a regional one, as he managed to do well in Northern states. He would secure 33.7 percent of the vote in Wisconsin, 29.81 in Indiana, and 42.7 in Maryland. In his final speech at the Southeast Fairgrounds in Atlanta, Georgia



following the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Wallace delivered a prime example of rhetoric he would use in later national campaigns. With the help of Asa Carter, (his speech writer and member of the Ku Klux Klan) Wallace would demonize the Supreme Court for their decisions and construct political enemies that he could use in 1968.

Wallace cleverly avoided using the word “negro” in all of his speeches and so could rely on the defense that he was merely defending civil liberties against the unresponsive Judicial Branch (Rohler, 40).

### **1968: Independent Run at President**

Due to Lyndon Johnson’s high level of support and Strom Thurmond’s backing of Barry Goldwater, the idea of challenging either candidate in the party primary of 1964 was an unsavory one. As an alternative, Wallace chose to run as an independent in 1968 in a move born out of necessity rather than any sort of large ideological differences from himself and the major parties. The task of getting on the ballot as a third party in each of the 50 states was a monumental one and required a large amount of money and campaigning. With the help of support of Alabama state officials, 49 states allowed the American Independent Party, (as it would be called) onto their ballots. Rohler explains that the task of hurdling Ohio’s laws required the intervention of the U.S. Supreme Court, an ironic position for the anti-supreme court Wallace (56).

The formation of the American Independent Party was referenced by Lewis Chester, Godfrey Hodgeson, and Bruce Page in their article, *An American Melodrama: The Presidential Campaign of 1968*, “the list of Wallace backers, managers and electors, in many states reads like a national directory of extremists”. Because of the loose nature of the connection between Wallace’s supporters, Wallace refused to hold a national

convention for fear that it might get taken over by some of the big personalities that would be present at the function.

Wallace's task to find a running partner for the position of Vice President was a difficult one. In order to not appear too geographically or racially centered, Wallace was unable to give support to former Georgia Governor Marvin Griffin because of the message having two segregationists on the party's ticket would convey. The struggle for Wallace then was to find a counterbalance to his extremist rhetoric so as to broaden appeal, yet align himself with someone that was still a kindred spirit ideologically. He eventually settled on retired Air Force General Curtis Lemay who accepted the bid as running mate September 27, 1968 (Rohler, 56). Lemay's inexperience fielding political questions led to some serious gaffs that hurt the Wallace campaign early on. Statements on nuclear war in Vietnam and the use of birth control to control population growth were contentious topics at the time and to some extent were not the ideological sentiments of Wallace supporters. To deal with this problem, Lemay was sent to Vietnam for a large portion of the campaign period.

One early sign of promise however was the substantial media coverage Wallace had received thanks in part to the tremendous personality he imbued. The first press conference to announce Lemay as running mate was covered by the three major news stations of the time via radio and television transmission. As a particular difficulty third parties face is lack of coverage and recognition, this was an optimistic initial sign for Wallace and his supporters.

With national riots as a result of the passing of the Civil Rights Act in 64 and the Voters Rights Act of 65, as well as protests by the youth of America over the Vietnam

War, and the assassination of individuals such as Martin Luther King and John F. Kennedy, the country was very much divided along ideology. The counterculture movement that was attacking the traditional belief systems of the urban working and middle class of America challenged the idea of patriotism and the importance of religion. This phisher created provided the room for Wallace to insert himself as champion of the “American” way of life and champion of the people.

Wallace’s electoral advisors recognized that he carried the support of the south and were confident he had secured the region’s 128 electoral votes as his base. The campaign hoped to lock down the support of an industrial state such as Ohio or Pennsylvania by playing up his role as champion of the working class and torch bearer of the old Populist Party. By assigning himself the Populist image, Rohler argues that Wallace could excuse himself of accusations as a racist on the basis that he is merely in support of doing what the majority of the nation wants (59). Civil Rights and his past as both progressive and conservative, could be explained away using this tactic. Wallace’s campaign with its broad goals and agenda was able to unite fragments of society regardless of party affiliation who loathed the idea of the expansion of government, as well as working class families interested in retaining the status quo and preserving state power.

As a result of his successful speeches across the country throughout the summer of 68, Wallace’s support amongst the public steadily rose. In May, 9 percent of Americans said they would vote for Wallace, compared to 21 percent by mid-September (White, 405). Wallace was nearing his ultimate goal which was to disrupt the election enough so that no single candidate could obtain a majority. This would put him in a

position of power able to push for cabinet or Supreme Court appointees. However, his popularity would make him a target that warranted a response from organized labor unions who attacked Wallace on multiple fronts. The unions were able to not only register 4.6 million new Black voters but also tarnished Wallace's record as the candidate for the everyman by exposing Alabama's poor quality of education and low GDP (Rohler, 60). Likewise the Wallace campaign came under attack from the Republican Party who pushed the argument that a vote for Wallace would hurt the conservative campaign of Nixon and help secure a Humphry win. This attack by the Republicans provides a real world example of several more commonalities present in most third party campaigns, the coopting of minor party platforms, and the idea of a wasted vote.

The Nixon campaign was able to scare Conservative voters enough to convince them that victory was impossible through Wallace and that only a Democratic Party Triumph would ensue. Conservative voters then that would find themselves caught between Wallace and Nixon or perhaps even siding with the former would begin to shift their vote to Nixon, relying on "strategic voting" as discussed in Chapter 1. To further entice voters to the side of the Republicans, the Nixon campaign began to offer similar promises to that of Wallace's platform. Nixon aligned himself with many conservative ideals while promising to appoint a "law-and-order" Attorney General and place a Southerner within the Supreme Court (Rohler, 66). The result of the attacks on Wallace was a drop in public opinion polls from a high of 21 percent of the vote to 13.5 after Election Day. Wallace would save funds to prepare another run at Governor of Alabama as well as build his staff for another Presidential election run, however with the expressed

purpose of this paper being to examine third party politics, those elections hold little significance.

### **Speech Analysis**

George Wallace would become famous for his fiery rhetoric and memorable quotes, throughout his career in politics. His embracing of Asa Carter as official speech writer helped to give Wallace the easily identifiable lines that would linger amongst the public's conscious during his 1968 campaign. Because of the times in which Wallace operated, there was much room for him to exploit political amongst the public. Student protests, the civil rights movement, the unsuccessful campaign in Vietnam, and the rise of the "Hippie" movement all stood to infringe upon the standard way of life that many working class white families held near and dear. The "rocking of the boat" so to speak, as a result of these contests to the status quo, would manifest themselves in the form of anger and fear in much of Middle-America. This group of self-proclaimed, disenfranchised peoples would form the base of Wallace's constituency and much of his rhetoric would be devoted to exploiting insecurities (Worthington).

Wallace would identify the issues most threatening to Middle-America and attempt to label himself with respect to these issues. By doing so, Wallace managed to make the war in Vietnam and the Civil Rights movement, even more of a salient issue in the households of America. His speeches would often frame Wallace in such a way as to attack the government for what he believed to be its disconnect from the common voter and elitism. Commenting famously on the this aspect of the two major parties and his belief that they offered little in the way of change, Wallace said, "You can take all the Democratic candidates for President and all the Republican candidates for President. Put

them in a sack and shake them up. Take the first one that falls out, grab him by the nape of the neck, and put him right back in the sack. Because there is not a dime's worth of difference in any of them” (Worthington).

Because of Wallace’s image and rhetorical style, he would struggle to depart from his hard line racial stance as he sought to develop opinions on policy issues. Because he lacked serious national support outside of the Southern region, was identified as an extremist by the media and racial bigot, and did not possess the national resume necessary to be taken seriously, Wallace’s attempts to take a stance on cleaning the streets, ending the Vietnam War, and turnover within the government received little consideration. He would come to call this policy line his “law and order” platform, which became a central theme in his 68 speeches. Unfortunately for Wallace, “law and order” was such a broad amalgamation of topics, that it lacked any clear sense or easily recognizable qualities. Because of this, he would still conjure up images of the conservative racist for most voters. In many way then, his insistence following his only gubernatorial run to harp on race issues would come back to hurt his campaign to an extent.

Where Wallace may have failed to receive recognition for his policies, he succeeded in popularizing a now common method of speech giving, used often by Conservative politicians to this day. His use of common language, elements of fear, repetition, crowd shadowing, and establishment of a common enemy for his audience have become hallmarks of today’s Tea Party movement. Illustrating an example of his rhetorical style and the employment of the “Us vs Them” ideology, Wallace frames the supreme court as an alien body responsible for much of the ills of society and says,

You have seen the breakdown of law and order in your own state. And according to the decisions of the Supreme Court, if you go--if you go into the streets tonight and are attacked and a policeman knocks the person in the head, he'll be let out of jail before you get into the hospital and then they go and try the policeman about it (Worthington).

His later speeches during his 68 campaign sought to group together liberals, students, minorities, and other groups that did not make up his constituency, as "anarchists". In addition to framing these "anarchists" as lazy, dangerous, and unseemly, Wallace also managed to group them together with the major two political parties,

The working man cannot walk to work in safety, nor his wife ride the transit system nor go to the supermarket. Nor can you walk in the neighborhood because these anarchists they kowtow to--both national parties, the members of both national parties--and the National Democrats and the National Republicans have their sails up to encourage the movement that dominates in our cities and makes it unsafe to walk on our streets (Worthington).

Wallace's rhetoric on the Vietnam War was very much two-fold and at odds at each other. While those who would attend his regional rallies and speeches would become more familiar with a Wallace who sought to ramp up the war efforts in an attempt to achieve American victory, his nationally televised public addresses would not echo these sentiments. One such address, given on October 28th, 1968, reflected this softened stance, "I'm also interested in, of course, the Vietnam war. Not only because of your children and grandchildren, and your husbands and loved one, but because I also have a son who is, of course, seventeen years of age, and the time will come that he will have to

see the service in the armed forces of our country” (Worthington). He goes on to mention his own involvement in WWII and so presents a tempered image to the country as both a father and veteran.

His transition from hard liner to a more moderate individual was done in an attempt to not only broaden his appeal but also to mitigate damage made by his running mate, General Curtis Lemay. Lemay’s controversial statements on nuclear war in Vietnam raked attention throughout the country and his selection by Wallace as political partner was seen as a mistake. In line with an attempt to transform his image, Wallace openly denied his role as a racist with statements such as, “I’ve never made a racist speech in my life” (Worthington). Wallace attempted to distance himself from these accusations by avoiding the usage of the word, “black” in public addresses while pointing to alleged improvements he had delivered to the black community of Alabama. When accused of being anti-integration, Wallace cleverly asserted that he was pro “freedom of decision” and that the federal government instructing citizens on who they must sell to was an infringement on personal rights. Wallace would rely on the reduction of federal control of personal or state freedom often, especially when polled on civil rights, such that it became a carefully crafted deflection strategy. One can see many similarities between Wallace’s rhetorical devices and the strategies relied on by Tea Party candidates today to draw in voters representing a similar audience.

### **George Wallace’s Impact**

The Wallace campaign was in many ways an embodiment of many previously mentioned theoretical hurdles that third parties are tasked with dealing with. The typical challenges were present throughout the campaign such as raising funds, dealing with



ballot laws in terms of its high monetary and temporal costs, finding qualified candidates, (in this case in the form of a running mate) dealing with media coverage, struggling to entice voters not to exercise strategic voting, contesting the difficulties associated with single-member-district plurality voting, and finally bullying from the larger parties.

Ultimately, while not actually victorious in the 1968 election, Wallace could take solace in the fact that he played an instrumental role in the changing of the Republican Party as it began to embrace the platforms of Populists and Southern Democrats while pushing a conservative political hardline of policies. His rhetorical style would also help pass on a legacy as it would find a home amongst Conservative politicians succeeding him, especially those operating within the Tea Party movement.

## **Chapter 4: John B. Anderson, Ross Perot, and Ralph Nader**

### **Introduction**

This chapter looks to pick up following the early years of the resurgence of the Republican Party in the South. The efforts of Strom Thurmond and George Wallace in particular laid the groundwork for the transition of the Republican Party to the party of the Southern and Midwestern States. Beginning with the 1980 Presidential campaign of John B. Anderson, this chapter will progress through the 90s, ending with Ralph Nader's Presidential run with the Green Party during the 2000 Presidential election. Not only will the reader be able to see the evolution of the Republican Party through two generations, but the efforts and effects of prominent third party movements will be dissected as they relate to the theoretical challenges from Chapter 2. At the conclusion of this chapter, the stage will be set for the Tea Party Movement's analysis with regards to its role in the Republican Party's current dynamics and party platform.

**“The only way you can do that (decrease taxes, balance the budget, and increase military spending) is with mirrors, and that's what it would take.” John B.**

**Anderson, GOP Presidential Forum, January 5, 1980**

A Republican member of the House of Representatives for most of his political career, John B. Anderson's time in politics was marked by consistency and moderation. Known for his clear way of speech and fiscal conservativeness early on, he would later find himself at odds with many of the Republican Party's decisions and increasingly right leaning rhetoric as he himself began to shift left of center. Anderson was not afraid to

cross party lines in attempt to pass legislation, as he did when pushing for the approval of Fair Housing Act of 1968. In order to pass this landmark act of legislation, Anderson attempted to enlist the help of Democrats to avoid having the bill sent back to the House-Senate Conference, a move that ultimately paid off for Anderson (Harrison, Smith, and Rodriguez, 3). His pursuit of victory for the position of Representative in the 1976 Congressional Republican Primary for the 16th district of Illinois against Doctor Don Lyon was aided greatly by the strong support Anderson received from Democratic and Independent voters who recognized Anderson as the face of compromise. His success in this election due in large part to media coverage and support led Anderson to consider a run in the Republican Presidential Primaries in April of 1979. He had long since become disillusioned with party politics within the House and had grown frustrated with the ideology of his Party at the time and so sought a new challenge.

### **1980 Republican Primary**

Despite being a popular figure within the House, Anderson made the decision to enter the already crowded Republican Primary knowing full well that it would cost him his position of power within the House of Representatives as he was likely to win reelection. Anderson also ignored calls to run for a position within the Senate, as he desired to pursue a position in which he could make a more immediate impact for the betterment of the American People (Harrison, Smith, and Rodriguez, 6). Anderson was starting from a major disadvantage given that his only significant political experience came through his position in the House of Representatives, something that would not help to set him apart from the field of 9 that he was placed into. The unusually competitive

primary featured prominent figures such as George H.W. Bush, Howard Baker, and Ronald Reagan, which hurt Anderson's chances of garnering media attention.

Anderson ran in 9 primaries before dropping out, he did well in the competitions on the East Coast and in Vermont and Massachusetts he was a serious vote getter (Harrison, Smith, and Rodriguez, 6). Anderson quickly realized that Reagan would receive the Republican nomination and recognized that Reagan's conservative political ideology was the way of the future for the party and so elected to enter the Presidential race as a third party candidate through the creation of the National Unity Party (Harrison, Smith, and Rodriguez, 6). Anderson began to mobilize his campaign using a grassroots approach, actively participating across the country in his staff's attempt to get him on the ballot in every state. Anderson's strong platform and hard work paid off as he was able to gain access to the ballot in every state, his techniques for doing so have become somewhat of the archetype for most third party politicians.

Aside from David Garth, (his campaign manager who had been blacklisted from participating in party politics) Anderson relied on a team of volunteers to help with his campaign. Anderson developed creative policy proposals such as his 50 cent gas tax to set him apart from other Presidential contenders such as Reagan who preached the benefits of broad sweeping tax cuts. In addition to the utilization of a grassroots approach to get on ballots, the employment of volunteers, and a radical agenda, Anderson also struggled to amass the funds needed to seriously threaten Carter and Reagan. While Anderson was able to raise 14 million dollars for his campaign, he was essentially out funded 5 to 1 when compared to the candidates of the two major parties. Ultimately this lack of funding hurt Anderson's ability to mobilize a large advertising push towards the

end of the campaign season, something that Anderson viewed as a major loss (Harrison, Smith, and Rodriguez, 7). More liberal Northeastern voters made up the base of Anderson's constituency, something Anderson certainly owed to his left-leaning policies, the lack of conservative support impeded his ability to hurt the vote get of the Reagan campaign.

Through his speeches and interviews, Anderson painted himself as the politician for the outsider, be it women, minorities, Native Americans, or any voter disenchanted with major party politics. Interestingly, Anderson identified himself as religious, as well as both socially and fiscally conservative early on in his political life but suggested that his political experiences led him to slowly shift his focus so as to advocate for those individuals in society he believed could not advocate for themselves. In his speech to a largely African American congregation at a church outside of Oakland, California, Anderson stated the need to provide a means of employment for the African American community, stressing the importance of employment for escaping poverty (Harrison, Smith, and Rodriguez, 7).

More controversially, at another rally, Anderson stated his support for the use of abortion amongst teens especially in cases of rape, arguing that the current political system did not address these issues adequately. Anderson was a staunch supporter of the Equal Rights Amendment, believing women to be underrepresented in politics, these were obviously controversial opinions to hold at the time (Harrison, Smith, and Rodriguez, 7). More than issuing hollow utterances of the respect he held for women, Anderson pointed out that 21 of his state coordinators were women, and that he would like to work to address gender inequality in terms of real wages earned (Harrison, Smith,

and Rodriguez, 8). Anderson wanted to improve funding for abortion clinics if elected and sought to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment if elected, and while against the draft, believed that women should be drafted if men were (Harrison, Smith, and Rodriguez, 8).

### **Anderson and the Debates**

Anderson was only invited to one the Presidential debates, this hurt his legitimacy and cost him a valuable opportunity to operate on a level playing field against the major party candidates. In the one debate he did participate in, only Anderson and Reagan took part. While he performed well, the absence of the incumbent diminished the impact of his victory. The other national debate featured only Reagan and Carter, thus barring Anderson from competing a truly level playing field. Anderson believed that being shut out of the national debates, (something most third party candidates must deal with) reduced his vote get from 20 to 6.6 percent of the popular vote (Harrison, Smith, and Rodriguez, 8). Putting aside any sort of personal gain, Anderson thought a strong showing would help to put in motion the events needed to establish a third major party in future elections.

### **Anderson's Impact**

Anderson's final vote total was minimal at best, and so if viewed in terms of the threat he posed to either Carter or Reagan, his campaign could be seen as a failure. However, Anderson did succeed in giving a voice to issues of the day that were not covered and more importantly, crystalized many of the techniques needed for third party candidates to gain traction in a political contest. Anderson serves as a case study of the American third party experience, embodying many of the challenges that candidates in

his position are said to face. Moreover, he empowered the liberal voter in an era of American politics characterized by conservative sentiment. While controversial, it could be argued that Anderson helped to push the Republican Party in their progression towards their current stance as the voice of the conservative right. Many of the more liberal Rockefeller Republicans supported Anderson's policies, perhaps drawing them away from their traditional party.

**“If you can't stand a little sacrifice and you can't stand a trip across the desert with limited water, we're never going to straighten this country out.” Ross Perot**

Ross Perot was considered by many to be political outsider, continuing in the same vein as Anderson but with even less prior experience. Perot's lack of political knowledge actually helped to endear him to millions of American voters who felt that a fresh take on politics was what was needed. Perot competed in both the 1992 and 1996 presidential races, campaigning using his own funds in 1992. His tremendous fortune helped him to compete with both Bush and Clinton in 1992 when funding his message and competing for ad space.

One of the most successful third party candidates in recent years, Perot was able to garner 18.9% of the popular vote in 1992, although his numbers dropped during the publically funded campaign in 1996 to only 8.4% (C-SPAN). Ultimately Perot's campaign was most valuable for the effect it had on the Republican Party. Following his first foray into Presidential politics, it can be said that the Republican Party realized the threat he posed and attempted to coopt his policies into their own so as to appeal to his

voting base. This follows the typical pattern described in Chapter 2 of this essay and is what allows the major parties to continually compete for supremacy in every political competition. Given that Perot represented a more conservative ideology, the incorporation of these ideals into the Republican platform effected its current form in contemporary politics.

### **1992 Presidential Election**

Perot's decision to run came about as the result of a challenge to the general public issued by Perot on the Larry King show, in which in response to a line of questioning, Perot promised to enter the 1992 presidential race should volunteers register him in all 50 states (Rapaport and Stone, 55). Less than a month later, Perot delivered a speech on C-SPAN stating policy issues which he felt needed to be addressed, these included the budget deficit, economic recovery, and the need to address the lack of accountability in government. Soon after this television appearance, Perot's media coverage increased and his perception amongst the voting public improved such that by June of 1992 Perot was polling ahead of both Bush and Clinton in the electoral vote count (Rapaport and Stone, 56). During this period, Perot was being outspent by his competitors yet still polling in the lead thanks in large part to the work of volunteers throughout the country. Unlike Anderson who assumed an active role in his grassroots campaign, Perot was largely absent in the fundraising and get-out-the-vote initiatives of his supporters.

In an effort to professionalize his campaign, Perot appointed corporate professionals and political insiders to help organize the Perot platform. However this was met with outrage amongst the early Perot volunteers. Co-chair of the Perot campaign Ed



Rollins, had a falling out with Perot and soon resigned followed shortly thereafter by a statement from Perot detailing his intent to withdraw from the race (Rapaport and Stone, 62-63). After much pleading from Perot supporters, the organization United We Stand America (UWSA) was formed, led by Vietnam veteran and friend of Perot, Orson Swindle. This new organization implemented a far more professional and hierarchical system to manage the Perot campaign which helped to coordinate efforts and to get on the ballot of the remaining states Perot had not breached.

Perot used the time he had while officially withdrawn from the competition to develop detailed plans on policy issues in which he had not previously addressed. His opinions on the deficit and how to combat it centered on large scale budget cuts, standing in stark contrast to what either Bush or Clinton proposed. The insistence on the cutting of programs and shrinking government is one instance which illustrates an example of Republican cooptation, as this has become a policy hallmark of the current party's platform. Perot also sought to implement term limits and address campaign finance reform upon his reentry into the race for the Presidency in October (Rapaport and Stone, 66). Perot promised to review the NAFTA proposal, and stressed the importance of focusing on domestic issues rather than the concerns of diplomatic relations that had concerned the preceding Presidents during the Cold War.

### **Perot and the Presidential Debates**

Perot's campaign could be said to scarcely resemble the campaign of Anderson that was discussed prior to this section. Benefiting from tremendous personal wealth, Perot was able to spend as much as his major party opponents while funding a media barrage of his own. Most importantly, whereas Anderson was largely shut out of the

national debate scene, Perot was invited by the Commission on Presidential Debates to participate in the debates. While Perot only controlled 9 percent of the vote in pre-debate polls, his personal popularity made him an attractive figure to include in the debates as an increased audience meant potential gains for both Bush and Clinton (Rapaport and Stone, 68). As a result of his strong showings during the debates and the free exposure and legitimacy handed to him as a participant, Perot's popularity actually went up in the final months of the election cycle.

### **1996 Presidential Election**

UWSA worked to build upon the successes it experienced in 1992 as it prepared for a second push in 1996. UWSA resisted appeals to be coopted into either of the major parties instead opting to shift from an interest group to a political party. UWSA's announcement concerning its transition into a third party came in 1995 on the Larry King show, it was made early enough for Perot to make it past the substantial hurdles that must be cleared in order for third parties to get on the ballot in every state (Rapaport and Stone, 70). The Republican Party following its defeat in 1992 realized the threat Perot had played to its vote get and so made attempts during the interim period between election cycles to appeal to the Perot voting base. The Republican Contract with America drafted in 1994 made it a point to address many of the concerns Perot voters had in 1992 (Rapaport and Stone, 70).

Many of the issues Perot had attempted to capitalize on such as the controversy surrounding NAFTA, congressional term limits, and the reduction of the deficit, had decreased in importance by 1996. Furthermore, Perot's personal appeal had also waned so that during his second run at the Presidency he struggled to garner as much media

attention as he did in 1992. Despite these setbacks and the popularity of both Bob Dole and Bill Clinton, Perot was able to use his personal wealth to get on the ballot in all 50 states and was eligible for federal campaign funding totaling more than 30 million dollars (Rapaport and Stone, 73). Perot's Reform Party was not given a spot at the national debates due to Perot's low polling numbers which threatened to drop below 5 percent. Bob Dole's nonsensical appeal to Perot to drop out of the race however, did manage to help Perot to garner some media attention towards the closing months of the election cycle and gave Perot an arena to attack Clinton on issues such as campaign finance reform (Rapaport and Stone, 74). By the end of the 1996 election contest Perot had won 8.4% of the popular vote which at the very least entitled the Reform Party to FEC funding for a 2000 presidential run.

### **Perot's Impact**

J. Menendez writing about the Perot campaign following the 1992 election in his book *The Perot Voters* says, "The Perot phenomenon is greater than Perot Himself. It is a movement over which he has only partial control... Win or lose, Perot deserves praise for helping to elevate the 1992 campaign to a genuine and serious discussion of ideas" (214). While ultimately unsuccessful in his pursuit, his decline in popularity from 1992 to 1996 at least in part signified an important function of American politics, which is a major party's coopting of a competing third party's platform. The Republican Party recognized the damage the Perot voters had done to Bush's chances of winning reelection, more importantly Republican leaders understood that Perot represented ideas that could help to distance themselves from the Democrats and forge a stronger identity as the party of small government. Because of the attention Perot gave to the issue of national debt,

President Clinton was able to amass enough support during his tenure to pass legislation to address the budget deficit which put the country on a path towards debt reduction.

Perot was one of the most successful third party candidates in recent memory and lends support to the idea of a party mobilizing around a central figure similar to that of the Progressive Party with Theodore Roosevelt. Taken together, both Anderson and Perot's efforts hold value for the purposes of this paper because of the vastly contrasting styles through which they attacked the American political system to advance their message. Perot's Populist message was incorporated into the contemporary Republican Party, at least partially connecting itself to the Bryan Populist legacy of the late 19th century.

**“I start with the premise that the function of leadership is to produce more leaders, not more followers” Ralph Nader.**

Nader has been a fixture in the American political landscape since his earliest runs with automobile safety as assistant to the Secretary of Labor, Daniel Patrick Moynihan in 1964. Nader's highly public battle with General Motors on this issue helped to garner him considerable attention and his work helped lead to the passage of the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966. Throughout the 70s and 80s he advocated to raise awareness for the environment, human rights, and the regulation of Nuclear power through his Nongovernmental Organization, Public Citizen. Between 1972 and 2000 Nader would be an individual mentioned frequently as a potential candidate for the position of presidency. Nader most notably received support from the Green Party in 1996 and 2000. His role in the 2000 election was said to have influenced

the ultimate fate of the contest, as he was said to have cost Al Gore much needed votes in his contest against George W. Bush.

### **The 1996 Write In**

In 1992, Nader entered the New Hampshire primary in an effort to spread his opinions on issues from campaign finance reform to broadcasting rights. Nader advocated passionately for the addition of a “none-of-the-above” line on ballots, which if successful in defeating participating candidates in a given contest, would force another electoral contest (Martin, 229). He served as a figure head for the “none-of-the-above” issue and finished with 6,311 votes (Martin, 229). Nader flirted with the idea of running as a presidential candidate in 1996, after realizing the changing climate within the Democratic Party and his inability to gain an audience with influential party members.

Nader was first approached by the California Green party and was asked to run in state primaries as the presidential candidate, Nader accepted. Shortly thereafter, Green party officials from various states began to approach Nader so that he would eventually appear on the ballot in 21 different states. An important distinction between Nader’s 1996 and 2000 campaigns was that Nader never officially embraced the Green Party platform. Moreover, he never clearly articulated his participation in the election and refused to spend more than \$5,000 of his own money so as to avoid the need to disclose personal finances (Martin, 229). Despite traveling little to campaign on issues, Nader was polling at 8 percent early on and threatened to steal votes away from the Clinton campaign. Nader would eventually finish 4th behind Ross Perot with 0.6% of the vote despite not having invested in his campaign, which encouraged him to consider his prospects in 2000.

## **2000 Presidential Election**

Nader announced his willingness to participate in the 2000 election on February 21, 2000, considered an extremely late move by most campaign standards. Because of Nader's confrontational style and pariah status within Washington's inner circle, he found it hard to assemble a qualified staff for his campaign. Nader selected Phil Donahue as cochairman, someone he had become very familiar with through his participation on Donahue's television show. The majority of his staff was comprised of young people and recent college graduates who lacked significant experience managing a campaign. Nader's lack of commitment in both 1992 and 1996 scared even some Nader supporters away from contributing to his cause given the possibility of a Nader withdrawal.

With a staff wanting in experience and thousands of volunteers averaging in the early 20s in age, Nader took the idea of grassroots seriously. Because of his stance on campaign finance reform, Nader refused to take PAC money or contributions from corporations, so that the difference in funding between himself and the major party candidates was enormous (Martin, 232). Relying largely on personal phone calls from Nader himself to prospective donors, the campaign as able to raise roughly \$8 million in funding, however the tremendous amount of time this and clearing ballot access laws in various states took, reduced Nader's ability to campaign effectively.

Seeking to avoid another Perot debate scenario, the Commission on Presidential Debates set a 15% threshold in order to participate in the national debates (Martin, 233). Nader would commit a good amount of his attention to the incongruences found within the bipartisan Commission on Presidential Debates' rubric for gaining access to debates.

Given that only 5 percent of the popular vote was required to qualify a party for federal campaign funding, Nader found the 15% benchmark to be unfair and arbitrary. Nader argued that the Commission on Presidential Debates, (a private entity funded by various corporations) represented a conflict of interest that could not be ignored and so filed a lawsuit against the commission for the violation of the Federal Campaign Act but this lawsuit proved fruitless for Nader (Martin, 234).

Because of his position as the Green Party candidate, Nader's campaign and associated touring would focus on many of the issues the major parties failed to address. He targeted states such as Hawaii and Alaska as areas to deliver targeted speeches realizing that these states often go overlooked by Republican and Democratic presidential campaigns. Employing a method similar to George Wallace, Nader harped on the lack of difference one finds between the two major parties, choosing to point out similarities on issues ranging from the industrial use of hemp to campaign finance.

While the Green Party platform shaped Nader's style and strategy while campaigning, it also contributed to the confusion the national media had concerning his beliefs and support. The Green Party's natural decentralized nature had led to an ideological divide amongst supporters. The two main factions, (the Association of State Green Parties and Green Party USA) could not see eye to eye on most issues yet both endorsed Nader as their candidate. This confusion detracted from Nader's message and hurt the legitimacy of his campaign to an extent. Nader worked carefully to finally endorse the Green Party at the Green Party national convention in Denver, Colorado, yet maintained his own sense of identity as a sort of cult of personality which the Green Party relied on for the proliferation of its message.

Nader selected Winona LaDuke as his running mate, a long time Green Party member and Harvard graduate. Nader, in selecting LaDuke was able to strengthen his image as an environmentalist and further appeal to the average liberal voter, while still focusing on concrete issues having to do with what he deemed to be important. In many ways Nader helped to broaden his appeal then by selecting LaDuke which would in turn help to generate interest from national media outlets. By the summer of 2000, the New York Times had published an article portraying Nader as a spoiler for the election with the potential to cost the election for Democratic candidate Al Gore. Molly Ivins, a noted columnist, implored voters to vote with their brains in swing-states so as to avoid handing the election to the greater of two-evils. Ivins maintained that in states that could be considered safe for either major party candidate, that it would be fine to vote with one's "heart". This pattern of voting would become known as the "Ivins Rule" and helped to color Nader as nothing more than an afterthought.

Nader would receive considerable media coverage for a third party candidate, however, due to mistakes with the leaking of exclusive stories, and due to his perceived hypocrisy amongst some of the voting public for critiquing corporations yet appearing on television broadcasts which were owned by major corporations, Nader's image took a hit (Martin, 242). Nader received attacks from former associates such as Gary Sellers, (a former Nader's Raider) for his stance on the major parties, chiefly that they differ very little from one another. Sellers along with other former Nader's Raiders formed the Nader's Raider for Gore website in an effort to challenge Nader while supporting Gore in his battle against Bush. Nader would be heavily criticized for his lack of emphasis on identity politics, often appearing soft on these issues while extremely passionate about



campaign finance reform and other such issues. For this reason, organizations such as the National Stonewall Democrats implored democrats to avoid supporting Nader (Martin 246). Nader's opponents also attacked him on race issues, noting that most Green Party supporters cared little about civil rights issues, dealing his campaign a final blow that threatened to sink his campaign before Memorial Day.

Nader's saving grace came in the form of political fundraising event in Portland, Oregon, in which 10,000 spectators came to listen to Nader as well as celebrities and rock stars. The event drew considerable media interest and led the Nader campaign to pursue similar super rallies in cities across the country. As these rallies grew and spread, Nader began to stake his claim as an issues politician, developing a more concrete stance on foreign policy, education reform, and public health. Despite his best efforts and national attention however, Nader would be shut out of the debates, to the point that he was banned from attending even as a spectator (Martin, 256). He viciously attacked both Bush and Gore but argued that Gore's actions and policies were more reprehensible because of his intellect and because of his shifting to center politics despite his historical left leaning tendencies.

His perceived targeting of Gore would continue as Nader and Pro-democratic groups lobbied back and forth to portray the other as the enemy, clearly illustrating that they two parties viewed their support base as at least partially overlapping. In the last days before the election, Nader chose to visit hotly contested states, which Nader maintained was done in order to reach the 5 percent popular support threshold needed to receive federal campaign financing. Ultimately Nader finished with roughly 3 percent of

the popular vote and so failed to achieve the goal, however Nader's impact on the election was much larger than his numbers suggested.

### **Nader's Impact**

When the dust settled, Bush had won Florida and the election. Nader's 96,915 votes in this state were more than enough to hand the state's electoral votes to Gore. Naturally accusations of Nader acting as spoiler were hurled at the Green Party from the Democratic Party, which argued that Nader's platform was much more appealing to Democratic Party supporters than it was to Republican supporters. Nader maintained that Al Gore played the ultimate role in his own defeat, arguing that Gore maintained the upper hand and that it was his race to lose. Ultimately the matter of whether or not Nader was a spoiler is a matter of public opinion.

Some would assert that the majority of Nader supporters were disenfranchised voters and official numbers show that when he did steal votes, he stole from both the Democratic and Republican Party, but at a rate of 2 to 1. Given the role of Pat Buchanan's libertarian party, one could argue that any number of third parties could have been accused of spoiling the election should any given party have amassed more than the 538 votes needed to swing Florida (Martin 279). Nader's most significant criticism was that the two major parties differed very little from one another, and that they both pandered towards the center of political policy. The Democratic Party perhaps realizing this, made it a point to move left of center in subsequent elections, possibly winning over some Green Party supporters in the process. In this way then, Nader played a role not at all different from other prominent third party candidates mentioned in this chapter. His

position as instigator and spoiler helped to shape major party platforms although he himself never threatened to win the election.

**Table 1: Popular Vote of Each Candidate Discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, by State**

Column1	Column2	Column22	Column3	Column4	Column5	Column52	Column6
State	Strom Thurmond 1948	Henry Wallace 1948	George Wallace 1968	John Anderson 1980	Ross Perot 1992	Ross Perot 1996	Ralph Nader 2000
Alabama	79.9	0.7	65.9	1.2	10.8	6	1.1
Alaska	0	0	12.1	7	28.4	10.9	10.1
Arizona	0	1.9	9.6	8.8	23.8	8	3
Arkansas	16.5	0.3	38.9	2.7	10.4	7.9	1.5
California	0	4.7	6.7	8.6	20.6	7	3.8
Colorado	0	1.2	7.5	11	23.3	6.6	5.3
Connecticut	0	1.6	6.1	12.2	21.6	10	4.4
Delaware	0	0.8	13.3	6.9	20.4	10.6	2.5
District of Columbia	0	0	0	9.3	4.3	1.9	5.2
Florida	15.5	2	28.5	5.1	19.8	9.1	1.6
Georgia	20.3	0.4	42.8	2.3	13.3	6.4	0.5
Hawaii	0	0	1.5	10.6	14.2	7.6	5.9
Idaho	0	2.3	12.5	6.2	27	12.7	2.5
Illinois	0	0	8.5	7.3	16.6	8	2.2
Indiana	0	0.6	11.4	5	19.8	10.5	0.8
Iowa	0	1.2	5.7	8.8	18.7	8.5	2.2
Kansas	0	0.6	10.2	7	27	8.6	3.4
Kentucky	1.3	0.2	18.3	2.4	13.7	8.7	1.5
Louisiana	49.1	0.7	48.3	1.7	11.8	8.9	1.2
Maine	0	0.7	1.6	10.2	30.4	14.2	5.7
Maryland	0.4	1.7	14.5	7.8	14.2	6.5	2.7
Massachusetts	0	1.8	3.7	15.5	22.7	8.9	6.4
Michigan	0	2.2	10	7	19.3	8.7	2
Minnesota	0	2.3	4.3	8.5	24	11.8	5.2
Mississippi	87.2	0.1	63.5	1.3	8.7	5.8	0.8
Missouri	0	0.3	11.4	3.7	21.7	10.1	1.6
Montana	0	3.3	7.3	8	26.1	13.6	5.9
Nebraska	0	0	8.4	7	23.6	10.5	3.5
Nevada	0	2.4	13.2	7.1	26.2	9.5	2.5
New Hampshire	0	0.9	3.8	12.9	22.6	9.7	3.9
New Jersey	0	2.2	9.1	7.7	15.6	8.5	3
New Mexico	0	0.6	7.9	6.4	16.1	5.8	3.6
New York	0	8.2	5.3	7.5	15.7	8	3.6
North Carolina	8.8	0.5	31.3	2.8	13.7	6.7	0
North Dakota	0.2	3.8	5.7	7.8	23.1	12.2	3.3
Ohio	0	1.3	11.8	5.9	21	10.7	2.5
Oklahoma	0	0	20.3	3.3	23	10.8	0
Oregon	0	2.9	6.1	9.5	24.2	8.8	5
Pennsylvania	0	1.5	8	6.4	18.2	9.6	2.1
Rhode Island	0	0.8	4.1	14.4	23.2	11.2	6.1
South Carolina	72	0.1	32.3	1.6	11.5	5.6	1.5
South Dakota	0	1.1	4.8	6.5	21.8	9.7	0
Tennessee	13.4	0.3	34	2.2	10.1	5.6	1
Texas	9.3	0.3	19	2.5	22	6.7	2.2
Utah	0	1	6.4	5	27.3	10	4.7
Vermont	0	1	3.2	14.9	22.8	12	6.9
Virginia	10.4	0.5	23.6	5.1	13.6	6.6	2.2
Washington	0	3.5	7.4	10.6	23.7	8.9	4.1
West Virginia	0	0.4	9.6	4.3	15.9	11.3	1.6
Wisconsin	0	2	7.6	7.1	21.5	10.4	3.6
Wyoming	0	0.9	8.7	6.8	25.6	12.3	2.1
Total	2.4	2.4	13.5	6.6	18.9	8.4	2.7

The above chart illustrates the popular vote total for each of the candidates discussed to this point, in each of the 50 states.

## Chapter 5: Rise of the Tea Party

### Introduction

The Tea Party, (or rather the Tea Party Movement) is a largely recent phenomenon in American politics that lacks understanding amongst the general voting populace. Since its rise to national prominence in 2009, a continued and growing stream of press has been dedicated to stories concerning the Tea Party's developments and agenda. Besides its clearly right leaning ideology however, much is unclear as to its message, form and purpose. Previous chapters have detailed third party movements, the structural challenges they face within American politics, and successful third party candidates dating as far back as the 1940s, leading up to the present day.

As argued earlier, the Republican Party has been the only third party to successfully transform itself into a major party. Since its swallowing up of the old Whig Party, it has evolved from the party of the elite and socially liberal, to its current manifestation as a firmly right representing body politic. This path has been carefully described and laid out as the Party's trajectory gradually morphed into what it currently is, which owes a large part of its platform to the Tea Party's agenda. Because of the challenges third parties have faced throughout the history of American politics, the Tea Party has made a rational choice to operate from within a major party in much the same way as the Southern Democrats and Populists had. Without this dynamic there would be no basis with which to describe the third party takeover of the Republican Party.

What one should realize is that despite its name, the Tea Party is not truly a political party. In actuality, the Tea Party represents an ideology centered most closely on

social conservatism and limited government regulation, sharing in the populist tradition of George Wallace that preceded its birth. The Tea Party movement truly gains its strength from the fact that it is not a party but rather a way of thought, given that should it threaten the hegemony the major parties have on American politics, it would surely lose voters to the Republican Party while simultaneously costing Republicans electoral contests against Democrats. In its current form, the Tea Party has been able to shape the Republican message to fit its agenda as it constitutes a major voting base for the party. In this way then, the Republican Party which originally swallowed up the Whigs and was reborn following the splintering the Democratic Party, has now come full circle and is being controlled by a third party.

### **Early Days**

It can be argued that the Tea Party Movement was born out of years of changing demographics within America's political landscape, as the image and rhetoric for the Republican Party began to shift to fit more closely in creed (albeit not in action) to the Tea Party ideology. This change was no accident, rather it was the product of decades of conscious political decisions by the likes of Strom Thurmond, George Wallace, and the Reagan administration. With a faltering economy towards the end of the Bush administration and subsequent bailout of American banks by the United States government, the far right Tea Party Movement finally had a single momentous event to latch on to as an example of all that is wrong with American politics. Government intervention on Wall Street when added to the loss of jobs for the common man, as well as an increase in immigration to America, (both legally and otherwise) resonated with the

core of Tea Party support such that a movement with the ability to take over the Republican Party was born.

### **Voting Base: Who Supports the Tea Party?**

It should be understood that the Tea Party appeals to its supporters hypocritically in much the same way that George Wallace pandered to the blue-collar white voter while himself representing an elite segment of society. In both cases the core demographics for supporters are much the same in that constituents are often found in conservative states throughout the Midwest and Southeastern United States, fall somewhere within the lower to lower-middle class range on a socioeconomic scale, and most importantly feel that their way of life is being threatened. Tea Party supporters will often call upon the ideas of hands off government and support for the “little man”, a legacy they inherited from Bryan Populism of the late 19th century. However, the true strength in their numbers is found along racial lines as many Tea Party members feel that illegal immigration, (primarily from Mexico) can have negative repercussions for the traditional “American” culture and economy. By styling their message using a Populist frame in much the same way that Wallace did, the Tea Party Movement can caution against the supporting of “freeloaders” without expressly targeting or mentioning illegal immigrants who are perceived to be job stealers and a drain on the welfare system.

Within the ethos of the Populist message of the Tea Party lay themes of classical Producerism that are often used to separate society into the broad categories of workers and nonproducers (Formisano, 20). While much of Tea Party ire is targeted towards immigrants, the Tea Party also takes issue with dishonest business men, and the idle rich. Interestingly, through operating within the Republican Party, many of the chief figures of

the movement can be said to be members of this “idle rich” elitist group. Here again we see analogies to the time of Wallace and classic Southern politics in which wealthy party elites used racial politics and strong language to mobilize the lower white, working classes.

According to Ronald Formisano in his book *The Tea Party Movement*, Tea Party members do not see big government as inherently evil, rather the actions of this inhuman body often tend to disproportionately favor “undeserving” individuals and in so in essence does not exist for the betterment of the American people (20). Attempts to extend unemployment benefits have been met with stiff opposition by Republicans and Tea Party members because of the perception that this will only serve to fuel unemployment and disillusionment with hard work. This process has been likened to a societal affliction, in which as one Republican politician said that two years of unemployment benefits, “changes the behavior of the unemployed... almost like a drug addiction” (Formisano, 22). Herein lies a critical flaw of the Tea Party ideology that often goes overlooked, this being that for those actually looking for work, the search often takes on average 9 months and often much longer (Formisano, 22). Extenuating circumstances affecting one’s ability to reenter the labor force such as health concerns and a poor credit score then preclude an individual from finding success. Interestingly, those falling into this category rarely seem to join in the Progressive Populist sentiment of the Tea Party, withdrawing from politics. In this way then, the Tea Party constituency lacks a core group of voters and supporters that one would assume naturally aligns with their message because they are paradoxically affected by the Tea Party agenda.



The April 15, 2009 “Tax Day Protests” illustrates perfectly the interesting dichotomy that exists within the Tea Party Movement. While many third parties and political movements struggle to gain media attention and financial backing, the Tea Party operating within the Republican Party have had no such problem. The “Tax Day Protests” were in response to a perceived failing of the economy and mishandling of governmental affairs by the Obama administration. Large calls to protests were backed by the Fox News syndicate and billionaires such as Rupert Murdoch as well as television personalities which included Glenn Beck, Sean Hannity, and Bill O’Reilly. In this way, the Tea Party’s protests regarding their dissatisfaction with big government and economic free-loaders were backed and spurred on by the wealthy elite in a way that intimately tied the two parties together.

Through the efforts of Fox’s celebrity personalities and their extremist rhetoric, the Obama administration became associated with socialism, fascism, and communism to the point where gripes from the Tea Party line often had more to do with personal dislike of Obama than anything else (Formisano, 29). Subsequent protests regarding healthcare legislation produced violent confrontation at town hall meetings across the country, with protestors spurred on and coached by Republican and Tea Party elites. While the underlying goals of the Tea Party Movement then is intended to be the empowerment of the average citizen at the expense of corporate interests and the wealthy elite, in actuality these very entities controlled the ebb and flow of Tea Party dealings from its inception.

Inflammatory remarks by Beck accusing President Obama of hating white people inadvertently displayed some of the racial undercurrents of the Tea Party message and were retracted during Beck’s August 28, 2010 speech given at the Lincoln Memorial in

Washington D.C. (Formisano, 32). In this speech, Beck attempted to deflect and repack the Tea Party message by suggesting that he felt no personal animosity towards the president and instead objected to his policy positions. Throughout his speech and the subsequent one delivered by Alaskan Governor Sarah Palin, a conscious effort to interject religious symbolism and Christian methods was made so as to portray the movement as one controlled and created for the often Christian, white, lower-middle class.

In keeping in line with the grassroots image of the campaign, Fox News funded the political action committee Our Country Deserves Better which had been used in 2008 to help fund the elections of prominent Republicans such as John McCain. Following the 2008 Presidential election, millionaire and chief funder of the committee, Sal Russo, renamed the political action committee (PAC) Tea Party Express (Formisano, 32). In 2010 this PAC became the principle agent for funding attack ads against Tea Party competition, and raised money to support Republican Senatorial races in Nevada, Massachusetts, and Delaware (Formisano, 33).

Despite the success of Russo and the Tea Party Express PAC, resentment grew amongst Tea Party supporters who wished to not be so intimately tied to the Republican Party. While a large portion of the movement's success came from corporate entities such as the Tea Party Express, opposition groups such as the Tea Party Patriots opted for a more grassroots approach, with hundreds of affiliated splinter groups tied to the organization throughout the country (Formisano, 33). Statements issued by local chapters of the Tea Party Patriots attempted to distance themselves from the Tea Party Express, condemning racist remarks made by the Express' leadership while cautioning Tea Party supporters to not donate to the faux grassroots organization. By 2010, the merger and

relationship between the Tea Party, Fox News, and the Republican Party had become clear with the cross funding between these groups. With the Fox News Corporation now being recognized as a pro Tea Party entity, the mere fact that 4 of 5 Republican front runners for the 2012 Presidential election were financially backed by the corporation spoke volumes to the wedding of forces.

### **The Tea Party Today**

According to Lawrence Rosenthal and Christine Trost in their book *The Precipitous Rise of the Tea Party*, today's Tea Party supporters can be compared to the right wing Christian voters of the 1970s and 1990s, yet are more likely to be Conservative and Republican than this group (229-230). Furthermore a Times survey of Tea Party members suggests 57 percent identified themselves as Republican, while 38 percent regarded themselves as independent. If these numbers are to be believed, only 5 percent of today's Tea Party voting base identifies itself as belonging to the Democratic Party (Rosenthal and Trost, 230). According to a 2010 Gallup poll, 80 percent of Tea Party members identify themselves as Republican compared with 44 percent of the general electorate. 80 percent of Tea Party supporters say they will vote Republican in any upcoming election compared with 95 percent of Conservative Republicans who were in favor of the Republican vote (Rosenthal and Trost, 230).

These figures confirm the close relationship between the Tea Party and Republican Party mentioned in the previous section, however what remains to be seen is how this relationship will mature in the coming elections. Currently, the Tea Party supporters turnout to vote at higher than average rates which helped the Republicans gain ground in the 2010 elections. However, this peculiarity has the potential to put

Republican leadership in a tough situation given that a failure to pander towards this group in the future could result in lower voting turnout and a loss in political pull for the Republicans.

The long term future of the Tea Party is unclear and up to date statistics that are fully developed are hard to come by given the temporal proximity between the composition of this essay and the transpiring of pertinent events. 2011 polling information suggests that the Tea Party may have peaked in terms of its positive influence within the Republican Party as only 32 percent of moderate Republicans said they agreed with Tea Party initiatives in a Pew Research Center Poll (Formisano, 98). In house disagreements point to a less harmonious future between main line Republicans and Tea Party candidates.

Outside of the Tea Party movement, the percentage of Democrats and independents disagreeing with Tea Party rhetoric doubled from 24 percent to 51 percent from March 2010 to April 2011 (Formisano, 99). Intraparty fighting between Republicans and Tea Party politicians has become more common within Congress as the latter are increasingly less willing to compromise, yet feel threatened to do so as Tea Party influence grows. In terms of real world political repercussions as a result of the influence the Tea Party have had however, examples can be seen in Romney's attempt to portray himself as a less liberal political figure in his campaign for President in 2012 in an effort to win votes and support. More concretely, the Obama administration was forced to cater to Republican demands for wide sweeping budget cuts in 2010 seeking reelection in 2012, forcing the Democrats hand in addressing the rising debt ceiling.

Because of the negative effect the Tea Party had on the Republican Party's success in the 2012 Senate elections, (affording seats to the Democrats due to unqualified Tea Party candidates receiving the nomination in certain states over more qualified Republican politicians) the Republican Party made it a point in 2014 to undercut Tea Party candidates in favor of Republican ones. Having won a majority in the Senate then as a result of this strategy, the Republican Party may begin to treat Tea Party candidates with increasing hostility in such future elections. Party infighting could have the potential to weaken the overall potency of the Republicans, as moderates fight with conservatives. Should this be the case, the Tea Party may actually cost rather than win major elections for the Republicans.

On a state level the effect of the Tea Party can be seen perhaps most dramatically in the state of Texas through the actions of Governor Rick Perry, thanks to pressure from the state legislature's Tea Party Caucus. A Tea Party advisory committee working in tandem with the Governor was able to steer the Texas House to pass a \$23 billion state spending cut to balance the budget while keeping taxation levels stagnant. Moreover, state sovereignty was reaffirmed while the state legislature considered a stronger stance on illegal immigration. The "emergency issue" requiring voter identification was fast tracked in an alleged effort to reduce voter fraud. This action while on its face seemed meritorious in principle, was considered by many to be intended to weaken the Democratic presence within the state, as it disproportionately affected minority voters within Texas (Formisano, 102). Perry, like Romney, attempted to bolster his image amongst the Christian right, designating August 6th as a day of "Prayer and fasting for

our Nation's Challenges" ahead of his entry into the Republican Primary in realizing the support this would garner amongst Tea Partyers.

### **Conclusion**

It is unclear to what extent the Tea Party Movement will continue to grow in the coming years as the bid for the Republican nomination for President in the 2016 election will have to play itself out through the pressure cooker known as the Republican Primary process. To this point, it cannot be denied that the Tea Party has become the principle agent of legislative change within the Republican Party in recent years, becoming synonymous with conservative ideology and right wing politics. While scholars debate the true staying power of the movement, it cannot be argued that the nation's changing demographics and rising gap between the wealthiest 1% and the American middle class is becoming an increasingly polarizing issue.

The dynamics needed to fuel the movement for generations to come, (principally the rise of ethnic minorities and youth throughout the country) appear as though they will become ever more salient of an issue in subsequent decades. Between 2000 and 2010, the Hispanic population within the United States rose 43 percent from 35.3 million to 50.5 million to nearly 16% of the total population (Formisano, 110). This phenomenon is juxtaposed with the slowing growth of the white population during the same period of time, expanding in total numbers by only 1%, thus dropping from 69% of the population to 64% by 2010. The United States' transformation into a "majority-minority" nation will most likely play a deciding role in the amount of support and legitimacy the Tea Party Movement gains and so therefore how effectively it cannot control power from within the Republican party.

## Chapter 6: Today's Major Parties

### Introduction

With the start of chapter 6, a review of the historical analysis of American third parties and the associated political trends can be undertaken. When taken together with the transformation of America's two preeminent parties, (the Democratic and Republican parties) it is clear that both alternative and main parties are intertwined in their development. It is apparent now that the voting base of both the Democrats and Republicans has changed drastically not only over the course of their political lives, but simply in the last 50 years. To contextualize this information then, the following pages will examine where the major parties currently stand in terms of voting base, policy platforms, and where new movements such as the aforementioned Tea Party, fit into the equation.

If the original thesis of this paper is to be supported, (that being that the Republican party has come full circle having started as a third party before being absorbed by a third party movement in the form of the Tea Party most recently) then identifying where the Republican Party currently resides on the political spectrum needs to be revisited to provide further evidence. Moreover, to fully grasp the current form and transformation of the Republican Party, one must understand where the Democrats currently are in relation to them. Questions such as, (but not limited to) why the Tea Party was successful, and where the far left working through Nader in challenge of the Democrats were not successful, will be answered before the conclusion of this final chapter.

## Early Party Trends

At the start of the 20th century, prior to many of the third party movements touched upon in previous chapters, the Democrats enjoyed a political base in the South and lagged behind the Republican Party in terms of power and influence outside of this region (Stonecash, 36). Republican dominance was so pronounced in the party's early years that 11 of the 13 presidential elections between 1860 and 1912 ended in their favor. Thanks largely to an insufficient response to the Great Depression on the part of the Republicans, the Democrats were able to gain significant electoral ground, retaining the South and working class while gaining the vote of urban workers and minorities. This base constituency was held for 30 years with little in the way of shifts to it. However, because of the saliency of racial issues and expanding government programs, major third party contests to conventional power structures began to develop through the efforts of such prominent southern politicians as Strom Thurmond and George Wallace.

In claiming to represent the average voter using strong Populist rhetoric, these challenges to the Democratic Party lured away support in the South, chipping away at the Plain State Populist and Southern Democratic blocks of the party. Eventual desertion of the party by former Southern Democratic politicians brought over support to the Republican Party. The shifting of demographics within the Republican Party from this point forward changed the policy platform of the party, essentially affecting change from within in much the same way as the Tea Party has done to the Republican voting base in recent elections.

One should note that this tactic stands in contrast to the methods employed by the Green Party in the 2000 election as they attempted to crystalize the voice of the elite left



through Nader, attacking the Democratic Party from outside its structure. Voting bases for both parties would change throughout the mid-20th century, but constants remained nevertheless. The Republican Party having originally represented the professional class and societal elites still maintained their hold over Wall Street and the financial sector. The Democrats on the other hand, managed to hold the support of the urban black and Jewish communities even as support from new minority groups, (such as the Hispanics) would pour into the party.

Between the years of 1960-1980, as the voting blocks of the major parties flipped, the frequency with which a given district might vote one way in Presidential election while supporting the candidate for the opposite party in a House seat election for example, increased. This phenomenon would come to be known as “split-decisions”. This trend gave the impression that the message of major parties had become disjointed on various levels of political competition, and that these major parties that represented strong and clear ideologies were beginning to weaken in their ideology.

The reality associated with the increase in split-decisions actually had more to do with the retention of experienced politicians at the House level holding on to their seats in their historic districts despite the incongruences associated with their policy stances and the new political ideologies fermenting (Stonecash, 39). By the end of the 1980s, the last remaining House members that represented the previous political era were beginning to retire from their formal political careers such that the transition of the major parties into the modern political age had been completed. Split-decision rates number between only 13-21% of contests currently which as a whole signifies of a shift from trends found in the years between 1960-1980 (Stonecash, 39).

Conversely, while split decisions have gone down, the number of independent voters has gone up. During the 1960 presidential election, only a quarter of the American public identified as an independent compared with 40 percent of today's voting base (Dalton, 2). If this figure is to be believed then, Independents are now the single largest voting group in the United States and have become the object of attention for both the Democratic and Republican campaigns as they compete for the middle ground. One should realize however, that the figure of who is and who is not an independent may not be completely accurate, given that it is based off self-reporting. The nonpartisan nature of an individual's voting pattern may be less than accurate. A voter may see himself as an independent yet has never actually voted Democrat, for example. For voters such as these, while the ideology of a specific party may be attractive and may fit that individual well, the label associated with said party is less appetizing.

Therefore, while the drop in split-decisions may perhaps suggest a return to strong parties as was common in the pre 1960-1980 era, when taken together with rise in self-reported independent voters this is most likely not the reality. The rise in individuals willing to classify themselves as not belonging to a particular party hints towards the possibility that parties themselves are not particularly strong, but rather that party ideology is growing in strength given the increasingly polarized nature of American politics. Polarized ideology employed by the major parties has become attractive to voters which has disrupted the historical trend of growing up in households aligned to a party due to family ties. The novelty and success of impassioned rhetoric then has become one of the greatest strengths of the Tea Party who rely on it to win votes.

Despite the fact that independents may not truly be entirely independent, the role they play and the impact they can have on elections was readily apparent during both the 2000 Presidential election and 2010 State legislature elections. Ralph Nader was alleged to have cost Al Gore the presidential race because of the support Nader gained from Liberals, a group considered to be safely Democratic. The battle to control the electoral seats of Florida between Al Gore and George W. Bush came down to a few hundred votes, votes that the media argued would have made their way to the Gore camp had Nader not participated in the election. Likewise, the Tea Party's success at attracting highly participatory yet staunchly conservative segments of the voting populace back towards the Republican Party helped the Republicans gain tremendous ground in the Senate in 2014 (Dalton, 2). While the impact of the Tea Party to date has been a net positive however, one should note that by supporting less than qualified candidates in a host of state primaries in 2010, the Tea Party cost the Republican party seats as Tea Party candidates replaced more politically sound Republican politicians. If this trend continues, the utility of the Tea Party core of the Republican Party will come into serious question.

In keeping in line with this argument, the growth of apartisan independent voters has had implications for the tactics major parties have used to attract voters residing in this middle ground. Voting relying more heavily on issues rather than party identifying rhetoric may be one outcome of the trend, however a less informed independent voter may leave himself open to charismatic politicians and inflammatory remarks as was mentioned earlier. Russell J. Dalton in his book *The Apartisan American*, suggests that this is certainly the case and that it has paid dividends for the Tea Party Movement in recent election cycles (185). Dalton argues that the rise of the apartisan independents can

be explained through understanding the age that American politics currently exists in thanks to expanding access to education, online resources, and the expanding role of government. A more socially and politically independent voter relies less on traditions of his family in order to decide where his political allegiance will lie, and has meant both major parties must appeal to these voters through issues that seem to cross party lines (190). The Tea Party, in deploying a Populist message and appealing to both race and class, managed to do just that.

### **The Contemporary Republican Party**

Today's Republican Party has struggled to reassert itself as the fiscally responsible entity it was once considered to be in the years preceding the Reagan administration, which critiqued the Carter administration for raising national debt to \$994 million before raising that number to \$2.9 trillion by 1989 (ProCon.org). Despite projecting an image of fiscal stability, the Reagan years provided anything but that, and the national debt would continue to grow under Republicans. Under President George H.W. Bush, debt would hit \$4.4 trillion representing a 54% increase, slowing to a 32% increase under President Clinton and reaching a total of \$5.8 trillion, before skyrocketing to \$11.6 trillion by the end of President George W. Bush's administration (useconomy.com).

During the 2000s under President George W. Bush, the Republican Party pushed for tax cuts, initiated costly medical programs for the elderly, and became entangled in two expensive wars. The economic collapse in 2007 and bailing out of major financial institutions all but cemented the Republicans' fate as fiscally irresponsible and acting in the interest of the top 1% of earners. In order to amend its image and begin to compete

for voters again following Obama's victory in the 2008 Presidential election, the Republicans rejected the Democratic stimulus bill and the Affordable Care Act on the grounds that these pieces of legislation were either not fiscally sound or were being used to expand the role of government beyond an acceptable point (Routledge, 89).

Fiscal responsibility can only go so far in mobilizing voters, and the party has much work to do to repair its image in this regard. Because of this, the Republicans, (spurred on by the most conservative of its politicians) have been motioning to pass referendums on marriage rights, immigration reform, and abortion laws (Routledge, 89). Today's Republicans are relying on social issues to maintain their conservative constituency while hoping that tax cuts and a pull back on government programs will attract the swing vote. Because it is unclear exactly what the party's chief concern is, the Tea Party movement has been allowed room with the help of considerable financial backing, to direct the party's image. This has worked to make up ground in the State Legislative elections but has further pushed away the professional class of voter that the Republicans lack within their constituency.

The Tea Party approach of rising to political prominence through the takeover of an existing party structure from within makes logistical sense in today's political environment. In an increasingly polarized America, the amount of political room third parties have to operate has now shrunk, given that most third party movements, (the Green Party, the Libertarians, and the Tea Party) rely on the farthest ends of the political spectrum in order to gain support. With the major parties being forced to pander towards this market in major elections then, there are less resources for third parties to compete for. The Tea Party realizing they would only serve to steal from the Republicans in

elections, (thereby handing many decisions to the Democratic Party) made the rational decision to participate in the political system from within a major party. This stands in contrast to the Nader campaign of 2000 in which he attacked the Democrats from the Green Party, rather than attempting to bend Democratic policy from within existing networks.

The successful Tea Party recipe for influencing political discourse is in no way unique however, as one may look no farther than William Jennings Bryan for an early example of the same tactics over a century ago. Bryan, carrying with him a strong Populist tradition and the support of the American Populist Party in 1896, ran as the Democratic nominee for President while also being backed by the Populist Party. Because of his multiple endorsements, Bryan appeared on ballots under both parties and could receive votes from voters aligned with either group. The Populists declined the opportunity to endorse Bryan's running mate Arthur Sewall, instead opting to offer this position to John M. Palmer. While the exact protocol associated with this election would undoubtedly be hard or impossible to replicate in today's system, Bryan's transition into the Democratic Party intimately tied a third party's goals and agenda with a major party. While ultimately unsuccessful in quest for the presidency, Bryan still managed to establish a tradition for the Tea Party whom carry with them their own Populist undertones.

### **The Contemporary Democratic Party**

Upon Party Restructuring in the 1950s and 1960s, the Democratic Party was tasked with the responsibility of reorganizing such that they could stabilize their electorate. This meant that a concerted effort to repair its image in regards to the public's

perception that the party was bad for business and centered too narrowly on elitist or race driven issues, had to be undertaken (Stonecash, 92). In order to appeal to a larger base, (mainly the middle class) the Democrats went along with the tax reforms of the Reagan era and limiting Welfare under a 1994 Republican controlled House. At the same time however, the Democrats pushed for the expansion of college loan programs and the improvement of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) so as to show their support for low income individuals provided they worked (Stonecash, 92).

Just as the Republican Party grew to struggle with balancing social and economic issues, so too did the Democratic Party. The Democrats challenged the Republicans on their conservative stance regarding abortion and same sex marriage, while confronting them on their unwillingness to recognize the legitimacy of Global Warming. The party has continued to struggle with managing its reputation as the party of liberal elites at the expense of its other constituencies, with party heads instructing Democratic politicians to place less emphasis on the aforementioned issues going forward. As the country's demographics continue to change in regards to the percentage of the population considered to be a minority, this group will grow in importance to the Democrats. In order to retain this demographic as strongly Democratic then, economic policies rather than elitist social ones should continue to be emphasized as they are most salient (Stonecash, 93).

The struggle to manage a coherent identity moving forward has manifested itself in an inability to act effectively on many issues. While originally supporting a publically sponsored option within the Affordable Care Act that would keep premiums offered through private insurers low, many Democratic politicians withdrew their support for this

clause for fear that it would paint them as in favor of socialism and an intrusive government at the expense of private industry (Stonecash, 93). The Republican Party has been able to utilize this image and the waffling on issues by the Democratic Party to paint their opponents as soft on issues, this has helped the Tea Party gain attention and legitimacy.

Moving forward, the Democrats, like the Republicans have sought to paint a clear policy agenda for the long-term that is tied heavily to their stance on taxation. While the Republican Party has increasingly stressed smaller government and tax-cuts to incentivize investment on the part of entrepreneurs, the Democrats have supported social welfare programs while accusing Republican policies of being tailored towards the wealthy. The Democrats have tried to argue their place as the party for the middle-class, yet argue for tax increases at a time of wage stagnation (Stonecash, 94). To combat this, the Democrats have stressed the importance of increasing the taxation levels of only the highest earners to support the middle class. Still the message of the Democrats has appeared even less coherent than that of the Republicans, and as Obama competed for the support of the Independent voter through efforts to compromise with Republicans in 2010 and 2011, he received criticism from his own party for not being liberal enough.

### **Moving Forward**

According to research on the Tea Party message and its effects on voters by Amber M. Gaffney, David E. Rast III, Justin D. Hackett, and Michael A. Hogg, the ultra-inflammatory and alarmist Tea Party rhetoric employed in the study they conducted was found to be most successful on conservative voters with unsure opinions on issues. Uncertainty was reduced in individuals wavering on their own political stances not only



because of the dislike for the outgroup the Tea Party message supported but also because these uncertain individuals also felt that those around them must feel similarly (283). Extremist within the larger in-group were able to essentially impose their will on their less certain counterparts.

It should be noted that in the particular experiment discussed, liberal participants did not exhibit any change in opinions, uncertain or otherwise, but the self-identified conservatives were, nevertheless drawn into the more narrow Tea Party line. Gaffney et al. suggest that future experiments should be conducted in a similar fashion using liberals and an Occupy Wall Street message to test whether or not the same phenomenon will be observed amongst unsure Liberals, but they leave this untested.

After reviewing the findings from this experiment, one can argue that the material is there to suggest that the Tea Party in fact did have a major influence not just on Republican and Conservative politicians but also unsure participatory voters such that they influenced State Legislative elections in 2010 and 2014. The slow take-over of the Republican Party by the Tea Party makes more sense when supported by the aforementioned results, and the potential to affect change will only increase in the future if independent voters truly are at an all-time high as was suggested earlier in the chapter. Even if the same phenomenon does not occur to the same extent amongst uncertain liberal voters exposed to extreme liberal rhetoric, the mere fact that the Tea Party has had an effect on politicizing conservatives around the country would suggest that liberals may begin to mobilize in response to this trend as a result of feeling threatened.

The dynamics for the continued politicization of American politics are in place given changing population dynamics, voting patterns, and increasingly salient social

issues. As of now the far left has not been able to coopt the Democratic Party in the same way that the Tea Party transformed the Republican Party platform from the far right, however this may change in time. While recent challenges from the left have come from outside the Democratic Party through the work of the Green Party and Ralph Nader, an attack from within the Democratic Party may prove to be more fruitful.

The evolution of the Republican Party is perhaps not complete and will most likely continue to develop in the coming election cycles. Regardless, the structural limitations of the American political system having forced the likes of Thurmond, George Wallace, and Tea Party elites to pursue the methods they have and that were discussed in this essay, are at the very least responsible for the Republican Party's current position.

### Bibliography/Works Cited

- "1948 Presidential Election." 1948 Presidential Election. N.p., n.d. Web. 10 Mar. 2015
- Abramson, Paul R., John H. Aldrich, Phil Paolino, and David W. Rohde. "Third-Party and Independent Candidates in American Politics: Wallace, Anderson, and Perot." JSTOR. *The Western Political Quarterly*, 1995. Web. 14 Sept. 2014.
- "The American Presidency Project." The American Presidency Project. N.p., n.d. Web. 24 Feb. 2015.
- Bennett, James T. *Not Invited to the Party: How the Demopublicans Have Rigged the System and Left Independents out in the Cold*. New York: Springer, 2009. Print.
- Bibby, J. F., & Maisel, L. S. *Two parties—or more? The American party system*. Boulder, CO: Westview. 2003.
- Burden, B. C.. *Minor parties in the 2000 presidential election*. In H. F. Weisberg & C. Wilcox (Eds.), *Models of voting in presidential elections: The 2000 election*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. 2003, 206 – 227.
- Burden, BC. "Ralph Nader's Campaign Strategy in the 2000 US Presidential Election." *AMERICAN POLITICS RESEARCH* 33.5, 2005. 672-99.
- Canfield, James Lewis. *A Case of Third Party Activism: The George Wallace Campaign Workers and the American Independent Party*. Washington D.C. : University Press of America.

- Carlson, Jody. *George C. Wallace and the Politics of Powerlessness: The Wallace Campaigns for the Presidency, 1964-1975*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1981.
- Cary, David. "Estimating the margin of victory for instant-runoff voting." *Proceedings of the 2011 Electronic Voting Technology Workshop/Workshop on Trustworthy Elections (EVT/WOTE'11)*. USENIX. 2011.
- Collett, C., & Hansen, J. R. (2002). *Sharing the spoils: Ralph Nader, the Green Party, and the elections of 2000*. In P. S. Herrnson & J. C. Green (Eds.), *Multiparty politics in America*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. 125-44.
- Crespino, Joseph. *Strom Thurmond's America*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2012. Print.
- "C-SPAN The Contenders." *C-SPAN The Contenders*. N.p., n.d. Web. 27 Jan. 2015.
- Dalton, Russell J. *The Apartisan American: Dealignment and Changing Electoral Politics*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: CQ Press, 2013.
- Devine, Thomas W. *Henry Wallace's 1948 Presidential Campaign and the Future of Postwar Liberalism*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina, 2013. Print.
- Dimaggio, Anthony R. *The Rise of the Tea Party: Political Discontent and Corporate Media in the Age of Obama*. New York: Monthly Review, 2011. Print.
- Electoral Systems*. 1 Vol. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc, 2008.
- Engberg, Gillian. *The History of Third Parties*. 104 Vol. Chicago: Booklist Publications, 2008.

- Formisano, Ronald P. *The Tea Party: A Brief History*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2012. Print.
- Gaffney, Amber M., David E. Rast, III, Justin D. Hackett, and Michael A. Hogg. "Further to the Right: Uncertainty, Political Polarization and the American "Tea Party" Movement." Taylor & Francis Online. *Social Influence*, 4 Oct. 2013. Web. 24 Feb. 2015.
- Graham, Kevin. *Ralph Nader: Battling for Democracy*. Denver, CO: Windom Pub, 2000.
- Gillespie, J. David. *Challengers to Duopoly: Why Third Parties Matter in American Two-party Politics*. Columbia, SC: U of South Carolina, 2012. Print.
- Hamby, Alonzo L. "The South Secedes Again." *Smithsonian*. N.p., Aug. 2008. Web. 13 Jan. 2015.
- Harrison, Kimberly, Charlene L. Smith, and Jamie Baron Rodriguez. "John B. Anderson: The Exemplary Dark Horse." *Nova Law Review* 34.2 (2010): 347.
- "Henry A. Wallace." Henry A. Wallace. N.p., n.d. Web. 12 Jan. 2015.
- Hicks, John D. "The Third Party Tradition in American Politics." JSTOR. *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 1933. Web. 14 Sept. 2014.
- Hough, Jerry F. *Changing Party Coalitions: The Mystery of the Red State-blue State Alignment*. New York: Agathon, 2006. Print.
- "John B. Anderson, Candidate for the Republican Presidential Nomination." *Africa Report* 25.1 1980: 39-.

- Jones, Charles O. *The Republican Party in American Politics*. New York: Macmillan, 1965. Print.
- Leshner, Stephen. *George Wallace: American Populist*. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1994.
- Macdonald, Dwight. *Henry Wallace: The Man and the Myth*. New York: Vanguard Press, 1948.
- Martin, Justin. *Nader: Crusader, Spoiler, Icon*. Cambridge, MA: Perseus Pub., 2002. Print.
- Mayer, George H. *The Republican Party: 1854-1964*. New York: Oxford UP, 1964. Print.
- McGaughey, William. *The Independence Party and the Future of Third-Party Politics*. Minneapolis.: Thistlerose, 2003.
- Menendez, Arthur J. *The Perot Voters*. Amherst: Prometheus, 1996. Print.
- O'Connor, R. E. *No Holding Back: The 1980 John B. Anderson Presidential Campaign*. 49 Vol. Middletown: American Library Association dba CHOICE, 2012.
- Oshinsky, David. "From the Old South to the New Right." *The New York Times*. *The New York Times*, 29 Sept. 2012. Web. 15 Jan. 2015.
- "President Elect - 1948." *President Elect - 1948*. N.p., n.d. Web. 24 Feb. 2015.
- Rapoport, Ronald, and Walter J. Stone. *Three's a Crowd: The Dynamic of Third Parties, Ross Perot, & Republican Resurgence*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan, 2005. Print.

Rohler, Lloyd Earl. *George Wallace: Conservative Populist*. no. 32.; no. 32 Vol.

Westport, Conn: Praeger Publishers, 2004

"Ronald Reagan - ProCon.org." ProConorg Headlines. N.p., n.d. Web. 25 Feb. 2015.

Rosenstone, Steven J., and Roy L. Behr. *Third Parties in America*. 2nd ed. Princeton, NJ:

Princeton UP, 1984. Print.

Rosenthal, Lawrence, and Christine Trost. *Steep: The Precipitous Rise of the Tea Party*.

Berkeley: U of California, 2012. Print.

Roosevelt, Eleanor. "My Day by Eleanor Roosevelt, July 27, 1943." *My Day by Eleanor*

Roosevelt, July 27, 1943. N.p., 27 July 1943. Web. 12 Jan. 2015.

Scarrow, Howard A. "Duverger's Law, Fusion, and the Decline of American "Third"

Parties." JSTOR. *The Western Political Quarterly*, 1986. Web. 14 Sept. 2014.

Shugart, Matthew S., and Martin P. Wattenberg. "Mixed-member electoral systems."

*Mixed member electoral systems* (2001).

Stone, Walter J., and Ronald B. Rapoport. "It's Perot Stupid! The Legacy of the 1992

Perot Movement in the Major-Party System, 1994-2000". *PS: Political Science*

and Politics 34, no. 1 (2001): 49-58.

Stonecash, Jeffrey M. *Understanding American Political Parties: Democratic Ideals,*

*Political Uncertainty and Strategic Positioning*. New York: Routledge, 2012.

Print.

Synon, John J. *George Wallace. A Profile of a Presidential Candidate*. Kilmarnock, VA.:

Manuscripts, 1968.

Van Dyke, Nella, and Meyer, David S., eds. *Mobilization Series on Social Movements, Protest, and Culture : Understanding the Tea Party Movement*. Farnham, Surrey, GBR: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2014. ProQuest ebrary. Web. 3 February 2015.

Worthington, Marianne. "The Campaign Rhetoric of George Wallace in the 1968 Presidential Election." *The Campaign Rhetoric of George Wallace in the 1968 Presidential Election*. Web. 18 Nov. 2014