

MUGWUMPS AND NEVER TRUMPS: THE RHETORIC OF PARTY BOLTING
AND PARTY REPAIR

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This Project is Dedicated to the Memory of

Geraldine Lansing

(1918-2016)

The wisest woman I have ever known.

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ABSTRACT

Political partisanship has long occupied a central position in the study of American political rhetoric, but scholarly understanding of intraparty political communication has lagged behind that of interparty conflict. While disputes between Republicans and Democrats are a significant animating factor in 21st century political life, our understanding of what moves and defines these institutions has largely been left to the rigid empiricism of political science or the functionalism characteristic of much of historiography. This dissertation proposes *party repair* as a new theory of partisanship and partisan realignment rooted in the study of intraparty political factions and organizational and constitutive rhetoric. Party bolters in the elections of 1884, 1948, and 2016 provide a brief glimpse into the complexities of partisan identification and disidentification occurring outside the traditional framework of critical elections.

Chapter 1: Introduction

On the first day of the 2016 Republican National Convention, a group of frustrated Republicans attempted a final procedural measure to block the nomination of millionaire-celebrity candidate Donald J. Trump. These traditional Republicans, led by Utah Senator Mike Lee, clashed with their pro-Trump counterparts on the floor of the convention hall in Cleveland, Ohio.¹ The two groups attempted to drown each other out with chants of “roll call vote” and “U.S.A.” A last-minute effort by the Trump campaign and party officials was able to block the final attempt by disaffected delegates to show their dissatisfaction with the selection of Trump as the Republican standard-bearer in 2016 through a roll call vote.²

In a scorched-earth primary campaign lasting well over a year, Trump had ostracized many in the Republican base with his brash style, his opposition to free trade, and his incendiary comments about women, prisoners of war, and immigrants. The frustration over Trump’s selection displayed on the floor of the convention was mirrored in elite circles of the conservative movement. After officially assuming the party mantle, Donald Trump was presented with the task of uniting a party deeply divided by the primary campaign. Former President George H.W. Bush, former Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney, and popular conservative columnist George Will all vowed never

1. Dan Roberts and Ben Jacobs “‘Never Trump’ Uproar at Republican National Convention Underscores Divided Party,” *The Guardian*, July 18, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/jul/18/donald-trump-republican-national-convention-party-unity>.

2. Ibid.

to vote for Trump.³ Questions of Trump's business ethics, his treatment of women, and his racially charged political rhetoric had turned away many traditional Republicans. The struggle to unite the Republican Party would be one of the chief tasks for the political outsider if he was going to win the 2016 general election.

The task of uniting a party despite these deep internal divisions seemed nearly impossible. The party convention, the choice of a vice presidential nominee, the response to protestors and party bolters, and the articulation of a cohesive political message palatable to those inside and outside the party were the core components of his mission to repair a fractured coalition. The selection of a nominee is often viewed as the significant defining element of presidential campaigns, but as the political party movements analyzed in this study illustrate, party conflict and redefinition do not end with the selection of a nominee. Repairing a political party means building a coalition sufficient to win the general election and maintaining a coalition that can extend beyond a single campaign and sustain the party in the years to come. This complex task dates to the early days of political parties and has confounded political rhetors throughout America's partisan history.

For 1884 Republican Presidential Nominee James G. Blaine, the threat of intraparty division came from a group of independent Republicans who would come to be

3. Gil Troy, "In Praise of Abandoning Your Party: Trump calls GOP defectors 'disloyal.' But the Founders Would Approve." *Politico*, last modified October 18, 2016, <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/10/trump-republican-party-defectors-history-214365>.

referred to as “Mugwumps.”⁴ Mugwumps ultimately bolted from the Republican Party to support New York Democrat Grover Cleveland. Like the “Never Trump” Movement, Mugwumps questioned the ethics of their party’s nominee and whether they could conscientiously vote for a candidate they deemed to be of low moral repute.⁵

Longstanding allegations had linked Blaine to political corruption, but Blaine was also a leading figure in one of two major factions within the GOP referred to as “Half-Breeds.”⁶ Unlike Trump, Blaine would ultimately lose the general election and *The New York Times* would credit the Mugwumps with Cleveland’s victory.⁷

Sixty-four years later, in 1948, two social identity groups in the Democratic Party rebelled against the incumbent president Harry S. Truman. During the Democratic National Convention in 1948, the rising Democratic star Hubert Humphrey delivered an address on race and racism within the Democratic Party and asked his fellow delegates to join him in supporting specific language in the party platform condemning racial discrimination and lauding steps toward greater racial equality under Truman.⁸ The addition to the party platform narrowly passed, resulting in an immediate walk-out of

4. David M. Tucker, *Mugwumps: Public Moralists of the Gilded Age*, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1998) 73.

5. Ibid.

6. Harrison Cook Thomas, *The Return of the Democratic Party to Power in 1884*, (New York, Columbia University, 1919) 33.

7. The New York Times, “Bless the Independents.’: Ohio Democrats Give the Credit of the Victory to the Mugwumps,” *New York Times*, November 8, 1884, 2, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/>.

8. Kari Frederickson *The Dixiecrat Revolt and the End of the Solid South, 1932-1968* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001) 118-123.

delegates from Mississippi and Alabama, who would join with other Southern Democrats in forming the States Rights (or “Dixiecrat”) Party under the leadership of Strom Thurmond.⁹ Simultaneously, former Democratic vice president Henry Wallace challenged Truman from the left, appealing to younger Democrats who hoped to see an expansion of New Deal programs and an end to segregation.¹⁰ Truman’s attempts to hold together a coalition after major defections ultimately succeeded, as he defeated Republican Thomas Dewey in the general election.

Political defections and party bolters, from Progressives and Dixiecrats to Mugwumps and Never Trumps, can play a vital role in presidential campaigns, well beyond political primaries and party nominating conventions. The rhetoric of these movements, and of the party nominees tasked with holding their coalitions together, represents an exigence at the heart of campaign rhetoric. The dilemma of *party repair* touches on many of the central questions for communication studies, as it concerns social movements, coalition building, identification, organizational rhetoric and polarization. Repairing a political party after a contentious primary is a complex but vital task for candidates seeking to win a general election; and the rhetoric of party bolters, willing to set aside partisanship for principle or identity, harkens back to debates over factionalism and political parties at the nation’s founding. Perhaps most importantly, the rhetorics of party bolting and party repair occupy a space at the intersection of morality, identity, and partisanship. The willingness of traditional partisans to forsake party labels in favor of

9. Ibid., 118-149.

10. Thomas W. Devine, *Henry Wallace's 1948 Presidential Campaign and the Future of Postwar Liberalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 18.

deeper convictions, with the knowledge that their decision may relinquish power to the opposing party, speaks meaningfully to questions of identity and identification that define one of the nation's most salient divisions. Movements that break partisan boundaries call into question the formation, preservation, and realignment of political parties. Understanding these movements begins with an examination of the complex institutions at the heart of American democracy.

Parties in America: A Debate Across Time

In *Federalist Paper* No. 10 Madison explains the inevitability and destructive capacity of factions.¹¹ Factions, according to Madison, are the necessary byproduct of a free society. He argues, "Liberty is to faction what air is to fire, an aliment without which it instantly expires."¹² Just as eliminating air would extinguish life, eliminating factions would require extinguishing the liberty on which democracy depends. Resigned to the inevitability of factionalism, the nation's founders sought instead to limit its destructiveness. Like *Federalist 10*, George Washington's Farewell Address occupies a significant place in public memory as a warning against the influence of political parties on effective governance.¹³ Washington cautioned that political parties could lead to despotism and an end to the American political project.¹⁴ Despite Washington's

11. James Madison, *Federalist* No.10, in *The Federalist Papers*, ed. Clinton Rossiter (New York: New American Library, 1961), 77-84.

12. *Ibid*, 78.

13. John Avlon, *Washington's Farewell: The Founding Father's Warning to Future Generations* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2017), 207-257.

14. George Washington, *Farewell Address*, in *George Washington: Writings*, ed. John Rodehamel, (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, 1997), 962-977.

warnings, the growing rift between followers of Washington's Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson and his Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton dominated American politics after Washington's retirement and laid the foundation for what later scholars would label *America's first party system*.¹⁵ Since Washington, political parties have occupied a central place in the drama of American politics, but that drama has been transformed by the rhetoric of social and political movements that defined their respective eras.

Historians and political scientists have traditionally divided American political history into six *party systems*, each with its own set of chief exigencies.¹⁶ This dissertation project will challenge the notion of neatly divided party systems and instead argue for a new understanding of partisan alignment rooted in rhetorical theorizing on organizational identification and the push and pull between intraparty factions. While there is already a robust body of literature challenging and re-conceptualizing the realignment theory of politics, these party systems provide a useful but perhaps overly deterministic starting point for understanding party development across time.¹⁷ The following paragraphs explain the traditional conceptualization of America's party systems.

15. Morton Grodzins, "Political Parties and Issues to 1800," in *The First Party System: Federalists and Republicans*, ed. William N. Chambers (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1972), 57-66.

16. Marjorie Randon Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, 12th ed. (New York: Pearson/Longman, 2007), 119-123.

17. Paul Kleppner, et al., *The Evolution of American Electoral Systems* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1981).

Jefferson and Hamilton's respective visions for the country constituted what scholars have labeled the *first party system*.¹⁸ Those aligned with Hamilton adopted the label *Federalists* and those aligned with Jefferson, took the name *Democratic-Republicans*. However, between 1812 and 1824, the Federalist Party faded from national prominence and in 1828 the former Democratic-Republican Andrew Jackson challenged John Quincy Adams under the banner of the newly formed *Democratic Party*. The *Whig Party* would emerge as a union of Jackson's opponents following his reelection in 1832 and, according to realignment theory, the *second party system* was born.¹⁹ The Democratic and Whig Parties monopolized presidential elections for the next five election cycles, until the birth of the *Republican Party* in 1854. The *third party system*, lasting from roughly 1861-1896, was focused first on the issue of slavery and later the matter of reconstruction.²⁰

While party alignments and ideologies have continued to change, the Republican and Democratic Party labels have remained at the heart of American politics since 1854. Theories of realignment suggest that party machines, reform movements, and issues of immigration and industrialization defined the *fourth party system*, lasting from roughly 1893 to 1932.²¹ Then, following the stock market crash of 1929, the Democratic Party adopted a New Deal policy agenda aimed at promoting economic opportunity through government assistance and federal work programs. The *fifth party system* emerged in

18. Grodzins, "Political Parties and Issues to 1800," 57-66.

19. Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, 120-121.

20. Ibid, 121-122.

21. Ibid, 122.

response to these programs and from 1932 to 1968, the central exigence of American politics was focused on the role of the central government in managing the economy.²² The final realignment in American political parties emerged in response to issues of race and counter-culture in the late 1960s. Under this *sixth party system*, the Republican Party has come to control nearly all the American South and has become increasingly associated with social conservatism, while the Democratic Party has dominated the North Eastern United States and adopted the mantle of social progressivism.²³

Mary Stuckey proposes that the rhetoric of the 2016 election is a harbinger of a new partisan realignment.²⁴ She points to the rhetoric of hope and nostalgia, anger, hyperbole, and vagueness among means and ends as signs that partisan realignment is imminent.²⁵ This dissertation challenges Stuckey's understanding of realignments and cautions scholars of communication not to abandon the greatest tools at their disposal for understanding political parties. Communication scholars are perhaps best positioned in the academy to understand the renegotiation of partisan identity; but in doing so, they must turn to their knowledge of organizational rhetoric. Questions of identification, identity, and morality are all inherently tied to a political reality that is rhetorically constituted and ever changing.

22. Ibid, 122-123.

23. Ibid., 120.

24. Mary E. Stuckey, "American Elections and the Rhetoric of Political Change: Hyperbole, Anger, and Hope in U.S. Politics," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 20 no. 4 (2017), 667-672.

25. Ibid., 672-686.

This project presents a new theory of partisan realignment rooted in organizational and constitutive rhetoric drawn from intraparty factionalism. Traditional understandings of partisan realignment are drawn from determinist or functionalist understandings of American history. Traditionally, political parties are viewed simply as a product of the times or exigencies in which they emerged. Stuckey's explanation argues that rhetoric may be a signal of realignment but does not break from the functionalism of traditional understandings. The perspective offered here challenges the notion of critical elections, harbingers of realignment, and even fixed eras of partisan identity and instead views partisan identity as a product of constant intraparty negotiation. By focusing on just a short period of intraparty conflict beyond political primaries, this dissertation opens the study of intraparty rhetoric as a source for understanding realignment.

Rather than viewing partisan realignment as a fixed phenomenon, driven by changes in the electorate or by so-called "critical elections," realignment should be understood as a continuous process of *identification*, *disidentification* and *repair*. Internal and external factions move partisan alignments *during* elections, even beyond primaries and even in those elections not typically classified as realigning or critical elections. By focusing simply on the short time between the selection of a candidate and the general election, it is easy to see the contested nature of partisan identity. This dissertation seeks not only to understand this contest within individual campaigns, but also to better understand how parties are aligned. By analyzing two elections from American history, this dissertation hopes to offer a better lens through which to make sense of partisan rhetoric generally and in the 2016 presidential campaign more specifically.

This dissertation presents transformations in American political parties as distinctly rhetorical phenomena. Even within what have been labeled as party systems, parties were constantly being challenged and redefined by internal and external factions. It was the rhetoric of these factions that became constitutive of parties and accounts for dramatic changes in partisan identity across time. Political parties are complex institutions subject to internal factionalism, termination, and realignment. For example, conflict between the pro-patronage Stalwarts and pro-civil-service reform Half Breeds was as significant to late 19th century Republican politics as the party's battles with Democrats.²⁶ Similarly, the split within the Democratic Party over issues of race came to a head in 1968, but these factions within the Democratic Party began to shape Democratic politics as early as the 19th century and even resulted in a dramatic party split in 1948.²⁷ In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, Republican candidates were often tasked with holding together a loose collation of military conservatives, fiscal conservatives, and social conservatives.²⁸ In each case, party identity was in flux and the victors saw victory as an opportunity to shape the next 'system' of American political parties.

The Institutions of Partisan Identity

26. Daniel DiSalvo, *Engines of Change: Party Factions in American Politics, 1868-2010* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 36-37.

27. Frederickson *The Dixiecrat Revolt*, 130.

28. Susan Currie Sivek, "Editing Conservatism: How National Review Magazine Framed and Mobilized a Political Movement." *Mass Communication and Society* 11, no. 3 (2008): 248-274.

The institutional mechanisms for negotiating these intraparty divisions have changed with time. The nation's first three presidential nominations bear little resemblance to modern political primaries. In the first two presidential elections, Washington ran unopposed and did not seek the nomination of any party. However, in 1796, congressional caucuses, made up of Federalists and Democratic-Republicans, formed and came to an agreement on their party's nominee.²⁹ These early American caucuses did not issue a public endorsement of a candidate, but instead agreed on a candidate to support behind closed doors and accepted the ability of the members of the caucus to keep the Electoral College voters focused on the informally selected candidate.³⁰ Four years later, this method was formalized with independent meetings of the two caucuses and clear instructions for electors that they should support the chosen nominee (Jefferson for Democratic-Republicans or Adams for Federalists).³¹ With the declining influence of the Federalist Party after 1812, the Democratic-Republican caucus essentially became the sole determinant of the presidency.³² In this early era of presidential nominations, intraparty divisions played out behind closed doors, allowing parties to project an image of unity after the congressional caucuses had met.

29. James W. Davis, *U.S. Presidential Primaries and the Caucus-Convention System: A Sourcebook* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1997), 9-10; Thomas R. Marshall, *Presidential Nominations in a Reform Age*, (New York: Praeger, 1981), 18-19.

30. Marshall, *Presidential Nominations in a Reform Age*, 19.

31. *Ibid.*

32. *Ibid.*, 20.

Eventually, intraparty divisions would overwhelm the congressional caucus model and intraparty divisions would spill out into full public view. The congressional caucus model had always depended on the willingness of candidates and electors to submit to the will of the caucus; however, in 1824, intraparty factions made clear their intention to ignore the nominating caucus and field their own respective candidates.³³ Ultimately, less than one-third of the eligible congressmen attended the congressional caucus and the nominated candidate finished third in Electoral College balloting.³⁴ The election of 1824 dealt the death knell to the congressional caucus system and Andrew Jackson's selection by a national nominating convention in 1832 ushered in a new era of presidential nominations that would last into the early 20th century.³⁵ Conventions were often raucous and hotly contested events with candidates representing the major intraparty factions vying for the party's nomination. The Republican Convention in 1880 proved particularly dramatic with Stalwarts and Half Breeds unable to agree on a candidate until the 36th ballot, in which the party selected the reluctant James G. Garfield, who had attended the convention as a supporter of John Sherman.³⁶

At the turn of the 20th century, progressive reformers wished to see greater public involvement in the nominating process, and out of that desire, presidential primaries were

33. *Ibid.*, 20-23.

34. Davis, *U.S. Presidential Primaries*, 11-12.

35. Marshall, *Presidential Nominations in a Reform Age*, 22.

36. Candice Millard, *Destiny of the Republic: A Tale of Madness, Medicine and the Murder of a President* (New York: Doubleday, 2011), 30-47.

born.³⁷ Initially adopted in only a few states, by 1916 over half of the delegates to both the Republican and Democratic conventions were selected by primary elections, a trend that would not be repeated again until 1972.³⁸ Between 1916 and 1972, the role of primaries remained limited and the party convention held onto control of the nominating process. In 1924, Former Treasury Secretary William McAdoo won nine of twelve of the Democratic Party's primary contests but lost the nomination during the convention to John W. Davis on the record-setting 103rd ballot.³⁹ Davis had not appeared on a single primary ballot and lost the general election to Calvin Coolidge, carrying only Southern states. A similar situation unfolded during the controversial 1968 Democratic National Convention, which resulted in the nomination of Hubert Humphrey, who had not competed in the party's primaries. Following the withdrawal of incumbent president Lyndon Johnson and the assassination of Robert Kennedy, anti-Vietnam War candidate Eugene McCarthy had won the majority of the primary contests but was passed over by party delegates in favor of Humphrey. The backlash during and after the convention was severe and Humphrey lost the general election to Richard Nixon.⁴⁰

The 1968 Democratic National Convention would have the effect of permanently altering the mechanisms for presidential nominations. In response to the controversial

37. Marshall, *Presidential Nominations in a Reform Age*, 26.

38. Davis, *U.S. Presidential Primaries*, 14.

39. Robert K. Murray, *The 103rd Ballot: Democrats and the Disaster in Madison Square Garden* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976).

40. Dominic Sandbrook, *Eugene McCarthy: The Rise and Fall of Postwar American Liberalism* (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 214-217; 225.

convention, Democratic Party Chairman Fred Harris recommended the creation of a commission to propose reforms to the nominating process.⁴¹ This commission came to be called the McGovern-Fraser commission for its two chairmen, George McGovern of South Dakota and Donald Fraser of Minnesota. The commission recommended a more transparent and primary-driven nomination process.⁴² The results of the commission altered both Democratic and Republican politics, guaranteeing that from 1972 onward, the majority of convention delegates would be selected by primary campaigns.⁴³ In addition to altering the nominating process, the McGovern-Fraser commission shifted the stage for intraparty disputes from national convention halls to state fairgrounds, community diners, and high school gymnasiums around the country.

The rhetorics of intraparty factionalism and *party repair* recur throughout American political history. To develop a thematic and hermeneutic understanding of these rhetorics requires identifying campaigns that provide prime examples of intraparty division and embody some of the diversity present in this rich rhetorical tradition. The presidential elections of 1884 and 1948 stand apart as exemplars of the rhetoric of intraparty division and party repair along with 2016. These campaigns in different centuries span the public nominating models throughout American history, with 1884 exemplifying the traditional convention model of candidate selection; 1948, a

41. L. Sandy Maisel, "Between Light and Shadow: The Political Context," in *The Life of the Parties: Activists in Presidential Politics*, ed. Ronald Rapoport, Alan I. McGlennon, and John Abramowitz (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2015), 29-42.

42. Davis, *U.S. Presidential Primaries*, 22-23.

43. *Ibid.*, 14.

convention-driven process with only secondary primaries; and 2016, a primary-driven process with a secondary convention. The campaigns further open the possibility of critiquing their respective “party systems,” with 1884 traditionally understood as representing the third party system, 1948, the fifth party system, and 2016, the sixth. The parties facing intraparty division also vary across these election cycles, with the Mugwumps challenging the Republican establishment in 1884 and Dixiecrats and Progressives challenging the Democratic Party in 1948.

Most importantly, these campaigns were among the most striking manifestations of intraparty polarization in American history. Henry Wallace’s Progressive Party, Cleveland’s Mugwumps and Thurmond’s Dixiecrats all represent dramatic shifts in the political landscape with lasting influence on American elections, and yet none have been labeled as “realignments.” Nominees responded to these movements using a range of rhetorical strategies, both successful and unsuccessful. The Never Trump movement of 2016 demonstrates the continued significance of party repair and the potential for party bolters to shape the national conversation. If scholars hope to explain rhetoric in national politics, then understanding the rifts within parties will be as important as examining the rising rhetoric of interparty polarization. This monograph addresses these intraparty dynamics by turning attention to questions of identification, organizing, and organizational rhetoric.

Study Overview

This study will analyze a variety of campaign materials from party bolters, party loyalists, and party nominees in order to better understand intraparty factionalism and party repair. The goals of this study are to examine the unique characteristics of party

repair in American politics and to investigate the role of organizational identification in political parties. By examining the rhetoric of party nominees and party leaders, I hope to reveal the strategies of identification that allow candidates and factionalist movements to navigate the rhetorical tensions between group identity, principles, and partisanship. From this theoretical foundation, critics may discover unique attributes of media and campaign events within and beyond political primaries.

Chapter two describes the extant literature on political parties and intraparty politics and makes the case that intraparty rhetoric, party bolters, and party repair require increased attention. In addition to presenting the literature on internal party politics, chapter two focuses on the dominant scholarly understanding of each of the campaigns being analyzed. For the 1884 and 1948 campaigns as well as for the recent 2016 election, a robust body of literature exists within the field of political communication, but also in associated disciplines of history and political science. Bringing together these related bodies of literature suggests the need for a rhetorical focus on the campaigns being discussed.

Chapter three focuses on the method of rhetorical criticism and the key debates at the core of this scholarly enterprise. In addition to the literature on intraparty politics, the development of rhetorical theory and criticism sheds considerable light on the need for a rhetorical approach to the subject matter. Chapter three briefly traces the history and development of rhetorical criticism with an eye toward situating this project within the broader discipline. Additionally, chapter three addresses several of the core controversies of modern rhetorical criticism, including the debate over the nature of the rhetorical situation and the role of identification in rhetorical criticism. Finally, chapter three turns

to questions of historical methods and text selection. The texts selected for each campaign cycle will be justified along with a description of the thematic analysis used in the early investigation of the historical record.

Chapter four analyzes the rhetoric of intraparty division and repair in the 1884 presidential election. This chapter briefly describes the rhetoric of Mugwumps, who found themselves in opposition to the nominee of the Republican Party, James G. Blaine. Analysis of Mugwump rhetoric is drawn primarily from the published speeches and letters by Mugwump leaders including George William Curtis, Moorfield Storey, Carl Schurz, Thomas Nast, and Henry Ward Beecher. The second half of the chapter focuses on the rhetoric of Blaine and his vice-presidential nominee John A. Logan and their response to the growing tide of intraparty division. This rhetoric was drawn primarily from T.B. Boyd's compilation of Blaine and Logan speeches from the campaign, published just after its conclusion.⁴⁴ Additional Blaine and Logan references are taken from the archives of *The New York Times*, the *New York Sun*, and other newspapers which found themselves at the epicenter of the Mugwump movement. Chapter four also turns to Blaine's most ardent defenders (sometimes dubbed "Blainiacs") including *New York Tribune* editor Whitelaw Reid.

Chapter five focuses on the election of 1948 and the rhetoric of incumbent president Harry Truman as he attempted to win the election of 1948 despite great intraparty opposition from two identity groups within the Democratic Party. Rhetoric from the Progressives and Dixiecrats is drawn primarily from the Henry A. Wallace

44. Thomas B. Boyd, *The Blaine and Logan Campaign of 1884*, (Chicago: J. L. Regan & Co., 1884).

Collection housed at the University of Iowa and the Strom Thurmond Collection at Clemson University. The core of the party repair analysis focuses on Truman's rhetoric along his national speaking tour. A sizeable portion of these texts come from the archives of the Harry S. Truman presidential library in Independence, Missouri, and from Steve Neal's edited volume, *Miracle of '48: Harry Truman's Major Campaign Speeches & Selected Whistle-Stops*.⁴⁵ Again, special attention is given to rhetoric focused on internal divisions and/or the candidacies of Strom Thurmond and Henry Wallace.

Chapter six attempts to summarize the major findings from these two elections and advance an alternative explanation to the realignment model of partisan identification rooted in intraparty factionalism and party repair. In the process, I seek to uncover what the movements of 1884 and 1948 can teach scholars about the election of 2016. Finally, I discuss the role of associative morality and populism within the study of partisanship and organizational identification.

45. Steve Neal, *Miracle of '48: Harry Truman's Major Campaign Speeches & Selected Whistle-Stops*, (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2003).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The study of political parties and the factions that emerge out of them dates back centuries, but the rhetorical understanding of these organizations is largely relegated to analysis of individual candidates and individual campaigns. While much is understood about political parties generally, the ways in which parties define themselves and their movements in relation to other movements remains a significant blind spot for rhetorical scholarship. This chapter highlights three major shortcomings with the extant literature. First, scholars of political rhetoric do not understand political parties as symbolically constructed organizations. Second, the discipline has little understanding of the relationship between parties and the factionalist movements that emerge in response to them. Finally, critics do not yet understand the rhetoric of party repair. I begin by outlining the defining characteristics of parties, factions, and social movement, before turning to the literature on eight movements from American history that provide a foundation for the study of party repair.

Political Parties and their Divisions: A Study in Definition

Edmund Burke's definition of political party in *Thoughts on the Causes of the Present Discontents* has guided the study of political parties for nearly two and a half centuries.¹ Today Burke's definition occupies a prominent place in the leading undergraduate textbooks on parties and is regularly cited in the scholarly literature as an

1. Edmund Burke, *Thoughts on the Causes of the Present Discontents* in *The Works of the Right Honorable Edmund Burke*, 4th ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1871), I 530.

authoritative definition.² Burke defines party as, “a body of men [sic] unified, for promoting by their joint endeavors the national interest, upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed.”³ As illustrated by this definition, unity, agreement, and shared purpose were, for Burke, the hallmarks of political parties. But this understanding of parties as coherent movements, built on some level of agreement, was challenged in Burke’s own political life.

Ironically, in the late 1780s and early 1790s, just as divisions among the members of Washington’s cabinet in the United States were beginning to fester, Burke found himself embroiled in one of the most heated intraparty rivalries in the history of the Western world. Divisions within the already fractured Whig Party in British Parliament were exacerbated by a split between Burke and his long-time intraparty ally, Charles James Fox.⁴ The growing divisions within the party and Burke’s disagreement with the Whig stance on the French Revolution prompted him to author *An Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs* in 1791.⁵ In the text, Burke highlights the intraparty divisions among

2. Torun Dewan and Francesco Squintani, "In Defense of Factions." *American Journal of Political Science* 60, no. 4 (2016), 860-881; Marjorie Randon Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, 12th ed. (New York: Pearson/Longman), 7; Brian F. Schaffner, *Politics, Parties, and Elections in America*, 7th ed. (Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning), 4.

3. E. Burke, *The Present Discontents*, I 530.

4. Loren Reid, *Charles James Fox: A Man for the People* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1969), 251-271.

5. Edmund Burke, *An Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs: In Consequence of Some Late Discussions in Parliament, Relative to the Reflections on the French Revolution*, 1791, 3rd ed. (London: J. Dodsley Pall-Mall, 1791).

Whigs. The picture of party presented in Burke's 1791 text can be read in stark contrast to his oft-cited 1770 definition. In *An Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*, Burke attempts to reunite the Whig Party and drive it away from its support of the French Revolution.⁶ He acknowledges the intraparty divisions and seems to accept their inevitability while still pushing the party away from its revolutionary impulses. Whereas in 1770 Burke stressed elements of unity and agreement in offering a robust defense of political parties as institutions, in 1791 Burke was engaging in the rhetorical tradition of *party repair*.

For the purposes of this dissertation project, *party repair* is defined as a particular form of rhetoric utilized by parties and party leaders in response to internal factions and divisions. Burke was participating in the rhetoric of party repair to the extent that he was engaged in a debate over the meaning of the Whig Party label and the significance of intraparty rivalries in shaping its meaning.

Parties are rhetorically constructed, and even long-standing definitions of political party, such as Burke's, are complicated by such rhetorical construction and by partisan identification. Scholarly definitions of political parties, interest groups, factions, and social movements are all implicated by intraparty political movements and by the roles that such movements play within the larger institutions. More contemporary definitions of party have come closer to acknowledging the complexity of these voluntary institutions. For example, V.O. Key famously suggested a tripartite definition of party, emphasizing that parties are comprised of a *party organization*, a *party in the electorate*,

6. Ibid., 1-143.

and a party in government.⁷ *Party organizations* include the formal leadership of the party, as well as elites employed by the party or otherwise directly engaged in the work of the party as it seeks to secure electoral victories. The *party in the electorate* refers to citizens who, formally or informally, identify with the political party. Finally, *the party in government* refers to those elected officials who have secured their offices through party affiliation and continue to actively pursue the party's objectives. While for Key, these parts work in concert to create and define the party, conflict often emerges between them that highlights the importance of intraparty factionalism.

One of the major disputes in the modern Republican Party illustrates how factional cleavages are reinforced by the tripartite division of parties. The rhetoric of the Tea Party continuously challenged the Republican Party in government and the Republican National Committee with the claim that Republican leaders are out of touch with the party in the electorate. For example, in a 2009 interview with CNN, Tea Party Express Co-Chair Amy Kremer said, "We're not going to sit back and just let the Republican Party hand us the nominee. We're going to choose the nominee." She went on to say, "We're sick of the Republican Party handing us candidates who are not true conservatives."⁸ Kremer's challenge illustrates that intraparty factions may locate the site of controversy, not as a split between members of the party within the electorate, or even with opposing factions that cut across all three parts of the party structure, but instead as

7. V.O. Key Jr., *Politics, Parties, and Pressure Groups*, 2nd ed. (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1947), 280-281, 493-494, 663-722.

8. Amy Kremer in "Angry Electorate Helps Sustain Tea Party" by Rachel Streitfeld, *CNN Politics*, September 12, 2011, <http://www.cnn.com/2011/POLITICS/09/11/tea.party.now/index.html>.

a contest between the party in the electorate and the party in government or between the party in the electorate and the party organization.

Beyond Key's recognition of the complexity of party in its various forms and functions, scholars have begun to appreciate the significance of symbolic construction in defining political parties. William Nisbet Chambers argues that a political party is, "a relatively durable social formation which seeks offices or power in government, exhibits a structure or organization which links leaders at the centers of government to a significant popular following in the political arena and its local enclaves, and generates in-group perspectives or at least symbols of identification and loyalty."⁹ Nisbet's definition recognizes that there is a powerful symbolic component to political parties; however, the definition still depends on the assumption that political parties are generative of these symbols rather than generated by them. In practice, any political party is subject to constant renegotiation and reimagination.¹⁰ The gradual, but nonetheless dramatic, transformation of the Democratic Party on issues of race between 1948 and 2008 illustrates that members of parties, party leaders, and elected party officials can all reshape the definition of a political party over time.

In addition to the tripartite nature of parties, the symbolic construction of these organizations occurs against the backdrop of at least two other structural factors that affect the process of redefining a political party. First, for most of American history,

9. William Nisbet Chambers, *The American Party Systems: Stages of Political Development* 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press), 5.

10. Craig Allen Smith "I Alone" vs. "Stronger Together": Contrasting Visions in the 2016 Nomination Acceptance Addresses," *American Behavioral Scientist* 61, no. 9, 968.

political parties were largely decentralized.¹¹ The decentralized nature of parties gave increased power to state and local party organizations in crafting the goals and platform of the party. As parties have become more nationalized since the 1970s, their available resources have expanded, and congressional and state candidates increasingly depend on these resources from the national party for their campaigns.¹² In addition to being decentralized, the membership structures of American parties are historically weak. In contrast to other democracies around the globe, America's parties have little to no formal membership structure. Only some American states require registered voters to disclose their party identification prior to the date of a primary campaign.¹³ With such lax requirements on partisan affiliation, voters are free to shift allegiances and consequently, to redefine the political party through their movement.

This dissertation seeks to understand the symbolic construction of party and party identity in response to intraparty divisions. The ways in which parties and intraparty factions work to reconcile difference or sway party identity in their direction are part of a form of political party rhetoric that I label *party repair*. Parties engage in party repair in response to and in concert with factions, party bolters, contentious primaries, and independent interest groups. Central to the rhetoric of party repair is an understanding of

11. Joel Paddock, *State & National Parties & American Democracy*, (New York: Peter Lang, 2005), 2; E.E. Schattschneider, *The Semisovereign People*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1960), 10-11.

12. William M. Luch, *The Nationalization of American Politics*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 227-258; Paddock, *State & National Parties*, 2-9.

13. Lisa Young, "Party Members and Intra-Party Democracy," in *The Challenges of Intra-Party Democracy*, eds. William P. Cross and Richard S. Katz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013): 76.

political parties as organizations. The following section outlines some of the available research on the intersection of political and organizational rhetoric.

Parties as Organizations

While political scientists like Key often define party organizations as the formal structures of power within a party (such as the Republican and Democratic National Committees), parties are organizations at all levels, in the sense that they serve the function of organizing. Boulding argues that organizations are “networks of roles interconnected by communication.”¹⁴ In Boulding’s conception, individuals within all three parts of the party fill roles within the broader institution and exist within that organization in relation to one another through communication. Crable argues that all organizations are rhetorical, and that all rhetoric is organizational.¹⁵ Both rhetors and audiences navigate a complex network of organizational affiliations that permeate their discourse. Crable argues that situating rhetoric in its organizational context better accentuates the ontological status of rhetors, who exist in relation to various identities and affiliations.¹⁶ A significant thrust of this dissertation project will depend on the understanding of presidential candidates, party leaders, and voters as engaged in the work of organizing. Rather than reading candidates’ comments as exclusively their own or as

14. Kenneth E. Boulding, *The Organizational Revolution: A Study of the Ethics of Economic Organization*, (New York: Harper & Bros., 1953).

15. Richard E. Crable, “‘Organizational Rhetoric’ as the Fourth Great System: Theoretical, Critical, and Paradigmatic Implications,” *Journal of Applied Communication Research* 18 no. 2 (1990), 115.

16. *Ibid.*, 118.

reflections of their individual identity, the theoretical framework to be proposed by this dissertation will analyze the ways in which political rhetors organize and reorganize political parties through rhetoric. Beyond being simply individual rhetors, candidates speak for larger organizational structures upon which they depend to win elections, secure public support for their policy agendas, and pass legislation once elected.

Kenneth Burke's 'definition of man' [sic] suggests that the move toward organizing is at the core of the human experience and consequently at the core of human symbolic action. Burke describes humans as, "goaded by the spirit of hierarchy (or moved by the sense of order)."¹⁷ Rhetoric, for Burke, is made necessary by the existence of division in human relations.¹⁸ Where division exists, rhetoric is necessary as a means of restoring order and crafting organizational boundaries.¹⁹ Highlighting the relational and organizational components of rhetoric, Burke prefers to understand "rhetoric" as "identification." Identification highlights the associative elements of communication and places rhetors in relation to one another as they are goaded by hierarchy.²⁰

Cheney argues that identification takes four forms within organizational rhetoric.²¹ First, rhetors seek to organize around "common ground."²² In this tactic,

17. Kenneth Burke, *Language as Symbolic Action*, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1966), 1-24.

18. Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives*, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1969), 22.

19. George Cheney, "The Rhetoric of Identification and the Study of Organizational Communication," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 69, (1983), 145.

20. *Ibid.*, 148-150

21. *Ibid.*, 148.

22. *Ibid.*

rhetors highlight shared identities and shared values between speaker and audience. Second, rhetors engage in identification through antithesis, by pointing to an enemy shared by speaker and audience.²³ In this tactic, movements and organizations are often defined in relation to what they are not. By establishing a dichotomy between insiders and outsiders, rhetors strengthen organizational bonds.²⁴ Thirdly, Cheney points to “the assumed or transcendent ‘we,’ ” in which rhetors blur the boundaries between the individual and collective in a way that enforces the assumption that all members of a group share a common perspective.²⁵ The assumed we is inherently ambiguous and benefits from the unclear referent of unity. President Obama’s remarks at the Human Rights Campaign’s National Dinner in 2011 provide an example of the rhetorical power of the assumed we. In the address, Obama relies on the language of ‘we’ through parallel structure, beginning successive thoughts, “We don’t believe in a small America.”²⁶ Obama followed each repetition with an explanation of the problems facing the country socially and economically. Saying, for example, “we don’t believe -- in a small America, where we let our roads crumble, we let our schools fall apart, where we stand by while teachers are laid off and science labs are shut down, and kids are dropping out.”²⁷ While the mission of the Human Right’s Campaign is specifically focused on LGBT equality,

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid., 148-149.

26. Barack Obama, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Barack Obama, 2011*, (Washington: United States Government Publishing Office, 2015), 1189-1191.

27. Ibid

Obama broadened the level of identification using an ‘assumed we’ strategy that defined the audience as allies of both his economic and social platforms.²⁸ In total, the word we, in its various forms appears 73 times in the address.

Finally, Cheney identifies a fourth form of organizational identification rooted in unifying symbols.²⁹ Unifying symbols may draw much of their strength from the same ambiguity of the assumed we, but they become powerful identifiers independent of explicit statements on the part of the organization. Corporate symbols, such as the McDonald’s arches or the Campbell’s soup can provide the foundations for identification with both internal and external audiences. Unifying symbols are often at the heart of political identification. Symbols like the rainbow pride flag for the LGBT community or the Republican elephant are directly tied to identification with the movements they represent. These strategies of common ground, antithesis, the assumed we, and unifying symbols provide a foundation for the study of identification in an organizational context.

King and Anderson highlight the political dimensions of identification in their discussion of the rhetoric of polarization. The authors argue that polarization depends on two, equally significant rhetorical strategies: one of affirmation and another of subversion.³⁰ King and Anderson analyze the rhetoric of Richard Nixon as he attempted to cement divisions between America’s “silent majority” and the counter culture protestors of the 1960s and 1970s. The authors argue that Nixon engaged in a rhetoric of

28. Ibid., 1190.

29. Cheney, “The Rhetoric of Identification,” 154-155.

30. Andrew A. King and Floyd Douglas Anderson. "Nixon, Agnew, and the “Silent Majority”": A Case Study in the Rhetoric of Polarization." *Western Speech* 35, no. 4 (1971): 243-244.

praise (or affirmation) for those in the silent majority, who held and observed wholesome American values, while he attempted to *subvert* the counter culture movements that he portrayed as an existential threat to the silent majority's way of life.³¹ The rhetoric of polarization further emphasizes the significance of antithesis in self-definition by stressing the existence of a common foe. Political parties do not exist merely in the abstract, but rather exist in opposition to one another. King and Anderson's perspective relies on the existence of stark in-group/out-group division. Within American politics, such polarized divisions often, but not always, emerge along partisan boundaries. Partisanship, as a specific form of polarization, relies on division between members of the major political parties. Partisanship's viability as a form of polarization is made more powerful through the endurance of political parties as social institutions.³² Despite the strength of these political associations, partisanship does break down; and those who leave their respective parties, known as *party bolters*, represent a unique challenge to traditional understandings of polarization and partisanship.

Parties as 'Faced' Organizations

As a pioneer in the field of corporate public relations, Ivy Lee is credited with advancing the concept of a corporate spokesperson. Sproule notes, "An important part of Lee's approach was to give a human face to the otherwise impersonal institutional voice of corporate suasion."³³ Certainly Lee's advocacy of this human face for a corporate actor

31. *Ibid.*, 245-253.

32. Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, 12-13.

33. Michael J. Sproule, "The New Managerial Rhetoric and the Old Criticism." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 74, no. 4 (1988), 468-486.

has dramatically transformed much of organizational rhetoric.³⁴ However, the idea of a faced organization is not new from the perspective of party politics. Parties have long been defined by a public face. Despite Washington's reservations about political parties, Hamilton was able to cast Washington as the face of the early American faction that would become the Federalist Party by relying on Washington's status as a military hero and showcasing perceived slights by Jefferson.³⁵ Hamilton and Jefferson would ultimately become the public figures most associated with their respective political movements in America's first party system, but during his time in office, President Madison was perceived as the Republican Party's leader.³⁶ The significance of a party leader and public face has grown with time.³⁷ In the 19th century, songs like *Hunters of Kentucky* and *Tippecanoe and Tyler Too* celebrated candidates as the heroic leaders of their respective parties.³⁸ In the Gilded Age, party bosses also often functioned as public

34. Sproule, "The New Managerial Rhetoric and the Old Criticism," 468-470.

35. William Nisbet Chambers, *The First Party System: Federalists and Republicans*, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1972), 51.

36. J. C. A. Stagg, "James Madison and the 'Malcontents': The Political Origins of the War of 1812." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 33, no. 4 (1976), 560.

37. James W. Ceaser, Glen E. Thurow, Jeffrey Tulis and Joseph M. Bessette, "The Rise of the Rhetorical Presidency," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 11, no. 2 (1981), 166-167.

38. Lynn H. Parsons, *The Birth of Modern Politics. Andrew Jackson, John Quincy Adams, and the Election of 1828*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 160; Benjamin S. Schoening and Eric T. Kasper, *Don't Stop Thinking About the Music: The Politics of Songs and Musicians in Presidential Campaigns*, (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2012) 41-46.

faces for their respective parties.³⁹ Throughout American history, scholars and popular media have spoken of presidents and presidential nominees as leaders of their respective parties.⁴⁰ When the opposing party controls the White House, the highest-ranking government official often becomes the public face of the political movement. During presidential elections, the presidential nominee is treated as the *de facto* leader of the party.⁴¹

Defining the ‘face of the party’ has not always been without controversy. In March of 2009, with no Republican president or presidential candidate and Democrats in control of both houses of Congress, a debate erupted over ‘the face of the Republican Party’ that exposed both the significance of factionalism and the lack of centralized power in American political parties. With no obvious leader in government, clever Democratic lawmakers quickly labeled conservative talk show host Rush Limbaugh the ‘face of the Republican Party.’⁴² Republican National Committee Chair Michael Steele, the first African American to hold his post, took offense to the label, telling CNN’s D.L. Hughley, “I’m the *de facto* leader of the Republican Party,” and dismissed Rush Limbaugh as merely “an entertainer.”⁴³ Limbaugh fired back on his radio program

39. John H. Sloan, “Bryan Versus ‘Bosses’ at Baltimore,” *Southern Speech Journal* 32 (1967), 260-272.

40. Stagg, “James Madison and the ‘Malcontents,’” 560.

41. Mary E. Stuckey, “American Elections and the Rhetoric of Political Change: Hyperbole, Anger, and Hope in U.S. Politics,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 20 no. 4 (2017), 671.

42. Adam Nagourney, “After Tussle on G.O.P. Title, an Apology to Limbaugh” *New York Times*, March 2, 2009, <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/03/us/politics/03limbaugh.html>.

43. *Ibid.*

saying, “Michael Steele, you are head of the RNC. You are not head of the Republican Party.”⁴⁴ He continued, “It’s time, Mr. Steele, for you to go behind the scenes and start doing the work that you were elected to do instead of trying to be some talking head media star, which you’re having a tough time pulling off.”⁴⁵ The dispute between Limbaugh and Steele illustrates both the difficulty of identifying a party leader when there are no formal leaders within the party in government and the significance of face in party identity. Even while nominees and presidents often represent the face of the party, they are still engaged in a defining struggle with the remaining factions and interest groups across all three parts of the party system.⁴⁶

The bulk of the extant literature on political campaign rhetoric focuses on candidates as individuals and ignores their organizational identity as party leaders and as the face of their respective party.⁴⁷ Conceptualizing nominees as organizational actors is essential to understanding the role of party repair in divided coalitions. Crable flips

44. Rush Limbaugh “A Few Words for Michael Steele,” *The Rush Limbaugh Show*, March 2, 2009, https://www.rushlimbaugh.com/daily/2009/03/02/a_few_words_for_michael_steele/.

45. Ibid.

46. Stuckey, “American Elections and the Rhetoric of Political Change,” 671.

47. See for example: Robert C. Rowland and John M. Jones. “One dream: Barack Obama, race, and the American dream.” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 14, no. 1 (2011): 125-154. Ceaser, Thurow, Tulis and Bessette acknowledge some role of parties in presidential leadership but seem to present them still as outside forces acting upon the presidency in, Ceaser, Thurow, Tulis and Bessette, “The Rise of the Rhetorical Presidency,” 162. Scacco and Coe make the argument that the presidency has permeated many more facets of life, but frame partisanship still from the perspective of the national audience acting upon the presidency in, Joshua M. Scacco and Kevin Coe, “The Ubiquitous Presidency: Toward a New Paradigm for Studying Presidential Communication” *International Journal of Communication* 10, (2016), 2014–2037

Kenneth Burke's pentadic terminology by arguing that rhetors can no longer be thought of actors in the Burkean sense.⁴⁸ Instead, organizations are often the actors and individual rhetors are the agencies used to achieve the organization's purpose. The significance of winning the presidential nomination of one of the two major parties in the United States is illustrative of Crable's point. While nothing precludes nonaligned candidates from seeking the presidency (many do), securing the nomination of the party transforms that candidate's electoral chances. Crable suggests that organizational identity is inescapable, even for actors striving for nonalignment.⁴⁹ An independent candidate for the presidency is still the leader of a campaign and the symbolic face of a campaign committee or newly formed political party. Such was the case with the Reform Party, which, between 1996 and 2004 assumed the policy platforms of its popular third-party nominees including right-leaning Pat Buchanan and left-leaning Ralph Nader. In appeals for support, a new party leader seeks to organize a coalition of voters that is powerful enough to elect the candidate to a role within a different organization (the executive or legislative branch of government). Crable argues, "Rhetors who actually represent purely their own views may be extinct if they ever existed."⁵⁰ The author suggests that scholars shift from imagining rhetors as actors in the Burkean sense to understanding them as more analogous to actors in a film, tasked with reading lines that are not their own.

As the 'face of the party,' nominees may serve as the agencies of the organizations to which they are now a part, but they also play a role in defining those

48. Crable, "Organizational Rhetoric' as the Fourth Great System," 120-121.

49. *Ibid.*, 114-119.

50. *Ibid.* 120.

organizations.⁵¹ In at least some cases, the factions analyzed here bolted from their party because of what the party's selected nominee communicated about party identity. One of the most prominent voices among 'Never Trump' party defectors, Jay Nordlinger wrote, "But a presidential nominee is the face of the party: its symbol, its representative, on the national stage and the world stage. Every party has its clowns, fools, and embarrassments. But if they are down-ballot, it doesn't matter so much. In nominating someone for president, a party says, 'This is who we are.'"⁵² Presidential nominees, of course, are not alone in representing the party label, and conflicting visions of party often emerge among candidates in down-ballot races and incumbent office holders not up for reelection. The presidential nominee becomes an organizational actor engaged in the difficult rhetorical task of balancing identities and interests among a complex range of actors, including the party organization, party in government, party in the electorate, intraparty factions, interest groups, and social movements. The following section focuses on just some of these stakeholders by summarizing the extant literature on factions, interest groups, and social movements.

Factions

Political parties are distinguished from other types of political movements and organizations by their breadth, endurance, and role as political symbols.⁵³ However,

51. Sidney Milkis, *The President and the Parties: The Transformation of the American Party System since the New Deal*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

52. Jay Nordlinger, "#ExGOP: The Shock of Disaffiliation" *National Review*, June 7, 2016, <https://www.nationalreview.com/2016/06/exgop-shock-disaffiliation-leaving-gop>.

53. Hershey, *Party Politics in America*, 12-13.

parties do not exist in a vacuum. Factions, social movements, and interest groups all pull political parties in new directions and shape the interests, structures, and platforms of these institutions.⁵⁴ The study of factions in particular predates the emergence of formal political parties. In Federalist 10, Madison points to factions, rather than parties, as the source of greatest concern for the young democracy.⁵⁵ Chambers suggests that Madison's discussion of factions was typical of the early American lexicon, noting that, prior to the late 1780s, it was unusual to speak of anything other than factions in government and elections.⁵⁶ While factions in the Madisonian sense may refer to yet uninstitutionalized political movements, factions, as conceptualized in this project, are better understood in Belloni and Beller's terms of "existing within interest groups or parties."⁵⁷ Factions fracture movements and create divisions within larger organizations. Belloni and Beller further argue that, while factions exist within parties, factions are not the same as political parties or even as interest groups. Factions are distinguished by an element of impermanence and informality as well as an element of shared identity with the

54. Stuckey, "American Elections and the Rhetoric of Political Change," 669-672.

55. James Madison, *Federalist No.10*, in *The Federalist Papers*, ed. Clinton Rossiter (New York: New American Library, 1961), 77-84.

56. Chambers, *The First Party System*, 3.

57. Frank P. Belloni and Dennis C. Beller, *Faction Politics: Political Parties and Factionalism in Comparative Perspective*, (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 1978), 3; Stewart, Smith, and Denton argue that these uninstitutionalized, or perhaps pre-institutionalized, movements are better conceptualized using the language of social movements rather than factions, but also argue that social movements themselves inevitably produce internal factions. Charles Stewart, Craig Allen Smith, and Robert E. Denton Jr. *Persuasion and Social Movements* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press Inc., 1984).

organization from which they emerged.⁵⁸ Factions either fade as intraparty exigencies are resolved or they become institutionalized as new parties or interest groups if exigencies persist.⁵⁹

Belloni and Beller contend that the study of factions has been hindered by negative connotations that once plagued the study of parties and interest groups.⁶⁰ While a robust body of scholarship now examines the latter institutions, factions have only recently emerged as an advanced area of study. Roback and James further note that the study of factions in the United States has proven particularly illusive, in part, because of the decentralized nature of American political parties and in part because of the vast diversity in factions' forms, causes, and outcomes.⁶¹ For example, the emergence of party machines in the mid-19th century created factions with intersecting geographic, ideological, and economic interests. In the 20th century, intra-party factions emerged over issues of race and eventually coalitions of social, economic, and military conservatives came to define the Republican Party.⁶²

58. Belloni and Beller note: "Key's objective in studying faction structure was to demonstrate an inherent inferiority of factions in comparison to parties." Belloni and Beller, *Faction Politics*, 10.

59. Ibid.

60. Frank P. Belloni and Dennis C. Beller "The Study of Party Factions as Competitive Political Organizations" *The Western Political Quarterly* 29, no. 4 (1976), 531-549.

61. Thomas H. Roback and Judson L. James, "Party Factions in the United States" in *Faction Politics: Political Parties and Factionalism in Comparative Perspective*, eds. Frank P. Belloni and Dennis C. Beller (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 1978), 329-355.

62. Susan Currie Sivek, "Editing Conservatism: How National Review Magazine Framed and Mobilized a Political Movement," *Mass Communication & Society* 11, no. 3 (2008), 248-274.

Roback and James' significant theoretical work sketches the characteristics, development, and trajectories of factions in the United States.⁶³ The authors differentiate between intraparty tendencies and intraparty factions. Tendencies, they argue, reflect general predispositions of certain types of voters within a party, for example, the “wings” of the party or those who are particularly fond of one candidate. Factions, by contrast, have seven distinguishing characteristics.

Factions should approach the minimal characteristics of a rudimentary organization and possess (1) explicit consensually shared major goals; (2) a formal structure of authority that facilitates the activities of the cadre; (3) technical expertise to aid in the mobilization of support; (4) temporal durability; (5) internal and external communications [sic] networks; (6) an incentive system to reward members and sympathizers; and (7) a group of ideology around which the motives of often diverse types of activists can cohere.⁶⁴

Factions, then, occupy the space between party tendencies and the parties themselves.

Because factions in the United States preceded parties, early factions took three distinct paths in their development.⁶⁵ First, some factions coalesced with other movements or factions to form political parties. For example, Hamilton, through correspondence, created networks of engagement across the young country, allowing his faction to subsume the concerns of his outer network and lay the foundation of the nation's first political party.⁶⁶ Still, other factions became interest groups and sought to

63. Roback and James, “Party Factions in the United States,” 329-355.

64. *Ibid.*, 330-331.

65. *Ibid.*

66. Chambers, *The First Party System*, 45-56.; Roback and James, “Party Factions in the United States,” 330.

influence government independent of the party system.⁶⁷ Developing into interest groups remains a rare but possible outcome for factions even in the modern era. Interest groups are independent of political parties and Rasmussen and Lindeboom define them as, “an association of individuals or organizations, usually formally organized, that on the basis of one or more shared concerns, attempts to influence public policy.”⁶⁸ Interest groups serve many similar functions to parties, but do not formally draft or nominate candidates for public office. Finally, as a third path, early American factions persisted as factions within the new “party system.”⁶⁹

In the aftermath of the creation of the party system, some factions continued to develop along this schema: forming parties, becoming interest groups, or remaining factions within the larger party structure. However, the creation of party competition altered the trajectory of factions and prompted Roback and James to propose a four-step model of factional activity.⁷⁰ They argue that factions first emerge out of the aggregation and articulation of salient concerns.⁷¹ From this first stage, a party tendency develops. If those tendencies begin to solidify, they may next take on the characteristics of a party faction, including establishing shared goals and an organizational structure. Once a faction is formed, it may take one of three paths. First, key exigencies may be resolved,

67. Roback and James, “Party Factions in the United States,” 330-331.

68. Anne Rasmussen and Gert-Jan Lindeboom, “Interest group–party linkage in the twenty-first century: Evidence from Denmark, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom” *European Journal of Political Research* 52, no. 2, (2013) 264-289.

69. Roback and James, “Party Factions in the United States,” 330-331.

70. *Ibid.*, 348.

71. *Ibid.*, 348-350.

and the faction may be folded back into the party. Second, the factional concerns could continue to fester, and the faction could break off from the original party to create its own party, as was the case with Thurmond's Dixiecrats and Wallace's Progressives in 1948. Finally, the movement could force the party toward realignment.⁷²

This final possibility has been a recent source of interest for rhetorical critics seeking to understand the symbolic construction of parties and social movements. V.O. Key's theory of realignment suggests that *critical elections* result in dramatic shifts in the partisan makeup of the country and reshape the party system, but, as I argue, the symbolic movements necessary for such transformations occur over time and rely on a complex set of rhetorical strategies.⁷³ The strategies of realignment provide a useful starting point for this dissertation project's exploration of party bolters and party repair, but the notion of repairing one's political party opens scholarly understanding of "realignment" well beyond rare, critical elections. Repair happens in a variety of contexts, which may or may not suggest realignment as traditionally understood, however, intraparty rhetoric occurring well before "critical elections" may open scholarly understanding of how parties sort and realign through constitutive rhetoric.

Stuckey analyzes the rhetoric of past partisan alignments to make sense of the present uncertainty regarding the party system in the aftermath of the emergence of Donald Trump.⁷⁴ Stuckey points to a variety of rhetorical strategies that come to the

72. Ibid.

73. V.O. Key, Jr., "A Theory of Critical Elections," *The Journal of Politics* 17, no. 1 (1955), 3-18; Stuckey, "American Elections and the Rhetoric of Political Change," 667-672.

74. Stuckey, "American Elections and the Rhetoric of Political Change," 672-687

surface just before such transformations, including hyperbole, vagueness, and nostalgia.⁷⁵ Stuckey makes the case that the rhetoric of Donald Trump and the surrounding movement directly mirror the language of past realignments and seems to suggest that Donald Trump may be the harbinger of a new realignment.

Stuckey treats realignment as the foregone conclusion of the rise in intraparty distrust, anger, and shifting political imaginaries, yet many of the movements highlighted in Stuckey's analysis did not occur at moments of partisan *realignment* classically defined. Reagan's election in 1980, for example, did not dramatically transform the American political party landscape in the way that Jackson's election in 1828 or Lincoln's election in 1860 arguably did. While a handful of scholars point to 1980 as a time of partisan realignment, others understand Reagan as simply applying new language to a Republican ideology that has existed since the 1930s.⁷⁶ It is possible, in retrospect, to isolate Reaganism as a harbinger of partisan change as his memory has animated much of Republican rhetoric since the 1980s; and Stuckey certainly suggests that Donald Trump is a harbinger of such change, but realignment in the aftermath of Trump is far from certain. More importantly, intraparty divisions and transformations are an important part of American elections regardless of the large-scale shifts they may signal. Intraparty movements are common in American political history, but only a handful have transformed the party system to the extent that they have been labeled "critical elections."

75. 677-686.

76. Sean Trende, "Are we in an Electoral Realignment?" in *Barack Obama and the New America: The 2012 Election and the Changing Face of Politics*, ed. Larry J. Sabato (Lanham: Rowan & Littlefield, 2013), 177-194.

Roback and James offer the language necessary to understand the development and trajectories of these movements, by proposing a variety of possible outcomes.⁷⁷ The second half of this literature review highlights the significant diversity within partisan defections and intraparty movements. A central lesson of the extant literature may be that intraparty factions and social movements produce far from uniform outcomes.

Key, Schattschneider, and Burnham all argue that partisan realignments occur in stages, which depend on the movements of intraparty identity groups or coalitions.⁷⁸ Recent scholarship challenges the notion of realignment that undergirds Stuckey's argument by suggesting that partisan shifts occur gradually across time rather than during decisive, tipping-point elections.⁷⁹ Sean Trende takes the argument further, suggesting that the realignment model of politics can explain very little, and that shifts, when they occur, are the consequence of a unique and often unpredictable network of effects that occur both constantly and gradually across time.⁸⁰ The extant scholarship's focus on partisan realignment theory may have led it to neglect significant components in the symbolic construction of parties. The notion that parties are subject to constant negotiation and reinvention is central to the theories of *disidentification* and *party repair*.

77. Roback and James, "Party Factions in the United States," 330-331

78. Walter Dean Burnham, *Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics*, (New York: W.W. Norton Company, 1970), 175-193; Key, "A Theory of Critical Elections," 3-18; Schattschneider, *The Semisovereign People*, 114-128.

79. David R. Mayhew, *Electoral Realignments: A Critique of An American Genre*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 1-42.

80. Trende, "Are we in an Electoral Realignment?" 177-194.

Nominees and party leaders often respond to such movements with an eye toward preserving the institutions they have been selected to lead.

Especially in their early stages, factions function as a form of social movement. Social movements occupy their own, unique area of academic inquiry with a variety of theoretical assumptions. The following section outlines the relevant research on social movements and their theoretical nature.

Social Movements

Social movement theorizing features prominently in the studies of individual factions that are summarized in the second half of this literature review. Stewart, Smith, and Denton express concern about the overapplication of the “social movement” label, but themselves apply it to the type of intraparty factions analyzed in this dissertation project.⁸¹ The authors define a social movement as “an organized, uninstitutionalized, and significantly large collectivity that is created to bring about or to resist a program for change in societal norms and values, operates primarily through persuasive strategies, and is countered by an established order.”⁸² Several of the factions analyzed in this dissertation can easily be classified as social movements, while others quickly adopted an institutional structure that placed them outside Stewart, Smith, and Denton’s conception of social movements.

81. See for example 6th edition treatment of the Tea Party. Charles Stewart, Craig Allen Smith, and Robert E. Denton Jr. *Persuasion and Social Movements* 6th ed. (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2012), 66-68.

82. Stewart, Smith, and Denton, *Persuasion and Social Movements* 1st ed, 14.

The most important contribution of social movement scholarship to the understanding of factions and their role within larger political parties is Stewart, Smith, and Denton's five stages in the life cycle of a social movement. The authors propose that movements advance through five stages. The first stage they refer to as "genesis."⁸³ In the genesis stage, the concerns that will come to dominate the social movement are simple rumblings that are considered unimportant by those in power and have reached very low levels of social awareness. In stage two, these rumblings grow into social unrest.⁸⁴ Social unrest is characterized by some elements of agitation and persuasion, but appeals are largely directed at leaders still perceived as rational and willing to respond to the group's concerns once they are made aware of them. Stage three is "enthusiastic mobilization."⁸⁵ In this stage, the social movement has widespread adoption and members view the movement as essential to realizing their collective goal. Stewart, Smith, and Denton describe this stage as increasingly optimistic and dependent on "we-they" distinctions."⁸⁶ The fourth stage in the authors' model is "maintenance."⁸⁷ In the maintenance stage the social movement struggles to maintain the level of enthusiasm and attention acquired in stage three. It is at this stage that the authors suggest movements either succeed or fall from relevance. The final stage may be most relevant to the examination of party factions

83. Ibid., 37-39.

84. Ibid., 39-41.

85. Ibid., 41-44

86. Ibid., 43.

87. Ibid., 44-46.

and party repair. The final stage is “termination.”⁸⁸ The authors argue that termination of a movement is inevitable but may take one of two forms.

The first form of termination is death of the movement.⁸⁹ Such has been the fate of many of the movements addressed in the literature on intraparty factions. The second option, which mirrors Roback and James’ model, is that the movement will “become another form of collectivity.”⁹⁰ Such was the case for Jackson’s Democratic Party, which split from the Democratic-Republicans and formed its own major-party. A variety of the factions described in this dissertation reached the stage of institutionalization when they became formal parties and put forward presidential candidates to challenge the party from which they split. Still others were absorbed back into the party after key exigencies had been resolved.

Underlying Stewart, Smith, and Denton’s vision of social movement life cycles is a drive for perfection within movements. The authors begin by noting that social movements emerge because individuals “perceive an ‘imperfection’ in the existing order.”⁹¹ The drive for perfection is central to Kenneth Burke’s understanding of rhetoric. Burke’s definition of man [sic] suggests that humans are “rotten with perfection.”⁹² The quest for perfection in rhetoric, for Burke, takes on the form of *entelechy*.⁹³ Entelechy, as

88. Ibid., 46-48.

89. Ibid.

90. Ibid; Roback and James, “Party Factions in the United States,” 330-331.

91. Stewart, Smith, and Denton, *Persuasion and Social Movements* 1st ed, 37-38.

92. Burke, *Language as Symbolic Action*, 16-20.

93. Ibid., 17.

defined by Burke, refers to “such use of symbolic resources that potentialities can be said to attain their perfect fulfillment.”⁹⁴ Stewart, Smith, and Denton’s vision of social movements is that they are imbued from conception with a foundational *telos* toward which they strive. Burke borrows from Aristotle the metaphor of a seed as a way of understanding entelechy. Burke writes, “the seed ‘implicitly contains’ a future conforming to its nature, if the external conditions necessary to such unfolding and fulfilment occur in the right order.”⁹⁵ The life cycle of movements takes on this entelechial character as intraparty factions strive to rid their party of imperfections and move toward the *telos* of the institution. Reed and McKinney argue that entelechy occupies a central place in the rhetoric of intraparty factionalism and that challengers in contentious primaries paint entelechical visions of their party’s future to symbolically sustain a coalition with competing intraparty factions.⁹⁶ Still missing from the study of social movements is an appreciation for the responses to such movements by the institutions they emerged out of. One unique facet of the relationship between faction and party is the presence of party defectors.

The Rhetoric of Defection and Party Bolting

94. Kenneth Burke, *On Human Nature: A Gathering While Everything Flows 1967-1984* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 125.

95. Kenneth Burke, *The Rhetoric of Religion: Studies in Logology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), 246.

96. Joel Lansing Reed and Mitchell S. McKinney. “Affirmation and Subversion: Navigating the Rhetorical Tensions of Polarization in the 2016 Presidential Primary Debates.” Paper presented at the National Communication Association Conference, Dallas, TX, November 2017.

Party bolting and party switching are closely related phenomena occurring in two different parts of the party. Party switching refers to the defection of members of the *party in government*, who either shed their party label or change their affiliations entirely to caucus with the opposing party in congress.⁹⁷ Party bolting refers to the decision of some party members *in the electorate* to cast their vote for an opposing candidate in the general election as a means of protesting their party's nominee. Examinations of the rhetoric of party bolting and party bolters remains sparse. While some attention has been paid to specific movements of party bolters, it is only after those movements become institutionalized as a new party that they come to occupy much scholarly attention. Despite this lack of attention, party bolting remains a risk for political campaigns; and a handful of movements that came to be institutionalized have been a significant point of focus for rhetoricians. Those movements are analyzed in the second half of this literature review. By contrast, a rich body of scholarship focuses on the rhetoric of those who have switched parties in government. The rhetoric of party switching helps to shed further light on the complex negotiation of party identity and may provide a framework for beginning to interrogate the phenomena of party bolting and party repair.

Party switching among elected officials remains relatively rare, but its occurrence can have profound implications for governance.⁹⁸ Yoshinaka argues that party switching can signal partisan realignment or speak to declining levels of partisan polarization.⁹⁹

97. Antoine Yoshinaka, *Crossing the Aisle: Party Switching by U.S. Legislators in the Postwar Era*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 9-11.

98. Yoshinaka, *Crossing the Aisle*, 10-11.

99. *Ibid.*, 12.

While party switching might signal these dramatic changes, party switching might also reveal intrapersonal changes among individual legislators.¹⁰⁰ Whether party switching signals a dramatic shift in partisan alignment is yet to be seen. What is clear is that party switching challenges the existing symbolic environment. Yoshinaka suggests, “By examining closely the decision to switch parties, we gain a better understanding of the *meaning* of party labels for elected officials.”¹⁰¹ Yoshinaka turns to quantitative data to investigate the questions of what party switches may signal for the party’s future; but qualitative, interview data in the same study reveal that those who switched parties considered important questions of meaning and party labels.¹⁰² Candidates switching parties are acted upon by transformations in the meaning of party labels, but also act on those labels as a way of redefining them and reshaping their personal identity and the party’s identity in relation to the label.

Organizational rhetoric speaks to the significance of shifting organizational identities. Shifting partisan affiliations, whether for voters or for elected officials, represents the substantial sorting function of rhetoric. George Cheney and Michael Kramer focus on the question of organizational identity in the context of joining or leaving companies and volunteer groups, but their focus on identity opens up new

100. Timothy P. Nokken, “Party Switching and the Procedural Party Agenda in the US House of Representatives,” in *Political Parties and Legislative Party Switching* eds. William B. Heller and Carol Mershon (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 81-105.

101 Yoshinaka, *Crossing the Aisle*, 13.

102. *Ibid.*, 181-220.

possibilities for understanding parties as organizations and defections as voluntary moves away from those organizations.¹⁰³

Speaking of organizations more generally, and drawing primarily on data from corporations, Kramer identifies four ways that individuals leave organizations.¹⁰⁴ The first, which occurs rarely in the context of political parties, is a *planned exit*. In corporations, or even civic and community organizations, such changes are announced well in advance and may include retirements or moves. The remaining forms of organizational exit can be made more directly analogous to the decision to leave a political party. The first is “a shock resulting in quitting.”¹⁰⁵ These shocks often come in response to revelations of unethical behavior within the organization or dramatic changes in the structure, identity, or functions of the organization.¹⁰⁶ Chapters four and five of this dissertation will reveal instances of factions rhetorically situating themselves as either responding to revelations of unethical behavior or confronting a party the factions claim to no longer recognize. Movements emphasizing the former provide an opportunity to examine the intersection of the ethical and the political, by focusing on moments in American history when a rhetoric of ethics overtook a rhetoric of partisanship in politics.

103. George Cheney, “On the Various and Changing Meanings of Organizational Membership: A Field Study of Organizational Identification,” *Communication Monographs* 50, (1983), 342-362; Michael W. Kramer, *Organizational Socialization: Joining and Leaving Organizations*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010).

104. Kramer, *Organizational Socialization*.

105. Kramer, *Organizational Socialization*, 171-172.

106. *Ibid.*, 172

The latter will speak to the nature of the rhetorical situation and the ways that movements respond when confronted with new perceptions of their partisan identities.

A third approach to leaving an organization, in Kramer's words, is "shock resulting in a job search before quitting."¹⁰⁷ While partisans certainly do not engage in a job search in any traditional sense, they may "go shopping" for new partisan identifiers in response to the previously identified shocks. Shocks may provide the motivation necessary to seek out a new party, but those transformations are not immediate and may slowly materialize over a number of years or election cycles. The final approach identified by Kramer is "gradual disenchantment."¹⁰⁸ In contrast to the previous two approaches, disenchantment is not the product of shocks, but rather a growing distrust or dislike for the organization over time. Certainly, partisan identities can be transformed slowly across time as a product of shifting attitudes. It is for that reason that age is consistently presented as a proxy for partisan identity. For example, the words often misattributed to Winston Churchill but apparently originating with the French jurist Anselme Polycarpe Batbie, "He who is not a républicain at twenty compels one to doubt the generosity of his heart; but he who, after thirty, persists, compels one to doubt the soundness of his mind."¹⁰⁹ Age may not be the only factor contributing to gradual disenchantment. Measured transformations in organizational or individual ideology may

107. Ibid., 173.

108. Ibid., 173-174.

109. Joseph S. Alpert, "Editorial: 'If you are not a Liberal When you are Young, you Have no Heart, and if you are not a Conservative When Old, you Have No Brain'" *The American Journal of Medicine* 129, no. 7 (2016) 647-648.

occur over time and prompt individuals to seek out new organizational identities.¹¹⁰

Gradual disenchantments often prompt individuals to engage with others in a sensemaking process related to their disenchantment.¹¹¹ These conversations may create the groundwork for movements that emerge in the context of an election.

The movements discussed in the second half of this literature review and in chapters four through seven illustrate the complexity of symbolically transforming party identities and the rhetorical give-and-take between intraparty factions and the party leaders tasked with responding to them. The approach that has dominated discussions of intraparty movements has been shaped by a kind of historical determinism that makes it challenging to see connections between movements across American history and parties' responses to them. For example, critics have used the different eras of candidate selection, convention addresses, or "party systems" as the sampling frames for their analysis. As the later chapters of this dissertation will reveal, eras and even audiences are not deterministic of the rhetoric that emerges out of them. Much of the rhetoric of intraparty factionalism has stayed consistent despite transformations in candidate selection methods, party strength, convention styles, and party centralization. A focus on the uniqueness of each era has obscured the significance of shared strategies of identification at work in these political movements and in the rhetoric of party repair.

In the context of realignment, the possibility that historical determinism may obscure connections across time within intraparty factionalism is equally concerning. While some intraparty movements, including those discussed by Stuckey, resulted in

110. Kramer, *Organizational Socialization*, 173-174.

111. *Ibid.*, 174

dramatic partisan realignment as classically defined, many of them did not.¹¹² Furthermore, many of the movements resulting in or responding to realignment, did not have as their central objective shifting the balance of power or ideological makeup of America's major political parties. One of the perils of analyzing such movements with the benefit of hindsight is that it allows the critic to impute the long-term significance of the movements they are analyzing on the rhetoric of the organization, movement, or rhetorical situation out of which that movement emerged. Critics consequently impute the perspective of partisan realignment on movements that were more tethered to an individual electoral context. This hindsight may prevent scholars from identifying the similarities within movements and factions, even when those factions produced dramatically different legacies for the party system.

To better understand the rhetorical literature on these movements and parties' responses, the next section focuses on eight of the most significant intraparty divisions and party defections in American history. While the list of intraparty factions analyzed is far from comprehensive, these eight cases represent the bulk of the extant literature on political parties and their internal divisions. Understanding these movements provides an overview of the dominant modes of thought on political factions and the necessity of analyzing party responses.

The Rhetoric of Intraparty Divisions in American History

Much of the extant literature on intraparty movements and parties' responses to them is built around specific movements and factions. I have identified eight factions that speak to the complexity of intraparty movements and the importance of understanding

112. Stuckey, "American Elections and the Rhetoric of Political Change," 667-672.

both party factionalism and party repair as significant elements of American political discourse. These party movements make up the bulk of the extant literature on party factionalism in the United States. Furthermore, scholarly treatment of these eight cases reflects the dominant theoretical understanding of parties and party movements as rhetorical institutions. While some movements not analyzed here had more lasting effects on the party system, these eight movements highlight the unique attributes of rhetorical theory's treatment of parties and party repair. I start by turning to five 19th century movements that have been a subject of interest for rhetorical critics. First, I describe the scholarship on the divisions within the Democratic-Republican Party that ultimately lead to the splintering off of Jacksonian Democrats. Here I specifically focus on the research on partisan newspapers as defining intraparty divisions. Second, I turn to the divisions within the young Republican Party before and during the American Civil War and Abraham Lincoln's attempts to navigate them. The third factionalist movement analyzed looks at Republican divisions between Stalwarts and Half-Breeds in the post-war era and the Gilded Age. Fourth, I summarize the limited rhetorical scholarship on the Mugwumps, who defected from the Republican Party during the 1884 election between Grover Cleveland and James G. Blaine and who will be the focus of chapter four. The final 19th century intraparty division included in this literature review returns to the Democratic Party and focuses on the 1896 campaign of William Jennings Bryan.

In the 20th century, I survey the literature concerning two intraparty factions. I begin with the conflict between Franklin Delano Roosevelt and fellow Democrat Al Smith over the future of the Democratic Party before turning to the election of 1948 and the two dramatic splits in party, one over civil rights issues, and another on economic

progressivism. After summarizing the extant literature on these two factions, I turn to the 21st century and survey the scholarly literature on the Tea Party movement and the 2016 presidential election.

Across these case studies I point to three central limitations in the academic research. First, the extant literature relies on an overly deterministic model of discourse rooted in party systems and/or party structures rather than framing the movements as engaged in a constant process of redefinition and driven by a shared, underlying approach to identification. Second, scholarship has neglected the organizational functions of nominees as leaders of their respective parties and the influence of organizational rhetoric on understanding party identity and party repair. Finally, the extant literature has done too little to address the ways in which candidates seek to repair their parties or party coalitions in the face of intraparty factionalism and in the aftermath of contentious nominating processes. I begin with Andrew Jackson and the election that would give birth to the Democratic Party.

The Jacksonians

If realigning elections can be said to exist, the election of 1828 is perhaps the most compelling example. A split between two factions of Democratic-Republicans in 1824 resulted in a dramatic transformation of American politics as Andrew Jackson left the Democratic-Republicans to form the Democratic Party. The legacy of the split between Jackson and his fellow Republicans, Henry Clay and John Quincy Adams, created the first of America's modern political parties and arguably redefined the nature of political campaigning for posterity.¹¹³

113. Parsons, *The Birth of Modern Politics*, 45-46; 160.

In 1824, Clay, Adams, and Jackson all ran as Democratic-Republicans and split the party vote along with William Crawford, sending the election to the House of Representatives. As the Speaker of the House, Clay negotiated a deal among the varying coalitions of Republicans to secure the election for Adams, despite Adams receiving fewer popular votes than Jackson in the election. Jackson alleged that a “corrupt bargain” had been struck whereby Clay would become Adams’ Secretary of State in exchange for Clay shifting his supporters to Adams.¹¹⁴ Jackson’s outraged supporters renounced the corruption of their current party and demanded change.¹¹⁵ Their outrage would result in a split between the two factions, an ushering in of the convention system, and arguably a modern form of campaigning.¹¹⁶ While almost no literature has analyzed the attempts of Clay and Adams to respond to Jackson’s claims, a robust body of literature speaks to Jackson’s split from the Republicans and its impact on the political system.

On the question of Jackson’s influence on the American political system, two of the historiographic perspectives diverge. One branch sees Jackson’s movement as an ideological continuation of the agrarian roots of the Republican Party and the other presents Jackson’s movement as driven by persona.¹¹⁷ The ideologically-driven model casts the emergence of the so-called second party system as a reflection of changing

114. *Ibid.*, 109-110.

115. Michael William Pfau, “Conventions of Deliberation? Convention Addresses and Deliberative Containment in the Second Party System” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 9, no. 4, (2006), 640.

116. Parsons, *The Birth of Modern Politics*, 45-46; 160.

117. John Meacham, *American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House*, (New York: Random House, 2008), 356; Robert M. Remini, *The Legacy of Andrew Jackson: Essays on Democracy, Indian Removal, and Slavery*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 8-9.

political attitudes and a desire for a return to the Jeffersonian vision of an agrarian economy with little centralized power.¹¹⁸ The personality-driven model emphasizes Jackson's significance in making American politics a matter of candidate personality and putting Jackson the man, rather than a specific ideology, at the center of American political disputes.¹¹⁹ This latter understanding may become particularly significant in 1884 and 2016, when candidates' personal characteristics became a proxy for organizational identity.

Either vision of Jackson's revolt from the Republican-dominated status quo tells only a portion of the story. Some evidence suggests that the historiographies of Jackson upon which rhetorical critics build their claims are as much shaped by the eras the historians occupied as by the era occupied by Jackson.¹²⁰ Historiographic narratives are their own form of hermeneutic, but rhetorical critics examining the rhetoric of party have occasionally overemphasized the role of contextual factors borrowed from historiography in shaping discourse, even though rhetors and audiences may have perceived them quite differently. Both ideology and personality contributed to the rise of Jackson and the intraparty conflict among Republicans.

118. Historians argue that Jackson saw himself in the ideological mold, driven by a desire to restore Jeffersonian Republicanism. Meacham, *American Lion*, 48.

119. Meacham notes, "Jackson was a transformative President in part because he had a transcendent personality; other presidents who followed him were not transformative and served unremarkably." Meacham, *American Lion*, 356.

120. Charles Grier Sellers, Jr., "Andrew Jackson versus the Historians," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 44, no. 4 (1958), 615-634.

Partisan newspapers provided a substantial thrust for the rhetoric of intraparty factionalism among Republicans in the 1820s. Communication scholars have examined the intersection of state and national factions in these papers, finding that partisan newspapers fostered intraparty divisions among the electorate and connected factions within state-level parties with the growing national divide between Jackson and Quincy Adams.¹²¹ Many of the early, state-level factions were drawn along distinct ideological lines from the national party factions. As such, it was rarely a foregone conclusion that the rhetoric of these factions would merge to form a cohesive movement, and often state-level concerns took precedence over national concerns in intraparty politics.¹²²

Rhetoricians have tended to treat all partisan newspapers in the 1820s and 1830s as dictated by the contents of two flagship papers, but that level of control was reserved only for the most salient national issues (i.e. a national bank).¹²³ At the state and local level, partisan newspapers attempted to navigate a complex range of issues within the party and emerging local factions. Partisan publications and nominees' engagement with them continued to play a role in party identification and party repair well into the 21st century.¹²⁴ The extant literature on Andrew Jackson's Democratic Party and the split of the Democratic-Republicans highlights the role of partisan media as a platform for party

121. Robert K. Stewart, "Jacksonians Discipline a Party Editor: Economic Leverage and Political Exile," *Journalism Quarterly* 66, no. 3 (1989), 591-599

122. *Ibid.*, 598-599.

123. Richard B. Kielbowicz, "Party Press Cohesiveness: Jacksonian Newspapers, 1832" *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 60, no. 3 (1983), 518-520.

124. Sivek, "Editing Conservatism," 248-272.

repair. This movement also exposes the complexity of historiography in relation to rhetoric and the often-disputed understandings of movements and their meanings.

Rail Splitter or Party Splitter?

By contrast to the Democratic Party, the Republican Party was founded out of a merging of movements rather than splitting off from an existing party. The birth of the Republican Party seemed to reflect a growing sentiment that the expansion of slavery into American territories was the central exigence of American politics, and Free Soilers and Northern Whigs flocked to the new party in droves. Hindsight suggests 1854-1860 as the birth of the two-party system that continues to dominate American politics; but for the young Republican Party, party identity was an open question and factions had already emerged. Radical and Conservative Republicans split on the question of compromise with Southern slave-states and the inevitability of armed conflict. The intraparty exigencies confronting Lincoln during the campaign and even in the aftermath of his victory illustrate that party factionalism and party repair are phenomena that continue well beyond conventions and the months between contentious primaries and general election campaigns. Michael William Pfau credits Lincoln's shrewdness on issues of party and party repair for much of his success prior to 1860. It was in the context of party divisions that Lincoln first issued the warning that would become a synecdoche for his larger rhetorical legacy: "a house divided against itself cannot stand."¹²⁵

125. Michael William Pfau, "The House that Abe Built: The 'House Divided' Speech and Republican Party Politics," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 2, no. 4 (1999), 625-651.

Pfau's article remains one of the most significant investigations of the rhetoric of party politics and party repair in the extant literature.¹²⁶ Pfau highlights the necessity of understanding party politics in making sense of Lincoln's famous House Divided address to the Republican State Convention of Illinois in 1858, stating,

The Republican Party of Illinois (as in the rest of the country) was composed of a heterogeneous collection of coalitions, and it is impossible to appreciate the true artistry of the House Divided unless we understand Lincoln as a party builder and leader, whose words were carefully crafted to synthesize the Republican creed in a manner most conducive to party unity.¹²⁷

In agreement with Pfau, this dissertation will seek to extend the party-focus beyond Lincoln to the broader scope of American electoral politics and appreciate the ways in which party nominees and party leaders negotiate partisan identity in response to factionalism and intraparty divisions.

Pfau argues that, consistent with its previous uses in Lincoln's rhetoric, the phrase "a house divided" in 1858 was a reference to the Republican Party and not to the nation, as has often been presented by rhetoricians.¹²⁸ Pfau analyzes both textual and contextual factors to suggest an understanding of Lincoln's address grounded in Lincoln's fear of division within Republican ranks. Lincoln's use of 'we' throughout the address becomes central to Pfau's argument. Cheney's rearticulation of the Burkean "assumed we" may provide the language necessary for understanding Pfau's argument through the lens of organizational discourse. Cheney defines the rhetorical strategy of an "assumed we" and the ambiguity underlying it as essential to its purpose:

126. *Ibid.*

127. *Ibid.*, 627

128. *Ibid.*, 632-647.

The assumed "we" and the corresponding "they" are found in statements where a common bond among members of the organization is taken for granted, but the nature of the relationship is not well defined. Evidence of this strategy includes some uses of the pronouns "we" and "they" (along with their object and possessive forms) and surrogate expressions.¹²⁹

This nebulous understanding of "we" and "they" may reoccur throughout the rhetoric of party repair and the cases analyzed in this dissertation project.

At times, Lincoln's most effective tool in navigating intraparty factionalism was silence. Gunderson notes that the problem of in-party divisions continued for Lincoln even after his election in 1860, and that some feared a split in the Republican Party would doom Lincoln's presidency before it began.¹³⁰ Between Lincoln's election and inauguration, he sought to avoid ostracizing factions within his own party by adopting a policy of 'eloquent silence.'¹³¹ It seemed that nearly any words spoken by the President-Elect were subject to multiple factionalist interpretations and fueled intraparty division. Gunderson suggests that the technique of silence may have been essential to preserving the party coalition and that Lincoln's decision to break his silence in a few cities along his whistle-stop trip to Washington D.C. may have even undermined his goals.¹³²

The notion that the party leader may engage in party repair through silence will prove particularly relevant in analyzing the rhetoric of Harry Truman in 1948. Lincoln's strategic use of the "assumed we" and the broader debate between Radical and

129. Cheney, "The Rhetoric of Identification," 148-149.

130. Robert G. Gunderson, "Lincoln and the Policy of Eloquent Silence: November 1860, to March 1861," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 47, no. 1 (1961), 1-2.

131. *Ibid.*, 2-9.

132. *Ibid.*, 7-9.

Conservative Republicans before and during the Civil War are similarly relevant to the rhetoric of party repair in both 1884 and 1948. Divisions within the GOP hardly ended with Union victory. Indeed, years of Republican control only made more apparent the divisions within the party of Lincoln.

Ma, Ma, Where's My Party?

The dearth of literature on Gilded Age political rhetoric may be a consequence of a historical determinism that views political machines rather than intraparty factions as the driving force of party politics in the late 19th century. Certainly, political machines are inseparable from Gilded Age party politics, but strong factions, sometimes backed by competing machines, swayed the outcomes of elections and may have ultimately resulted in the toppling of the patronage system. While a handful of studies have focused on the rhetoric of intraparty factions, attempts to unify parties in the Gilded Age have been almost entirely neglected.

Within the Republican Party, the most pronounced division was between conservative Republicans, known as Stalwarts, and more moderate Republicans who favored civil service reform, referred to pejoratively as "Half-Breeds." This split within the post-war GOP represents one of the most heated intraparty rivalries in American history. Peskin notes that in nearly every election of the Gilded Age, the Republican Party threatened to spilt along factional lines.¹³³ Stalwarts, most associated with New York Senator Roscoe Conkling, framed their intraparty opponents as envious of their power and accused them of seeking civil service reform only as a means of securing that

133. Allan Peskin, "The Election of 1880," *The Wilson Quarterly* 4, no. 2 (1980), 180.

power for themselves.¹³⁴ Half-Breeds, led by Maine politician and U.S. House Speaker James G. Blaine, associated Stalwarts with a legacy of unethical graft and accused them of corruption and malfeasance.¹³⁵

During the 1880 Republican National Convention, the two factions were locked in an intense contest over which wing's candidate ought to lead the party in the November election. The contest between Blaine and the Stalwart ex-president Ulysses S. Grant proved interminable; and on the 35th ballot the voting began to turn in favor of the reluctant dark horse candidate, James A. Garfield.¹³⁶ Garfield, sympathetic to the Half-Breed's quest for civil-service reform, represented a compromise candidate between the intraparty factions and secured a sizeable victory over Democrat Winfield Scott Hancock in the general election. Candice Millard presents the narrative of Garfield's rise and eventual assassination as deeply imbedded in the intraparty factionalism of the era.¹³⁷ Even in Garfield's 1880 "front-porch" campaign he was able to effectively speak for his party through journalists who would gather at his home. Notably, the only time that Garfield left home to campaign was a trip to New York designed to reunite disaffected Stalwarts with the Republican ticket.¹³⁸ These divisions within the GOP continued even after Garfield's successor Chester Arthur signed into law the Pendleton Civil Service

134. Candice Millard, *Destiny of the Republic: A Tale of Madness, Medicine, and the Murder of a President*, (New York: Doubleday, 2011), 30-33.

135. *Ibid.*, 40-43.

136. *Ibid.*, 46-53.

137. *Ibid.*

138. Peskin, "The Election of 1880," 180.

Reform Act.¹³⁹ What little analysis exists concerning the political rhetoric of Stalwarts and Half-Breeds has tended to focus on interparty rivalries with Democrats rather than on the conflict between the two factions.¹⁴⁰

One central figure of the Stalwarts and Half-Breeds conflict has garnered some scholarly attention: Half-Breed leader James G. Blaine. Sproule further develops the line of research concerning partisan news by focusing on Republican newspapers' abandonment of Blaine in the elections of 1876 and 1884.¹⁴¹ Partisan newspapers, even those with Half-Breed sympathies were willing to highlight Blaine's scandals and connect him to the graft policies of Stalwarts. This media framing of Blaine gave extra credence to Conkling's argument that Half-Breeds were just after the same power that they criticized Stalwarts for exercising.¹⁴² Scott similarly focuses on Blaine's rhetoric of polarization, targeting Jefferson Davis in the debate over the 1876 Amnesty Bill; but

139. David M. Tucker, *Mugwumps: Public Moralists of the Gilded Age*, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1998) 38-45.

140. Harlen Makemson, "One Misdeed Evokes Another: How Political Cartoonists Used 'Scandal Intertextuality' Against Presidential Candidate James G. Blaine," *Media History Monographs* 7, no. 2 (2005), 1-20.

141. J. Michael Sproule, "Newspapers as Political Persuaders: The Campaign Against James G. Blaine," *Central States Speech Journal* 24, no. 4 (1973), 310-318.

142. Gerald W. McFarland, *Moralists or Pragmatists? The Mugwumps, 1884-1900*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1975), 4.

Scott largely ignores intraparty debate and focuses on the conflict between Democrats and Republicans on reconstruction.¹⁴³

While Blaine was a controversial figure in the Republican primaries of 1876 and 1880, anti-Blaine sentiment came to a head in 1884 when Blaine won the Republican nomination.¹⁴⁴ With civil service reform enshrined in law, members of Blaine's own faction, perhaps motivated by a renewed focus of partisan media, became vocal opponents of Blaine's campaign.¹⁴⁵ These opponents came to be called Mugwumps, and their decision to bolt from the Republican Party and support Democrat Grover Cleveland likely tilted the election in Cleveland's favor. Examinations of Mugwump rhetoric are sparse and the scholarship on Blaine's response is even more limited. The conflict between Blaine and the Mugwumps represents a significant touchpoint in the continued existence of the Republican Party, but 1884 is certainly not a realigning election in the sense understood by Stuckey and other rhetorical critics. Furthermore, the 1884 election is not one dominated exclusively by political bosses as some historical determinists would suggest. Parties and party factions played a significant role and chapter four of the proposed dissertation will analyze this controversy to better understand the rhetoric of intraparty factionalism and party repair as a form of political rhetoric.

The Mugwumps movement has invited two primary areas of interest among historians. The first concerns the relationship between the moral and the political. Both

143. Darrell W. Scott, "James G. Blaine and the Amnesty Debate of 1876: A Case Study of the Rhetoric of Polarization," *Communicator* 11, (1981), 53-60.

144. McFarland, *Moralists or Pragmatists?*, 1-16.

145. *Ibid.*; Sproule, "Newspapers as Political Persuaders," 315-317.

Tucker and McFarland note the changing historical attitudes regarding Mugwumps' motivations. Some have presented the Mugwumps in line with Conkling's characterization of reformers and see them as rational actors looking to sway the party in their direction. Others frame the Mugwumps as virtuous actors willing to put morality above partisan identity, or as the subtitle of Tucker's monograph labels them, the "Public Moralists of the Gilded Age."¹⁴⁶ The second, related area of interest centers on the question of the ideal course of action for intraparty factions and the decision to bolt from the party. If the Conklingsque characterization of Mugwumps is accurate, and they behave primarily as rational actors, then at what point does bolting promote the interests of a faction and at what point does it undermine those objectives? The recurring questions of when to bolt, when to pressure, and when to conform plagues the rhetoric of factions and of party repair. These two questions will be relevant not only to chapter four and the analysis of Mugwump and Republican rhetoric in 1884, but also in investigating the election cycles of 1948 and 2016 in which morality and partisanship collided over intraparty debates.

William Jennings Bryan and the Cross of Electability

By the time Democrats met to select their nominee for the 1896 election, the patronage system was dramatically curtailed, and three years of recession provided the central exigence for the campaign.¹⁴⁷ The question over free coinage of silver became a stasis point between and within America's political parties. A small faction within the

146. David M. Tucker, *Mugwumps*.

147. William D. Harpine, "Bryan's 'A Cross of Gold': The Rhetoric of Polarization at the 1896 Democratic Convention," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 87, no. 3 (2001), 291-304.

party favored the retention of Cleveland's gold standard, whereas the silver faction had dominated state and local delegate selection.¹⁴⁸ The delegate makeup made it clear that a successful candidate must appeal to the now dominant silver faction. Bryan's famous "Cross of Gold" speech at the convention boldly advanced the populist case for currency reform. The address instantly made Bryan a leader in the free coinage movement and helped him to secure the nomination.¹⁴⁹ Harpine argues that the strong stance taken by Bryan at the convention was necessary to appeal to the growing silver faction and secure the nomination but that it also failed to speak to the larger, national audience, who, during the general election may have rejected Bryan as too radical.¹⁵⁰

Bryan's case highlights a recurring theme in the study of political primaries, the possibility that intraparty exigencies might influence the outcome of general elections and the related possibility that what resonates in the context of a primary campaign might find much less resonance with a general election audience. Social scientists argue that voters often simultaneously consider a candidate's ability to secure her or his party's nomination (viability) and also the likelihood of the same candidate winning the general election (electability).¹⁵¹ Candidates emerging from primaries must be able to share their message with a broader audience and hope to retain the coalition that allowed them to

148. R. Hal Williams, *Realigning America: McKinley, Bryan, and the Remarkable Election of 1896*, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010), 67-92

149. Harpine, "Bryan's 'A Cross of Gold:'," 291-304.

150. *Ibid.*, 298-301.

151. Alan I. Abramowitz, "Viability, electability, and candidate choice in a presidential primary election: A test of competing models." *The Journal of Politics* 51, no. 4 (1989): 977-92.

secure the nomination. The three cases analyzed in this dissertation will illustrate the complexity of speaking with both in-party and general election audiences, especially when struggling to regain support from lost in-party factions. While party repair occurs in a variety of contexts, the moments between a primary and a general election are especially important for coalition building.

The New Deal Versus the Old Guard

The 1930s represented another period of substantial economic upheaval in the United States and a public tidal wave of support toward the Democratic Party. With this rise in support came changes within the party and a growing rift between business-friendly Democrats aligned with New York Governor Al Smith and New Deal Democrats sympathetic to Franklin D. Roosevelt.¹⁵² Roosevelt and Smith battled for the Democratic nomination in 1932, with Roosevelt convincingly winning the party's nomination over Smith who had secured the nomination four years prior. While Smith would go on to endorse Roosevelt in the general election, he would become a vocal opponent of the New Deal and formed the American Liberty League as a means of providing a business response to Roosevelt's policies.¹⁵³

The American Liberty League illustrates Belloni and Beller's third potential outcome for factions: becoming an institutionalized interest group, rather than bolting from the party entirely or falling back into the party fold.¹⁵⁴ The Liberty League adds an

152. George Wolfskill, *The Revolt of the Conservatives: A History of the American Liberty League, 1934-1940*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1962), 142-162.

153. Alfred E. Smith, Political Debater, *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 54, no.4 (1968), 372.

154. Belloni and Beller, *Faction Politics*, 10.

additional layer to McFarland's question of ideal outcomes for factions.¹⁵⁵ The option selected by Smith and other conservative Democrats has perplexed some scholars who prefer to see only the clean partisan divisions of an era. Goldstein notes the nonpartisan labeling adopted by the League and struggles to reconcile it with the league's pro-business agenda and clear opposition to Roosevelt.¹⁵⁶ But the American Liberty League were not all Republicans. While Republican business leaders would flock to the League over the course of the Roosevelt administration, in 1936, the Republican Party made it plain that the American Liberty League did not speak for the GOP or their objectives.¹⁵⁷

The language of intraparty factionalism may provide Goldstein with a solution to the partisan quandary. Despite often siding with the Republican response to the New Deal and even coming to endorse Republican candidates, many of the Democratic leaders in the American Liberty League still considered themselves Democrats fighting over the future of their party and that party's relationship with business.¹⁵⁸ An understanding of political parties, political party systems, and even nominating processes depends on awareness of party factions and interest groups. This dissertation project aims to give scholars the language necessary to speak meaningfully about intraparty politics and party discourse as a form of organizational rhetoric.

155. McFarland, *Moralists or Pragmatists?*, 1-16.

156. Jared A. Goldstein, "The American Liberty League and the Rise of Constitutional Nationalism." *Temple Law Review* 86 (2013): 287.287-330.

157. Frederick Rudolph, "The American Liberty League, 1934-1940," *American Historical Review* 56, no. 1, (1950), 31-32.

158. *Ibid.*

Truman Defeats Dewey... and Wallace... and Thurmond

The intraparty exigencies confronting Harry Truman in 1948 were perhaps more daunting than any incumbent president in American history. Having risen to the presidency upon the death of Roosevelt, Truman had never previously united the Democratic Party under his name through a convention or primary campaign.¹⁵⁹ Furthermore, the label of the Democratic Party had become so closely identified with Roosevelt that adapting the party to fit Truman's unique style and perspectives would become hotly contested.¹⁶⁰ The factions within the Democratic Party emerged over issues of civil rights, foreign policy, and the economy.

The first major division within the party concerned issues of civil rights. In 1946 Truman had formed the President's Committee on Civil Rights and made clear his intention to implement the committee's proposals including integrating the federal work force and the U.S. armed services.¹⁶¹ At the start of the convention, intraparty divisions on race were already at the forefront of the discussion, but a speech by the Mayor of Minneapolis, Hubert Humphrey, would push Southern delegates into revolt, causing many to walk out of the convention.¹⁶² During the general election, South Carolina Democrat Strom Thurmond would lead the newly formed States' Rights Democratic

159. Halford R. Ryan, *Harry S. Truman: Presidential Rhetoric*, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1993), 89-107.

160. Zachary Karabell, *The Last Campaign: How Harry Truman Won the 1948 Election*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), 3-7.

161. Steven R. Goldzweig, *Truman's Whistle-stop Campaign*, (College Station: Texas A&M University Press), 47-49.

162. Karabell, *The Last Campaign*, 157-159.

Party (Dixiecrats). The Dixiecrat Revolt represented a significant intraparty division for Truman, but it was not the only intraparty challenge Truman faced.¹⁶³

In 1946 Truman asked for the resignation of Roosevelt's former Vice President and Truman's current Commerce Secretary, Henry Wallace. Wallace represented the left wing of the Democratic Party and split with Truman on issues of foreign policy and economics. After coming into conflict with Truman repeatedly, Wallace opted to launch his own campaign in 1948 and challenged Truman under the banner of the United States Progressive Party.¹⁶⁴ Both the Progressives and the Dixiecrats pushed back against the Democratic label under Truman. Truman's 1948 campaign represents one of the most important sources for understanding intraparty factions and party repair.

The scholarship on the 1948 campaign represents a rare look beyond the rhetoric of intraparty factions to the candidate and party's response, but scholars have also examined the rhetoric of Dixiecrats and Progressives in 1948.¹⁶⁵ Frederickson argues that the Dixiecrats hoped to send a signal to the Democratic Party that their civil rights platform would cost them national elections and hoped to take away enough Democratic votes from Truman to send the election to the House of Representatives where they could negotiate with Truman and other party leaders.¹⁶⁶ Dixiecrats sought a fundamental

163. Ibid., 30-33.

164. Ibid., 30-31; Marie Hochmuth, "Henry A. Wallace," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 34, no. 3, (1948), 322-326.

165. Hochmuth, "Henry A. Wallace," 324-326. Frederickson, *The Dixiecrat Revolt*, 118-187.

166. Kari Frederickson, *The Dixiecrat Revolt and the End of the Solid South 1932-1968*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 3-4.

objective familiar to many of the intraparty factions discussed in this chapter.

Frederickson notes that Dixiecrats hoped to “reclaim their former prestige and ideological prominence in a party that had moved away from them.”¹⁶⁷ Unlike Mugwumps or Jacksonians, Dixiecrats hoped to retain their partisan identity. The official name of the Dixiecrat party, the States’ Rights Democratic Party, was intended to connote the new party’s status as a branch within the existing Democratic Party.

The cause of the Dixiecrats is uniquely tied to issues of race and questions of identity that extend beyond partisan labels. Bedingfield notes the significance of court decisions demanding an end to all white primaries in the South as motivating the Dixiecrat Revolt.¹⁶⁸ Dixiecrat rhetoric was laced with fear appeals not just about the end of segregation but also about what they framed as the loss of the Democratic Party. Dixiecrats expressed fear that changes within the Democratic Party on matters of race would reduce the voting power of white people in the South and give an increased significance to black voters. The merging of partisan identity and racial or gender identity has recurred throughout factionalist rhetoric in the United States and would play a significant role in the intraparty factions again in 2016.

Ryan Neville-Sheppard notes that the rhetoric of Henry Wallace and the Progressive Party depended on a technique of polarization.¹⁶⁹ Polarization occurs both

167. *Ibid.*, 5.

168. Sid Bedingfield, “Partisan Journalism and the Rise of the Republican Party in South Carolina, 1959-1962” *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 90, no. 1 (2013), 5-22.

169. Ryan Neville-Shepard, “Presidential Campaign Announcements: A Third-Party Variant,” *Southern Communication Journal* 79, no. 2 (2014), 137-139.

within and between parties. The unique exigencies of intraparty discourse have necessitated a shift in our understanding of polarization, which includes a striving for perfection within organizations and institutions.¹⁷⁰ Neville-Sheppard examines Wallace's rhetoric to better understand third-party campaign announcements.¹⁷¹ Neville-Sheppard's scholarship shines a light on an understudied area of campaign discourse but could benefit from a closer examination of the rhetorically constructed relationship between some third parties and the major parties in which they were once factions. Wallace struggled to gain political ground on issues other than foreign policy.¹⁷² Establishing clear policy differences and a comprehensive platform is a unique challenge for intraparty factions that decide to break off and form new political parties.

Harry Truman's victory despite two significant challenges emerging from within his own party has prompted scholars to analyze Truman's rhetorical strategy in 1948. Scholars have focused specifically on Truman's convention address and on his "Whistle-Stop" tour of the United States.¹⁷³ Truman's overarching strategy, Goldzwig argues, depended on appealing to key constituencies within the Democratic base while running against the Republican Congress, the Kremlin, and linking his Republican opponent

170. Reed and McKinney. "Affirmation and Subversion," 26-32.

171. Neville-Shepard, "Presidential Campaign Announcements," 137-139.

172. Gary C. Donaldson, *Truman Defeats Dewey*, (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky) 49-60.

173. Goldzwig, *Truman's Whistle-stop Campaign*, 7-11.

Thomas Dewey to both.¹⁷⁴ Finding others to run against is consistent with Burke's strategy of antithesis and may serve to unite the party in opposition to outsiders.¹⁷⁵

Ryan focuses on Truman's convention address and how Truman utilized it as a tool for uniting the party by highlighting past accomplishments and turning the party against the Republican congress.¹⁷⁶ As will be discussed in greater detail in chapter five, Truman used the address to call congress back into session and demand action on issues he deemed essential to the national interest. Convention addresses represent major platforms in the rhetoric of party repair. Craig Allen Smith suggests that in convention addresses, "nominees reconstitute their parties by artfully melding the wisdom and accomplishments of iconic partisan figures into a rationale for embracing the nominee's agenda."¹⁷⁷ Convention addresses play a defining role for parties, but the process of reconstituting a party occurs over the course of entire campaigns and beyond. This dissertation project looks beyond convention addresses to the ways in which nominees and other leaders repair fractured parties. The example of Truman's 1948 campaign illustrates the ongoing significance of party repair beyond the convention address.

In response to a dire political situation, Truman embarked on a 'Whistle-Stop' train tour of the United States, giving extemporaneous speeches to large audiences at train stations around the U.S. Goldzwig argues that the Whistle Stop campaign successfully relied on traditional populism to motivate portions of the Roosevelt coalition

174. Ibid., 7-8.

175. Cheney, "The Rhetoric of Identification," 147-148.

176. Ryan, *Harry S. Truman*: 89-107.

177. Smith "I Alone" vs. "Stronger Together", 968.

not drawn away by the candidacies of Thurmond or Wallace, while also drawing back many of those who had been tempted by the Dixiecrat or Progressive platforms.¹⁷⁸

Goldzwig also notes that the intraparty factions of 1948 continued to split into smaller factions, such as the Americans for Democratic Action. Stewart, Smith, and Denton argue that social movements are destined to split into factions, even as they emerged out of larger organizations.¹⁷⁹

While some scholars have analyzed the 1948 campaign and Truman's attempt to repair the Democratic Party, the extant literature is missing a significant organizational perspective and fails to put Truman's efforts into conversation with past attempts at party repair. Chapter five of this dissertation analyzes Truman's campaign and seeks to better understand the overarching attributes of the rhetoric of party repair, including populism.

Tea Party v. Establishment

The Tea Party Movement in the United States emerged out of the conservative response to Barack Obama's election and a growing distrust of the Republican Party establishment. Tea Partiers became a major force in the congressional elections of 2010 and remain an active force in American politics. As the Tea Party rose to prominence in national elections there was a corresponding explosion of scholarly literature investigating the movement and its implications for American politics. A great deal of this literature has understood the Tea Party as a social movement rather than a faction and very little extant literature has investigated the relationship between the Tea Party and the

178. Goldzwig, *Truman's Whistle-stop Campaign*, 7-11.

179. Stewart, Smith, and Denton, *Persuasion and Social Movements* 1st ed, 14, 41-48.

Republican Party, with which most Tea Partiers also identified.¹⁸⁰ The Tea Party often deployed rhetoric targeting *the Republican establishment* in addition to liberals and Democrats. Understanding the Tea Party's opposition to the Republican establishment opens up the possibility of understanding the Tea Party not just as a social movement but also as a party faction.

Sivek argues that the conservative movement is strongest when its rhetoric unites the disparate forces within conservatism in opposition to a shared enemy.¹⁸¹ Uniting fiscal and religious conservatives demonstrates an added layer in the extant scholarship on party repair. Repairing parties split along coalitional lines is especially challenging, but Wilson and Burack argue that the Tea Party uniquely joined these distinct forces within the GOP.¹⁸² Opposition to President Obama and Nancy Pelosi provided much of the rhetorical fodder for the Tea Party, but they also turned attacks on more traditional Republicans. Both fiscal and religious conservatives may have found comfort in the narrative that establishment party leaders were ignoring their concerns.

Skocpol and Williamson provide a deep investigation of the organizational makeup of the Tea Party movement and define the formal and informal institutional

180. Brian Montopoli, "Tea Party Supporters: Who They Are and What They Believe," *CBS News*, December 14, 2012, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/tea-party-supporters-who-they-are-and-what-they-believe>.

181. Sivek, "Editing Conservatism," 248-272.

182. Angelia R. Wilson and Cynthia Burack, "'Where Liberty Reigns and God is Supreme': The Christian Right and the Tea Party Movement," *New Political Science* 34, no. 2, (2012) 173.

mechanisms at the group's disposal.¹⁸³ They argue that racial and gender identity played a key role in the formation of the movement. They further argue that the Tea Party may have benefited the GOP by providing additional energy and enthusiasm to the party but also caution that the movement may ostracize more traditional Republicans.¹⁸⁴ The Tea Party illustrates the importance of maintaining a core base of supporters while also accounting for factions within a political party. As a candidate in 2012, Mitt Romney was uniquely tasked with the concern of bringing Tea Party supporters back into the Republican fold despite their support of more staunchly conservative candidates in the Republican primaries. While the Tea Party has waned in popularity in recent years, it may have helped to give rise to the intense intraparty divisions within the GOP that became evident during the 2016 presidential campaign.

Never Trump & Bernie-or-Bust

Contentious presidential primaries may provide the clearest example of intraparty division and consequently intraparty identity formation.¹⁸⁵ The aftermath of these contentious primaries demands a rejoining of party factions through the rhetoric of party repair. The presidential election in 2016 is unique in that both major parties struggled to respond to factions in their ranks. Republican divisions rooted in the Tea Party movement spilled over into the 2016 election, but new dimensions also emerged between party

183. Theda Skocpol and Vanessa Williamson, *The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 155-188.

184. *Ibid.*

185. Marty Cohen, David Karol, Hans Noel, and John Zaller, "Party Versus Faction in the Reformed Presidential Nominating System," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 49, no. 4, (2016), 701-708.

insiders, who had held elective office and party outsiders who had not.¹⁸⁶ The rise of candidates like Donald Trump, Ben Carson, and Carly Fiorina created a new type of faction within the GOP. Similarly, in the Democratic primaries, longtime party leader Hillary Clinton represented the party establishment and Independent Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders played the role of a party outsider. Despite caucusing with the Democrats in the U.S. Senate, Sanders had skirted party labels in the U.S. Senate, meaning that stark insider/outsider divisions on both sides of the aisle would set the stage for a raucous primary season.¹⁸⁷

Marty Cohen and colleagues argued in their 2008 book, *The Party Decides*, that party nominees are selected during what they label *invisible primaries*.¹⁸⁸ In invisible primaries, party elites make predeterminations of the most viable candidate through polling, fundraising, and endorsements even before the Iowa caucuses and New Hampshire primary. The authors suggest that, prior to 2016, the eventual nominee was most often the winner of this invisible primary. Cohen et. al define political parties as “coalitions of policy demanding groups,” and argue that factions within these coalitions

186. Joel Lansing Reed, Sopheak Hoeun, Josh C. Bramlett, Molly Greenwood, and Grace Hase “Corn Belt Controversy: Intraparty Divisions and Political Cynicism at the 2016 Iowa Caucuses,” in *An Unprecedented Election: Media, Communication, and the Electorate in the 2016 Campaign*, eds. Benjamin R. Warner, Dianne G. Bystrom, Mitchell S. McKinney, and Mary C. Banwart, (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2018) 319-336.

187. *Ibid.*

188. Marty Cohen, David Karol, Hans Noel, and John Zaller, *The Party Decides: Presidential Nominations Before and After Reform*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 1-277.

are inevitable.¹⁸⁹ Such divisions are particularly likely in the event of a contentious presidential primary, but party organizations, the parties in government, and party elites attempt to minimize this conflict by demonstrating clear preferences prior to the campaign.¹⁹⁰ The 2016 campaign, with its clear intraparty divisions, put the hypothesis of *The Party Decides* to the test in both the Democratic and Republican primaries.

In a post-election essay, Cohen et. al argued that their original thesis did little to describe the 2016 primary and that the nature of political campaigns was indeed changing.¹⁹¹ They note, among other factors, the rapid growth in political communication.¹⁹² Primary debates, social media, and increased early campaign coverage from traditional media outlets have given candidates more direct access to voters.¹⁹³ The declining power of elites identified by Cohen et. al may represent the continuation of the trend toward citizen engagement that finds its origins in the early 19th century move toward a convention system for candidate selection. Over time, the rhetoric of party repair has been forced to appeal to a broader section of the party faithful, but this broadening is not necessarily deterministic. Understood from a perspective of organizational rhetoric, this expansion of political discourse cannot be understood merely as a response to an already constituted audience demanding a different form of rhetoric

189. Cohen, Karol, Noel, and Zaller, "Party Versus Faction in the Reformed Presidential Nominating System," 703.

190. Ibid., 702-703

191. Ibid

192. Ibid., 703-704.

193. Ibid.

from the speaker. Instead, as Craig Allen Smith notes, “Texts reconstitute their audiences, they do not simply feed existing appetites.”¹⁹⁴ Viewing party repair simply as a response to changing demographics misses the essential organizational element of political parties. From an organizational perspective, there is still much about party repair that can be understood generically, and chapters four through six may reveal the extent to which party repair functions as a constant in American politics and the characteristics of identification within these parties and movements.

Noel suggests that factions in the modern Democratic and Republican parties can essentially be broken into two party wings: one interested in compromise and one focused solely on ideology.¹⁹⁵ While intraparty factionalism is certainly more complex than one internal division, Noel’s use of compromise as a defining characteristic of intraparty separation is a useful heuristic for understanding the role of party repair. Noel argues that in the modern era, the aim of intraparty factions is not ideological so much as it is a debate over methods. One wing of the party is amenable to compromising with the opposing party in the name of pragmatism, while the others view themselves as ideological purists in pursuit of perfection. The latter wing relies heavily on a rhetoric of polarization. Bowers, Ochs, and Jensen suggest that the in-group division based on tactics and governance are at the core of polarization, noting, “The fact that the uncommitted might agree with their ideology but reject their tactics (e.g. someone who opposes

194. Smith, “I Alone” vs. “Stronger Together,” 967.

195. Hans Noel, “Ideological Factions in the Republican and Democratic Parties,” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 667, no. 1 (2016), 167-172.

abortion but does not agree with picketing a clinic) is not of interest.”¹⁹⁶ Noel proposes a clear distinction between the compromiser/ideologue dichotomy and the insider/outsider dynamics that were also on display in 2016.¹⁹⁷ However, the notion of compromise as the essential work of government may complicate Noel’s depiction of insiders and outsiders. It may be the case that outsiders similarly engage in a rhetoric that rejects the normal operations of government and therefore rejects the use of compromise. The analysis chapters of this dissertation will pay special attention to discussions of compromise in the two presidential campaigns to be investigated to determine what, if any role, the rhetoric of compromise plays in the rhetoric of party repair.

In 2016, convention addresses again became a significant focal point for the rhetoric of party repair. Craig Allen Smith notes that Donald Trump’s rhetoric broke from traditional, generic expectations for convention addresses in the sense that he did little to reconstitute a party deeply divided by the contentious primaries.¹⁹⁸ Smith describes Trump’s approach to the Republican Party as a “hostile takeover” and notes that Trump did not strive to reunite the GOP during the convention.¹⁹⁹ While Smith’s description of the Republican convention address may be accurate, the rhetoric of party repair certainly played a role in Donald Trump’s campaign between the end of the primaries and the general election in November. Discussions of Supreme Court appointments, stoking anti-

196. John W., Bowers, Donovan J. Ochs, Richard J. Jensen, and David P. Schulz. *The Rhetoric of Agitation and Control*, 3rd ed. (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2010), 41.

197. Noel, “Ideological Factions in the Republican and Democratic Parties” 166-172.

198. Smith, “I Alone” vs. “Stronger Together,” 967-969.

199. *Ibid.*, 967-973.

Clinton sentiment, and appealing to foreign policy issues all contained elements of the rhetoric of party repair. This project will seek to understand the role of these types of appeals in shaping political rhetoric between primaries and general elections.

The language of repair is not new to communication studies. Most popularly, Benoit's theory of image restoration or image repair has provided the foundation for numerous studies on how individuals and organizations rebuild their reputations in the aftermath of scandals, crises, or other challenges.²⁰⁰ Benoit identifies a number of approaches used by actors to restore their reputations, including denying wrongdoing, evading responsibility, reducing the offensiveness of the controversial action, highlighting corrective measures, or asking for forgiveness.²⁰¹ Unlike image repair, party repair does not suggest a stable or fixed organizational identity to which the audience is compelled to return. Instead, party repair is a more dynamic process wherein changes are made to organizational identity even while the party label remains fixed. Benoit investigated Trump's image repair strategies in the aftermath of the *Access Hollywood* tapes in 2016.²⁰² While Benoit's approach provided insight into Trump's attempts to rebuild his own image, it did not speak to the interplay between Trump's own attempts at personal image restoration and the restoration of a Republican Party label, which had

200. William L. Benoit, *Accounts, Excuses, and Apologies: A Theory of Image Restoration Strategies* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 63-95; William Benoit, "Image Repair on the Donald Trump 'Access Hollywood' Video: 'Grab Them by the P*ssy,'" *Communication Studies* 68, no. 3 (2017): 243-259; William L. Benoit, "Hugh Grant's Image Restoration Discourse: An Actor Apologizes." *Communication Quarterly* 45, no. 3 (1997): 251-267.

201. Benoit, *Accounts, Excuses, and Apologies*, 74-82.

202. Benoit, "Image Repair on the Donald Trump 'Access Hollywood' Video," 243-259.

long held sexual morality and family values as a facet of its identity. Unlike image repair, party repair posits candidates as inherently organizational actors.

Conclusion

Individual candidates and campaigns have drawn the attention of scholars to party repair, but none of this literature captures party repair as a recurring rhetorical phenomenon with profound implications in constituting audiences and organizations. As these eight cases illustrate, intraparty conflict is a consistent theme of American politics and is not reserved only for “realigning” or “critical” elections. By studying political parties from the perspective of electoral realignment, rhetoricians have unnecessarily wedded their scholarship to the notion that intraparty movements are meaningful only if they flip partisan alignment on its head. The rhetoric of party politics may have much more to do with party repair than with these large, meta-theoretical movements. Studying intraparty discourse only with the hindsight knowledge of realignment obscures the consistency and significance of intraparty conflict and party repair. This dissertation relies on an understanding of political parties as organizations, constantly engaged in a practice of self-definition through internal conflict and debate. Rather than presenting factionalist movements in relation to the meta-historical trends in party development, this study analyzes those movements in relation to the parties from which they emerged in order to provide a language for understanding party factions and party repair.

Of the eight cases discussed in chapter two, only two will be further investigated in the analysis section of the dissertation: the elections of 1884 and 1948, with the relevance of these two studies to the election of 2016 discussed in the brief concluding chapter. The three cases selected for analysis represent instances in which new

movements emerged during the primaries or convention and threatened to destroy the eventual party nominee. Additionally, the movements in each of these elections relied heavily on the rhetorical tensions between partisanship and moralism. With the Mugwumps of 1884, the Progressives of 1948, and the Never Trumpers of 2016, the language of moralism became central to the plea to bolt from the party; and in each case, the party nominee and party leaders were tasked with defending pragmatic partisanship even in the face of such moralistic appeals. Finally, at the heart of such tensions lies the question of political compromise.

Chapter 3: Method

The first two chapters of this dissertation provide a foundation in the history and literature surrounding political parties and their rhetorical construction. This chapter outlines the project's epistemological foundations in rhetorical theory and identifies procedures for the selection and analysis of political texts from two presidential campaigns in American history. I begin with a general overview of rhetorical criticism as a method of analysis before turning my attention to the core theoretical assumptions of the proposed method: situations as constructed through rhetoric, rhetoric as organizational, and organizations as dependent on identification. These three assumptions then guide the procedures for analysis outlined in the final section of chapter three.

The methodological and theoretical assumptions of rhetorical criticism are inseparably tied. As such, this chapter will identify some important theoretical premises that guide the critical approach, but the driving impulse of the chapter is to explain rhetorical criticism as a method of inquiry and provide a detailed accounting of the procedures for its implementation in this study of intra-party rhetoric and party repair.

Rhetorical Criticism

Cheney defines rhetorical criticism as “the description, interpretation, analysis, and critique of organized persuasion- and, by extension, identification.”¹ Cheney's definition of criticism identifies many of the essential tasks of rhetorical critics. In the first chapter of Black's formative work *Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method*, Black

1. George Cheney with Daniel J. Lair, in *Engaging Organizational Communication Theory and Research: Multiple Perspectives*, eds. Steve May and Dennis K. Mumby (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications), 60.

coyly defines criticism even more broadly as, “that which critics do.”² While Black’s definition requires considerable expansion in identifying the role of the critic, by focusing on critics, Black demystifies criticism as a method of inquiry and opens the possibility of understanding the work of rhetorical critics as analogous to other forms of criticism. While the art critic, film critic, and theater critic are concerned with a diverse range of subjects, the method through which they approach their craft speaks to the nature and practice of rhetorical criticism. Art criticism, for example, does not see its enterprise as limited to trained academics, but instead sees art criticism as open to anyone capable of developing an informed opinion on a piece or body of art and expressing that opinion to an audience.³ Rhetorical criticism similarly occurs, not only in the pages of the discipline’s leading academic journals but also in the day-to-day analysis of persuasive messages by their intended and unintended audiences.

While the connections to other forms of criticism are informative as the nature of rhetorical criticism as enterprise, the study of rhetoric is governed by a unique set of theoretical assumptions. The most significant of these assumptions is the centrality of the audience. Wichelns argued that, prior to his writing in 1925, there was often a great deal of misapplication of literary concepts not well suited for the study of persuasion.⁴ Wichelns further suggested that the fundamental difference in these two traditions is

2. Edwin Black, *Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method* (New York: Macmillan, 1965) 4.

3. Malcom Gee, *Art Criticism since 1900* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 3-12.

4. Herbert A. Wichelns, “The Literary Criticism of Oratory,” in *Studies in Rhetoric and Public Speaking in Honor of James A. Winans*, ed. A.M. Drummond (New York: Century, 1925): 3-27.

grounded in audience and effect.⁵ Rhetoric is concerned not just with the use of language, or with the creation or description of complex characters and scenes, but rhetoric is also interested in resonance with an audience.

For much of the history of criticism, the writings of Aristotle directed scholarly understandings of rhetoric.⁶ It was Black's 1965 work that first truly challenged the prevailing assumptions of rhetoric and compelled critics to look differently at persuasive messages. Black analogizes the critic to the modern scientist in their observational and descriptive capacities.⁷ At the levels of observation and description, Black clearly sees the necessity for critics to defend their methods of inquiry. Black notes, "The labor of the contemporary critic serves both to disclose the enigmas of an artistic product and to sanction, implicitly or overtly, its own methods of disclosure."⁸ The role of the critic then extends beyond the role of the scientist, according to Black, when she or he enters the realm of evaluation and appraisal.

Within any realm of critical inquiry, theory and methodology are also inseparable from the object of their analysis. In this case, the object of analysis is the construction and reconstruction of political parties and party factions. First it is necessary to establish that political parties are worth studying symbolically. Political parties and party leadership can be analyzed from a variety of perspectives, but rhetorical criticism provides a unique contribution to the study of political organizations. Black notes the unique role of the

5. Wichelns, "The Literary Criticism of Oratory," 22.

6. Black, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 19.

7. *Ibid.*, 1-4.

8. *Ibid.*, 2.

rhetorical critic in studying political rhetoric. Using Curry's analysis of the rhetoric of John C. Calhoun as a starting point, Black explains:

The general appraisal of policies advocated by rhetors is not, of course, the particular responsibility of the rhetorical critic. What shape American society would have taken had Calhoun's policies prevailed and what utility some of those policies might have for contemporary problems can best be determined by one with training in politics, in the social sciences, and in historiography- areas which the rhetorician is not necessarily an expert. But the rhetorical appraisal of policies- that is, the estimate of the relationships between these policies and linguistic and argumentative conventions- does fall into the unique providence of rhetoric.⁹

Black's argument about the nature and effects of policy agendas extends also to political parties. The caution against overemphasizing the long-term effects of policies applies to the reshaping of America's political landscape over time and guides the parameters of this criticism. Rather than analyzing the lasting transformations of political parties or the party system based on the rhetoric of party repair, this dissertation seeks to understand the symbolic construction of parties in their immediate environments, in the months following contentious primaries or conventions. Although the Mugwumps succeeded only within the confines of the 1884 election, their rhetoric and Blaine's response to it, represents a prime example of the rhetoric of intraparty factionalism and intraparty coalition building. The discussion section will of course make claims about the success or failure of these individual movements within their electoral context, but to view their rhetoric as harbingers of shifting dynamics in American politics is a task better reserved for the fields of political science and sociology. The following two sections detail some of the important theoretical assumptions that guided this project beginning with a discussion of the nature of the rhetorical situation.

9. Ibid., 77-78.

Black was highly critical of neo-Aristotelian criticism for its focus on the situated audience and the immediate environment of public address.¹⁰ Black's critique significantly reshaped the field of rhetoric by opening it up to a new pluralism in both theory and method, but not all the effects on the field were positive. Inspired by Black, a new generation of rhetorical critics came to reject public address scholarship entirely and dismissed the relationship between historical context and rhetoric.¹¹ As Stephen Lucas notes "Yet, as so often happens, the tide of scholarly revisionism swept everything out to sea. Neo-Aristotelianism as a method of criticism and public address as an area of scholarship were so closely allied that as students of rhetoric followed Black in rejecting the former, they also rejected the latter."¹² Lucas suggests that a new era of scholarship is capable of responding to Black's critique while still relying on an appreciation for the nature, form, and effects of public address.

Rhetorical criticism may have overcorrected by rejecting neo-Aristotelianism entirely and certainly erred in finding no room for historical/contextual factors of rhetoric. Hendrix argues, "Unlike imaginative literature, a speech often becomes highly abstract and even incomprehensible when lifted from its intended context. The anti-contextual nature of imaginative literature, on the other hand, is one primary indication of

10. Black, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 19.

11. Stephen E. Lucas, 1988, "The Renaissance of American Public Address: Text and Context in Rhetorical Criticism," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, vol. 74, no. 2, p. 241-244.

12. *Ibid.*, 242.

its value.”¹³ Hendrix makes clear that it is still possible, even necessary, to engage in the historical/contextual aspects of criticism, but that these approaches need to address not only the immediate situation, but also the broader societal, cultural, and political assumptions of the period.¹⁴ This study engages with the call for advanced contextual research, by focusing on the social milieu and political zeitgeist of a given era. The Gilded Age, the immediate post-war period, and the early 21st century all carry unique characteristics, which inform the rhetoric of parties and movements, but it would be a mistake to read rhetoric as merely responding to these factors. Rather, rhetoric is constitutive of culture and political exigencies as much as it is responding to them. Recognizing the constructed nature of reality opens up a possibility for understanding parties as malleable products of identification, reshaped by the rhetoric of movements and candidates. The section that follows analyzes two dominant approaches to rhetoric and provides a guiding framework for understanding the role of history and context in rhetorical criticism.

The Rhetorical Situation

This criticism analyzes a set of intraparty controversies across American history with attention to the period between the selection of a party nominee and the general election. In both instances, rhetors are tasked with responding to divisions in their party, some long standing and some newly created, by addressing members of the party coalition and/or courting support from the opposing party coalition. On its face, this

13. J.A. Hendrix, “In Defense of Neo-Aristotelian Rhetorical Criticism.” *Western Speech* 32, no. 4 (1968): 246–52.

14. *Ibid.*, 247.

model of political rhetors responding to specific exigencies by speaking to an audience with some capacity to resolve the exigence, fits neatly within the traditional conception of the rhetorical situation advanced by Lloyd Bitzer.¹⁵

Bitzer claims that rhetoric emerges in response to a rhetorical situation, defined by some central exigence needing to be resolved.¹⁶ For Bitzer, to constitute a rhetorical situation, the rhetoric must have some suasive power to resolve the exigence and the rhetor will inevitably be confronted by certain restraints on their actions.¹⁷ Bitzer clearly contends that situations exist prior to rhetoric and that rhetoric speaks into such situations in hopes of resolving the exigence, which called it into being. Perhaps most controversially, Bitzer claims, “nor should we assume that a rhetorical address gives existence to the situation; on the contrary, it is the situation which calls discourse into existence.”¹⁸ Bitzer’s analysis fits well with traditional understandings of rhetoric, which often frames famous addresses as monumental responses to the serious controversies of the day. Bitzer employs the example of the Declaration of Independence as a response to the British oppression of the late 18th century.¹⁹

In 1973, Richard Vatz challenged Bitzer’s understanding of the rhetorical situation. Vatz argued that Bitzer’s view of meaning as intrinsic to the situation had led

15. Lloyd F. Bitzer, “The Rhetorical Situation,” *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 1, no.1: 3.

16. *Ibid.*, 6-8.

17. *Ibid.*

18. *Ibid.*, 2.

19. *Ibid.*

him to dismiss the ways in which rhetoric shapes reality rather than simply reflecting it.²⁰

For Vatz, “meaning is not discovered in situations, but *created* by rhetors.”²¹ Vatz

presents an understanding of rhetoric appreciative of the generative capacity of discourse,

rooted in the ideas of Kenneth Burke, Chaim Perelman, and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca.

Vatz summarizes his disagreements with Bitzer in just a few sentences, saying,

I would not say "rhetoric is situational," but situations are rhetorical; not ". . . exigence strongly invites utterance," but utterance strongly invites exigence; not "the situation controls the rhetorical response. . ." but the rhetoric controls the situational response; not ". . . rhetorical discourse . . . does obtain its character-as-rhetorical from the situation which generates it," but situations obtain their character from the rhetoric which surrounds them or creates them.²²

Vatz’s argument can be read against Bitzer’s example of the Declaration of

Independence. Bitzer argues for an understanding of the Declaration as the rhetorical

response necessitated by British oppression of American colonists.²³ While the Colonists

certainly viewed themselves as responding to British oppression, they were also defining

the oppression as such and giving *presence* to their list of grievances and to the cause of

independence. They were also simultaneously constructing new rhetorical situations.

Certainly, for Loyalists and the British Crown, the rhetorical situation was dramatically

different, but became imbued with meaning through rhetoric.

While it is possible to view party factionalism and party repair through the lens of exigencies needing to be resolved, such a view precludes an understanding of parties as

20. Richard E. Vatz, “The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation,” *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 6, no. 3: 155-156.

21. *Ibid.*, 157.

22. *Ibid.*, 159.

23. Bitzer, “The Rhetorical Situation,” 2.

rhetorically constituted. Divisions within parties are built around key disagreements, but those disagreements and divisions are built through rhetoric. The necessity of rebuilding a party arises in response to divisive primary rhetoric, and responses to that division do not start from a blank canvas, but instead from a canvas already dirty with the discursive infighting that accompanies partisan politics. The language of rhetorical exigencies is still a partially useful framework for understanding the situation with which rhetors are confronted, but Bitzer's temporal understanding in which situations always call discourse into being is inconsistent with understanding party rhetoric as a facet of organizational identity. Organizations, including political parties, are defined rhetorically and are consistent with Vatz's view that "situations obtain their character from the rhetoric which surrounds them."²⁴ The following section continues the discussion from chapter two of the project's grounding in organizational rhetoric.

Organizational Rhetoric & Organizational Identity

The nature of party building and party repair is inherently tied to organizational rhetoric and organizational identity. As discussed in chapter two, parties are fundamentally organizations and the rhetoric of presidential candidates and faction leaders serves the purpose of organizing parties in the vital period between the selection of a candidate and the general election. Hoffman and Ford propose a specific method for

24. Richard E. Crable, "'Organizational Rhetoric' as the Fourth Great System: Theoretical, Critical, and Paradigmatic Implications," *Journal of Applied Communication Research* 18 no. 2 (1990), 115; Vatz, "The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation," 150.

the analysis of organizational texts.²⁵ Their approach begins with what they term the “basic descriptive process” in which the critic attempts to identify the strategies of the rhetor and describe the rhetorical situation.²⁶ Much of the basic descriptive work for these campaigns has already been articulated in chapters one through three, but that description will be expanded upon in the early pages of the three analysis chapters. After the situation has been described and the basic strategies identified, Hoffman and Ford propose turning to, “commonly occurring rhetorical strategies and situations.”²⁷ The authors suggest that some common strategies and situations might include crisis rhetoric, identity rhetoric, or the rhetoric of risk.²⁸ Within the work of party repair, identity rhetoric has already been isolated as a potential generic element and chapters four through six will test the appropriateness of that lens.

From this foundation, Hoffman and Ford suggest an evaluative and/or critical reading of the texts.²⁹ Hoffman and Ford’s evaluative approach is particularly well suited for neo-Aristotelian criticism and genre criticism that does not advance beyond the level of categorization.³⁰ By contrast, the critical approach is aimed at revealing underlying power relationships within the rhetoric. Both forms of reading are useful in examining the attributes of organizational identification within parties and party movements. I hope for

25. Mary F. Hoffman and Debra J. Ford, *Organizational Rhetoric: Situations and Strategies* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2009).

26. *Ibid.*, 1-48.

27. *Ibid.*, 55-75.

28. *Ibid.*, 55.

29. Hoffman and Ford, *Organizational Rhetoric*, 103-118.

30. *Ibid.*, 105-107.

this dissertation project to advance beyond mere categorization to explain how this unique form of rhetoric functions to create consubstantial movements.³¹

Beyond Burke's concept of consubstantiality and Vatz's conception of meaning, rhetoric is also constitutive of the audiences, cultures, and organizations it seeks to address.³² Constitutive rhetoric moved beyond consubstantiality by suggesting that language is the means by which identities are constituted. As James Boyd White terms it, "The study of this process-of constitutive rhetoric-is the study of the ways we constitute ourselves as individuals, as communities, and as cultures, whenever we speak."³³ Rhetoric serves not only to establish identification between rhetor and audience, but it also constitutes the nature of their social relations and even their roles as rhetor and audience. Constitutive rhetoric plays an important part in political movements, and this dissertation will attempt to uncover the constitutive elements of party factionalism and party repair.³⁴

31. Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives*, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1969), 22; George Cheney, "The Rhetoric of Identification and the Study of Organizational Communication," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 69, (1983), 145; Mathieu Chaput, Boris H. J. M. Brummans and François Cooren, "The Role of Organizational Identification in the Communicative Constitution of an Organization: A Study of Consubstantialization in a Young Political Party," *Management Communication Quarterly* 25 (2011): 252-256.

32. James Boyd White, "Law as Rhetoric, Rhetoric as Law: The Arts of Cultural and Communal Life," *The University of Chicago Law Review* 52, no. 3 (1985): 684-702.

33. *Ibid.*, 690-691.

34. Andrew Taylor, "Barry Goldwater: insurgent conservatism as constitutive rhetoric," *Journal of Political Ideologies* 3 (2016): 242-260.

Analysis of the selected texts will begin with an investigation of Cheney's strategies of identification discussed in chapter two: common ground, antithesis, and the 'assumed we.'³⁵ Both evaluative and critical readings are necessary to understand the complex work of identification. Evaluative readings may reveal some of the failures in Blaine's attempt to reconstruct a deeply divided Republican Party or Donald Trump's successes in courting disaffected Democrats and Independents. A critical reading adds essential elements of identification within political parties. As Burke notes, "Identification is compensatory to division."³⁶ Even as parties and party movements seek to unify, they necessarily divide. Burke grounds his theory of identification in an appreciation for the ubiquity of hierarchies and the pursuit of perfection.³⁷

Beyond evaluative and critical readings, Pfau proposes the importance of partisan readings of historical texts.³⁸ Pfau engages Lincoln's 'House Divided' Speech with an eye toward the partisan context of the address.³⁹ Such partisan readings are essential in understanding party dynamics. With in-group and out-group distinctions comes the possibility for rhetorics of compromise and polarization.⁴⁰ As I analyze rhetoric from

35. George Cheney, "The Rhetoric of Identification and the Study of Organizational Communication," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 69 (1983), 143-158.

36. Burke, *Rhetoric of Motives*, 22.

37. Cheney, "The Rhetoric of Identification," 145; Kenneth Burke, *Language as Symbolic Action*, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1966), 1-24.

38. Michael William Pfau "The House that Abe Built: The 'House Divided Speech and Republican Party Politics," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 2, no. 4 (1999): 631.

39. Pfau, "The House that Abe Built," 625-651.

40. King and Anderson. "Nixon, Agnew, and the "Silent Majority," 243-244.

both election cycles I will also search for evidence of King and Anderson's polarizing strategies of affirmation and subversion as well as for rhetoric advocating compromise within the party system or with members of the political out-group.⁴¹

Organizational identity will become a major theme in chapters four and five as factions in 1884 and 1948 vie for control of their respective party labels. Identity is at the core of organizational rhetoric, and while a great deal of research has analyzed the attributes of identity formation in other types of organizations, national-level parties are unique.⁴² Parties are characterized by direct, zero-sum competition within a fixed system, in which vote choice is the sole resource. Furthermore, unlike some forms of organizations, political parties have long existed in media-rich communication environments. The jingles, parades, partisan newspapers, conventions, stump speeches, and party machines of early American politics dominated organizational identification long before Sproule identified them as staples of modern persuasion.⁴³ Cheney and Christensen discuss the significance of both internal and external rhetoric in shaping organizational identity.⁴⁴ The authors argue that these internal and external lines have become blurred.⁴⁵ Cheney and Christensen note, "Because internal and external aspects

41. Ibid.

42. George Cheney and Lars Thøger Christensen, "Organizational Identity: Linkages Between Internal and External Communication," in *The New Handbook of Organizational Communication*, eds. Fredric M. Jablin & Linda L. Putnam (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2001), 231-233.

43. Michael J. Sproule, "The New Managerial Rhetoric and the Old Criticism." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 74, no. 4 (1988), 468-486.

44. Cheney and Christensen, "Organizational Identity: Linkages," 231-264.

45. Ibid., 231-232.

of organizing are closely intertwined, communication that seems to be directed toward others may actually be auto-communicative, that is, directed primarily toward the self.”⁴⁶ Party repair is rooted in the idea that even general elections serve an auto-communicative function and auto-communicative rhetoric does not end with the selection of a nominee, rather intraparty factions and the response to them continue to construct organizational identity throughout the campaign.

Lilliana Mason argues that partisanship has recently become core to individual identity.⁴⁷ This dissertation will argue that while our relationship to our identities may have become more entrenched, organizational identities themselves have long been fluid and subject to negotiation from within through disidentification and repair. If given enough time to form their identities, contest would almost certainly have emerged within the Rattlers and the Eagles camps in the famed Robbers Cave experiment revisited by Mason.⁴⁸ These intra-camp debates would find their stasis in the defining traits of a Rattler or an Eagle.

Differences within one group would manifest even in intergroup competition. These transformations, which some have come to call *realignments*, are more accurately understood as the everyday trappings of organizational identification. By focusing on those movements that did ultimately break from their partisan bands, this dissertation will investigate the nature of partisan change through the lens of intraparty rhetoric.

46. Ibid., 258.

47. Lilliana Mason, *Uncivil Agreement: How Politics Became Our Identity* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press), 6-9.

48. Ibid., 1-4; 13; 20-22.

Combined with Achen and Bartels' observation that people do not vote reflectively based on the actions of partisans or even their own policy preferences but rather based on the impression that 'their kind' of person belongs to that party, the transformation and negotiation of organizational identities may be even more important.⁴⁹ Parties are not monolithic institutions and rhetorical critics should resist the impulse to define them as such. They intersect with questions of morality, reflexivity, and identity that animate much of intraparty discourse.

Text Analysis

While Hoffman and Ford's suggestion of interpretive and critical readings may offer some preliminary insights into the nature of texts, the approach is limited to claims either divorced from their historical and political context or emerging in response to an exigence. Such exigence-oriented explanations have been called into question by historians who challenge the empiricism and simplicity of historical functionalism.⁵⁰ An overly deterministic view of partisan identity runs the risk of obscuring the constructed nature of American parties. Ceccarelli notes the tendency of rhetorical critics to turn to secondary historical sources, in search of claims about audiences and their reception of texts.⁵¹ Such an approach provides a foundation for the analysis of text and audience but

49. Christopher H. Achen and Larry M. Bartels, *Democracy for Realists: Why Elections Do Not Produce Responsive Government* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 303.

50. Tim P. Vos, "Functionalist Explanations in Media Histories: A Historiographical Essay," *American Journalism* 35, no. 4 (2018): 490-503.

51. Leah Ceccarelli, *Shaping Science with Rhetoric: The Cases of Dobzhansky, Schrodinger, and Wilson* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), 7-8.

is limited to the extent that it fosters a Bitzerian view of rhetoric and rhetorical situations. Ceccarelli offers a solution to this limitation by outlining the method of *close textual-intertextual analysis*.⁵² Ceccarelli's approach depends on the close textual analysis, not only of a primary piece of rhetoric, but also of rhetoric emerging in response to the initial text.⁵³

Rhetoric does not exist in a vacuum, but critics' attempts to derive context solely from secondary sources causes them to neglect their role as interpretivists, relinquishing the critic's interpretive mission exclusively to the rigid worldview of historians. Rather, Ceccarelli argues that critics should turn to related, contemporaneous texts and engage in close textual analysis of the entire body of texts surrounding a rhetorical artifact, placing them in relationship to the original works.⁵⁴ The intertextual elements of this process require a merging of the roles of the rhetorical critic and the historian with a recognition that rhetoric does not merely respond to the exigencies of an external reality, but shapes and defines reality, including the significance of a given rhetorical artifact.

For both the elections of 1884 and 1948, I have extended beyond one or two pieces of rhetoric, to include a wide range of texts that are designed to answer questions of how rhetoric was received by audiences. First, attempts were made to include the publicly available, personal correspondence of contemporaries in the analysis. Personal correspondence provides insight into the less public responses to a piece of rhetoric and offers a rich source for rhetorical analysis. Second, articles newspaper archives illuminate

52. Ceccarelli, *Shaping Science*, 8.

53. *Ibid.*

54. *Ibid.*, 8-9.

the wider contemporary response to the rhetoric of intraparty movements and the party response to them. Finally, focusing on both party bolting and party repair allows the analysis to highlight intertextuality through debate, speaking to the push and pull of organizational construction and identification.

Text Selection

For both campaigns analyzed, there are a wide variety of available texts that might speak to questions of party repair and party identity. Just as party nominating processes have shifted, so too have the media carrying messages of intraparty conflict. In October 2017, President Donald Trump engaged in a widely publicized feud with fellow Republican, U.S. Senator Bob Corker, over Twitter.⁵⁵ Trump has utilized Twitter to attack other members of the establishment wing of his own party including Arizona Senators Jeff Flake and John McCain. In 1968 it was television that provided the channel of choice for fostering intraparty polarization. Viewers of the nightly news saw conflict between protestors and police officers as well as ejections of some southern delegates from the convention hall all in living color.⁵⁶ In 1884, independent Republicans attacked James G. Blaine using chants and political cartoons, and subscribers to *The New York*

55. Maggie Haberman and Thomas Kaplan, “Bob Corker, Often an Ally of Trump, Is Latest Republican to Be Attacked by Him,” *New York Times*, August 25, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/25/us/politics/bob-corker-often-an-ally-of-trump-is-latest-republican-to-be-attacked-by-him.html>.

56. Frank Kusch, *Battleground Chicago: The Police and the 1968 Democratic National Convention* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), 147.

Times could read about the rising tide of Mugwumps in American politics.⁵⁷ This changing media environment necessitates a unique approach to text selection and analysis for the 1884 and 1948 campaigns.

1884 Texts

The central intraparty conflict of the 1884 election involved Republican nominee James G. Blaine and a group of party bolters who would come to be called Mugwumps. Blaine was unique amongst nineteenth century presidential candidates in that he engaged in an active campaign to secure the presidency, including giving several of his own political speeches.⁵⁸ The speeches of Blaine and his running mate John A. Logan were compiled by J. L. Reagan and Company following the election.⁵⁹ This archive will provide the primary source for party repair in the 1884 election. Secondary sources on Blaine will include *Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion: The Making of a President, 1884*, “Crossing the Rubicon: Theodore Roosevelt, Henry Cabot Lodge, and the 1884 Republican National Convention,” and *Race Over Party: Black Politics and Partisanship in Late Nineteenth-century Boston*.⁶⁰

57. Steven A. Seidman, "U. S. Presidential Campaign Slogans: In Other Words," *Phi Kappa Phi Forum* 93, no. 3 (Fall2013 2013): 15.

58. Robert C. Kennedy, “The Blaine and Butler "Combination",” *HarpWeek*, August 23, 2001, <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/harp/0823.html>.

59. T.B. Boyd, *The Blaine and Logan Campaign of 1884* (Chicago: J.L. Reagan & Co., 1884): 11-229.

60. Millington W. Bergeson-Lockwood, *Race Over Party: Black Politics and Partisanship in Late Nineteenth-Century Boston* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2018); Edward Kohn, “Crossing the Rubicon: Theodore Roosevelt, Henry Cabot Lodge, and the 1884 Republican National

As an uninstitutionalized movement, the rhetoric of the Mugwumps only occasionally took the form of public address. Instead Mugwumps turned to newspapers, political cartoons, and private correspondence. Walsh argues that considering private correspondence is essential to understanding the rhetoric of social and political movements.⁶¹ By examining both the public, mass mediated messages of Students for a Democratic Society and then examining their more private correspondence, Walsh discovered that the intra-group rhetoric revealed that individual-level rhetoric presented unique strategies and defining characteristics of group identity.⁶² Walsh cautions against analyzing only mass-mediated messages in understanding social and political movements.

Still, a variety of original texts from Mugwump leaders have been published. The analysis of Mugwump rhetoric is derived from the writings and speeches of Mugwumps including *de facto* leader Carl Schurz. Other Mugwump leaders with accessible texts for analysis include Charles Francis Adams Jr. and Henry Adams, the grandsons of former President John Quincy Adams, NAACP founder Moorfield Storey, *Chicago Tribune* editor Horace White, Brooklyn Mayor Seth Low, and political cartoonist Thomas Nast.⁶³

Convention,” *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 5, no. 1 (2006); Mark Wahlgren Summers, *Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion: The Making of a President, 1884*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

61. Walsh Jr, James F. "Paying attention to channels: Differential images of recruitment in students for a democratic society, 1960-1965." *Communication Studies* 44, no. 1 (1993): 71-86.

62. *Ibid.*, 80-82.

63. Gerald W. McFarland, *Mugwumps, Morals, & Politics 1884-1920* (Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1975), 257-273.

Chapter four also relies heavily on the Mugwump sympathetic publications *Harper's Weekly* and the *New York Evening Post*. Secondary sources include *Moralists or Pragmatists: The Mugwumps 1884-1900*, *Mugwumps: Public Moralists of the Gilded Age* and *Mugwumps: Morals and Politics: 1884-1920*.⁶⁴

Unlike Blaine and the Mugwumps, Cleveland took a much more traditional approach to campaigning than his opponent James G. Blaine. Cleveland gave only two campaign speeches in 1884, providing only a limited sample for analysis.⁶⁵ While Cleveland ran primarily a front porch campaign, party leaders worked to ensure his victory, and the Library of Congress has compiled a detailed record of the 1884 election including campaign tracts, songs, and speeches by both Cleveland and Blaine.

1948 Texts

The Truman Presidential Library maintains a detailed archive of Truman's speeches and correspondence during the 1948 Presidential Campaign.⁶⁶ Additionally, political columnist Steve Neal has compiled a record of Truman's speeches on the

64. Gerald W. McFarland, *Moralists or Pragmatists? The Mugwumps, 1884-1900* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1975); David M. Tucker, *Mugwumps: Public Moralists of the Gilded Age* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1998).

65. Henry F. Graff, "Grover Cleveland: Campaigns and Elections," *UVA Miller Center*, last modified 2018, <https://millercenter.org/president/cleveland/campaigns-and-elections>.

66. Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, "The 1948 Election Campaign," *Harry S. Truman Presidential Library*, last modified 2017, https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/1948campaign/large/docs.

campaign trail, including a large selection of Truman's whistle stops.⁶⁷ These sources, along with secondary sources including *Truman's Whistle-stop Campaign* and *Truman Defeats Dewey* provided the texts for the examination of Party Repair in 1948.⁶⁸

Clemson University houses the digital archives of Strom Thurmond.⁶⁹ I analyzed key texts from Thurmond in 1948 but also rely on secondary sources including *The Dixiecrat Revolt and the End of the Solid South, 1932-1968*. Similarly, the archives of Henry Wallace are maintained through the University of Iowa.⁷⁰ Wallace's speeches, correspondence, and writings, as well as excerpts from *Henry Wallace's 1948 Presidential Campaign and the Future of Postwar Liberalism* provided fodder for the final factionalist candidate in the 1948 election.

Conclusion

This dissertation analyzes speeches and campaign materials from two different election cycles with an eye toward advancing scholarly understanding of these campaigns as well as of the 2016 presidential election. In both cycles, I will search for the complex mechanisms through which candidates negotiate the meaning of party and party identity. The bulk of the analysis relies on questions of identification in organizational contexts, as

67. Steve Neal, *Miracle of '48: Harry Truman's Major Campaign Speeches & Selected Whistle-Stops* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2003).

68. Steven R. Goldzwig, *Truman's Whistle-stop Campaign*, (College Station: Texas A&M University Press), 47-49.

69. Clemson University Libraries, "Strom Thurmond Collection," *Clemson University*, last modified 2018, <https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/strom/>.

70. The University of Iowa Libraries, "Henry A. Wallace Collection," *University of Iowa*, last modified 2013, <http://wallace.lib.uiowa.edu/about.aspx>.

defined by Cheney, as well as related elements of polarization and political compromise. In the chapters that follow, I will analyze the rhetoric of the 1884 and 1948 elections. Chapters four and five provide a theoretical foundation for the study of political parties and intra-party movements by focusing specifically on the nature of intraparty factionalism and party repair. Chapter six will discuss the significance of the findings for the present and summarize the implications of those findings for future research on political party rhetoric.

Chapter 4: The Mugwump Revolt of 1884

I have laughed myself red with amusement over the letters, affidavits, leading articles and speeches which are flying through the air. Society is torn to pieces. Parties are wrecked from top to bottom. A great political revolution seems impending. Yet, when I am not angry, I can do nothing but laugh.

– Henry Adams, September 1884¹

Like many elections of the Gilded Age, the 1884 campaign between Democrat Grover Cleveland and Republican James G. Blaine faded rapidly from public memory. Modern understandings of Gilded Age democracy emphasize corruption, vote stealing, and machine politics. While each of these factors characterized American politics in the late 19th century, it was also a period of intense partisan division. Up to 1880, the dominant rhetorical strategy of Republican campaigns had been to “wave the bloody shirt,” or to remind voters of the sacrifice of Union soldiers in the Civil War and blame the Democratic Party for the conflict.² As interest was drawn away from the war and toward issues of economics and patronage, parties began to fracture. Within the Republican Party, followers of New York Senator Roscoe Conkling and Maine Senator James G. Blaine formed factions that would come to be called *Stalwarts* and *Half-Breeds*. The two sides engaged in a heated debate over civil service reform and access to the “spoils” of government.

Following the assassination of President James Garfield at the hands of a partisan job seeker, public attention turned increasingly toward civil service reform and issues of political corruption, prompting Stalwart president Chester Arthur to sign into law the

1. Henry Adams, *Henry Adams: Selected Letters*, ed. Ernest Samuels (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992), 175.

2. Mark Wahlgren Summers, *Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion: The Making of a President 1884* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 41-45.

Pendleton Civil Service Reform Act of 1883, despite a long career of benefiting from partisan appointments and machine politics.³ Especially significant in the push for reform were a group of independently-minded, aristocratic Republicans who would soon come to be called “the Mugwumps.”⁴ Mugwumps might be fairly characterized as the most dedicated reformers in the party. They were willing to attack Democrats, as well as Republicans, for benefiting from the era’s culture of corruption. It was the issue of corruption that would come to dominate the election of 1884 and result in a Mugwump revolt from the Republican Party.⁵

At the Republican Convention in Chicago on June 3rd through 6th 1884, Republicans passed over incumbent president Chester A. Arthur and nominated Maine Senator and former Speaker of the House James G. Blaine on the fourth ballot.⁶ While

3. Daniel Canter, Alexander Kutikov, and Robert G. Uzzo. "How Chester Alan Arthur 'Brightened' from A Political Spoilsman to a Civil Service Reformer." *BJU International* 108, no. 8 (2011): 1235-1237.

4. The term mugwump was argued to be borrowed from the Algonkian phrase for “great man” used in *Eliot's Indian Bible*, with the alternative spelling mukquomp. Alexander F. Chamberlain, “Algonkian Words in American English: A Study in the Contact of the White Man and the Indian,” *The Journal of American Folklore* 15, no. 59 (1902): 250. Also referenced in: *Harper's Weekly, A Journal of Civilization*, November 1, 1884, 721, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000061498>. All *Harper's Weekly* citations accessed through Hathi Trust Digital Library.

5. Gerald W. McFarland, *Mugwumps, Morals, & Politics 1884-1920* (Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1975), 15-16.

6. Republican National Committee, *Proceedings of the Eighth Republican National Convention held at Chicago, Illinois, June 3, 4, 5, and 6* (Chicago: Rand, McNally, & Company, 1884), 141-162, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015030799913;view=1up;seq=213>.

Blaine had been the leader of the Half-Breeds, who supported civil service reform, the Mugwumps viewed Blaine as the nation's chief beneficiary of political graft. Blaine had been engulfed in scandal and allegations of bribery throughout his political career. Mugwumps bristled at the notion of voting for Blaine and resolved to bolt from the party over his nomination. Following the Democratic convention, Mugwumps shifted their support to Democratic nominee Grover Cleveland. The pages that follow analyze the rhetoric of the Mugwump movement and the attempts of the Republican Party to heal their fractured coalition. I begin with a description of the most consequential rhetors in the Mugwump revolt before turning to the major themes in their rhetoric. Cheney's concept of organizational identification, including the elements of antithesis, common ground, the assumed "we," and unifying symbols, provides the foundation for the analysis.⁷ After outlining the major themes of *disidentification* the chapter turns to the rhetoric of Blaine and his supporters to better understand the strategies of party repair employed during the general election. In both cases, overarching themes emerge about the relationship between partisan identification and morality.

The Mugwumps

In some respects, Mugwumps were a relatively homogenous group of highly educated, liberal reformers within the Republican Party.⁸ They tended to reside in urban

7. George Cheney, "The Rhetoric of Identification and the Study of Organizational Communication," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 69, (1983), 148-158.

8. McFarland, *Mugwumps, Morals, & Politics*, 20-21; Gerald W. McFarland, *Moralists or Pragmatists? The Mugwumps, 1884-1900* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1975), 2; 14-15; David M.

areas, especially New York, Boston, Cleveland, or the nation's capital and had been active in the fight for abolition prior to the Civil War and later fought for civil service reform.⁹ In another sense, Mugwumps' lives were varied and took them into a range of fields, including business, government, and journalism. Their contributions to the 1884 election were mixed. Some, like George William Curtis, used their writing to turn the tide in favor of Cleveland. Others, like Carl Schurz, advanced their position through the public speaking circuit. Still others preferred to work behind the scenes, influencing the election through the power of their private correspondence. The sections that follow provide necessary background for understanding the Mugwump revolt and the leaders whose rhetoric was arguably instrumental in electing Grover Cleveland in 1884.

Carl Schurz

While several high-ranking officials bolted from the Republican Party in 1884, none was more prominent than the former Missouri Senator and Secretary of the Interior, Carl Schurz.¹⁰ After leaving national office in 1881, Schurz served as editor of one of the leading publications that would become most associated with Mugwumpery, the *New-York Evening Post* (today the *New York Post*).¹¹ But Schurz's editorial role was significantly less defining than it would be for other high-profile Mugwumps. Editorial

Tucker, *Mugwumps: Public Moralists of the Gilded Age* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1998), 1-14.

9. McFarland, *Mugwumps, Morals, & Politics*, 20; Tucker, *Mugwumps: Public Moralists*, 38-45.

10. McFarland, *Mugwumps, Morals, & Politics*, 33.

11. Frederic Bancroft and William A. Dunning, *The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz*, vol. 3. (New York: The McClure Company, 1908), 402.

disagreements with fellow Mugwump E.L. Godkin prompted Schurz to leave *The Post* prior to the election of 1884.¹² Having left public office and his editorial post, Schurz was seldom reserved in expressing his political opinions, including his fervent opposition to James G. Blaine. While Schurz no longer held a significant formal position, he carried considerable weight in the party, especially among German-Americans who were crucial to the Republican Party's continued success.¹³ Prior to his immigration to the United States in 1852, Schurz had played a large role in the German Revolutions of 1848, which helped to establish the freely-elected Frankfurt Parliament in Germany.¹⁴ Because of his role in the German Revolutions and public advocacy on their behalf, Schurz was highly respected among German-Americans; and in 1884, Schurz's anti-Blaine speeches were translated into German in response to "great demand."¹⁵

Well before the party convention in 1884, Schurz, who aligned himself with reform-minded Republicans, prophesied the party's split if it were to nominate Blaine. Schurz wrote to Kansas Senator Preston Plumb in March, saying, "I see good reasons for apprehending that Blaine's nomination would be followed instantly by a break."¹⁶

12. Allan Nevins, *The Evening Post: A Century of Journalism* (New York: Boni and Liveright Publishers, 1922), 453-457.

13. Summers, *Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion*, 83; Hans Louis Trefousse, *Carl Schurz: A Biography* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1998), 60.

14. Carl Wittke, "The German Forty-Eighters in America: A Centennial Appraisal," *The American Historical Review* 53, no. 4 (1948): 711-725.

15. Carl Schurz, *Speeches, Correspondence, and Political Papers of Carl Schurz*, vol. 4, ed. Frederic Bancroft (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1913), 286.

16. *Ibid.*, 201.

Following Blaine's nomination, Schurz became a vocal leader in the Mugwump cause. He traveled around the United States delivering speeches on behalf of Cleveland and imploring moderate Republicans to join him in opposing Blaine. By some accounts, Schurz visited over two dozen communities to campaign for Cleveland.¹⁷ Owing to the diligence of historian Frederic Bancroft, a robust record exists of Schurz's correspondence and speeches during the 1884 election. Two of Schurz's most well circulated campaign addresses are analyzed here along with much of his individual correspondence.¹⁸

The power of Schurz's oratory drew national attention. His campaign address with arguably the greatest level of exposure was delivered on August 5th in Brooklyn, New York to a largely Republican audience. In the speech, Schurz outlined, in classic judicial form, the corruption case against Blaine. A full two weeks after its initial delivery, *Harper's Weekly* praised the speech as "a model of the true method of political discussion."¹⁹ The editorial went on to note of the speech, "It is perfectly clear in statement, resistless in logic, and moderate in tone. It was very effective in delivery, and yet is entirely free from clap-trap. It is remorseless in its exposure of the significance of all the facts which it marshals, yet there is no touch of intentional injustice or

17. Bancroft and Dunning, *The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz*, 407.

18. The first of these speeches was delivered August 5th in Brooklyn, NY and the second in Cincinnati on September 25th. Schurz, *Speeches, Correspondence, and Political Papers*, 224; Carl Schurz, "Can Honest Americans Vote for Jas. G. Blaine? From a Speech at Cincinnati, Sept. 25," *Library of Congress*, accessed October 1, 2018, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbpe.1290200f/>.

19. *Harper's Weekly*, August 23, 1884, 545.

misrepresentation.”²⁰ Continuous praise from *Harper’s Weekly* and its political editor, George William Curtis, certainly amplified the reach of Schurz’s message, but Curtis himself was a powerful voice in the Mugwump revolt.

George William Curtis and Harper’s Weekly

Whereas Schurz drew much of his influence from a life in elective office and the power of his oratory, Curtis had developed a reputation built on the power of the printed word. Curtis held only one formal political appointment in his long and influential career, serving as the first chairman of the U.S. Civil Service Commission established under President Grant.²¹ Curtis is often credited as the leading figure in the civil service reform movement, but he is also remembered for his significant influence as a newspaper editor and for his role as the president of New York University in the later years of his life.²² Like many journalists and editors of the day, Curtis was intensely partisan in his duties. Both Schurz and Curtis had been original members of the Republican Party. Curtis, who was a devout abolitionist, put his full force behind the newly formed party as an outspoken proponent of John C. Fremont in the election of 1856 and became an early supporter of Lincoln four years later.²³

Despite Curtis’ weighty contributions in several elections, one biographer

20. Ibid.

21. Richard J. Stillman II, *Creating the American State: The Moral Reformers and the Modern Administrative World They Made* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1998), 23

22. Ibid., 22.

23. Gordon Milne, *George William Curtis & the Genteel Tradition* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1956), 91.

described the 1884 election as “the climactic moment in his political career.”²⁴ Along with many of his fellow Mugwumps, Curtis had entered the Chicago convention as a supporter of the Vermont reformer George F. Edmunds.²⁵ Edmunds gained much excitement among the liberal delegates to the convention, including the young New York idealist, Theodore Roosevelt.²⁶ In the first round of voting, opposition to Blaine was divided between Edmunds and the incumbent president, Chester Arthur.²⁷ Despite a dismal showing on the first ballot, Edmunds supporters refused to switch to Arthur. Sizeable defections among the supporters of Arthur and Blaine’s soon-to-be vice-presidential nominee, John A. Logan, cleared the path to victory for Blaine.²⁸

The threat of a party bolt loomed large at the convention. Blaine supporters attempted to pass an amendment that would require all seated delegates to pledge to support the eventual nominee of the party.²⁹ Incensed by the amendment, Curtis rose to speak against it, labeling the amendment an attack on individual autonomy and freedom of choice.³⁰ When Blaine did secure the nomination, Curtis was initially reluctant to leave the political party he helped form, but under pressure from the Harper family, which owned *Harper’s Weekly*, his close allies in journalism, and, as he would later argue, his

24. Ibid., 179.

25. Edward Cary, *George William Curtis* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, and Company, 1894), 286.

26. James C. Malin, “Roosevelt and the Elections of 1884 and 1888,” *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 14, no. 1 (Jun., 1927): 26-29.

27. Summers, *Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion*, 138-142.

28. Ibid., 140-142.

29. *Harper’s Weekly*, June 14, 1884, 379.

30. Milne, *George William Curtis*, 180.

own conscience, Curtis decided to align *Harper's Weekly* squarely behind Cleveland.³¹ Curtis, and *Harper's Weekly* more generally, became a major source of Mugwump opinion and journalism in 1884. In addition to scattered addresses and pieces of correspondence from Curtis, this chapter looks to the writings of Curtis and *Harper's Weekly* as representative of the rhetoric of intraparty factionalism in 1884.

Thomas Nast

Curtis' writings were deeply influential among Republicans, but his words were amplified by the visual attributes of *Harper's Weekly*, especially the drawings of *Harper's* star political cartoonist, Thomas Nast. Modern biographers have dubbed Nast "America's greatest political cartoonist" and "the father of modern political cartoons."³² Many of Nast's creations remain salient political and cultural symbols, including the Republican Elephant and the modern image of Santa Claus.³³ Nast's most impactful contribution to American politics may have been his courageous cartoons targeting the notorious Tammany Hall political machine in New York and its leader William M. Tweed.³⁴ The celebrated illustrator had also earned a reputation as a "president maker," supporting winning presidential candidates in each of his six presidential elections while

31. Summers, *Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion*, 199.

32. Jay G. Williams, *Thomas Nast: America's Greatest Political Cartoonist: A History of Pictorial Caricatures of 19th Century Society* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2014); Fiona Deans Halloran, *Thomas Nast: The Father of Modern Political Cartoons* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

33. Williams, *Thomas Nast*, 1.

34. Halloran, *Thomas Nast*, 119-143; McFarland, *Mugwumps, Morals, & Politics*, 37.

at *Harper's*.³⁵

Nast's cultural sway brought great attention to *Harper's Weekly*, but it was also a source of controversy between Nast and Curtis.³⁶ While the two were closely aligned in ideology and their quest for civil service reform, Curtis believed that political communication should maintain a level of courteousness and sophistication that is rare in cartoon images.³⁷ Throughout the 1884 election, Nast and Curtis vied for creative control of *Harper's*, but the two were joined conclusively in their opposition to Blaine.³⁸

Nast was pointed in his criticism of Blaine well before the former Speaker of the House secured the Republican nomination. Nast's earliest depictions of Blaine represented the Republican leader as a bigot, whose record was marred by immoral dealings and associations with the most corrupt actors in American politics.³⁹ When Blaine won the Republican Nomination, Nast quickly devoted the power of his cartoons to the Mugwump cause. Immediately following the convention, *Harper's Weekly*, published the first of Nast's cartoons portraying Mugwumps as defenders of honor and decency in American politics.⁴⁰ Nast's visual campaign against Blaine in 1884 occurred at the end of the cartoonist's illustrious career, and his cartoons reached a significant

35. J. Chal Vinson, *Thomas Nast: Political Cartoonist* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1967) 23-37.

36. Halloran, *Thomas Nast*, 221-244.

37. Halloran, *Thomas Nast*, 221-222.

38. Summers, *Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion*, 199.

39. Halloran, *Thomas Nast*, 168.

40. Williams, *Thomas Nast*, 301; Summers, *Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion*, 199-200.

audience and embodied the spirit of the Mugwump movement.⁴¹ The analysis of Mugwump rhetoric outlined below included over 60 images published in *Harper's Weekly* during the 1884 election, with the vast majority created by Nast.⁴² This analysis also includes the work of other dominant cartoonists of the day, including Frank Beard, Bernhard Gillam, and Joseph Keppler.

E. L. Godkin, *The Nation*, and the *New-York Evening Post*

Harper's was one of the publications that became a major platform for the Mugwumps in 1884. Two others, *The Nation* and the *New-York Evening Post*, were under significant guidance from *Post* editor and *Nation* founder Edwin L. Godkin. Godkin, like Schurz, had emigrated to the United States following a successful career in Europe. Born in Ireland, he began his journalism career as a war correspondent in Turkey but decided to take his talents to the United States in the 1850s and quickly made his way in the leading intellectual circles of the day, including an association with George William Curtis and Charles Eliot Norton.⁴³

Godkin, notorious for his blunt, and at times brash, honesty had long made

41. Vinson, *Thomas Nast*, 23.

42. HarpWeek, *The Presidential Elections 1860-1912: 1884 Cleveland V. Blaine*, accessed September 21, 2018, <http://elections.harpweek.com/1884/cartoons-1884f.asp?UniqueID=1&Year=1884>; and from Williams, *Thomas Nast*, 300-305.

43. William W. Armstrong, *E.L. Godkin: A Biography* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1978), 1-34; William W. Armstrong, *The Gilded Age Letters of E.L. Godkin* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1974), 29.

evident his dislike of James Blaine.⁴⁴ In an 1882 letter to his friend James Bryce, Godkin described Blaine as a man “of whose character of a politician you cannot have too low an opinion, and who is utterly distrusted not only by all educated men, but by all business men.”⁴⁵ Despite having achieved significant notoriety and readership in Republican circles, Godkin could not bring himself to endorse Blaine in 1884 and instead, along with fellow editor Horace White, dedicated the *Post* and the *Nation* to supporting Cleveland.⁴⁶

Like *Harper's*, *The Post* and *The Nation* were instrumental in the Mugwump's aims of challenging the Republican Party and shifting public sentiment toward Cleveland. This chapter includes an analysis of the available editorials from *The Post* and *The Nation* between the Republican Convention and the general election in 1884, as well as the scattered speeches, writings, and correspondence of Edwin Godkin.

Moorfield Storey

While Mugwump leaders included first-generation Americans like Carl Schurz and E.L. Godkin, the social activist Moorfield Storey traced his family roots back to the earliest Europeans to settle on the continent.⁴⁷ Storey had long been active in the abolitionist movement and was well connected in Massachusetts' elite academic and political circles.⁴⁸ He professed a strong belief in virtuous public service and robust

44. E.L. Godkin, *The Gilded Age Letters of E.L. Godkin*, ed. William W. Armstrong (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1974), 205; 232; 281.

45. Godkin, *The Gilded Age Letters*, 281.

46. Armstrong, *E.L. Godkin*, 159-178.

47. William B. Hixson Jr., *Moorfield Storey and the Abolitionist Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 3.

48. *Ibid.*, 4.

political engagement.⁴⁹ While his partisan identity shifted with time, Storey maintained an important role in electoral politics, including during the 1884 election.⁵⁰ In modern American politics, Storey is most remembered as the founding president of the NAACP and for his legal representation of black defendants falsely accused of crimes in the early Jim Crow era.⁵¹ But in 1884 it was James Blaine's scandals that caused Storey to join the Mugwumps in bolting from the Republican Party.⁵²

Storey found himself at the heart of the major scandal plaguing Blaine's candidacy when the clerk of Blaine's former business associate came forward with new letters written by Blaine to the clerk's employer clearly demonstrating attempts by Blaine to use the Speaker's office for personal gain. The initial wave of letters, which came to be known as the *Mulligan Letters* (so named for the clerk who exposed them), had derailed Blaine's first candidacy in 1876.⁵³ These letters provided the foundation for the Mugwump's claims of corruption against Blaine. The Mulligan Letters allege that while Speaker of the House of Representatives, Blaine had sought preferential treatment in purchasing and selling bonds of the Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad company from companies that the House of Representatives was tasked with funding and regulating.⁵⁴ In 1884, appalled that Blaine had won the Republican nomination despite widespread

49. Ibid., 5-6.

50. Ibid., 6.

51. Ibid., 146-190.

52. Moorfield Storey, *Mr. Blaine's Record: The Investigation of 1876 and the Mulligan Letters* (Boston: Committee of One Hundred, 1884).

53. Summers, *Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion*, 61-64.

54. Storey, *Mr. Blaine's Record*, 14-17.

public knowledge of the letters, Mulligan came forward with new letters by Blaine, which he delivered directly to Storey.⁵⁵ Based on these letters, Storey authored a detailed account of the scandal and a scathing critique of Blaine.⁵⁶ Storey's publication on Blaine provides the foundation for analysis of his 1884 rhetoric.

Henry Ward Beecher

Biographer Debby Applegate refers to the abolitionist minister Henry Ward Beecher as “the most famous man in America.”⁵⁷ The brother of renowned anti-slavery author Harriet Beecher Stowe, Henry Ward Beecher rose to fame as a preacher and lecturer. An early Republican and an ardent abolitionist, Beecher used his national pulpit to hasten the coming conflict over slavery. Prior to the Civil War, Beecher went so far as arming Kansas abolitionists with Sharps Rifles, which would soon come to be called “Beecher’s Bibles.”⁵⁸ Beecher had long expressed a strong distrust of Democrats and Democratic politicians. Like many of his fellow Mugwumps, Beecher had supported the Republican Party’s first nominee John C. Fremont in 1856 and backed every Republican nominee since, but his strong opposition to Blaine was enough to drive his support to Cleveland in 1884.⁵⁹

Soon after the convention, Beecher sent a letter of support to the Mugwumps in

55. Hixson Jr., *Moorfield Storey*, 22-23.

56. Ibid; Storey, *Mr. Blaine's Record*, 1-23.

57. Debby Applegate, *The Most Famous Man in America: A Biography of Henry Ward Beecher* (New York: Doubleday, 2006).

58. Ibid., 281-282.

59. Ibid., 462-463.

New York, stating, “Put me down against Blaine one hundred times in letters two feet long.”⁶⁰ While Beecher was quick to reject Blaine’s nomination, he was more resistant than some in endorsing Cleveland.⁶¹ But by October, Beecher had fully embraced Cleveland’s candidacy and viewed allegations of Cleveland’s sexual promiscuity as directly analogous to his own trial for adultery in 1875.⁶² Beecher’s oratory was world renowned and his masterful but informal style always drew a crowd.⁶³ In October, Beecher delivered his most well documented speech of the 1884 campaign to a lively audience in Brooklyn.⁶⁴ Notations from the original transcriber indicate over 57 instances of applause or cheering from the audience and 31 interruptions for laughter.⁶⁵ Beecher’s Brooklyn address as well as some of his original correspondence feature prominently in the analysis.

Other Mugwump Leaders

While the previously mentioned leaders represent the bulk of the analysis for this chapter, a variety of other Mugwump exemplars are included. Drawn from the pages of *Harper’s Weekly*, the *New-York Evening Post*, *The New-York Times*, or contributing short quotes to memoirs of their compatriots, their roles in the Mugwump bolt of 1884 are no

60. Albert Bigelow Paine, *Th. Nast: His Period and His Pictures* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1904), 497.

61. Applegate, *The Most Famous Man in America*, 462-463.

62. Henry Ward Beecher, *Lectures and Orations*, ed. Newell Dwight Hillis (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1913), 308-311.

63. Applegate, *The Most Famous Man in America*, 173.

64. Beecher, *Lectures and Orations*, 284-285.

65. *Ibid.*, 284-311.

less significant, but their rhetoric remains less documented. For some, the lack of documentation was by choice. This was certainly the case for Henry and Charles Francis Adams Jr. Heirs to one of America's most famous political families, their grandfather John Quincy Adams and great-grandfather John Adams lent great credibility to their cause. Both were progressive reformers. Charles Francis Adams Jr. had been a leading advocate of public accountability for business, chairing the Massachusetts Railroad Commission, which has been credited by some as laying the foundation for regulation and administration of public goods and services.⁶⁶ Henry Adams became the nation's foremost historian and social critic.

Both men were strong Republicans who adamantly opposed Blaine, but for different reasons each brother opted out of significant political engagement in 1884. For Charles, it was his new role as the president of the Union Pacific Railroad.⁶⁷ The older of the two brothers, Charles was dedicated to protecting the business interests of his company, but gladly sent along his support for fellow Republicans bolting for Cleveland.⁶⁸ Henry Adams similarly opposed Blaine's nomination and left little doubt among friends where he stood, but he remained publicly reserved and focused primarily on his academic pursuits.⁶⁹ He wrote a friend in September noting his change in party

66. Stillman, *Creating the American State*, 44-62.

67. Edward Chase Kirkland, *Charles Francis Adams, Jr. 1835-1915: The Patrician at Bay* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), 164.

68. Summers, *Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion*, 198.

69. Henry Adams, *Selected Letters*, 175.

loyalties, saying, “I am a free trade Democrat and support Mr. Cleveland.”⁷⁰ The younger Adams’ opposition to Blaine comes as no surprise to the modern reader, now aware of Henry Adams’ authorship of the then anonymous 1880 novel *Democracy*. Blaine was the readily apparent inspiration for the novel’s primary villain, the corrupt Senator Silas Ratcliffe, who exploited his public office for personal gain⁷¹

Alongside the Adams brothers were a wealth of other Mugwumps of varying levels of engagement, including elite social critic Charles Eliot Norton, leading leather businessman Jackson S. Schultz, *The New-York Times* editor George Jones, and the legendary American author Mark Twain.⁷² Their words and commentary on the breaking up of the Republican Party coalition can be found in these pages and their role as leading political rhetors of the day should not be understated.

Other Intraparty Movements

When the votes were finally tallied, and Cleveland was declared the victor, *The New-York Times* placed the credit squarely with the Mugwumps.⁷³ More recent historians have also pointed to two third-party movements, which may have tipped the election in Cleveland’s favor.⁷⁴ The candidacies of Prohibition Party nominee John St. John and Greenback Party candidate Benjamin Butler both exploited internal divisions within the

70. Ibid.

71. James P. Young, *Henry Adams: The Historian and Political Theorist* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001), 108.

72. Kay R. Moser, “Mark Twain-Mugwump,” *Mark Twain Journal* 21, no. 2 (1982): 1-4.

73. *The New-York Times*, November 8, 1884, 2, <https://spiderbites.nytimes.com/1884/>. All citations from *The New York Times* accessed via the *Times* database.

74. Summers, *Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion*, xiv.

two major parties. For former Kansas Governor John St. John, the dividing line was prohibition.⁷⁵ Prohibitionists tended to vote overwhelmingly for Republicans, but key demographics within the party (especially Germans) made the issue particularly challenging to navigate.⁷⁶ Many of Nast's cartoons depict Blaine's struggles to court both wet and dry voters within the same party.⁷⁷

The other major issue dominating Gilded Age politics was currency. Heated debates proliferated over the gold standard, free coinage of silver, and paper currency known as greenbacks. It was the currency debate that attracted populist voters within the two dominant parties, but especially the Democratic Party, to the Greenbackers.⁷⁸ Greenbackers supported paper currency not tied to any type of bullion.⁷⁹ Paper currency had been issued during the Civil War but was discontinued shortly thereafter.⁸⁰ With the Panic of 1873 and the long depression that followed, Americans across the political spectrum hoped that currency policy might provide some relief.⁸¹ Greenback nominee Benjamin Butler ultimately secured more votes than St. John, but both took a sizeable share of the electorate in key states like New York and Connecticut, where Cleveland

75. *Ibid.*, 82.

76. *Ibid.*, 82-83.

77. *Harper's Weekly*, August 23, 1884, 543; *Harper's Weekly*, October 4, 1884, 654. *Harper's Weekly*, October 25, 1884, 707.

78. Summers, *Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion*, 223-229.

79. Gretchen Ritter, *Goldbugs and Greenbacks: The Antimonopoly Tradition and the Politics of Finance in America, 1865-1896* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 140.

80. *Ibid.*, 3.

81. *Ibid.*, 142-143.

won with less than 1% of the overall vote.⁸² Both St. John and Butler provide additional questions for the study of party bolting, and their rhetoric at times appears alongside that of Mugwumps in the analysis.

Mugwumps and the Rhetoric of Disidentification

In 1884, party bolting presented a unique challenge to the organizational schema of the Republican Party. Through strategies of disidentification, the Mugwumps resisted scholarly understandings of political parties and political organization in the United States. In the sections that follow, I analyze the rhetoric of Mugwumps as they bolted from the Republican Party and as they publicly defended their position. Their rhetoric maintained an overarching judicial character and relied on various strategies for unraveling their previous bonds of identification. Foremost, Mugwump leaders turned to the rhetoric of morality, advocating for the higher, moral ground in place of the common ground they once shared with their fellow party members. They rejected the ambiguity of the “assumed ‘we’,” which had long held together the Republican coalition. They reformulated antithesis to recast former enemies as friends, while warning against the Trojan horse infiltration of Blaine and his disciples within the Republican Party. Perhaps most significantly, the Mugwumps played an integral part in the destruction of the unifying symbol that had banded the Republican Party together since the early days of the Civil War.

The Judicial Campaign and the Dominance of Identification by Associative

Morality

In Aristotle’s system for classifying rhetoric, political campaigning is often

82. Summers, *Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion*, 290-301.

thought of as *deliberative*, or as rhetoric that is concerned with the future and predicted consequences.⁸³ Deliberative appeals to vote for Blaine might have employed Blaine's support for trade protections that could be a boon to the American economy, or they may have turned to the candidate's ability to address Republican concerns with immigration policy. Mugwump rhetoric against Blaine certainly turned to deliberative appeals at times. For example, in Carl Schurz's well distributed speech in Cincinnati, the former Senator proclaimed:

We sincerely believe these consequences which Mr. Blaine's election would draw after it to be so grave and, perhaps, irremediable that all the evils predicted, even by the extremest[sic] Republicans, as likely to follow a change of party in power are insignificant compared with them. We believe, therefore, that this change, which as every sensible man knows must come some time, should be made now, when it cannot be postponed without the gravest, and, perhaps, permanent injury to the public welfare.⁸⁴

This direct comparison between the consequences of a Democratic victory and a Blaine victory featured occasionally in Mugwump rhetoric, but as later sections of the analysis suggest, the majority of Mugwump rhetoric focused on virtue over consequence and past over future. Prediction seemed to play only a minor role in the rhetoric of mugwumpery, in part because factionalist rhetoric in 1884 largely turned away from specific policies, toward issues of Blaine's past. Curtis's biographer Edward Carry argues that had anyone other than Blaine won the nomination, the issue of the tariff would certainly have

83. Susan Condor, Cristian Tileaga, and Michael Billig, "Political Rhetoric," in *Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology*, eds. Leonie Huddy, David O. Sears, and Jack S. Levy (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 262-300.

84. Carl Schurz, "Can Honest Americans Vote for Jas. G. Blaine?," 4.

dominated the 1884 election.⁸⁵ Instead, Independent Republicans focused almost exclusively on allegations of corruption against Blaine. Moving beyond the traditional praise and blame of ceremonial rhetoric, disaffected party leaders deployed a *forensic* or *judicial* rhetoric, based on past events in Blaine's political life. Mugwumps' judicial rhetoric sought to lay out, in explicit detail, the proof of Blaine's corruption.

At the start of the Republican Convention, Bernhard Gillam, one of Nast's counterparts at *Puck Magazine*, produced a cartoon representation of Blaine being disrobed in front of a group of Republican leaders in the style of Gérôme's *Phryne before the Areopagus*.⁸⁶ Unlike Phryne, whose beauty persuaded the Areopagus (the court of Athens) to spare her life, Blaine is shown covered in tattoos exposing his corrupt dealings with business while Speaker of the House. Gillam's tattooed caricature of Blaine reflected the Mugwump sentiment that Blaine was a self-interested politician. The judicial metaphor of Gillam's cartoon extended well beyond the convention, with both Democrats and Republicans making a public case against Blaine on charges of corruption. Underlying this rhetoric was a larger indictment of the Republican Party, but first it was necessary to establish the guilt of the accused. The task of laying out the charges against Blaine became the primary objective of the Mugwumps, and especially Moorfield Storey.

As a trusted Republican and civil rights activist, Storey was well positioned as a public adjudicator of the Blaine matter. In consultation with other Republican bolters, Storey published a book formally titled *Mr. Blaine's Record: The Investigation of 1876*

85. Cary, *George William Curtis*, 281.

86. See Appendix 1. *Puck*, June 4, 1884, 216, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/008886840>.

and The Mulligan Letters. Storey framed his writing on the subject as the continuation of an official investigation begun in the House of Representatives in 1876 but never concluded.⁸⁷ The official investigation was largely dropped after Blaine left the House to represent Maine in the U.S. Senate and lost the Republican nomination for president to Rutherford B. Hayes.⁸⁸ Storey's book begins by very briefly describing Blaine's perceived fall from grace during the campaign in 1876 and the abrupt end to the investigation.⁸⁹ As Speaker of the House, Blaine had been the most likely candidate for the Republican nomination before allegations of his involvement in the railroad scandal and the disclosure of letters to a railroad executive clearly contradicting Blaine's claims unraveled his presidential ambitions.⁹⁰

In just over 22 pages of text and 44 pages of appendixes, Storey outlines the case against Blaine in relation to the Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad Company. Storey attempted to reconstruct the initial investigation through the Congressional Record and through newly discovered correspondence between Blaine and railroad officials. Storey's work bears more resemblance to a legal brief than to other political essays of the day. Moving beyond Aristotle's standard's for judicial rhetoric, Storey relied on a prominent legal metaphor. He referred repeatedly to the *evidence* against Blaine, providing a detailed record of that evidence in the appendixes. Storey deployed the language of *charges* rather than *allegations*. Thirty-one times in the text, Storey utilized the word

87. Storey, *Mr. Blaine's Record*, 1-2.

88. *Ibid.*

89. *Ibid.*

90. *Ibid.*

charge, in its various tenses, in reference to Blaine. Storey's final words in the book read like the closing statement of a prosecuting attorney addressing a jury:

The letters and other evidence therefore prove Mr. Blaine guilty of falsehood, of bartering official influence for personal profit, and of deceiving his Maine friends. They show that he is capable of all that has been charged against him in connection with the railroad companies named. Do they not also show that all these charges are true? And can any one yet believe such a man a fit person to set in the chair of Washington and Lincoln, or see without alarm men who have been trusted and honored insisting that he is "the one representative American"? It rests with the voters of this country to prove that he is not.⁹¹

Not only did Storey's conclusion offer a statement of Blaine's guilt, it also situated the burden of proof with the American public. Storey's investigation was framed to offer the American people the option of passing final judgement in an investigation that was never given a chance to conclude.

Beyond Storey's investigation, a focus on Blaine's past deeds dominated much of the campaign, with independent Republicans making the election a referendum on Blaine's guilt. On September 27th, *Harper's Weekly* published a supplement containing a reprinting of the relevant Mulligan letters.⁹² The supplement was annotated with direct quotes from Blaine in the margins. The annotated quotes from Blaine appeared to directly contradict Blaine's own writings in the Mulligan letters. The *Evening Post* similarly issued a special publication entitled *Tabulated Falsehoods of James G. Blaine*.⁹³ The *Post* publication was written in two columns. The left column listed the nine alleged

91. Storey, *Mr. Blaine's Record*, 22-23.

92. *Harper's Weekly*, September 27, 1884, 1-4 [Supplement],
<https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbpe.1290200m/?sp=3> p.

93. New-York Evening Post, 1884, [Supplement]
<https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbpe.1290200g/?sp=1>.

falsehoods, and the right column, labeled *The Proofs*, provided evidence of Blaine's deception.

In both of his two most popular speeches of the campaign, Carl Schurz devoted significant time to laying out the charges against Blaine. *The Boston Post* dubbed Schurz's second address in Brooklyn "the most notable speech of the campaign."⁹⁴ They further described how the address "cut to the bone" with its "plain facts."⁹⁵ In over 15,000 words, Schurz made the case that Blaine's past dealings not only cast disparagement on him but on those who had previously supported him. Like Storey's book, Schurz's addresses offered an in-depth description of the Mulligan letters and Blaine's association with the Little Rock and Fort Smith Rail Road. Schurz felt that Blaine's sentencing in the eyes of the public should be clear based on his crimes:

And now we declare and maintain that, not according to any new-fangled and exaggerated notions of official punctilio, but according to the code of public morals which has hitherto prevailed in this country, and which prevails in every civilized nation on earth, such acts constitute the prostitution of official power for private gain and a scandalous degradation of official honor and dignity, not only reflecting shame upon the man guilty of them, but in the highest degree humiliating to the people among whom that man held high public station.⁹⁶

Blaine's conviction, according to Schurz, is not only a conviction for him, but also for his followers. In the eyes of Mugwump leaders, Blaine's guilt was apparent, but Blaine had won the Republican nomination despite widespread public awareness of the scandal.

Mugwumps had been aware of the Mulligan letters since they derailed Blaine's candidacy in 1876, but the scandal had only briefly stalled Blaine's ambitions. Writing to

94. *The New-York Times*, August 7, 1884, 4.

95. *Ibid.*

96. Carl Schurz, "Can Honest Americans Vote for Jas. G. Blaine?," 4.

a friend in 1881, Marian “Clover” Adams had expressed shock at Garfield’s selection of Blaine as Secretary of State, noting that the Mulligan letters had “branded Blaine.”⁹⁷ After Blaine secured the nomination in 1884, the Central Committee of Republicans and Independents in Chicago issued a lengthy anti-Blaine letter to their members in which they echoed Adams’ claims from 1881, saying, “No unknown man was nominated. His record is notorious.”⁹⁸ While Blaine’s railroad scandal was well known around the country, Mugwumps committed themselves to resharing details of the scandal nationally, but the railroad scandal was only part of a broader narrative of Blaine’s corruption.

A recurring theme in Nast’s cartoons over the course of the campaign was a depiction of Blaine carrying a large bag reminiscent of that of a traveling salesman. Perhaps intended to symbolize Blaine’s political baggage, the image also created the impression of the candidate as an immoral persuader; and the bag was always labeled to note Blaine’s long record of public corruption, for example, “20 Years of Jobbery” or “20 Years of Dodging.”⁹⁹ In over a dozen cartoons, Nast made the case that Blaine’s past experiences were not an asset, but rather an illustration of his record of public immorality. As the Chicago Mugwumps phrased it, “As speaker of the House of

97. Ward Thoron, *First of Hearts: Selected Letters of Mrs. Henry Adams* (Boston: Little, Brown, & Company, 1936), 36-37.

98. Central Committee of Republicans and Independents, “To Republicans and Independent Voters. Chicago, Sept. 20, 1884.” *Library of Congress*, accessed October 1, 2018, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbpe.0180290b/?sp=1>.

99. See Appendix 2. *Harper's Weekly*, September 27, 1884, 634; *Harper's Weekly*, October 25, 1884, 695.

Representatives, he did not scruple to prostitute a judicial decision to personal gain.”¹⁰⁰

And, while the official platform address of the Boston Mugwumps never mentioned Blaine by name, the authors made clear their frustrations with the Republican Party, writing of the GOP, they said:

It offers a candidate who is an unfit leader, shown by his own words and his acknowledged acts, which are of official record, to be unworthy of respect and confidence; who has traded upon his official trust for his pecuniary gain; a representative of men, methods, and conduct which the public conscience condemns, and which illustrate the very evils which honest men would reform.¹⁰¹

Across various media from a diverse range of Independent Republicans, the overwhelming complexion of Mugwump rhetoric was a forensic recounting of Blaine’s past deeds and a call for his sentencing by voters on Election Day. A satirical broadside of unknown origin read. “Blaine’s Funeral: Died November 4th, 1884. Hon. Jas. G. Blaine, and with him the Republican Party, aged 24 years,” implying that Blaine’s defeat, if it happened, would be the end of his political career and the Republican Party.¹⁰² The *Evening Post* hoped that Blaine’s defeat would be so overwhelming as to formally condemn Blaine and those remaining in the Republican fold.¹⁰³

Mugwumps did occasionally focus on issue positions, including Blaine’s

100. Central Committee of Republicans and Independents, “To Republicans and Independent,” 2.

101. George William Curtis, “National Conference Address,” *Library of Congress*, accessed October 1, 2018, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbpe.0760300f/?st=gallery>.

102. Library of Congress, “Soap! Soap! Blaine’s Only Hope!,” *Library of Congress*, accessed October 1, 2018, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbpe.23801600/>.

103. *New-York Evening Post*, October 27, 1884, 2, <http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn83030384/issues/1884/> All *Evening Post* citations accessed through NYS Historic Newspapers database.

proposed tariffs, which they largely opposed, and civil service reform, which they overwhelmingly supported. While Blaine supported civil service reforms on paper, Mugwumps linked allegations of corruption to skepticism about Blaine's commitment to the cause. Significant reform had occurred under Arthur, but there were still numerous federal jobs that remained partisan appointments, and Henry Ward Beecher went so far as expressing fear that Blaine might not defend the reform laws already on the books.¹⁰⁴ Even with the occasional reference to issue positions, the concerns over Blaine's past dominated Mugwump rhetoric and attempted to provide the bridge for independent Republicans to Grover Cleveland. In his Brooklyn speech, Schurz claimed that Mugwumps would have supported any Republican candidate, regardless of their stance on trade, "provided they satisfied that one fundamental requirement of unimpeachable, positive and active integrity."¹⁰⁵ That Blaine lacked such integrity provided the sole basis for Republican revolt according to Schurz.

Making the campaign a referendum on Blaine's guilt rather than an endorsement of Cleveland's policies allowed Mugwumps to sidestep some of the ideological concerns that had been at the core of their Republican identity. A powerful tool of disidentification, the Mugwumps' judicial rhetoric does not fit neatly with Cheney's taxonomy of Burkean identification strategies. In one sense, it could be argued that the Mugwumps are simply redrawing the arrows of antithesis toward Blaine, and, as later sections of this chapter will argue, there is certainly an element of antithesis in Mugwumps' treatment of Blaine and their *Trojan horse* framing of the nominee and his supporters. However, antithesis

104. Beecher, *Lectures and Orations*, 295-296.

105. Schurz, *Speeches, Correspondence, and Political Papers*, 225.

leaves aside the essential moral character of the Mugwumps' judicial rhetoric. Instead, it is necessary to return to Burke's description of socialization as "a *moralizing* process."¹⁰⁶ To speak of the moralizing nature of organizational identification and disidentification may lead to the impression that morality is *placed upon* the audience by the rhetor rather than morality providing the essential associative ingredient of identification. It is the latter understanding of moralizing, here termed disidentification via *associative morality*, which is necessary to understand how individuals sharing common beliefs, enemies, and symbols can still reject their bands of identification and construct disidentifying counter movements.

Associative morality is not unique to Mugwump rhetoric, or even to partisan identification. In *Roberts v. United States Jaycees* (1984) and *Boy Scouts of America v. Dale* (2000), the Supreme Court confirmed that there was a freedom of association embodied in the constitution and that, "freedom of association... plainly presupposes a freedom not to associate."¹⁰⁷ *Boy Scouts v. Dale* illustrates well the power of identification and disidentification by associative morality. In the case, the Boy Scouts of America argued that excluding James Dale, an openly gay scoutmaster, was within their rights under the constitution and justified by the hindrance Dale's inclusion would place on the ability of the organization to "encourage the moral development of its members."¹⁰⁸ The court's conservative majority sided with the Boy Scouts in finding that including Dale did not conform to the organization's stated interpretation of the Boy

106. Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives*, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1969), 39.

107. *Roberts v. United States Jaycees*, 468 U.S. 609 (1984), 623.

108. *Boy Scouts of America v. Dale*, 530 U.S. 640 (2000).

Scout oath, which demanded that scouts be, “morally straight.”¹⁰⁹ Reading the disidentification between the Scouts and Dale as a lack of common ground obscures the point that Dale could be excluded solely on the basis of his homosexuality irrespective of his role as a gay rights activist or a critic of the national organization. The court’s majority found that the mere association with Dale would hinder the expression rights of other Boy Scouts because their language would be impeded by the moral association with Dale.¹¹⁰

Some have used the term *associative morality* to refer to the moral obligations implicit in group membership, but the cases of *Boy Scouts v. Dale* as well as the Mugwump’s allegations against Blaine are more akin to what social scientists have termed ‘moral identification.’¹¹¹ Moral identification refers to an individual’s commitment to a group based on their level of moral agreement with those groups’ objectives and practices. *Associative morality*, however, functions at the constitutive level to define the parameters of groups (in this case political parties) in such a way that separates otherwise likeminded individuals on the basis of morality and immorality. Rather than a simple agreement with the moral charter of a group, *associative morality* is dispersed across members and the immorality of one member paints all other members as immoral merely by association. The Mugwumps’ claims illustrate a fear that their own

109. Ibid.

110. Ibid.

111. Douglas R. May, Young K. Chang, and Ruodan Shao, "Does Ethical Membership Matter? Moral Identification and its Organizational Implications," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 100, no. 3 (2015): 681; Craig L. Carr, *On Fairness*, (London: Routledge, 2000).

morality might be undermined by their association with Blaine through their shared Republican identity. It was this fear that imbued their rhetoric of disidentification.

Dating back to Goffman, scholars of stigma have examined the role of associative stigma, in which stigma is attached to individuals based only on their associations or relationships with members of a stigmatized group.¹¹² Associative moral stigma is rooted in the further assumption that the individual being stigmatized by association bears some moral culpability for their relation's stigmatized identity and therefore is also deserving of that stigmatization.¹¹³ The Mugwumps argued that they would face a type of moral stigma if attached to Blaine because of Blaine's known scandals.¹¹⁴ A similar kind of identification by associative morality is the underlying premise for Aesop's fable of the *Ass and His Purchaser*, in which a farmer immediately returns a donkey he has purchased upon seeing that donkey associate with the laziest animal in his herd.¹¹⁵ In each case, it is the perception of shared morality or immorality that provides the basis for identification, and it is precisely on the fear of such identification that the Mugwumps based their opposition to Blaine and their disidentification with the Republican Party in 1884.

Morality and immorality by association imbued Mugwump rhetoric during the 1884 campaign. The issue of most importance for party bolters was Blaine's corruption

112. Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963), 28-32.

113. Jenny L. Davis and Bianca Manago, "Motherhood and Associative Moral Stigma: The Moral Double Bind," *Stigma and Health* 1, no. 2, (2016): 72-86.

114. Cary, *George William Curtis*, 289-290

115. Aesop, *An Argosy of Fables: A Representative Selection from the Fable Literature of Every Age and Land* ed. Frederic Taber Cooper (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1921), 105.

while in public office. The following section continues the discussion of moralizing rhetoric, with special attention to the complications that such moralizing poses for the idea of identification by *common ground*. Building on the same spatial metaphor of common ground, I suggest that a multidimensional understanding of ground opens the possibility that individuals may share issue positions while engaging in rhetorical disidentification on the basis that the two groups function on different planes of morality.

From Common Ground to Higher Ground

Henry Ward Beecher fostered the impression of Mugwumps that they were the true Republicans and that their decision to bolt from the party was paradoxically the only way to demonstrate true commitment to Republican ideals. Beecher asked a sympathetic audience, “Who are the Independent Republicans? They are the men who seek to raise the party to higher ground. They are the men who hailed the rising sun and don’t want to see the setting sun go down in clouds and darkness.”¹¹⁶ Relying on the same spatial metaphor just days before the general election, *Puck Magazine* published a cartoon by *Puck* founder and prominent illustrator Joseph Keppler depicting Mugwump leaders including Schurz, Curtis, and Beecher building the base of a towering monument to reform. The bricks providing the foundation for the monument were labeled with the various accomplishments of Republican reformers, including the “Civil Service Reform Bill” and one labeled “Republican Revolt 1884.”¹¹⁷ The tagline read, “Men may come, and men may go; but the work of reform shall go on forever.” Keppler’s drawing

116. Beecher, *Lectures and Orations*, 301.

117. See Appendix 3. *Puck*, November 5, 1884, 305, <http://elections.harpreweek.com/1884/cartoon-1884-large.asp?UniqueID=58&Year=1884>.

depicted the upward movement of Mugwumps, building toward new planes and securing a high and noble position that could not be compromised by a single nominee or political movement.

While claims of common ground provide the explicit basis for identification through ideology, Mugwumps made the case that moral identification should supersede and guide political identification. In the days following the convention, Curtis wrote a strongly worded reply to a friend who encouraged him to return to the party fold, saying:

My dear boy, I should be recreant to my conscience and I should bitterly disappoint all those who are accustomed to look to me, if, after all that I have said about political morality, I should now support for the presidency, the one man who is most repugnant to the political conscience of young Republicans.¹¹⁸

For Curtis, higher ground was about maintenance of a strong moral position despite the perceived slippage of those around him. The supremacy of morality and conscience were routinely deployed as the primary justifications for the Mugwump revolt. In addressing their fellow Republicans, Mugwumps placed morality at the center of their political and civic philosophy.

Beecher discussed two competing understandings of party, one in which parties were the essential mechanisms through which change is enacted and another in which parties were merely tools, useful to the extent that they allowed one's morality to enter the public domain:

It is very natural that men working through a political party should by and by come to look upon all events in the community in their relation to party welfare and party success. But I, who have had nothing to do with parties, except as moral instruments, naturally look upon their movements and purposes from the moral standpoint. What are they attempting to do for this great people? What does their

118. Cary, *George William Curtis*, 289-290.

success mean?¹¹⁹

Beecher, Schurz and Curtis, were quick to remind their fellow Republicans that they had been among the earliest adopters of the Republican banner. But each warned against the idolatry of unquestioned party loyalty. For South Carolina's reconstructionist former-Governor, Daniel Chamberlain, morality must provide clear limitations on partisanship. During the 1884 campaign, Chamberlain wrote in *Harper's Weekly*: "So then, after all, there is a plain, unquestioned limit to our obligation to support party nominations, a limit which lies in the very nature of moral duty, a limit the denial of which is the denial of moral distinctions."¹²⁰ In Chamberlain's estimation, party loyalty is capable of overtaking any sense of morality whatsoever and, therefore, must be resisted. Only by placing moral convictions first, could Republicans venture to call themselves moral people.

Philadelphia Mugwumps made their case to their fellow Republicans in only one sentence, a quote that was borrowed from the New York platform address, stating, "That the paramount issue of the presidential election of this year is moral rather than political."¹²¹ Setting aside ideological differences to vote one's conscience was framed as a form of sacrifice for the greater good. The rhetoric of the campaign reinforced the perception that there was at least some element of sacrifice involved for Mugwump leaders. Another cartoonist, Frank Beard, most remembered for his prohibitionist

119. Beecher, *Lectures and Orations*, 287.

120. *Harper's Weekly*, July 5, 1884, 427.

121. Independent Republicans and Independents of Philadelphia, "We the Undersigned Republicans and Independents," *Library of Congress*, accessed October 1, 2018, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbpe.16001800/?sp=1>.

drawings, published a cartoon in *The Judge* depicting Schurz, Curtis, Beecher, and *New-York Times* editor George Jones attempting to hang themselves from a tree, symbolizing their apparent political suicide for backing Cleveland.¹²² Many of the Mugwump leaders no longer held elective office, but they still stood to lose a great deal as prominent voices in Republican politics, and many of their fortunes did suffer. For Curtis and Nast in particular, the attacks were unrelenting, and as the later sections will note, attacks on the masculinity and maturity of Mugwumps were at the heart of *party repair* rhetoric.¹²³ Even after the campaign, as late as 1889, Republican publications continued to blast Mugwumps and their leaders as self-righteous hypocrites.¹²⁴

Mugwumps made clear from the beginning their willingness to sacrifice for their convictions. They were willing to make *individual* sacrifices, but the central sacrifice for party bolters in both of the campaigns analyzed here was relinquishing the highest public office in the country to their political opponents, in this case the Democrats, who had not controlled the White House since 1869 and who had not been elected to the presidency since the outbreak of the Civil War. Perhaps anticipating the backlash the revolt was about to receive, Nast's first political cartoon following the Republican Convention was a somber visualization of the death of Virginia, as recorded in Livy's *History of Rome*.¹²⁵

122. *The Judge*, August 16, 1884, 16, <http://elections.harpreweek.com/1884/cartoon-1884-large.asp?UniqueID=57&Year=1884>.

123. Paine, *Th. Nast: His Period and His Pictures*, 494-496.

124. *American Economist*, "Some Self-Glorification," October 25, 1889, 265-266.

125. Livy, *The History of Rome, Books 1-5*, ed. Valerie M Warrior (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2006) 230-235.

Appius Claudius Crassus, a corrupt decimvir in Rome, demanded to have sex with Lucius Virginius' daughter Virginia. Rather than sacrifice his daughter's honor, Virginius stabbed and killed his daughter in front of Appius, setting off a revolution that would restore the Roman Republic. In Nast's rendering, readers saw Virginius holding a knife in one hand and the body of Virginia in the other, standing before Appius, depicted in the cartoon as a toga-clad James Blaine.¹²⁶ The words underneath the image made clear the willingness of Nast and other Mugwumps to sacrifice the party they loved rather than see it defiled by Blaine.¹²⁷

Implicitly and explicitly, Mugwumps made the case that they occupied a higher plane of morality than their fellow Republicans. For Beecher, that plane was one closer to God. Beecher claimed, "I study public affairs from the moral and religious standpoint, and that which is offensive to God may I never live to see the day when it may be acceptable to me and my countrymen."¹²⁸ Others like Curtis, Schurz, Godkin, and Nast relied on a more secular vision of morality, and rarely held back their condemnation of their fellow Republicans who had aligned themselves with the party's nominee. In Brooklyn, Schurz mocked his fellow Republicans, characterizing their position as, "Hang moral ideas. We are for the Party!"¹²⁹

In the disidentifying rhetoric of Mugwumps, the key distinction was in the willingness to think beyond politics, to the level of morality. For Schurz, politics had the

126. See Appendix 4. Paine, *Th. Nast: His Period and His Pictures*, 494-496.

127. *Ibid.*

128. Beecher, *Lectures and Orations*, 284-285

129. Schurz, *Speeches, Correspondence, and Political Papers*, 249.

potential for short term changes in trade policy or civil service reform, but immorality ran the risk of infecting the core institutions that preserve government. Schurz said, “But this time the Republican National Convention has, with brutal directness, so that we must face it whether we will or not, forced upon the country another issue, which is infinitely more important, because it touches the vitality of our institutions.”¹³⁰ The *Evening Post* reminded voters that the effects on these institutions were the core concern of politics: “It must be remembered, in fact, that the goodness of the Republican voters does no good as long as it does not reach Government. The quality of the individual members of a party is of no sort of use politically unless it affects legislation and administration.”¹³¹ The major ideological disagreements of the day and the faith in and stability of institutions functioned on distinct planes. Morality became the essential ingredient of identification and disidentification by separating it from politics entirely and elevating morality over partisanship and institutions over the year’s political controversies.

From a Mugwump perspective, moral divisions allow clear lines that cannot be crossed or those crossing them become immoral actors merely by association. Organizational identification, however, often depends on blurred lines and vague but implicit criteria for group membership. In contrast to identification, disidentification, forces those leaving an organization on moral grounds to clearly articulate the boundaries of group identity that place them outside of the association.

A Rejection of Ambiguity: Who “We” Thought “We” Were and Who “I” Am

The concrete assertion of “I” in rhetoric presents a distinct challenge to the

130. Ibid., 225.

131. *New-York Evening Post*, October 27, 1884, 2.

predominant assumed “we.” Mugwump rhetoric rests on the foundation of defectors’ ability to claim agency and individual autonomy within the party system, thereby creating new and complex associations. Political organizations resist such claims of autonomy and depend on loosely defined networks for their continued existence.¹³² Much of the writing of *Harper’s Weekly* and the *New-York Evening Post* in 1884 was dedicated to the question of individual identity (whether it be Blaine’s identity or the identity of the column’s author) relative to party identity. Once individual autonomy had been claimed, it was the responsibility of Mugwump rhetors to sort through the traditional ambiguity of party identification and situate their beloved Republican Party of the past outside of the boundaries of the emerging party of Blaine and his running mate John A. Logan. Where the rhetoric of identification depends on ambiguity for its organizational strength, disidentification requires clear bright-lines to distinguish between the former party, the current party, and the party to which the bolters are now defecting. But to secure such clear distinctions, first requires a defense of the power of the individual to leave her or his respective party.

The claim to individual autonomy in 1884 was first advanced by George William Curtis on the floor of the Republican Convention. As mentioned in the first portion of this chapter, delegates to the Republican convention in Chicago, fearing a bolt from their fellow delegates, attempted to pass a resolution that would bind delegates at the convention to support the party’s eventual nominee. Curtis, who remained relatively quiet

132. Ryan Neville-Shepard, “Containing the Third-Party Voter: The Marginalization of Johnson and Stein Supporters in the 2016 Presidential Election,” Paper presented at the National Communication Association Conference, Salt Lake City, UT, November 2018.

in his opposition to Blaine during the convention, offered a fiery rebuke of the resolution. In what would become one of the most memorable lines of the convention, Curtis proclaimed, “A Republican and a free man I came to this Convention; by the grace of God a Republican and a free man I will go out of this Convention.”¹³³ For Curtis, individual autonomy was tied to the conception of virtue and honor.¹³⁴ Morality, in Curtis’ framing, was both prior to organizing and the fundamental question of organization. In defending his decision to bolt from the party in the pages of *The New-York Times*, Curtis wrote, “No honorable man in a convention or out of it, would allow a majority to bind him to a course of action which he morally disapproved.”¹³⁵ In contrast to appeals for “higher ground,” this form of public moralism begins at the level of the individual and a reclaiming of moral autonomy free of institutional constraints.

From this reclaimed position of individual autonomy, Mugwumps outlined the political organizing schema in a way that clarified the organizational divisions to which they presented themselves as responding. Disidentification depends on explicitly articulated divisions and a clear image of the ideological bridges, which might allow party bolters to traverse the perceived divide between the major parties. Appropriately, it was the Independent Republican platform address delivered by Curtis in July in Boston which most clearly engaged the question of partisan sorting. Curtis begins by observing that little separates Republicans and Democrats on policy issues, stating:

No position taken by one party is seriously traversed by the other. Both evidently contemplate a general agreement of public opinion upon subjects which have

133. Republican National Committee, *Proceedings*, 38.

134. *The New-York Times*, June 26, 1884, 4.

135. *Ibid*; Cary, *George William Curtis*, 291.

been long in controversy, and indicate an unwillingness to declare, upon other and carinal questions, views which in the present condition of opinion might seriously disturb the parties within themselves.¹³⁶

By challenging the long-held assumption that Republicans and Democrats represented dramatically different policy preferences, the Mugwumps began the process of articulating what they perceived to be the often-unstated political boundaries in American politics. Articulation of those boundaries depended on giving some attention to ideological and issue-based distinctions that were tertiary in Mugwump rhetoric.

The platform adopted in Boston claimed for the Mugwumps, a “pure Republicanism.”¹³⁷ The Mugwumps turned to the party’s founders for evidence of what it meant to be a Republican and to make the case the party of Blaine and Logan had drifted away from that ideal. According to Mugwumps, the notion of pure Republicanism, as intended by the party’s founders was defined by its virtuousness. Curtis noted, “The Republican party first sprang from a moral sentiment. It was the party of political morality and of personal liberty.”¹³⁸ Those bolting from the Republican Party in 1884 routinely invoked the decision of party founders to split from the Whig Party over the moral issue of slavery. Curtis quoted early party leader William H. Seward as saying of his newly formed party in the 1850s that it should never be idolatrized and that future generations of leaders should allow it to perish if the party strayed from its founding

136. George William Curtis, *The Political Reformation of 1884: A Democratic Campaign Book*, ed. William H. Barnum (New York: The Democratic National Committee, 1884), 283.

137. *Ibid.*, 284.

138. *Ibid.*

virtues.¹³⁹ Mugwumps used these defining virtues to lament the loss of the party they thought they knew.

The *Evening Post* expressed wonder at how the party could nominate a candidate so openly opposed to their understandings of what it meant to be a Republican: “Blaine and Logan both represent the same political methods which have met with such bitter denunciation by eminent Republicans, so that practically the wing of the party in favor of civil-service reform and a higher grade of politics has no representative on the ticket.”¹⁴⁰ Some Republicans turned to planks of the party’s 1884 platform that broke from their understanding of the often nebulous Republican label. For example, the day following the convention, Jackson S. Schultz said:

There are four planks in the Chicago platform which I will not stand upon. These are the anti-Chinese plank, the protection tariff plank, the eight-hour plank, and the tub thrown out to the Ohio protectionists in the resolution promising to restore the tariff on wool. I will not stand on these planks, and I will not vote for any man who stands on them. If the Democratic party or some other party has sense enough to name a good man who will antagonize these ideas, I will gladly vote for him.¹⁴¹

In Cleveland, Schultz and others claimed to have found their candidate, but throughout the campaign Mugwumps were tasked with defending Cleveland against claims that the Democrat would roll back civil service reforms achieved under Arthur. *Harper’s Weekly* argued that Cleveland’s record in New York demonstrated sympathy to the cause of reform, but also remained insistent that morality should trump politics.¹⁴²

139. *Ibid.*, 283-285.

140. *New-York Evening Post*, June 9, 1884, 1.

141. *New-York Evening Post*, June 7, 1884, 1.

142. *Harper's Weekly*, September 20, 1884, 612.

Moving from a state of ambiguity to a state of clarity in organizational identity presented a special challenge for partisan media. Newspapers and magazines in the Gilded Age were intensely partisan, with publications closely aligned with one party's platform and interests.¹⁴³ Major outlets like *The New-York Times*, *Harper's Weekly*, and the *New-York Evening Post* reflected the political leanings of their owners and editors.¹⁴⁴ *Harper's Weekly* faced claims that the publication had betrayed their subscribers by endorsing the Democratic candidate and campaigning against Blaine. On June 28th Harper & Brothers responded to those allegations, stating:

WE have received a number of communications asking whether HARPER'S WEEKLY, in opposing the election of Mr. BLAINE, is not guilty of a breach of faith toward those who have subscribed to it as a Republican journal. There is a short and conclusive reply to this question. HARPER'S WEEKLY has never been a party organ. It holds to fundamental Republican principles, and supports the political organization which best represents them; but it has always and emphatically declared its independence of party.¹⁴⁵

Harper & Brothers' reply included several previous instances in which the magazine had refused to endorse Republican candidates. In those previous instances, *Harper's* had also found it necessary to clarify the nature of their relationship with the party, but the failure to endorse the new party leader represented the most significant break from their Republican loyalties. Schudson writes about the move toward objectivity in journalism in

143. Richard L. Kaplan, "The Economics and Politics of Nineteenth-Century Newspapers," *American Journalism* 10, no. 1-2, (1993): 84-101.

144. Michael Schudson, "The Objectivity Norm in American Journalism." *Journalism* 2, no. 2 (2001): 160.

145. *Harper's Weekly*, June 28, 1884, 406.

the early 20th century.¹⁴⁶ While there is little evidence of objectivity in 1884, there is a move toward independence among some of the most prominent newspapers in the country.

Explicit ideological sorting becomes necessary only when partisan ties begin to break down and the assumed “we” is drawn into question. In 1884, that sorting required a public working out of the ideological and moral spectrum of politics. It is at these times of resorting that the constitutive power of rhetoric is most apparent. Blaine supporters and Mugwumps offered competing definitions of what it meant to be a Republican. As the nominee, Blaine was a powerful symbol in defining party identity, but Mugwumps turned to party founders, norms, and conventions to make the case that Blaine did not conform to his party label. It would still be necessary to unravel years of antithesis directed toward Democrats and turn such antithesis squarely in the direction of their former allies. The rhetorical maneuvering necessary for that redirection is outlined in the following section.

Old Enemies to New Friends

For his purposes, Schurz had long rejected identification via antithesis. In one of his most widely circulated addresses of the 1880 campaign, Schurz told the audience in Indianapolis:

I wish to state the question mildly, for I am not partisan enough—indeed my orthodoxy in that respect has now and then been questioned—to deal in wholesale and indiscriminate denunciation of our opponents. I do not mean to incite your prejudices and inflame your passions, but to discuss facts and to draw from them legitimate conclusions. I do not want the party to which I belong to depend for success upon the failings of its opponents and, I am, therefore not inclined to exaggerate the latter.¹⁴⁷

146. Schudson, “The Objectivity Norm in American Journalism,” 149-170.

147. Schurz, *Speeches, Correspondence, and Political Papers*, 9.

Schurz would continue his condemnation of antithesis in 1884, and his bolt from the Republican Party would serve as the ultimate symbolic rejection of antithesis against Democrats as a form of Republican identification. Schurz framed his 1884 addresses as embodying the Jeffersonian notion that separations must be declared and justified. Schurz said, “a candid statement of our reasons for the step we have taken is due to those whose companionship in the pending contest we have left.”¹⁴⁸ By contrast, rhetors like Curtis, Godkin, and Beecher had blasted their Democratic opponents with intense rhetorical fire since the early days of the Republican Party. The embrace of their former adversaries would demand some explanation and a shifting in the language of antithesis, as would their vocal animosity toward their former compatriots.

Shifting away from the antitheses of the past, at times required challenging the concept of identification by antithesis altogether. The most explicit challenge to partisan antithesis came from George William Curtis in the week immediately following the Republican Convention. In personal correspondence to a fellow Republican, Curtis wrote:

There would never be any better party, or indeed any party but that which we belong, if everything that it did and everybody that it nominated should be sustained because it was not so bad as another party... It is not Blaine’s ‘brilliancy,’ it is the low and venal system of his politics, of which we had the latest monstrous evidence at Chicago, that shall not master the Republican party if I can help it. When the only argument is that we are not so bad as the other fellows, it is time to call a halt.¹⁴⁹

One broadside from Massachusetts, now found in the ephemera collection of the Library of Congress, further attacks the notion of antithesis as a foundation for party

148. *Ibid.* 224.

149. *George William Curtis*, 289.

identification. The broadside mentions many Republicans' moral opposition to voting for a Democratic president. Perhaps as *reductio ad absurdum*, the broadside quotes a prominent Republican as saying he'd sooner vote for Satan than the angel Gabriel, if the former was a Republican and the latter a Democrat.¹⁵⁰ Such strong antithesis, the broadside suggests presents, "to all false and base men of the country an invitation to join the Republican Party, and to qualify themselves for high public trust simply by assuming the name[.]"¹⁵¹ Mugwumps presented unquestioning party loyalty and outgroup antithesis as a welcoming of corrupt intentions, but they also argued that corruption had taken root among Republicans, because of a few nefarious actors who had hijacked the party for their own use.

Mugwumps often redirected their antithesis toward their own party, not by attacking Republican politics, but by casting Blaine and his supporters as a *Trojan horse faction* in the Republican ranks. The Trojan horse framing allowed Mugwumps to make their case for disidentification in a manner totally divorced from the ideological and ethical foundations that had motivated the party from its conception. Franklin MacVeagh, who would later go on to become Treasury Secretary under William Howard Taft, led a group of Mugwumps in Illinois who issued a statement to Chicago voters making clear that their party had been overtaken. The Chicago Mugwumps wrote of Blaine's nomination:

It is all the more deplorable and dangerous because Mr. Blaine's nomination was made with all the outward forms and circumstance of popular party choice. But

150. Library of Congress, "I Cannot Vote for a Democrat," *Library of Congress*, accessed October 1, 2018, <https://www.loc.gov/item/rbpe.0760300d/>.

151. *Ibid.*

those who were on the spot know how fictitious is the claim that it was the irresistible demand of the great body of republicans of the northwest.¹⁵²

Allegations that Blaine had paid off convention delegates were common in Mugwump rhetoric and the Chicago Mugwumps warned of the powerful Trojan horse faction representing Blaine: “In the Conventions of 1876 and 1880, a healthy respect for the honest sentiment of the country defeated him. But in 1884, the corrupt influences which he represented, in defiance of repeated warnings, forced him upon the party.”¹⁵³ Antithesis then did not need to be directed at the party to which they had long ascribed virtue, because that party had been plundered by outsiders.

Persuading Republicans to reject Blaine was only half of the Mugwumps’ mission. To fully effect political change, they believed it was necessary for Republicans to vote for Cleveland. While some movements (Prohibitionists and Greenbackers) turned primarily to new parties, many Mugwumps ascribed to the rhetoric of polarization, in which voters are presented with only two options.¹⁵⁴ Both Butler of the Greenback Party and St. John of the Prohibition Party offered Republicans viable third-party alternatives, but Mugwumps refused to endorse either. Mark Twain provided yet another alternative, writing, “I don’t ask you to vote at all. I only urge you not to soil yourself by voting for Blaine.”¹⁵⁵ But other Mugwumps, like Henry Ward Beecher, used the language of

152. Central Committee of Republicans and Independents, “To Republicans and Independent Voters,” 1.

153. *Ibid.*, 2.

154. Andrew A. King and Floyd Douglas Anderson. “Nixon, Agnew, and the “Silent Majority”: A Case Study in the Rhetoric of Polarization.” *Western Speech* 35, no. 4 (1971): 243-244.

155. Moser, “Mark Twain-Mugwump,” 3.

antithesis to suggest that only Cleveland provided an electable substitute: “If you vote for Blaine, you vote for corruption. If you vote for St. John, you vote into the air. If you vote for Butler, you vote into the mud. If you vote for Cleveland [cheers], you vote for an honest man [loud cheers.]”¹⁵⁶ *Harper’s Weekly* expressed few reservations about St. John, who, it noted, was likely to draw nine of his ten votes from the Republican nominee.¹⁵⁷ By contrast, two weeks later, *Harper’s* alleged that Butler was actively conspiring with Blaine to draw Democratic votes:

After long reflection General Butler has decided that he can aid Mr. Blaine’s chances most surely by presenting himself as a Presidential candidate and drawing as many votes as possible from Mr. Cleveland. The plan of the Butler campaign is undoubtedly to try to defeat Mr. Cleveland in New York by diverting from his support of the Tammany vote, and by persuading the “working-men” that General Butler is especially their friend and Mr. Cleveland their enemy. The real character and significance of the Blaine canvass become only plainer to intelligent men as they see Butler coming to his aid, and as they watch the evasions of the law to which its managers resort in order to extort money from the public employes [sic].¹⁵⁸

Echoing those sentiments, some of Nast’s most pointed cartoons of the campaign featured Butler alongside Blaine or his surrogates conspiring to subvert the public will.¹⁵⁹

The Republicans were not alone in their intraparty factionalism in 1884. The Democratic ticket was met with factional opposition in New York and Indiana.¹⁶⁰ Unlike the Republicans, Democratic factionalism was stifled by an overwhelming sense that Cleveland was capable of returning the presidency to Democratic hands for the first time

156. Beecher, *Lectures and Orations*, 307.

157. *Harper’s Weekly*, August 9, 1884, 512.

158. *Harper’s Weekly*, August 23, 1884, 544.

159. *Harper’s Weekly*, 1884, 661; 575; 591; 595; 730.

160. *New-York Evening Post*, July 12, 1884, 1.

since the Civil War.¹⁶¹ The acquiescence of Southerners to Cleveland was especially significant as the North/South divide remained the most salient intraparty division within the Democratic Party.¹⁶² The ability to quickly fall in line is a rhetorical phenomenon, and the willingness of Southern Democrats to place party identity over regional identity created a unified movement toward Election Day.

While Democratic divisions between North and South were significant, it was the interparty divide, dating back to the 1860s, which had allowed Republicans to maintain control of the White House for so long. Cheney added the concept of *unifying symbols* to Burke's strategies of identification.¹⁶³ Cheney argues that unifying symbols are largely a product of the modern era, but Cheney focuses almost exclusively on modern rhetorical exemplars. Republican identification in the 1860s and 1870s was founded on public memory of the Civil War and the symbolic power of the bloody shirt, just one example of the longstanding power of unifying symbols in organizational rhetoric.¹⁶⁴ In 1884, Mugwumps rejected the symbol that had held their party together as they broke up a coalition formed in opposition to slavery and Southern aggression.

Hanging Up the Bloody Shirt: An End to the Republican Unifying Symbol

The rhetorical disidentification of Mugwumps from the Republican Party in 1884 relied on a shift from the epideictic to the judicial, a sense of moral commonality that superseded ideological common ground, a rejection of ambiguity in defining group

161. Ibid.

162. Ibid.

163. Cheney "The Rhetoric of Identification," 154-155.

164. Summers, *Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion*, 41-45.

parameters, and a walking back of out-group antithesis. However, the most powerful inversion of Cheney's identification strategies may be Independent Republicans' rejection of the central, unifying symbol of the Republican political narrative in the second half of the 19th century. For almost 20 years, Republican rhetoric had been animated by collective memory of the Civil War and Southern secession.¹⁶⁵ The political tactic that came to be known as "waving the bloody shirt" had dominated Republican campaigning since the 1860s. Through 1884, Republican leaders were quick to remind Northern voters of the associations between the Democratic Party and Southern secessionism. Republican victory was framed as honoring Civil War veterans, both living and dead, and Democratic defeat was another defeat of the Confederacy.

In the election of 1868, just three years after Lee's surrender, Mississippi, Texas, and Virginia had not yet been restored to the union and the bloody shirt was on full display in support of Ulysses S. Grant. Grant and other Union generals who won victory over the treasonous South were lauded as heroes. A popular poem during the 1868 election highlights the reliance on Civil War rhetoric. An early stanza reads:

By the truth of song and sermon,
By the march we made with Sherman
By the bullets Siegel sent,
By the fight and route and rally
Of Sheridan along the Valley,
GRANT SHALL BE OUR PRESIDENT!

In the closing lines, the poem reminds Union soldiers of their loyalty to Grant and of Grant's victory over Lee's army:

So boys a final bumper
While we in chorus chant
For next President we name

165. Ibid.

Our own Ulysses Grant

And if asked what state he hails from
 This our sole reply shall be:
 “From near Appomattox Court House,
 With the famous apple tree.”

For ‘twas where to our Ulysses
 That Lee gave up the fight.
 Now, boys! To Grant for President,
 And God defend the right.¹⁶⁶

In 1872, Thomas Nast became the chief purveyor of bloody shirt politics.¹⁶⁷ In a series of cartoons for *Harper’s Weekly*, Nast portrayed Democratic and Liberal Republican nominee Horace Greeley as working directly with former secessionists. Nast used bloody shirt politics to mock Greeley’s advocacy for reconciliation between North and South and his famous call in 1872 “to clasp hands across the bloody chasm which has too long divided us.”¹⁶⁸ In response to that plea, Nast depicted Greeley reaching out to clasp hands but unable to reach across the divide, illustrated as the graves of over thirteen thousand Union soldiers who died in the Confederate prisoner of war camp in Andersonville, Georgia.¹⁶⁹ An even more shocking representation appeared on *Harper’s* cover on September 14th, showing Greeley reaching across the grave of Abraham Lincoln to clasp hands with the ghost of John Wilkes Booth. In a fiery address to Union veterans during

166. Reinhard H. Luthin, “Waving the Bloody Shirt: Northern Political Tactics in Post-Civil War Times,” *The Georgia Review* 14, no. 1, (1960): 66.

167. *Ibid.*, 67.

168. Robert North Roberts, Scott J. Hammond, and Valerie A. Sulfaro, *Presidential Campaigns, Slogans, Issues, and Platforms: The Complete Encyclopedia, Volume 1* (Santa Barbara: Greenwood, 2012), 51.

169. See Appendix ??; *Harper’s Weekly*, September 21, 1872, 732.

the 1876 campaign Robert G. Ingersoll told the crowd:

Every man that endeavored to tear the old flag from the heaven that enriches it was a Democrat. Every man that tried to destroy this nation was a Democrat... The man that assassinated Abraham Lincoln was a Democrat... Soldiers, every scar you have on your heroic bodies was given you by a Democrat.¹⁷⁰

In 1874, the abolitionist Gerrit Smith described the Civil War as the “Democratic Rebellion” and argued that voting for Tilden in 1876 would restore the secessionists to power and that the Ku Klux Klan was a wing of the Democratic Party.¹⁷¹ At least partially to disrupt the unifying symbol of Republican patriotism, in 1880 the Democrats nominated former Union general Winfield Hancock. Yet even Hancock still confronted the symbol of the bloody shirt and was faced with claims that he was merely a pawn for Confederate interests.¹⁷²

The bloody shirt, or the political imagery of deceased or wounded Union veterans, provided a powerful symbol of identification for Republicans in the aftermath of the Civil War. Uniting around the symbol often allowed Republican rhetors to hide behind its power. The historian Mark Wahlgren Summers expresses particularly strong cynicism toward bloody shirt appeals, noting: “Bloody-shirt patriotism was not the last refuge of the scoundrel; it was the first. Corrupt politicians were able to keep on stealing as long as

170. Stanley P. Hirshson, *Farewell to the Bloody Shirt: Northern Republicans & The Southern Negro, 1877-1893* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962), 23.

171. Gerrit Smith, “Every Vote for Mr. Tilden Helps to Bring on the Ruin of the Country by Helping to Restore the Democratic Party to Power,” *Library of Congress*, October 1, 1874, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbpe.12803600/?sp=1>.

172. Library of Congress, “Rebel Echoes,” *Library of Congress*, accessed October 1, 2018, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbpe.23800100/?sp=1>.

voters could see no further than their faded uniforms.”¹⁷³ By 1884, collective memory of the war had begun to fade, and those who were young children at the war’s end were becoming eligible to vote. Public attention had been drawn away from reconstruction to issues of currency, patronage, trade, and immigration. The second half of this chapter will include a focus on attempts by Blaine and Logan to hold onto bloody shirt rhetoric, but Mugwumps, including some who had previously been active peddlers of the strategy, sought to strip public memory of the war from its partisan stranglehold.

Harper’s Weekly hoped that readers could divorce the long-standing symbol of the Union war effort from the career of James G. Blaine. Blaine instead reflected the era of corruption, which had followed the war. An editorial published in *Harper’s Weekly* in August opined:

But the WEEEEKLY has most inadequately set forth its views if it has not plainly taught that the glorious issue of the civil war, the unconditional triumph of the national Union, the abolition of slavery, the political enfranchisement of the freedmen, the maintenance of the financial honor of the country unsullied, the legislation of reconstruction – all the famous deeds of the party – while just causes of Republican pride and congratulation, in which all Republicans share, are not reasons for any Republican to support a Presidential candidate who he holds to be unworthy, merely because he has been nominated by a Republican Convention.¹⁷⁴

Perhaps because of the strength of their previous opposition to Greeley and sharp condemnation of Southern Democrats, Mugwumps did not frequently rely on language of reconciliation between the North and South but instead professed a belief that Cleveland and Blaine were characters in a new conflict over corruption. Cleveland’s reputation for battling Tammany Hall in New York made him the ideal figure for routing white collar

173. Summers, *Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion*, 43.

174. *Harper’s Weekly*, August 9, 1884, 515.

crime and abuse of power.

Nast's transformation on the bloody shirt question was dramatic. The artist mocked Blaine for proposing at times to move away from Civil War animosities as a campaign tactic and at others embracing the bloody shirt wholeheartedly. In the days leading up to his first presidential bid in 1876, Blaine had famously blasted Jefferson Davis on the floor of the Senate, accusing the former president of the Confederacy of murder at Andersonville.¹⁷⁵ In the October 18th, 1884 edition of *Harper's*, Nast's cartoon depicted James Blaine complaining to *Tribune* editor Whitelaw Reid about his ill-fitting clean shirt.¹⁷⁶ Blaine requests that Reid give him back the bloody shirt, which had for so long inoculated him from criticism. In another cartoon, Nast shows Blaine, in a state of panic, about to be announced on stage. The candidate realizes he is wearing a clean shirt and exclaims, "Wait a minute! There's something wrong!"¹⁷⁷ Nast's willingness to attack the party symbol he had played such an important role in creating symbolized a meaningful break in Republican identification.

Mugwump rejection of the bloody shirt in 1884 was also animated by more troubling language of racial superiority. Despite previously leading the fight for enfranchisement, many Independent Republicans expressed fears that those liberated by the Civil War were not prepared to vote and had become victims of corrupt, machine politics.¹⁷⁸ Both Curtis and Schurz abandoned calls for reconstruction in the American

175. Luthin, "Waving the Bloody Shirt," 67.

176. See Appendix ??, *Harper's Weekly*, October 18, 1884, 685.

177. *Harper's Weekly*, June 28, 1884, 405.

178. Hirshson, *Farewell to the Bloody Shirt*, 127-129.

South before 1884 and turned their anti-corruption narrative against some of the most vulnerable populations in the country.¹⁷⁹ Godkin actively opposed full enfranchisement for black voters and used *The Nation* and the *New-York Evening Post* to argue in favor of class and education based voting restrictions.¹⁸⁰ By the 1880s, white sentiment had turned against reconstruction, including among Republicans, and the rhetorical power of the bloody shirt had been diminished by resurgent racism in both the North and South.¹⁸¹

By the end of the 1884 election, the Republican revolt had torn apart the unifying symbol of the Republican Party. Just before Election Day, *Puck* published a cartoon showing a bloody shirt being tossed out of the front door of Republican Headquarters.¹⁸² After losing the election, Blaine correctly observed that white Southerners had illegally and violently suppressed black voting during the campaign.¹⁸³ Between 1872 and 1884, voter suppression had returned the South to solid Democratic control, and Mugwump attacks on the bloody shirt fed a narrative that put issues of race and reconstruction out of the public spotlight even as lynching and Jim Crow laws proliferated across the South.¹⁸⁴

Summary

Disidentification took a variety of forms in 1884. Backing away from the mechanisms of identification that had held the party together, Mugwumps transitioned

179. Ibid., 127.

180. Ibid., 128.

181. Eric Foner and Olivia Mahoney, *America's Reconstruction: People and Politics After the Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), 124-129.

182. *Harper's Weekly*, November 5, 1884, 298.

183. Hirshson, *Farewell to the Bloody Shirt*, 131.

184. Summers, *Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion*, 46.

from epideictic to judicial rhetoric, turning the campaign into a referendum on Blaine's past dealings rather than his policies. Leaders like Carl Schurz depended on associative morality and shifted the public debate to a plane higher than the political. Enemies were recast as allies and old allies became new friends through Trojan horse framings of the former party and a castigation of the third-party alternatives. Breaking down the assumed "we" required a direct attack on the elements of ambiguity that had preserved the coalition in previous election cycles and an attack on the unifying symbol of the American Civil War.

Mugwump rhetoric did not emerge in a vacuum. It was met with strong opposition from Blaine and his supporters, who attempted to hold the party coalition together despite the growing rift in the party base. The second half of this chapter focuses on Blaine's attempt to preserve the party between the Republican Convention in June and the General Election on November 4th.

The Blainiacs

Mugwumps and prohibitionists rejected Blaine's nomination, but most Republicans fell in line with the party ticket. Maintaining the coalition that had elected James Garfield was imperative for Blaine, but intraparty division became apparent early in the campaign. Between June and November, Mugwumps and traditional Republicans engaged in a vigorous debate over the identity of the Republican Party. While much of the rhetoric outlined in this section came from Blaine himself, a variety of Republicans came to Blaine's aid in addressing party bolters and redefining what it meant to be a Republican after the revolt. *Puck Magazine* would label these loyal Republicans

blainiacs.¹⁸⁵ The sections that follow provide brief overview of the Blaine/Logan ticket and Blaine's most vocal supporters before offering a description of the dominant themes of party repair in the 1884 election.

James G. Blaine

By the start of the 1884 campaign, James G. Blaine was a household name across the United States. Aside from William Tecumseh Sherman and the three living presidents (Grant, Hayes, and Arthur), Blaine was arguably the most famous Republican in the country. Raised in Pennsylvania but representing Maine in both houses of Congress, Blaine became Speaker of the House during only his sixth year in the body.¹⁸⁶ His tenure as Speaker and eventual service in the Senate was defined by debates over civil service reform and his rivalry with Republican New York Senator and Stalwart Republican leader Roscoe Conkling.¹⁸⁷ As the leader of the "Half Breed" faction in the Republican Party, Blaine was no stranger to intraparty conflict.

Blaine had unsuccessfully sought the Republican nomination for president in both 1876 and 1880. In 1876, the Mulligan Letters unraveled his convention bid and in 1880 a deadlock with former President Ulysses S. Grant carried into the 36th ballot before Blaine threw his support behind reluctant candidate James Garfield.¹⁸⁸ When Garfield

185. *Puck*, December 17, 1884, 263, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/008886840>.

186. Gail Hamilton, *Biography of James G. Blaine* (Norwich: The Henry Bill Company, 1895), 222-232.

187. David M. Jordan, *Roscoe Conkling of New York: Voice in the Senate* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971), 230-241.

188. Candice Millard, *Destiny of the Republic: A Tale of Madness, Medicine, and the Murder of a President*, (New York: Doubleday, 2011), 42-47.

was ultimately elected president, he named Blaine his Secretary of State (a position he would hold again under Benjamin Harrison). Just four months into office, Blaine was walking alongside President Garfield through the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad Station in Washington D.C. when Charles Guiteau fired two bullets from a British Bulldog revolver into Garfield's back.¹⁸⁹ President Garfield would die from his injuries 11 weeks later. Renderings of the assassination showed Blaine pointing toward the fleeing assassin or leaning over Garfield attempting to help.¹⁹⁰ Blaine viewed Garfield's assassination as a national tragedy, but it was also a personal tragedy for Blaine's ambitions.¹⁹¹ When Stalwart vice president Chester A. Arthur assumed the presidency, Blaine resigned, presumably with the intention of challenging Arthur for the nomination in 1884.¹⁹²

Blaine ultimately defeated Arthur at the 1884 Republican National Convention, along with Mugwump favorite George Edmunds and Stalwart Illinois Senator John A. Logan. As noted in the first portion of the chapter, Blaine's nomination was met with intense intraparty consternation. Blaine advocated for Logan as his running mate to appease former Stalwarts, but as one of Keppler's cartoons immediately following the convention observed, the writing was on the wall for a Republican revolt, not from

189. *Ibid.*, 117; 129-131.

190. *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, July 16, 1881, 332-333, <https://www.loc.gov/item/96521930/>; *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, July 16, 1881, I, <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/99614083/resource/cph.3b25031/>.

191. Bingham Duncan, *Whitelaw Reid: Journalist, Politician, Diplomat* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1975), 89-90.

192. *Ibid.*, 89-90.

Stalwarts, whose leader had lost his political post, but from Mugwumps.¹⁹³ Blaine faced intraparty exigencies emanating from multiple intraparty movements but especially from prohibitionists and liberal reformers. Blaine entered the campaign with several objectives, but repairing the fractured coalition was an important first step.

Unlike Cleveland, Blaine was an active campaigner, giving speeches across the country to a variety of constituencies.¹⁹⁴ With a significant percentage of Republican newspapers and magazines backing Cleveland, Blaine was forced to take his case directly to the American people. His speeches took on a variety of themes, but this chapter focuses specifically on those themes concerning party loyalty and party identification. Blaine supporter Thomas Boyd compiled a record of Blaine's campaign addresses in the aftermath of the election. Boyd's volume, along with selections of Blaine rhetoric from personal correspondence and the archives of the Library of Congress, provide some of the fodder for the analysis of party repair in 1884.

John A. Logan

Senator John A. Logan was a leader among Stalwarts and a loyal ally of Roscoe Conkling. Logan rose to national fame as a Major General for the Union army during the Civil War. Prior to the war, Logan had identified as a Democrat, but his support for the Union and his home state of Illinois led him to shed his party identity and become a vocal

193. Joseph Keppler, "The Writing on the Wall," *Puck*, June 18, 1884, accessed November 9, 2018, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2012645210/>.

194. Thomas B. Boyd, *The Blaine and Logan Campaign of 1884*, ed. Thomas B. Boyd (Chicago: J.L. Reagan & Co., 1884).

Republican.¹⁹⁵ Known affectionately as either “Black Jack” or “Black Eagle,” Logan made a point of extoling his virtues as a military commander and his association with General Grant in his campaigns for the House and Senate.¹⁹⁶ Logan’s military service provided a contrast with Blaine who was the only Republican nominee to not serve in the military between the end of the Civil War and the turn of the 20th century. In nominating Logan for the vice presidency, Preston Plumb stressed the importance of Blaine’s lack of military service: “Mr. President, this is the first time in the history of the Republican party since the war, when the man who is to fill the first place is not a soldier.”¹⁹⁷ Plumb went on to argue that Logan’s selection was a nomination for all veterans, and that Logan would be their representative on the ticket.¹⁹⁸ Logan’s reputation for waving the bloody shirt was unsurpassed by nearly any of his contemporaries and remained on full display during the 1884 campaign.¹⁹⁹ Logan, like Blaine, went on a robust speaking tour in 1884, parts of which are also recorded in Boyd’s text. Along with his personal correspondence, these speeches were analyzed to discern the nature of party repair in Logan’s rhetoric.

In the modern era, the selection of a running mate by the presidential nominee may be the candidate’s first, major symbolic act of party repair. For most of American history, however, the task of selecting a vice presidential nominee fell to the convention

195. James Pickett Jones, *John A. Logan: Stalwart Republican from Illinois* (Tallahassee: University Presses of Florida, 1982), 1.

196. *Ibid.*, 56-68.

197. Republican National Committee, *Proceedings*, 169.

198. *Ibid.*

199. Jones, *John A. Logan*, 189;192.

delegates, though candidates' intentions were well known and almost universally followed by the delegates. Of course, the selection and announcement of a running mate does not always have party repair in mind. For Lincoln in 1864, the selection of Democratic governor Andrew Johnson was intended as a sign of National Unity (taken as the name for his newly formed party) rather than party unity.²⁰⁰ But for Garfield in 1880, the selection of political novice Chester A. Arthur was a clear attempt to appease Conkling and the Stalwarts.²⁰¹ If in selecting Logan, convention delegates were attempting to unite the party, they had clearly misidentified the major intraparty exigence of the day.²⁰² It is more likely that the selection of Logan was necessary for Blaine to secure the party's nomination at the convention and advance beyond the stage he had been confined to in 1876 and 1880.²⁰³ Mugwumps advanced allegations of a deal struck between Blaine and Logan, who had also been a contender for the presidential nomination. After a strong showing from Blaine on the first three ballots, Logan instructed his delegates to shift their support to Blaine.²⁰⁴ The additional votes from Logan were enough to push Blaine across the threshold he was unable to cross in 1880, but they did little to appease the concerns of Mugwumps, who saw Logan as deeply

200. Daniel J. Tichenor, "Democracy's Wartime Deficits: The Prerogative Presidency and Liberal Democracy in the United States," in *Imperfect Democracies: The Democratic Deficit in Canada and the United States*, eds. Patti Tamara Lenard and Richard Simeon (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012), 212.

201. Millard, *Destiny of the Republic*, 95-97.

202. Jones, *John A. Logan*, 186-189.

203. *Ibid.*

204. *Ibid.*, 181-183.

entrenched in the same system of corruption as Blaine.²⁰⁵

While vice presidential nominees can serve as important symbols in the rhetoric of party repair, the constraints imposed by the unique exigencies of conventions (or primary campaigns after 1972) often short circuit the move toward party repair. As the Logan case illustrates, the rhetoric of a primary campaign may even directly undermine the central objective of a general election. Additional theorizing is necessary, not only for primary campaigns, but to explain the unique interplay of primary and general election campaigning. Reed and McKinney discuss this interplay as rooted in an entelechial vision of a party, ‘rotten with perfection.’²⁰⁶ Intraparty polarization may further entrench outgroup polarization even while resulting in internal division.²⁰⁷ While Logan did not have the rhetorical power as a unifying symbol himself, his own rhetoric aimed to restore the party coalition, or at least stop the bleeding. Logan often played a part in attacking both Democrats and Republican defectors.²⁰⁸ Even with fewer media backers, Logan’s rhetorical power, along with Blaine’s, was amplified by the one high-profile New York newspaper that remained loyal to the party ticket: The *New-York Tribune* and its owner/editor Whitelaw Reid.

Whitelaw Reid and the *New-York Tribune*

205. Ibid., 186-189.

206. Joel Lansing Reed and Mitchell S. McKinney. “Affirmation and Subversion: Navigating the Rhetorical Tensions of Polarization in the 2016 Presidential Primary Debates.” Paper presented at the National Communication Association Conference, Dallas, TX, November 2017, 26-32.

207. Ibid.

208. Jones, *John A. Logan*, 189-197.

The primary responsibility for repairing the broken Republican coalition fell to Blaine and Logan as the official faces of the new party, but in an era of expressly partisan media, Republican newspapers were an important instrument of party identification. Leading Republican newspapers, including *Harper's Weekly*, *The New-York Times*, the *New-York Evening Post*, and the *Boston Herald* abandoned Blaine, but one major publication wholeheartedly backed the Republican ticket: the *New-York Tribune* and its editor/owner Whitelaw Reid.²⁰⁹ Reid was one of the most prominent Republican voices of the Gilded Age, having purchased the *Tribune* upon the death of its founder and Reid's close associate Horace Greely.²¹⁰ Under Reid's leadership the *Tribune* became the most prominent Republican newspaper in the country.²¹¹ Like Blaine, Reid was no stranger to intraparty controversy. In 1872, Reid had been an outspoken voice in the bolt against Grant and backed Greely's bid as the Democratic and Liberal Republican candidate for president.²¹² The *Tribune* backed Garfield in 1880, but following Garfield's assassination, Reid worked directly with Blaine to publicly criticize Arthur in the pages of the paper and blaze a path for Blaine to the 1884 nomination.²¹³ After Blaine secured the nomination, the *Tribune* became a significant outlet for appealing to disaffected Republicans, making Reid a popular target of Mugwump attacks.

209. Harry William Baehr, *The New-York Tribune Since the Civil War* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1936), 206-211.

210. *Ibid.*, 117-123.

211. Summers, *Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion*, 70.

212. Duncan, *Whitelaw Reid*, 41-46.

213. *Ibid.*, 89-91.

Reid believed in a strong relationship between news media and political parties.

In an address to the Editorial Associations of New York and Ohio in 1879, Reid said:

A Government like ours without parties is impossible. Substantial reforms can only be reached through the action of parties. The true statesman and the really influential editor are those who are able to control and guide parties, not those who waste their strength in merely thrusting aside and breaking up the only tools with which their work can be done.²¹⁴

In the modern era, partisan identification in political media is rejected as part of the political milieu. Even media personalities who are willing to identify as liberal or conservative tend to reject party labels. While the rhetoric of *Harper's Weekly* and the *New-York Evening Post* summarized in the first half of this chapter might fit with this 21st century understanding of media identification, the explicit partisan labeling of the *New-York Tribune* in 1884 was the rule rather than the exception. Partisan media were reified through debates over party bolting, and the *Tribune* played an active role in attempts to repair the party. The newspaper's strategies of identification are included in the analysis below. As was customary for newspapers of the era, the *Tribune* regularly included snippets from Republican journals across the country, providing additional fodder for intertextual analysis. The pages that follow set the parameters for the study of party repair in the 1884 election before outlining the unique nature of party repair as a form of organizational identification.

The Party and the Campaign

Not all campaign rhetoric addresses party repair. Campaigns often focus on appealing to independents and members of the opposing party. For example,

214. Whitelaw Reid, *Some Newspaper Tendencies: An Address Delivered Before the Editorial Associations of New York and Ohio*, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1879), 45.

campaigning in New York in October, Blaine addressed Democrats specifically, saying:

There is no intelligent Democrat who will not tell you behind the door that the most potent agent in producing this marvelous prosperity has been the protective tariff. Now, I ask that intelligent Democrat to come out from behind the door on the front steps and vote the Republican ticket, because in that way, and in that way alone, can he aid in maintaining the protective system.²¹⁵

Even when addressing Republican audiences, Blaine often chose to avoid partisanship entirely, saying that partisanship would spoil an otherwise positive occasion.²¹⁶ Many of Blaine's campaign speeches focused on pleasantries rather than politics.²¹⁷ This analysis does not discount the importance of such communication in the work of party identification but focuses more specifically on explicit rhetoric of *party repair*, or the symbolic elements that define a party and/or explicitly address factionalist movements in the aftermath of selecting a nominee.

General campaign appeals are not easily or neatly separated from the rhetoric of party repair, but understanding general election rhetoric and its relationship to an intraparty audience opens new possibilities for theorizing about presidential elections. Cheney's typology of identification fails to capture some of the important elements of partisan identification, to the extent that it does not highlight the role of identification as a *moralizing* process and may also neglect rhetoric intended to divert or to dodge. This chapter identifies the relationship between public moralism, politization, and party identification in the aftermath of the Republican convention of 1884.

Party repair rhetoric in 1884 challenged the Mugwumps' claim that partisanship

215. Blaine, *The Blaine and Logan Campaign*, 180.

216. *Ibid.*, 46-49.

217. *Ibid.*

should be less salient than morality in voting decisions and that party labels ought to be abandoned based on the character of the nominee. In the remainder of this chapter, I identify six major themes in Mugwump rhetoric and attempt to unpack its unique relationship with rhetorics of moral identification, associative morality, and polarization. I begin by analyzing the Blaine campaign's response to charges of immorality and Mugwumps' privileging of the moral over the political. I then turn to the ways in which Blaine and his supporters created the impression of a unified and enthusiastic party despite clear opposition from Mugwumps and the relationship between bandwagons and identification. Next, I discuss how Blaine used the issue of the trade protections to redraw the parameters of the party before turning to the campaign's techniques of subversion directed toward party bolters. I then examine the rhetoric of duty to democracy and fidelity to the majority, which became major themes in pro-Blaine rhetoric in 1884. Finally, I discuss how identification functions in the context of a political dodge or diversion. Morality became something of an overarching consideration in the debate over party in 1884, and the first section outlines the position of Blaine and his most loyal associates regarding the relationship between morality and party.

Party, Morality, and Identification

Mugwumps relied on judicial rhetoric to make the case that Blaine was an immoral actor and argued for disidentification from the Republican label based on what I have termed *associative morality*. Their case for corruption centered around Blaine's suspicious dealings with the Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad Company and their case for disidentification was premised on the notion that morality ought to guide organizational affiliations. By contrast, Blaine and party loyalists contested claims of

Blaine's corruption but also advanced a different understanding of the relationship between morality and partisan identification. For Republican loyalists, morality began with an assessment of the character of the organization to which one was a part (in this case the Republican Party) and only then assessed individual moral associations in relation to that shared partisan identity. I first outline the responses of Blaine, Logan, and the *New-York Tribune* to the allegations of corruption advanced by the party bolters. I then discuss the unique relationship between party and morality in loyalist rhetoric, before turning to the role of religion in the rhetoric of party repair.

The Republican response to allegations of corruption against Blaine mirrors the traditional typology of image restoration advanced by Benoit.²¹⁸ Both denial and bolstering featured heavily in Republican rhetoric. Massachusetts Senator Henry L. Dawes was quoted as saying: "I should be false to my duty and to the truth if I did not declare my solemn conviction that there is no man in public life whose public and private character is more free from stain than that of Mr. Blaine."²¹⁹ Walter Phelps flatly denied the allegations against Blaine, responding to them at length in a style similar to *The Evening Post's* detailing of the charges.²²⁰ The *Tribune* dismissed allegations of corruption and argued that Mugwumps had failed to prove any of their charges against

218. William L. Benoit, *Accounts, Excuses, and Apologies: A Theory of Image Restoration Strategies* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 63-95.

219. *New-York Tribune*, August 15, 1884, 4.

220. Royal Cortissoz, *The Life of Whitelaw Reid Vol. II: Politics-Diplomacy* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921), 93. Both Phelps and the *Tribune* ran articles detailing charges in one column and defenses against those charges in another. Both created the impression that the opposing side had provided almost no facts in the case.

the nominee. The paper accused Mugwumps of dredging up scandals that had already been resolved in Blaine's favor in 1876.²²¹ Republicans also sought to minimize the allegations against Blaine, drawing direct comparison to charges made against Garfield, Lincoln, and even George Washington.²²²

A considerable portion of their defense also relied on what Benoit has labeled *attacking the accuser*.²²³ Engaging with the judicial metaphor of the Mugwumps, the *Tribune* turned against those who it deemed to be unreliable judges in the case against Blaine: Curtis and Schurz.²²⁴ The day before the general election, the *Tribune* declared 1884, "The Year of Lies," saying, "The wild carnival of defamation has reached its last day, and now we are to see what effect it has on public opinion."²²⁵ Republican media accused Mugwumps of possessing a "dead conscience" or "tainted character."²²⁶ The *Tribune* dedicated considerable space to discussing what it deemed to be Schurz's moral failings.²²⁷

Blaine further accused bolters like Schurz, Curtis, and Beecher of unfairly putting the party on trial through its accusations, saying, "As I have said, that party is not on trial.

221. *New-York Tribune*, June 8, 1884, 36; 58,

<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030214>. All citations from the *New-York Tribune* are taken from the Library of Congress's National Endowment for the Humanities Chronicling America project.

222. *New-York Tribune*, June 8, 1884, 6; *New-York Tribune*, June 9, 1884, 4.

223. Benoit, *Accounts, Excuses, and Apologies*, 3.

224. *New-York Tribune*, August 8, 1884, 4.

225. *New-York Tribune*, November 4, 1884, 4.

226. *New-York Tribune*, July 27, 6.

227. *New-York Tribune*, August 8, 1884, 4.

If it has made mistakes, they have been merged and forgotten in the greater success which has corrected them. If it has had internal differences, they are laid aside. If it has had factional strife, I'm sure that it has ceased."²²⁸ Blaine's argument reflected a larger sentiment in Republican rhetoric about the relationship between party and morality. In the Republican view, the party was not defined through association with the moral dealings of individuals within the party, or even with the presidential candidate. Rather than organizations reflecting the morality of their members, or even their leaders, organizations were deemed moral because of their past accomplishments. Individual leaders, as members of the Republican Party were shielded from charges of immorality based on their organizational identity and their misdeeds are simply "merged and forgotten" in comparison to the overall good produced by the organization.

Republicans who supported Blaine argued that the campaign was a referendum on the party rather than the individual.²²⁹ Blaine himself blasted those seeking to draw attention away from matters of party toward charges of personal corruption, proclaiming, "But the Republican party does not make this a personal campaign. The Republican party sees in the majesty of its popular uprising something grander, something better, something nobler than a mere squabble over personal slander."²³⁰ From a Republican perspective, party was to be placed above all questions of individual morality and voting against one's party based on individual charges was unconscionable. As the *Tribune* argued:

228. Blaine, *The Blaine and Logan Campaign*, 189.

229. *New-York Tribune*, November 3, 1884, 2.

230. Blaine, *The Blaine and Logan Campaign*, 116.

The man who considers this or that issue only, or the attitude of candidate only, is false to his duty. He must choose which of the parties is the better, all things considered. No man has any right to set up a private standard for himself, and so vote to help the worse of the two parties because the better does not suit him. To do evil that good may come is a deliberate crime. The solemn duty of every man is to do what is right [illegible], and according to his conscience and his knowledge to choose that party which is on the whole the better and the more worthy of trust.²³¹

Republican rhetoric still engaged the relationship between morality and identification, but it did so in direct contrast to the previously advanced concept of associative morality. In this new formulation, the association with other members in the organization is secondary to an overarching *organizational morality* that can subsume ethical concerns with party leaders and even with issue positions of the party. For party loyalists, morality emanates downward, not as an ingredient of identification, but a consequence of identification.

The *Tribune* acknowledged that the party had failings but suggested the inevitability of such failings and turned the question back on Mugwump leaders saying, “All parties have faults; even the latest and professedly the purest has already been guilty of a crime- that of slander.”²³² But individual failings were not sufficient to alter the overarching moral good of the party. Republicans mocked the Mugwumps for their emphasis on individual morality above all else, calling them “better than thou” Republicans and lampooning their “exalted moral excellence.”²³³ The *Tribune* further wondered why those so insistent on morality would align themselves with what they

231. *New-York Tribune*, June 27, 1884, 6.

232. *New-York Tribune*, July 27, 1884, 6.

233. *New-York Tribune*, August 8, 1884, 4; *New-York Tribune*, July 12, 1884, 7; *New-York Tribune*, November 2, 1884, 6.

deemed to be the fundamentally immoral Democratic Party.²³⁴

The papers questioned how Blaine's supposed immorality could be sufficient to "put aside" the range of Republican issues including, "the tariff, the industrial development of the country, commercial extension, the protection of American citizenship abroad, the civil rights of Southern Republicans, Civil Service Reform, the Mormon question, [and] the purity of the ballot."²³⁵ According to the *Tribune*, these issues were ignored by the bolters out of a self-aggrandizing, moral hubris. Again satirizing the Mugwumps the paper wrote of the bolters, "'It is not a political question,' they shrieked in concert, standing on tiptoe and putting their tongues in their cheeks."²³⁶ When revelations emerged of Cleveland's fathering a child outside of marriage, the paper turned accusations of immorality back on Mugwumps, saying, "The campaign is now ending and the moral issues are upon their hands – tainted meat which turns their own stomachs when they attempt to swallow it themselves."²³⁷ The relationship between morality and these issue positions of the campaign will be discussed further in a subsequent section on identification and the tariff along with sections examining the past and the antithesis from which Republican organizational morality derived. First it is necessary to discuss the prominent role of religious rhetoric as an element of party repair in 1884.

As a dominant source of morality in the late nineteenth century, religion provided

234. *New-York Tribune*, August 8, 1884, 4.

235. *New-York Tribune*, November 2, 1884, 6.

236. *Ibid.*

237. *Ibid.*

a powerful metaphor for Republicans throughout the campaign. After speaking at length to an audience on the campus of Ohio University about the protective tariff, Blaine famously said:

If I should keep on for an hour, I should have but one speech, and that on one idea. I should be like the prophet crying in the wilderness. I have but one cry and that is protection. I want your minds on that and not to be diverted from it. The Democrats are engaged in diverting popular attention from it. The Republicans are engaged in attracting attention to it.”²³⁸

The prophetic nature of Republican rhetoric extended also to the language of party repair. On July 27th under the headline “Choose Ye This Day Whom Ye Will Serve” the *Tribune* argued that voters were governed by this same command that was given by Joshua to the Jewish people at Shechem in the Old Testament. In the modern era, voters could choose to serve only one party and those who had a conscience should have known the moral choice was the Republican Party. The *Tribune* accused Mugwumps of idolatry in even considering a bolt from the party, saying, “If he knows which party is on the whole the better, but prefers the other because of habits or associations, or private grudges or vanities or desires, he is worshipping idols- ‘the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell.”²³⁹ This moral choice is perfectly characteristic of the rhetoric of polarization, which often accompanies the use of religious rhetoric in politics.²⁴⁰ The explicit invocation of biblical metaphor suggests that God was on the side of the Republican Party and leaders like Schurz were akin to Balaam, leading Republicans away from the

238. Blaine, *The Blaine and Logan Campaign*, 117.

239. *New-York Tribune*, November 2, 1884, 6.

240. Brian T. Kaylor, *Presidential Campaign Rhetoric in an Age of Confessional Politics* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2012), 91.

promised land and toward the wickedness of the Democrats.

While making the case that God was on the side of the Republican Party, leaders were also quick to chastise Mugwumps for their religious piousness, branding them “holier-than-thou” Republicans.²⁴¹ In an extended metaphor, the *Tribune* compared Mugwumps to the Pharisees of the New Testament.²⁴² At other times, the Mugwumps were labeled as zealots: “The Independent newspapers congratulate each other upon their ‘flaming zeal.’ Considering the methods to which they resort in their anti-Blaine campaign it can be truly said that they are ‘afame.’ The Bible refers to that sort of illumination in the phrase, ‘set on fire of hell.’ ”²⁴³ The contrasting visions of a Republican promised land and Mugwump zealotry illuminated by the fires of hell illustrates the importance of religious rhetoric in rhetorical polarization between loyal Republicans and their former associates. While zeal was criticized among Mugwumps, the passion and enthusiasm of Republicans became major components of party repair in 1884.

Enthusiasm, Unity, and Memory

In the modern era, nominees are typically known well in advance of the party convention. Today, conventions function primarily as what Farrell calls *legitimation rituals*.²⁴⁴ With this task in mind, conventions play a major role in the rhetoric of party

241. *New-York Tribune*, August 15, 1884, 4.

242. *Ibid.*

243. *New-York Tribune*, August 8, 1884, 4.

244. Thomas B. Farrell, “Political Conventions as Legitimation Ritual,” *Communication Monographs* 45, no. 4 (1978): 293.

repair. Prior to the modern primary system, however, conventions were anything but displays of unity. Conventions highlighted the divisions within the party as opposing factions vied for control, including the ability to shape the party platform and to select the presidential nominee. While conventions were not part of the rhetoric of party repair, there were still formal structures in place, designed to bring legitimation and unity to the party. Two groups of party members were selected to officially inform Blaine and Logan of their respective nominations.²⁴⁵ Their formal declarations to the candidates and the candidates' written responses jumpstarted the campaign and the work of repairing the fractured coalition.

In their notification of Blaine, the selected delegates acknowledged the importance of repairing the party. They pointed to examples from 1860, 1872, and 1880 in which intraparty conflict threatened victory.²⁴⁶ But the delegates claimed that such controversies had resolved over the course of the campaign, and "Individual preferences gradually yielded to convictions of public duty. The promptings of patriotism finally rose superior to the irritations and animosities of the hour. Indeed, the party in every trial has grown stronger in the face of threatened danger."²⁴⁷ There was a rare acknowledgement of intraparty strife early in the campaign, when much Republican rhetoric had chosen to pretend that internal conflict had already been resolved.

On July 26th, just after Blaine's formal letter of acceptance, the *Tribune* complied brief reactions to the left from favorable Republican journals across the country. Those

245. Boyd, *The Blaine and Logan Campaign*, 17-23.

246. Henderson, *The Blaine and Logan Campaign*, 19.

247. *Ibid.*

articles featured headlines like “Not a Sentence Could Be Spared,” “Voters Should Study It,” and “Simply Incomparable” to demonstrate the unquestioned success of Blaine’s letter.²⁴⁸ The overwhelmingly positive reception portrayed in the *Tribune* was reflective of a major theme in the paper’s reporting in the two months following the convention, which largely ignored intraparty opposition and crafted an image of an enthusiastic and unified party, despite growing dissent from a number of prominent Republicans and Republican papers.

The *Tribune* created the impression of overwhelming enthusiasm for Blaine starting with its account of the convention. In an almost comical description of the applause for Blaine’s home state during the roll call voting, the *Tribune* wrote under the headline “A Tornado of Applause for Blaine”:

When “Maine” was spoken by the deep voice secretary, there was a sudden explosion, and in a twinkling the convention was a scene of the wildest enthusiasm and excitement. Whole delegations mounted their chairs and led the cheering, which instantly spread to the stage and galleries and deepened into a roar fully as deep and deafening as the voice of Niagara. The scene was indescribable. The air quivered, the gaslights trembled, and the walls fairly shook; the flags were stripped from the gallery and stage and frantically waved, while hats, umbrellas, handkerchiefs and other personal belongings were tossed to and fro like bubbles over the great dancing sea of human heads. For a quarter of an hour the tumult lasted and it only ceased when people had exhausted themselves.²⁴⁹

After the nominee had been selected, the paper did not falter in its insistence that Blaine and Logan had ignited public fervor nationally and internationally, stating, “The

248. *New-York Tribune*, July 26, 1884, 3.

249. *New-York Tribune*, June 6, 1884, 1.

nomination of Blaine has awakened the greatest enthusiasm in all parts of the country.”²⁵⁰

Two days after the convention, the paper printed a collection of headlines from across the country and around the globe expressing excitement over Blaine’s nomination in England, Washington, California, Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky²⁵¹ On exactly the same page, the *Tribune* ran a brief excerpt from *The New-York Times* making clear the rival Republican paper’s intention to oppose Blaine, but the authors quickly dismissed the proclamation against the backdrop of its portrayal of overwhelming support.²⁵² The paper stated, “Harmony and good will prevail on all sides,” and in the same article dismissed *The Times*’ opposition as a “little discordant squeal,” which, “evoked a good deal of merriment.”²⁵³

In addition to detailing universal excitement, the *Tribune* fostered an image of national Republican unity. Ignoring what Keppler had observed as the “writing on the wall” of a Republican revolt the *Tribune* claimed, “There is no sullen dissatisfaction expressed and no talk of bolting is heard.”²⁵⁴ Two days following Blaine’s nomination the *Tribune* remained confident of its prediction stating “Again, his nomination will heal all differences in the State of New York, and in the coming election the Republican party will be united throughout the whole State.”²⁵⁵ Blaine himself extolled the unity of the

250. *New-York Tribune*, June 7, 1884, 1-2; 8.

251. *New-York Tribune*, June 8, 1884, 1.

252. *Ibid.*

253. *Ibid.*

254. *New-York Tribune*, June 7, 1884, 1.

255. *New-York Tribune*, June 7, 1884, 5.

Republican Party and its ability to court young men to their cause.²⁵⁶

The *Tribune* pointed to antithesis against Democrats as a primary source of Republican unity writing after the convention, “It was a fight in which each wing of the party entered with the full understanding that as soon as the issue was decided the ranks should be closed and united front presented to the common enemy.”²⁵⁷ Taking antithesis even further, Blaine told an audience of New York Republicans, “I trust that there will be no longer “Half-Breeds” or “Stalwarts,” but only Republicans; that we shall tolerate no jealousies or heart-burnings within our ranks, but that, ignoring the differences of the past, we shall all unite in common and honorable combat against the common enemy, not only of our party, but, as we believe, of the prosperity of the country.”²⁵⁸ On June 9th the paper even reported that Curtis was likely to support Blaine and Logan.²⁵⁹

Republican rhetoric suggested that much of the newfound unity derived from the same source as Republican organizational morality: the collective memory of the party. Despite being only 30 years old, the Party had dramatically transformed the American political landscape during its short life. It was this memory, which established the premise for organizational morality over individual or associative morality. Blaine’s memory of the party illustrated that organizational morality not only subsumed moral culpability, but also moral acclaim, stating, “I know better; and I know these lavish compliments are intended, not for me personally, but as a mark of confidence in the great,

256. Blaine, *The Blaine and Logan Campaign*, 112.

257. *New-York Tribune*, June 7, 1884, 2.

258. Blaine, *The Blaine and Logan Campaign*, 181.

259. *New-York Tribune*, June 9, 1884, 1.

and for twenty-four years triumphant, party which I have been chosen to represent.”²⁶⁰

Memory of the party was constructed in relation to past party leaders and waving the bloody shirt but also advanced a complicated and troubling orientation toward reconstruction and anti-racism.

Republican rhetoric portrayed Blaine as the natural heir to the mantle of Frémont, Lincoln, and Garfield, and their memories played an important role in efforts to repair the Republican coalition. While both Lincoln and Garfield had become martyrs of the Republican cause, Frémont was still alive and revered as the most impactful founding father of his party. Frémont joined Blaine for campaign events, creating both a visual and pronounced appeal for unity around the new Republican leader.²⁶¹ Before a crowd in Springfield, Illinois, Blaine invoked the memory of Lincoln, saying, “It was under the lead of an Illinois man, now enshrined in history, that the Republican party won its first great victory. And from that day to this, Illinois has never failed the Republican party.”²⁶² In 1884, the collective memory and veneration of Garfield were still at full pitch, and Republican journals did not hesitate to use Blaine’s loyalty to Garfield as a political instrument. The day after the convention, the *Tribune* declared:

The country still vividly remembers the devotion with which the head of the Cabinet watched at the President’s bedside; the calm dignity with which, during those long weeks of suspense, he discharged the painful duties of his position; the admirable precision of the bulletins which he issued to the press and through Minister Lowell to the foreign legations; and the perfection of the replies which he dictated to official expressions of sympathy at home and abroad.²⁶³

260. Blaine, *The Blaine and Logan Campaign*, 66.

261. Blaine, *The Blaine and Logan Campaign*, 26-28.

262. *Ibid.*, 149.

263. *Tribune* June 7th Page 3 *New-York Tribune*, June 7, 1884, 3.

Even the rhetorical power of these leaders could not overshadow the long-standing symbol of Republican unity: the bloody shirt.

While Blaine did not fight in the war, that did not stop Republican papers from crediting him with the victory. Blaine's notification committee declared to the nominee, "It was your good fortune to aid in protecting the Nation against the assaults of armed treason; you were present and helped to unloose the shackles of the slave."²⁶⁴ While early campaign rhetoric suggested moving on from the bloody shirt, Republicans quickly returned to the reliable symbol of identification. At a Blaine rally in New York, Senator Hawley spoke of Republican victory over "the enemies of the flag and the constitution."²⁶⁵ Blaine occasionally joked about the enthusiasm of his crowds, saying they could put the "rebel yell" to shame and "could have terrified the whole army of Lee."²⁶⁶ By the end of the campaign Blaine had turned from humor to accusing Republican states that left the party of joining the cause of the confederacy. In Indianapolis he proclaimed:

But our opponents meet us in an entirely different spirit and with an entirely different course of action. Instead of the memories of the Union, they invoke the prejudices of the rebellion in their aid, and they ask that New York and Indiana shall join the unholy alliance and turn the National Government over to the South.²⁶⁷

While public memorializing of the Civil War echoed previous Republican rhetoric, the

264. Henderson, *The Blaine and Logan Campaign*, 19-20.

265. Hawley, *The Blaine and Logan Campaign*, 53.

266. Blaine, *The Blaine and Logan Campaign*, 130.

267. *Ibid.* 142.

language used in relation to contemporaneous racism and segregation had changed dramatically from the Republican Party of early reconstruction.

Where Mugwumps sought to divorce the Republican Party from anti-racism and reconstruction entirely, Blaine and Logan did not hesitate to make it an issue of the campaign, but only when it suited the party's interests. In his letter of acceptance, Blaine made the case for unity between North and South and seemed to advocate leaving war-era animosities in the past.²⁶⁸ The *Tribune* wrote that "the time has come when the old should be definitely put behind us, when reconstruction and the negro question, and the 'bloody shirt' should be laid aside."²⁶⁹ On the other hand, Blaine did not hesitate to accuse his opponents of attempting to win the election by disenfranchising black voters.²⁷⁰ On multiple occasions Logan accused Democrats and their allies of attempting to steal elections through their intimidation of black voters in the South.²⁷¹ The internal contradictions of Republican rhetoric in 1884 advanced what would be a Republican framework for the Jim Crow era. Republicans advocated black suffrage that would help to solidify Republican power, but largely ignored issues like lynching, segregation, and the continued exploitation of black labor as issues of the past.

While collective memory became an important facet of party repair, it was essential that the Republican Party present a cohesive policy agenda for the present. As Blaine himself noted: "But we are mindful that parties cannot live entirely on the past,

268. *Ibid.*, 31.

269. *New-York Tribune*, August 25, 1884, 2.

270. Blaine, *The Blaine and Logan Campaign*, 143;176.

271. Logan, *The Blaine and Logan Campaign*, 40.

however splendid the record. The present is ever changed with its immediate cares, and the future presses on with its new duties and its perplexing responsibilities.”²⁷² Blaine was committed to one issue above all others that should define the Republican Party and be the basis of identification for all voters: support for the protective tariff.

It's the Tariff, Stupid

Eventually the Mugwump bolt became impossible for Blaine and Republican media to dismiss. As high-profile Republicans broke away and several Republican papers endorsed Cleveland, Republican loyalists turned to strategies that would redraw the boundaries of the Republican Party, placing Mugwumps outside of the Republican label and claiming they were not, and perhaps never were, real Republicans. In this reformulation, the primary litmus test for Republican identification was support for the protective tariff.

The tariff was the centerpiece of the Blaine/Logan campaign. In Blaine’s letter of acceptance, he turned immediately to the question of trade protections and dedicated nearly 22 paragraphs to discussions of foreign trade and economic enlargement.²⁷³ By contrast, Blaine reserved his discussion of civil service reform, highlighted by the Mugwumps as a major issue of the day, to only four paragraphs.²⁷⁴ Just one paragraph made mention of America’s currency system, which would eventually play an important role in the campaign with the formation of Benjamin Butler’s Greenback Party.²⁷⁵ The

272. Blaine, *The Blaine and Logan Campaign*, 20.

273. *Ibid.*, 24-31.

274. *New-York Tribune*, August 2, 1884, 1-2.

275. Blaine, *The Blaine and Logan Campaign*, 33-34.

same amount of space was allotted to Blaine's discussion of Mormons, which appeared just before the currency issue in the letter.²⁷⁶

In addition to serving as the central issue of the campaign, the tariff became a matter of party identification. At a rally in South Bend, Indiana, Blaine said, "If you compare the two great political parties in relation to this question you find that the Republican party lives, moves, breaths, and has its being in protection."²⁷⁷ Blaine connected the tariff with a protection of American labor, which he argued motivated the party's founding in opposition to slavery and its continued support of tariffs.²⁷⁸ During a speech in Columbus, Ohio in early October, Blaine dismissed the possibility that free traders were Republicans at all, saying, "There is not a speaker of any kind representing the Republican party who is not in favor of a protective tariff. The issue, therefore, is broad and distinct between the two parties."²⁷⁹ In speeches across the country, Blaine and associates linked the tariff directly to Republican identity, essentially redrawing the boundaries of the party to exclude those sympathetic to free trade.²⁸⁰ During a speech in West Virginia, Blaine remarked, "...Republican principles this year means a tariff for the protection of American labor. If West Virginia is in favor of that, she is Republican; if she is opposed to it, she is not Republican."²⁸¹

276. Ibid.

277. Ibid., 134.

278. Ibid., 24-31; 134.

279. Ibid., 95.

280. See for example: Blaine, *The Blaine and Logan Campaign*, 101; 102; 135.

281. Ibid., 102.

While Mugwumps defined their opposition based almost entirely on morality, Blaine labeled their bolt a rebellion of free-trade Republicans and welcomed their leaving on those grounds. In a rare acknowledgement of the Mugwumps specifically, Blaine stated: “Some Republicans in the State of New York have left us because they are free traders. They have acted wisely.”²⁸² The *Tribune* dismissed Schurz’s claim to be motivated by morality rather than support for free trade as shameless dishonesty.²⁸³ Blaine attempted to use the tariff issue to unite his base, arguing, “We have to defend our tariff system, and that you can only effectually do by upholding and supporting the great principles of the Republican party.”²⁸⁴ By making the tariff a central issue of his anti-Mugwump rhetoric, Blaine did not seek to repair the party in the traditional sense of bringing those disaffected back into the party fold. But his attacks on disaffected party members and labeling them as outside the party still aligns with what is here termed the rhetoric of party repair. Party rhetors sought to preserve, or even strengthen, the party label through refinement and redefinition. Party repair is a decidedly symbolic phenomenon, and consubstantiality is mediated through symbolic exchange.

Focus on the tariff also allowed Blaine to sidestep concerns over his questionable behavior in the railroad scandal. Blaine told an audience in East Saginaw in October, “All political campaigns begin with many issues, and nearly all political campaigns end with only one issue. That issue now is whether this country shall maintain a protective

282. Blaine, *The Blaine and Logan Campaign*, 174.

283. *New-York Tribune*, August 8, 1884, 4.

284. Blaine, *The Blaine and Logan Campaign*, 155.

tariff.”²⁸⁵ Even more specifically, the *Tribune* tied the tariff directly to morality and labeled the Mugwumps’ unmovable moralism as shortsighted and likely to bankrupt the working people of the country.²⁸⁶ That framing illustrates how, in addition to deriving from a noble past, organizational morality may also stem from support for specific pieces of legislation deemed moral.

The trade issue was not the only justification provided by party loyalists for believing that Mugwumps were not real Republicans. The *Tribune* began to reprint old cartoons from *Harper’s* which had been critical of Lincoln.²⁸⁷ Blasting Mugwumps for their infidelity to the party was an important part of the Republican rhetorical tactic of subversion. Subversion became a dominant theme in the rhetoric of party repair. The next section describes the Republican subversion against Mugwumps in the context of the rhetoric of polarization.

Subversion

Polarized rhetoric depends on stark in-group/out-group divisions.²⁸⁸ Party bolters challenge those divisions by leaving open the possibility of defection. A willingness to reflect cynically on one’s own party challenges the polarized landscape, but partisan leaders depend on and attempt to reify stark divisions to maintain their coalitions.²⁸⁹ King

285. *Ibid.*, 127.

286. *New-York Tribune*, October 28, 1884, 3.

287. *New-York Tribune*, August 9, 1884, 1. *New-York Tribune*, August 11, 1884, 4.

288. John W., Bowers, Donovan J. Ochs, Richard J. Jensen, and David P. Schulz. *The Rhetoric of Agitation and Control*, 3rd ed. (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2010), 41.

289. Russell Muirhead, *The Promise of Party in a Polarized Age*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 100-108.

and Anderson argue that there are two major strategies in the rhetoric of polarization: affirmation and subversion.²⁹⁰ Affirmation, which extols in-group virtue, can be seen in the memorializing of the party's noble past. The technique of subversion, however, depends on undermining the opposing party. King and Anderson say that the strategy depends on "a careful selection of those images that will undermine the ethos of competing groups, ideologies, or institutions."²⁹¹ In order to maintain clear organizational and ideological divisions, the Republicans relied on a variety of images to undermine Mugwumps' ethos, painting them as weak, imprudent, and hypocritical.

Exploiting the intense cultural antipathy for women that characterized much of late 19th century America, Republican cartoonists who remained loyal to Blaine feminized Mugwump leaders in their drawings.²⁹² Artists depicted Mugwumps, especially Curtis, in women's clothing.²⁹³ Cartoons relied on the late 19th century image of "the dude," or a man overly fixated on traditionally feminine interests like fashion.²⁹⁴ Even after the campaign, attacks on Mugwump masculinity continued.²⁹⁵ While Mugwumps presented themselves as Virginius holding a dagger before the throne of

290. King and Anderson, "Nixon, Agnew, and the "Silent Majority," 243-244.

291. *Ibid.*, 244.

292. Kristin L. Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 23-24.

293. Harlen Makemson, "A 'Dude and Pharisee': Cartoon Attacks on Harper's Weekly Editor George William Curtis and the Mugwumps in the Presidential Campaign of 1884," *Journalism History* 94, no. 4, (2004), 179-189.

294. *Ibid.*, 183-185.

295. Summers, *Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion*, 338.

Appius Claudius, Republicans described Mugwump proclamations as “squeals,” “shrieks,” and borrowing from Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, “the roar of a sucking dove.”²⁹⁶ The *Tribune* called the Mugwumps’ position cowardly and accused them of intentionally dodging any possibility of dissent from true Republicans.²⁹⁷ A friend writing to Nast questioned how he could have come to associate with the weak-willed Mugwumps, “Oh Nast, how art the mighty fallen! How weak in a bad cause has he become, who for years has been such a Sampson in a good one.”²⁹⁸

In addition to presenting the Mugwumps as weak, Republican media portrayed them as imprudent. Neville-Sheppard argues that third party voters are often similarly discounted as young, naïve, and unthinking.²⁹⁹ While Schurz, Curtis, and Godkin were older and well-established Republicans by 1884, Republicans utilized language of imprudence against the party bolters. Early in the campaign, the *Tribune* dismissed Mugwumps as merely suffering from brief “mental dyspepsia.”³⁰⁰ Blaine’s notification committee suggested that the bolters were simply upset about having lost the nomination and that the bolt would easily be resolved by a “sober second thought.”³⁰¹ As the campaign continued, the framing shifted from childish frustrations to willful ignorance.³⁰²

296. *New-York Tribune*, June 8, 1884, 1; *New-York Tribune*, August 8, 1884, 4.

297. *New-York Tribune*, August 11, 1884, 8.

298. Paine, *Th. Nast*, 496.

299. Neville-Shepard, “Containing the Third-Party Voter.”

300. *New-York Tribune*, June 8, 1884, 6.

301. Henderson, *The Blaine and Logan Campaign*, 19.

302. *New-York Tribune*, August 8, 1884, 1.

In August the *Tribune* dubbed *The New-York Times* “dumb as an oyster.”³⁰³ Frank Beard’s image of Mugwump leaders with bags over their heads appearing to commit political suicide perfectly exemplified the Republican rhetoric, which presented the Mugwumps as dopes, incapable of understanding the realities of modern politics.³⁰⁴

In the rhetoric of party repair, if Mugwumps were not foolish or effeminate, they were certainly portrayed as hypocrites. Charges of hypocrisy became major fodder for the *New-York Tribune*. The easiest targets for accusations of hypocrisy were *The New-York Times* and *Harper’s Weekly*, both of which had opposed Cleveland as the governor of New York but now endorsed him for the presidency. Throughout the campaign, the *Tribune* published quotes from *The New-York Times* during Cleveland’s tenure as governor. Quotes called Cleveland a “very low priced statesman,” “extravagant and corrupt,” and questioned the honesty of his intentions.³⁰⁵ The *Tribune* again reprinted cartoons from *Harper’s Weekly*, this time showing Cleveland as incapable of controlling the monster that is the Democratic Party.³⁰⁶

Republican rhetoric was not entirely devoid of individual virtue. There was a great deal of discussion regarding the duties of the individual voter relative to the organization. Unlike the Mugwumps, that conception of virtue was tied directly to the

303. *New-York Tribune*, August 12, 1884, 4.

304. *The Judge*, August 16, 1884, 16, <http://elections.harpweek.com/1884/cartoon-1884-large.asp?UniqueID=57&Year=1884>.

305. *New-York Tribune*, November 4, 1884, 1; *New-York Tribune*, August 8, 1884, 4; *New-York Tribune*, August 12, 1884, 4-5.

306. *New-York Tribune*, August 16, 1884, 1.

will of the majority. The following section analyzes the ways in which Republicans used duty and democracy to criticize Mugwumps and dissuade the Republican faithful from joining them.

Duty and Democracy

While some degree of organizational morality was derived from party legacy, Republican loyalists also tied organizational morality to a sense of membership obligation, having its origins in democracy and the rule of the majority. Blaine viewed voting for his presidency as the fundamental duty of every Republican. In a rousing speech on the tariff, Blaine asked Republican voters in Ohio, “Is your courage equal to your responsibility? Is your confidence equal to your courage?”³⁰⁷ In 1884, the Republican view of duty depended almost entirely on fidelity to party. The only relevant question for the *Tribune* was whether the nominee was fairly selected by Republicans at the convention. The paper reasoned, that if the selection was fair, bolting should not be an option. In the days following the convention the paper stated, “It is sufficient for us, as members of the Republican party, to know that Mr. Blaine is to lead the party in the coming campaign [...] and to give to him, therefore, as the accepted leader, cordial support, is a duty which every Republican owes to the party.”³⁰⁸

Public input on the nominee in 1884 paled in comparison to the modern primary system, but the results of the convention were presented as democratic and therefore binding. According to the rhetoric of party repair in 1884, that binding moved beyond the

307. Blaine, *The Blaine and Logan Campaign*, 86.

308. *New-York Tribune*, June 9, 1884, 2.

*party as organization to the party in the electorate.*³⁰⁹ Voters were argued to be morally obligated to support the nominee of their respective party. Majority rule was offered as the primary justification for factions to put aside their reservations after the convention:

The nomination of Mr. Blaine has been made by the representatives of the majority of the Republican party; and every Republican, however he may have felt heretofore as to the expediency of the nomination is bound to accept it as the fair result of the collected representation of the Republican party, and to give to it his cordial support.³¹⁰

Along with the shield of organizational morality came a basic duty owed to the organization. From this perspective, individuals were no longer entitled to their prior perspective on the nominee once that nominee was formally selected. *The Troy Times* opined that the will of the majority should always supersede individual reservations, because the time for reservations had passed.³¹¹ In an extended open letter to Mugwump leaders, John A. Platt argued that bolting was anti-democratic and therefore should only be undertaken in those extreme circumstances that require a true *revolution*.³¹² Simple moral disagreements with candidate behavior were not a sufficient justification for bolting.

Mugwumps' insistence that morality alone was sufficient to justify a party bolt, affronted the Republican belief that the results of a convention should be morally binding. Republicans argued that Mugwumps had violated their basic duty by endorsing Cleveland. In an open letter to George William Curtis, Pastor William H. Russell charged

309. See Chapter 2 discussion of V.O. Key and divisions in political parties.

310. *New-York Tribune*, June 7, 1884, 5.

311. *New-York Tribune*, June 9, 1884, 2.

312. *New-York Tribune*, August 25, 1884, 2.

that Curtis and his associates “have proved unfaithful to their trust.”³¹³ Not only had they violated their duty to the party, they had undermined the institution of democracy. As the *Tribune* put it: “Those who oppose Mr. Blaine ought to consider whether they are opposed to free government.”³¹⁴ And undermining the majority rule of the convention was the cardinal sin of organizational membership. Logan emphasized that democratic virtue was at the heart of American governance and the Republican cause in the Civil War.³¹⁵ If Mugwumps did not assent to the decrees of the convention, then the only explanation was that they did not believe in democracy. Instead, the Mugwumps were painted as elitists, who believed that they alone were fit to govern the country and the great masses could not be trusted with a decision as important as the Republican nomination.³¹⁶ The theme of fidelity to democracy is therefore linked directly to the *Tribune*’s portrayal of enthusiasm. If the majority of the Republican base expressed enthusiasm for Blaine, then it was possible to portray Mugwumps as elitists who viewed themselves as above the will of the people.

The symbolic act of party bolting illustrates that in American democracy, there is more than one party and party conventions do not have the final say in governance. Organizational affiliation in political parties is voluntary and leaving one’s political party is also fundamentally democratic. The existence of an opposition party (especially in a two-party system) carries unique implications for organizational identification. Given the

313. *New-York Tribune*, November 1, 1884, 5.

314. *New-York Tribune*, June 8, 1884, 6.

315. Logan, *The Blaine and Logan Campaign*, 39.

316. *New-York Tribune*, June 8, 1884, 6.

zero-sum nature of politics, political organizations often depend on showing disunion in the opposing party as an instrument of identification. The technique serves a similar function as other strategies of subversion, but it also offers a distraction from internal divisions. Rather than confront the problem of internal factionalism, Republicans in 1884 often preferred to exploit factionalism in the Democratic Party to divert public attention.

The Democrat Dodge

As previously observed, the Republican Party was not alone in its intraparty divisions in 1884, but divisions among Republicans were far more pronounced than among Democrats. Democrats faced internal opposition from Benjamin Butler's Greenback Party and holdover conflict between Cleveland and Tammany Hall in New York.³¹⁷ Blaine himself fostered the impression that free trade and support for the tariff had resulted in additional Democratic Party divisions.³¹⁸ While the highlighting of such divisions can also be read as an attempt to court Democratic voters, it was often used explicitly to dodge the question of Republican defection. At an early Blaine rally in New York, prominent attorney Emery A. Storrs spoke in support of Republican unity noting, "We are losing some Republicans and at the same time winning tens of thousands to our side from the rank-and-file of the old Democratic party."³¹⁹ Storrs attempt to downplay the significance of the Mugwump revolt by pointing out Democratic divisions continued throughout the campaign.

Blaine rallies often featured Democrats opposed to Cleveland as speakers.

317. Duncan, *Whitelaw Reid*, 103.

318. Blaine, *The Blaine and Logan Campaign*, 44.

319. Storrs, *The Blaine and Logan Campaign*, 55.

Democratic Representative John F. Finerty spoke to a crowd in Columbus saying that he embodied the growing anti-Cleveland sentiment within the Democratic Party and that he was “proud to be a rebel against the nominee.”³²⁰ At a separate rally in West Virginia, Finerty went further, saying, “Every Democrat north of the Ohio who had the blood of a freeman in his heart would resent the insult offered to the backbone of the Democratic party at the Chicago convention in the nomination of Grover Cleveland.”³²¹ Finerty’s words were echoed in Republican media.

Cleveland had easily secured the party’s nomination on only the second ballot, but, while the *Tribune* quickly dismissed conflict in their own party following the Republican convention, they pounced at the opportunity to paint the Democrats as deeply divided. Where the headlines in the aftermath of Blaine’s selection showed no hint of internal division, the *Tribune* headlines the day following the Democratic convention in July read “After Cleveland’s Nomination: Frequent Expressions of Dissatisfaction Among the Delegates,” “Bangor Democrats Silent,” “Peoria Democrats Reticent,” “Not a Cheer in Oswego,” “Disappointment in Toledo,” and “Disappointment in Cincinnati.”³²² Even as celebrations erupted in Cleveland’s home state, the *Tribune* claimed there was no enthusiasm for Cleveland to be found in New York.³²³ The *Tribune* further claimed that Irish Democrats were defecting within only minutes of learning of Cleveland’s

320. Finerty, *The Blaine and Logan Campaign*, 96.

321. *Ibid.*, 100.

322. *New-York Tribune*, July 12, 1884, 5; 10.

323. *Ibid.*

selection.³²⁴ Displays of disunity among Democrats continued in Republican media throughout the campaign.³²⁵

Butler became a favorite subject for Republican media trying to exploit Democratic struggles to mask their own internal divisions. Even before the convention, the *Tribune* stoked intraparty division within the Democratic base by predicting that the party might name Butler as the nominee.³²⁶ When Butler was selected as the nominee for the Greenback Party instead, the *Tribune* provided Butler with a platform throughout the campaign.³²⁷ An August 18th article in the *Tribune* argued that while the editors deeply disagreed with Butler's currency position, they hoped he would play a prominent role in the campaign as he had been underestimated by the Democratic Party.³²⁸ The *Tribune* mocked both Cleveland and Butler for appearing to wait on one another before issuing letters of acceptance, saying "In these days the people may be thankful to have even one candidate who knows what he thinks and means."³²⁹ Despite the Mugwump revolt, Republicans portrayed Blaine as above the reproach of partisan infighting.

Dodging and deception have not traditionally been understood as strategies of identification. However, the election of 1884 demonstrates that in the context of American politics, redirecting attention toward division in the opposing party may be

324. *New-York Tribune*, July 12, 1884, 1.

325. *New-York Tribune*, August 2, 1884, 2; *New-York Tribune*, August 18, 1884, 4; *New-York Tribune*, October 28, 1884, 4.

326. *New-York Tribune*, June 7, 1884, 4.

327. *New-York Tribune*, October 27, 1884, 4.

328. *New-York Tribune*, August 18, 1884, 1.

329. *New-York Tribune*, August 18, 1884, 4.

used as a tool of disidentification, preventing voters from believing that the opposing party is a viable alternative to their own. By dodging the question of crumbling party alliances and directing attention elsewhere, partisans can maintain the illusion of unity for a short time leading up to the election.

Summary: Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion

Though there is ample evidence of the Mugwumps' influence on the outcome of the election, it was ultimately the issues of prohibition and Anti-Catholicism, and not the Mugwumps, that Republicans credited with dividing their coalition and securing victory for Cleveland.³³⁰ Their framing maintained that the Republican coalition held firm, but Democratic voters who were planning to leave their party decided to stay after controversial comments by Samuel Burchard during a speech alongside Blaine at a meeting of clergymen in New York just days before the election.³³¹ In the speech, Burchard publicly attacked the party bolters, but faced backlash after saying, "We are Republicans, and don't propose to leave our party and identify ourselves with the party whose antecedents have been rum, Romanism, and rebellion."³³² Catholics and opponents of prohibition took offense at Burchard's comments.³³³ While Blaine offered a public rebuke, the damage done by Burchard's ill-conceived rhetoric of party repair had undermined any hopes of Democratic defection.³³⁴ The speech, they feared, had

330. Duncan, *Whitelaw Reid*, 104-105.

331. *Ibid.*

332. Burchard, *The Blaine and Logan Campaign*, 191.

333. Duncan, *Whitelaw Reid*, 104-105.

334. *Ibid.*; Blaine, *The Blaine and Logan Campaign*, 203-204.

galvanized Irish and German Democrats, handing New York to Cleveland in a very close campaign. By contrast, *The New-York Times* placed the credit squarely with the Mugwump revolt.³³⁵ In either case, the symbolic construction of partisan identities shaped the campaign and handed Democrats their first presidential victory in over twenty years.

The reformation of party identities between convention and election day is here termed party repair. In 1884 that repair depended on a questioning of the relationship between morality and partisan identity. It relied on the issue of the protective tariff to reawaken Republican identity as the salience of the Civil War slipped from the forefront of public consciousness. Those loyal to Blaine argued that their coalition had held strong despite apparent opposition and used Democratic division as a form of distraction from intraparty conflict. Republicans used techniques of subversion to associate mugwumpery with images of weakness and hypocrisy, while arguing that Mugwumps had shirked their sacred duty to party and to democracy. The Mugwump movement sparked a redefinition of the Republican Party in the period between the convention and general election. Through speeches, cartoons, newspaper articles, and all types of ephemeral media, the Republican Party was reconstituted via unfolding intraparty division.

Scholarship focused on critical elections and partisan realignment has largely ignored the election of 1884, suggesting that it did not dramatically alter American electoral politics. As this chapter suggests, the 1884 election involved a robust debate over the significance of the Republican Party label and the relationship between party and morality. Intraparty conflict challenged the core principles of Republican identity.

335. *The New-York Times*, November 8, 1884, 2.

Moving beyond the theory of critical elections, the 1884 campaign provides an example of how parties are regularly constituted and reconstituted through campaign rhetoric. Partisan realignment is a gradual and rhetorical process. Many of the intraparty debates in 1884 would become characteristic of what future scholars labeled the fourth party system. Discussions of currency, trade protections, an end to Civil War-era animosities, public morality, and, most importantly, a weakening of partisan allegiances all demonstrate that cracks existed in party foundations well before the supposedly realigning election of 1896. By understanding campaign rhetoric as a form of organizational identification, it is possible to see realignment, not just as an independent variable responding to public exigencies, but as an ongoing process driven by robust debate both between and within political parties.

The Mugwump revolt may further broaden our understanding of potential outcomes for party factions and social movements. While the Mugwumps were defined by their opposition to Blaine and their support for public morality, their impact on partisan structures did not fade away with Blaine's loss. Questions of the meaning of partisanship and the relationship of party identity to morality have continued across time. The strength of partisan identification may still be influenced by competing conceptions of the relationship between party and morality. Chapter six will further expand on the significance of the Mugwump revolt and its relationship to the intraparty rhetoric of 2016, but first it is necessary to present another set of intraparty movements that have not been credited as realigning Democratic politics, but certainly reformulated partisan identity in relationship to ideology and race.

The election of 1884 was the first victory for Democrats since before the Civil

War. That same year in Lamar, Missouri, loyal Democrats John and Martha Truman, gave birth to their oldest son Harry. Later in life, Harry would recount his father's jubilation when, in 1892, Grover Cleveland returned to the White House for a second term. Truman biographer David McCullough notes the young Truman's memory of his father riding in a torchlight parade to celebrate Cleveland's victory.³³⁶ When Truman ultimately became president and undertook major White House renovations, Cleveland's portrait was selected to hang alongside portraits of Woodrow Wilson, Theodore Roosevelt, and William McKinley in the Blue Room.³³⁷ As a Democrat invested in seeing a return to public moralism, Truman likely borrowed a great deal from the Democratic president of his childhood, but in the election of 1948, Harry Truman found himself in a position much more akin to Blaine's predicament in 1884, with party members threatening to bolt and unravel a coalition that had kept the party in power for 16 years. Chapter five turns to the 1948 election and Truman's attempt to hold together his party despite intense challenges from southern segregationists and northern liberals.

336. David McCullough, *Truman* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 51.

337. *Ibid.*, 885.

Chapter 5: Democrats, Dixiecrats, and Progressives

Now, I want you to tell all your friends and everybody you know, whether a Republican, a Mugwump, or a Democrat, to come out and do his duty civically on the 2nd day of November.

– Harry S. Truman, September 1948¹

It is doubtful that any of the loyal Democrats gathered at the Shirley-Savoy Hotel in Denver, Colorado on September 20, 1948 understood President Truman's plea for them to persuade their Mugwump friends to come out and vote. The legacy of the Mugwumps did not have significant reach into the 20th century. But while the election of 1884 faded quickly from public memory, Harry S. Truman's reelection in 1948 has been a popular area of inquiry for historians and for the general public. The election stuck in public memory, in part, because of its improbable outcome and more significantly because it set the stage for policy and social issue debates that would dominate American politics throughout the second half of the 20th century. Like the 1884 election, 1948 is not thought to be a realigning or critical election; yet for millions of Americans it dramatically altered the meaning of the Democratic Party label and resulted in clear fault lines in the Democratic coalition. The pages that follow unpack the rhetorical push and pull between Democratic nominee Harry Truman and two intraparty movements that would break off and form their own short-lived political parties in response to Truman's nomination. I begin with a discussion of the 1948 election and the two dominant intraparty movements that challenged Truman. I then turn my attention, first, to the

1. Rear Platform and Other Informal Remarks in Colorado, September 20, 1948, Public Papers Harry S. Truman 1945-1953, n. 198, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, <https://www.trumanlibrary.org/publicpapers/index.php?pid=1821>.

rhetoric of former vice president Henry Wallace and his movement of liberal progressives and, secondly, to then South Carolina governor Strom Thurmond and the Dixiecrat Revolt. Finally, I analyze Truman's rhetoric of party repair in response to these movements, including elements of antithesis and partisan populism.

In 1948, the Democrats had held the White House for 16 years, the longest tenure for either party since Cleveland snapped the Republicans' stronghold on the office in 1884. With the death of Franklin Roosevelt in 1945, Truman assumed the presidency and became the logical heir to what historians have labeled Roosevelt's *New Deal Coalition*. Historians and political scientists have often spoken of political parties as coalitions of various social identity groups joined around a common party label.² For Democrats in the mid-20th century those identity groups included the Northern black working class, industrial and farm laborers, Catholics, Jews, and low-income residents of major cities.³

This coalition-based understanding of parties suggests that the primary motive for partisan affiliation comes from identification with some outside social identity. Those external affiliations can either strengthen partisan ties or weaken them depending on whether external social identities are congruent with partisan identity.⁴ When such identities are misaligned, partisans may experience what political scientists label *cross-*

2. Matthew Grossmann, and David A. Hopkins, *Asymmetric Politics: Ideological Republicans and Group Interest Democrats* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 70-79.

3. Jeffrey Levine, Edward G. Carmines, Robert Huckfeldt, "The Rise of Ideology in the Post-New Deal Party System, 1972-1992," *American Politics Research* 25, no. 1 (1997): 20.

4. Bernard R. Berelson, Paul F. Lazarsfeld, and William N. McPhee 1954. *Voting A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954).

pressures.⁵ Mason defines cross-pressures as “attitudes or identities that are not commonly found in the partisan’s party.”⁶ For example, in the modern era, a voter may identify as an evangelical Christian but affiliate with the Democratic Party. Social scientists argue that such an individual will likely experience competing pressures based on their group identities.⁷ Conceptually, identification extends well beyond partisan affiliations and external identifications implicate partisan group membership. This chapter focuses on the rhetorical creation of these partisan cross pressures in intra-Democratic politics in the 1948 presidential election and Truman’s attempt to repair the fractured coalition.

Two dominant movements threatened to drive asunder Truman’s Democratic Party in 1948. White, Southern Democrats, frustrated by the party’s Civil Rights Platform, bolted from the party and formed the State’s Rights Democratic Party, more commonly referred to as the *Dixiecrats*. Meanwhile, Northern progressives angered by Truman’s hardline stance on the Soviet Union also bolted from the party to support Progressive Party candidate Henry Wallace. These two movements were on opposite sides of the ideological spectrum and their rhetoric was animated by distinct strategies of disidentification and legitimacy, but they both attempted to reclaim and redefine the party label. The following section provides some historical context for the first of those two movements, the Dixiecrat Revolt, led by South Carolina Governor Strom Thurmond.

5. Lilliana Mason, *Uncivil Agreement: How Politics Became Our Identity* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press), 7.

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Ibid.*

Thurmond and the Dixiecrats

There was nothing new about the association between the Democratic Party and the American South. Since the end of reconstruction, the Solid South had been taken for granted as a Democratic stronghold.⁸ But with the birth of the New Deal, the Democratic coalition had attempted to preserve a tenuous relationship between white Southern segregationists and Northern black workers, many of whom had fled oppressive Jim Crow Laws almost exclusively passed by Democratic lawmakers as well as the terror of lynching across the South, which Democrats had done little to alleviate.⁹ Black Northern voters were skeptical of the Democratic Party, but many found hope for an end to the Great Depression in Roosevelt's New Deal policies.¹⁰ Given the strength of ties between the Democratic Party, slavery, and Jim Crow, a much higher percentage of black voters identified simply as New Deal supporters rather than as Democrats.¹¹ Many of Roosevelt's New Deal policies still relied on segregated labor and housing, and the Democrat's policies were far from progressive on race.¹² For some black voters, it was the progressive Eleanor Roosevelt who drove them to the Democratic Party rather than

8. Dewey W. Grantham, *The Life & Death of the Solid South: A Political History* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1988), 1-5.

9. Kari Frederickson, *The Dixiecrat Revolt and the End of the Solid South 1932-1968* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 3-4.

10. Gary C. Donaldson, *Truman Defeats Dewey* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky) 91.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid. 91-92.

her husband.¹³ Franklin Roosevelt had walked a fine line to avoid ostracizing black Northern voters or white Southern segregationists, but in the election of 1944, he faced a threatened Southern bolt, which collapsed before gaining significant traction.¹⁴

When Truman inherited the New Deal coalition upon Roosevelt's death, he also inherited Roosevelt's dilemma. Early campaign documents suggest that Truman officials openly discussed whether to appeal to Northern black voters or white Southerners.¹⁵ In those documents, top campaign officials advised the former.¹⁶ By the time of the Democratic National Convention in July 1948, Truman had established a robust civil rights agenda, including the creation of multiple federal commissions tasked with enforcing civil rights laws and plans for anti-lynching laws.¹⁷ Angry Southern Democrats became increasingly critical of the sitting president and arrived at the convention with faint hopes of defeating Truman's nomination.

When delegates reached the convention in Philadelphia, the conflict over civil rights and the future of the party was at a boiling point. Groups of Democrats from Mississippi and South Carolina came to the convention demanding to be seated over the states' all-white, pro-segregation delegations.¹⁸ Early in the convention, Southern Democrats on the platform committee worked to defeat language calling for an end to

13. Ibid.

14. Frederickson, *The Dixiecrat Revolt*, 37.

15. Steven R. Goldzwig, *Truman's Whistle-stop Campaign* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press), 8.

16. Ibid.

17. Frederickson, *The Dixiecrat Revolt*, 76.

18. Ibid., 123.

“racial, religious, and economic discrimination.”¹⁹ While they would emerge victorious in the committee, their work was undone when the general convention delegates voted overwhelmingly in favor of adding the Civil Rights plank to the platform.²⁰ In response to the addition, delegates from Alabama and Mississippi walked out of the convention as boos rained down on them from the remaining Democrats in the hall.²¹ While other Southern leaders and delegations remained in the hall, many resolved to bolt from the party.

Unlike the Mugwumps of 1884, the Dixiecrats opted to form their own party. Reconciling their disidentification with their long history of praise for the Democratic Party did not require the additional step of walking back their long-held animosity toward Republicans, who they saw as an equally unpalatable alternative. Like many political factions, the Dixiecrat movement became institutionalized within an external political party.²² Still the break from the Democrats was far from complete. While colloquially called the Dixiecrats, the official moniker for the newly formed party was the States’ Rights Democratic Party and sought to replace Truman on the ballot in every Southern state rather than join him as a third-party alternative.²³ Like other Southern factionalist

19. Zachary Karabell, *The Last Campaign: How Harry Truman Won the 1948 Election* (Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 2000), 154.

20. Frederickson, *The Dixiecrat Revolt*, 123.

21. Goldzwig, *Truman’s Whistle-stop Campaign*, 41.

22. Thomas H. Roback and Judson L. James, “Party Factions in the United States” in *Faction Politics: Political Parties and Factionalism in Comparative Perspective*, eds. Frank P. Belloni and Dennis C. Beller (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 1978), 330-331.

23. Donaldson, *Truman Defeats Dewey*, 184.

movements, the Dixiecrats stated that they never hoped to win in the electoral college but instead planned to send the election to the House of Representatives where they could negotiate for a stronger voice on civil rights laws.²⁴

In the 1950s, some political scientists suggested that the Dixiecrats hoped that by bolting from the party, Truman would lose to Dewey and his defeat would be a strong symbolic act illustrating the power of the Southern lobby and demanding a walking back of the civil rights agenda.²⁵ In either case, a long-term separation from the Democratic Party was not in the Dixiecrats' plans. Rather, they hoped that short-term disidentification could prompt a long-term reevaluation of the party label. As the historian Gary A. Donaldson put it, "The Dixiecrat movement did not represent a new phenomenon. It was, in fact, a call to the past, a last-ditch effort to bring back the Southern stranglehold on the Democratic party that prevailed during the first third of the century."²⁶ Dixiecrats resolved that their party should have all the trappings of the Democratic Party they hoped to replace.

Given the power of political conventions in 1948, the first order of business for the Dixiecrats was to meet and select a candidate. Plans had already been in the works to organize a convention in Birmingham, Alabama if the Democrats nominated Truman as

24. Frederickson, *The Dixiecrat Revolt*, 3; Address at the Watermelon Festival, Cherryville, North Carolina, July 31, 1948, mss100, 596, pg. Strom Thurmond Collection, Clemson University, <https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/strom/596>.

25. Emile B. Ader, "Why the Dixiecrats Failed," *The Journal of Politics* 15, no.1 (1953): 367.

26. Karabell, *The Last Campaign*, 164-165; Donaldson, *Truman Defeats Dewey*, 186;.

anticipated.²⁷ Instead of selecting delegates in a style similar to the major party conventions, the Dixiecrats allowed anyone who attended to vote.²⁸ Speakers accused Northern Democrats of trying to destroy the white race and Confederate battle flags became an important symbol at the convention.²⁹ Ultimately the delegates settled on South Carolina Governor Strom Thurmond as their “nominee” or what would be more accurately labeled as their *recommendation* for a Democratic candidate to the individual states in the South.³⁰ Thurmond’s speech of acceptance, included in the analysis of this chapter, was deeply entrenched in the rhetoric of disidentification from Truman’s Democratic Party while arguing that Dixiecrats remained faithful to the pure Democrat label.³¹

Dixiecrats were separated from Mugwumps by the presence of a clear and institutionalized movement leader. Thurmond was formally selected and quickly became the face of the movement. The South Carolina Governor hoped to campaign in every

27. Karabell, *The Last Campaign*, 165.

28. Donaldson, *Truman Defeats Dewey*, 184. Over 6,000 people attended and voted as Delegates at the convention in Birmingham Alabama just days after the Democratic National Convention. Many Southern delegates left directly from Philadelphia and traveled to Birmingham.

29. David McCullough, *Truman* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 645.

30. Frederickson, *The Dixiecrat Revolt*, 139; States’ Rights 1948 October 1 Radio Interview with Governor Thurmond, October 1, 1948, mss 100, 395, Strom Thurmond Collection, Clemson University, <https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/strom/395>.

31. Thurmond Address Accepting the States’ Rights Democratic Nomination as President of the United States, August 11, 1948, mss 100, 366, Strom Thurmond Collection, Clemson University, <https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/strom/366>.

state in the South and even some Midwestern states, including Truman's home state of Missouri.³² Thurmond's desire was met with consternation from other leading Southerners who did not want to risk handing any states over to Republican nominee Thomas Dewey.³³ Instead, they sought to campaign only in states where Thurmond was listed in place of Truman on the ballot. Thurmond hoped to distance the States' Rights Democratic Party from the most explicit language of racial superiority, but his surrogates, including other Southern governors, and outspoken political figures in the Dixiecrat movement frequently undermined Thurmond's efforts.³⁴ Still, Thurmond was the heart and soul of the Dixiecrat rebellion, and many national publications credited him for tempering explicitly racist justifications for much of the campaign.³⁵

As the nationwide symbol for the Dixiecrat Party, Thurmond gave stump speeches at fairs and festivals across the South along with regular radio interviews on sympathetic Southern radio stations.³⁶ Audiences throughout Thurmond's career cited him as an example of a strong and charismatic speaker, and his robust campaign sought to make clear that he was the one and only Democratic nominee in the South.³⁷ Transcripts of many of Thurmond's speeches and interviews during the campaign are

32. Karabell, *The Last Campaign*, 169.

33. *Ibid.*

34. Donaldson, *Truman Defeats Dewey*, 184-186.

35. *Ibid.*, 143.

36. Clemson University, *Strom Thurmond Collection*, Clemson University Libraries, Special Collections and Archives, last modified 2018, <https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/strom>.

37. Nadine Cohodas, *Strom Thurmond and the Politics of Southern Change* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993), 42.

now available in the archives of Thurmond's alma mater: Clemson University.³⁸ These transcripts, along with records of Thurmond's personal correspondence and speeches, and the speeches of a handful of other Dixiecrat leaders provide the foundation for this chapter's analysis of Dixiecrat rhetoric of 1948.

Wallace and the Progressives

Southern segregationists in open revolt from the party was only one of the problems for Truman's chances at victory. The party was also fracturing from Truman's left. Northern progressives were ardent supporters of Roosevelt's New Deal program.³⁹ They liked the promise of government jobs and services to rebuild from the Great Depression and reshape society from the center outward. Early in his administration, Roosevelt had been forced to choose between progressive working class voters and wealthier old-guard Democrats.⁴⁰ Roosevelt quickly ostracized wealthier Democrats resistant to large-scale government intervention.⁴¹ In 1934, limited government Democrats broke off to form the American Liberty League, which, while nominally Democratic, would come to be associated with the fiscally conservative wing of the

38. Clemson University, *Strom Thurmond Collection*.

39. Eric Schickler, *Racial Realignment: The Transformation of American Liberalism, 1932–1965* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 9.

40. George Wolfskill, *The Revolt of the Conservatives: A History of the American Liberty League, 1934-1940*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1962), 142-162.

41. Schickler, *Racial Realignment*, 80.

Republican Party.⁴² Roosevelt's tough economic stance, along with the power of his even more progressive wife Eleanor, endeared him to fiscally liberal Northerners.⁴³

During Roosevelt's first campaign in 1932, he selected as his running mate conservative Southern Democrat John Nance Garner. Roosevelt's selection of Garner may have been intended as a symbol for Southern Democrats that the New Yorker, Roosevelt, was sympathetic to their concerns. Garner and Roosevelt maintained divergent visions for the Democratic Party and for the country throughout their eight years in office.⁴⁴ By the start of Roosevelt's third campaign in 1944, his disagreements with Garner had come to a head, and Garner came out publicly against a third term.⁴⁵ More comfortable with his base of Southern support, Roosevelt selected liberal Agriculture Secretary Henry Wallace as his running mate. Wallace became a hero for Northern progressives as he pushed for expansion of social programs and support for organized labor.⁴⁶

42. Ibid.

43. Allida Mae Black, *Castling Her Own Shadow: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Shaping of Postwar Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 3.

44. John C. Culver and John Hyde, *American Dreamer: The Life and Times of Henry A. Wallace*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000), 173-175; 180.

45. Culver and Hyde, *American Dreamer*, 197; Jacqueline Castledine, "Quieting the Chorus," in *Anticommunism and the African American Freedom Movement Another Side of the Story*, eds. Robbie Lieberman and Clarence Lang (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 55.

46. Thomas W. Devine, *Henry Wallace's 1948 Presidential Campaign and the Future of Postwar Liberalism* (Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 66-67; Donaldson, *Truman Defeats Dewey*, 51.

Again in 1944, Roosevelt was faced with the challenge of using his vice-presidential nomination to either unite or divide the party. Moderate and conservative Democrats viewed Wallace as a serious threat and challenged his selection at the convention.⁴⁷ While Roosevelt had hoped to run with Wallace again, he acquiesced to the will of conservative party leaders and instructed Wallace to withdraw after the first ballot in favor of Missouri Senator Harry Truman.⁴⁸ Roosevelt and Truman coasted to victory in November, and Roosevelt offered Wallace a spot in the cabinet as Secretary of Commerce. When Roosevelt died shortly into his fourth term, Truman became president and inherited Roosevelt's cabinet, including Secretary Wallace. Wallace and Truman disagreed about the best approach to handling the rising Soviet Union after World War II.⁴⁹ This conflict culminated with Wallace explicitly contradicting U.S. policy on the Soviet Union during a speech at Madison Square Garden in 1946 and passing off his comments as having been endorsed by President Truman.⁵⁰ Truman fired Wallace in the aftermath of the speech and opened another serious fault line in the party.

Wallace swiftly gained traction as a potential left-wing challenger to Truman in the lead up to the 1948 election. Wallace had initially hoped to be the Democratic nominee, but with support for Truman increasing before the convention, he instead decided to challenge Truman from outside of their shared party.⁵¹ Just 11 days after the

47. Donaldson, *Truman Defeats Dewey*, 51-52.

48. Ibid.

49. Karabell, *The Last Campaign*, 30-31.

50. Ibid.

51. Donaldson, *Truman Defeats Dewey*, 55; 58.

Democratic National Convention, Wallace easily secured the nomination of his newly formed Progressive Party.⁵² The Progressive Party platform placed the blame for society's ills squarely with big business and accused Truman of warmongering.⁵³

Even before his formal announcement, Wallace had traveled the country speaking to varied audiences and attempting to establish a base of support for his candidacy.⁵⁴ One of the most cited speeches of Wallace's speaking tour was delivered to a packed house at Gilmore Stadium in Los Angeles in May of 1947 and is included in the analysis.⁵⁵ He would continue to speak to large, enthusiastic crowds after his announcement. Wallace garnered significant support from young voters, presenting another challenge for Truman and the Democratic loyalists.⁵⁶ Among his most ambitious campaign strategies was a trip through the American South. Despite very low popularity in the Southern states, Wallace and several of his supporters took their campaign deep into the American South where he was bombarded with boos and rotten fruit.⁵⁷ In the South, Wallace not only spoke in favor of New Deal policies, but, even more controversially, he blasted segregation and Jim Crow laws.⁵⁸

52. McCullough, *Truman*, 645-646.

53. Progressive Party, "Progressive National Platform," in *Wisconsin Blue Book 1950* (Madison: State of Wisconsin, 1950), 519-545.

54. Marie Hochmuth, "Henry A. Wallace," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 34, no. 3 (1948): 322.

55. Devine, *Henry Wallace's 1948 Presidential Campaign*, 277.

56. *Ibid.*, 200-210.

57. *Ibid.*, 248-249.

58. McCullough, *Truman*, 667.

Wallace's power for oratory had greatly increased his public following throughout the 1940s. In 1942, in one of his most celebrated speeches, Wallace declared the 20th century "The century of the common man."⁵⁹ He became an outspoken voice for education, labor unions, civil rights, and aid to the poor. While relatively quiet on his own religious convictions, the social gospel was a staple of Wallace's speeches.⁶⁰ When a man from Los Angeles wrote him inquiring about his vocation, Wallace responded by noting, "My political activities are purely incidental to trying to work out a type of world where the general welfare can be more continuously served in peace. If I could live in good conscience without engaging in politics, I would prefer it so."⁶¹ Consistent with this conviction, contemporary rhetorical critic Marie Houchmuth Nichols argued that Wallace's speaking was more akin to a tent evangelist than a politician.⁶²

He was fiery and direct, but while Wallace was often credited for his charisma as a speaker, Houchmuth also noted that what Wallace's supporters read as enthusiasm and passion, others sometimes interpreted as aggression.⁶³ His zeal had led many liberals to back the Democratic Party, while also generating unwelcome support from communists

59. Henry A. Wallace "The Century of the Common Man," American Rhetoric Online Speech Bank, last modified August 5, 2017, <https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/henrywallacefreeworldassoc.htm>.

60. Culver and Hyde, *American Dreamer*, 128-129; 76; 444.

61 Letter from Wallace to Leo Pride, June 18, 1948, Reel 45, n. 101, Henry A. Wallace Correspondence June 1948- March 1949, Henry A. Wallace Collection, University of Iowa Libraries, <http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/wallace/id/43395/rec/45>.

62. Hochmuth, "Henry A. Wallace," 323.

63. *Ibid.*, 324.

in the United States.⁶⁴ Associations with communism would be a major liability for Wallace's campaign, but Wallace at times seemed to embrace elements of the association, even advertising a letter he received from Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin praising Wallace's foreign policy.⁶⁵

The analysis portion of this chapter explores Wallace's campaign speeches, printed campaign ephemera, and personal correspondence from 1948. A great deal of Wallace's campaign was conducted through two media: radio addresses and letters. Wallace's campaign made a concerted effort to reach the public through radio and allocated a sizeable portion of their meager campaign budget to the task.⁶⁶ He also often corresponded with key decision makers by mail about the foundations for his run and for his disidentification from the Democratic Party. Wallace himself noted the value of letters as a form of exchange resulting in the symbolic construction. In a radio address on October 20th, Wallace said:

So many billions of words are written, broadcast, and published every day in magazines, in newspapers, and on the air. But I wonder if other words, words that never break into print, are never spoken in the professional tones of radio, are not

64. Donaldson, *Truman Defeats Dewey*, 56-58.

65. Henry A. Wallace, "Stalin Answers Wallace," *University of Iowa Libraries* (1947)

<http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm/ref/collection/wallace/id/42371>; Donaldson, *Truman Defeats Dewey*, 56-58.

66. Wallace Letter to Anita McCormick Blaine, August 17, 1948, Reel 45, n. 324, Henry A. Wallace Correspondence June 1948- March 1949, Henry A. Wallace Collection, University of Iowa Libraries, <http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/wallace/id/43395/rec/45>; Blaine Letter to Henry A. Wallace, October 13, 1948, Reel 45, n. 456, Henry A. Wallace Correspondence June 1948- March 1949, Henry A. Wallace Collection, University of Iowa Libraries, <http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/wallace/id/43395/rec/45>.

more important. I mean the ordinary words that people write to friends. I mean the millions of letters that pass between Americans, the private opening-up between people, in a personal note.⁶⁷

Wallace's rhetoric for the current analysis was collected from a variety of sources, including the digital archives at the University of Iowa, the Library of Congress, and the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library. Addresses, letters, and interviews were analyzed in order to better understand Wallace's relationship with the Democratic Party and his efforts at rhetorical disidentification. The analysis begins with an investigation of Wallace's campaign before turning to Thurmond's and finally Truman's rhetoric of party repair.

Wallace's Systemic Disidentification

Many Mugwump and Republican leaders in 1884 saw the two-party system as an inevitability. That sentiment animated Henry Ward Beecher's comment that voting for 1884 Prohibitionist candidate John St. John was merely a "vote into the air."⁶⁸ The only reasonable solution for those disillusioned with the party's nominee was to switch to the opposition party. In 1948, however, both factionalist movements rejected the possibility of voting for the Republican candidate Thomas E. Dewey. Dewey had an exceptionally strong record in support of civil rights and had long been a vocal opponent of New Deal policies.⁶⁹ In 1940 Dewey had even authored a campaign pamphlet entitled "The Case

67. Henry A. Wallace Radio Address, October 20, 1948, Past Daily, Gordon Skene Sound Collection, <https://pastdaily.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Henry-Wallace-October-20-1948.mp3>.

68. Beecher, *Lectures and Orations*, 307.

69. Simon Topping, "'Never argue with the Gallup Poll': Thomas Dewey, Civil Rights and the Election of 1948," *Journal of American Studies* 38, no. 2 (2004): 179-182

Against the New Deal.”⁷⁰ While Mugwumps presented Cleveland as a palatable alternative to intraparty corruption, Democratic defectors in 1948 framed Dewey as the quintessential Republican enemy. While some have argued that the movements were willing to see the Republicans win in order to force intraparty change, they were certainly not willing to support them with their vote.

Both the Progressives and the Dixiecrats rejected the two-major party nominees; but, as this chapter will argue, their rhetoric of disidentification turned in competing directions. Dixiecrats turned to questions of legitimacy and a belief that they were the candidates of the true Democratic Party. For Wallace and the Progressives, the central rhetorical thrust was what is here termed as *systemic disidentification*. Rather than simply opting out of one party and into another, the Progressives challenged the prevailing party system altogether and sought to bring an end to the two-parties that had dominated American politics since the Civil War. Neville-Sheppard labels third-party candidates “agitators for change” and finds that fighting against dominant parties is essential to the role these actors play in American politics.⁷¹ Wallace and his supporters attempted to make the case that the entire system had failed and needed to be discarded. Wallace in particular railed against bipartisanship that he saw as rooted in a system of corporate colonization which had taken hold of the Democratic Party after the death of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

70. Thomas E. Dewey, *The Case Against the New Deal* (New York: Harper, 1940)

<https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000577042>.

71. Ryan Michael Shepard, PhD diss., (University of Kansas, 2011), <https://kuscholarworks.ku.edu/handle/1808/8202>.

The most dominant issues for Wallace throughout the campaign were the same issues that had led to his spilt with Truman and his eventual firing, specifically, the United States' hardline stance on the Soviet Union and what Wallace perceived to be an increasing public militarism. Where both Truman and Dewey presented the USSR as a threat to U.S. interests, Wallace argued on behalf of the former U.S. ally. In an interview with *FUTURE Magazine* around August 23rd of 1948, Wallace said "Our freedom is not menaced today by Russia. It is menaced by those who seek to militarize our country and to prepare for aggressive war."⁷² Wallace specifically blamed business for the prevailing anti-Soviet sentiment, describing it to Peace Publications as "the militarization of America in the interest of Wall Street aggrandizement."⁷³ Throughout the campaign, Wallace's most common refrain would be for peace with the Soviet Union.

The pages that follow outline the four major components of Wallace's rhetoric of disidentification. I begin by describing Wallace's rhetorical challenge to bipartisanship. I then turn to the underlying disease that Wallace saw as infecting the two-party system, specifically, the influence of powerful corporations. Next, I outline the moment that Wallace identified as the ultimate downfall of the Democratic Party, at which point the disease was allowed to infect the institution of which Wallace had once been the second

72. Wallace Interview with *Future Magazine*, August 23, 1948, Reel 45, n. 345-350, Henry A. Wallace Correspondence June 1948- March 1949, Henry A. Wallace Collection, University of Iowa Libraries, <http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/wallace/id/43395/rec/45>.

73. Wallace Statement to the Peace Publications Fund, August 23, 1948, Reel 45, n. 351-357, Henry A. Wallace Correspondence June 1948- March 1949, Henry A. Wallace Collection, University of Iowa Libraries, <http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/wallace/id/43395/rec/45>.

most prominent leader. Finally, I discuss Wallace's rhetoric surrounding his newly formed party and its relationship to his former Democratic Party.

The Parties Versus the People

The rhetoric of bipartisanship in contemporary political discourse is regarded so positively that Henry Wallace's attacks on the concept of bipartisan compromise might come as a shock to the modern reader. A key attribute of Wallace's approach was a belief that the two major parties shared a single bellicose ideology that had infected American government. The Progressive Party Platform began with the dire warning: "Three years after the end of the second world war, the drums are beating for a third."⁷⁴ Those beating the war drums were the leaders of both major parties. For Wallace and his progressives, bipartisan agreement represented an existential threat, and his campaign was determined to break the two-party stranglehold on power.

Whereas traditional partisan disidentification can simply point to a specific candidate or a platform tenet on which the bolting movement breaks with their former party, systemic disidentification demands a multi-part response. Systemic disidentification first requires evidence of the existence of a homogenous or uniform system and evidence of that system's corruption. Next, systemic disidentification must establish that working within a system is impossible, before finally offering some alternative outside of the system. In the case of the two-party system, Wallace and his associates argued that a corrupt arrangement existed between the two parties. Bipartisan

74. Progressive Party, "Progressive National Platform," in *Wisconsin Blue Book, 1950* (Madison: The State of Wisconsin, 1950), pg. 519.

agreements constituted evidence of conspiracy to undermine choice for voters and reduce the nation to a single perspective.

Progressives presented the Republican and Democratic Parties as one and the same. The party platform made the case explicitly, noting, “Two sets of candidates compete for votes under the outworn emblems of the old parties. But both represent a single program – a program of monopoly profits through war preparations, lower living standards, and suppression of dissent.”⁷⁵ The contrasting visions of the old and the new became a major staple of Wallace’s rhetoric during the campaign. In speeches, radio and magazine interviews, and even in personal correspondence, Wallace relied on the shorthand phrase “the two old parties” when describing Republicans and Democrats.⁷⁶ While Wallace alleged the manufacturing of partisan differences between Dewey and Truman, at times he suggested that the parties had given up on the illusion of difference altogether. In a September 20th address on *NBC Radio*, Wallace said, “The Democrats

75. Ibid.

76. Henry A. Wallace NBC Radio Address, July 29, 1948, Past Daily, Gordon Skene Sound Collection, <http://pastdaily.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Henry-Wallace-July-29-1948.mp3>; Henry A. Wallace, “Henry A. Wallace Acceptance Speech at Shibe Park, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania July 24,” in *Representative American Speeches 1948-1949 Volume 21*, ed. A. Craig Baird (New York: The H.W. Wilson Company, 1949), 122-138; Wallace Statement to Scholastic Magazine, August 18, 1948, Reel 45, n. 337-338, Henry A. Wallace Correspondence June 1948- March 1949, Henry A. Wallace Collection, University of Iowa Libraries, <http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/wallace/id/43395/rec/45>.

and Republicans no longer even attempt to deceive the people into thinking that there is a difference between them.”⁷⁷

The lack of distinctions between Republicans and Democrats was so central to Progressive identification that it became the foundation for Wallace’s campaign song. The song, written by Oscar Brand and performed by famed folk singer Pete Seger, used the imagery of a merry-go-round on which voters were trapped with no real choice of direction. Using the major party symbols of the donkey and elephant the lyrics read:

The donkey is tired and thin
The elephant thinks he’ll move in
They yell and they fuss, but they ain’t foolin’ us
Cause they’re brothers right under the skin

It’s the same, same merry-go-round
Which one will you ride this year?
The donkey and elephant bob up and down
On the same merry-go-round

The elephant comes from the North
The donkey may come from the South
If you look then you’ll find the donkey’s behind
But they have the same bit in their mouth.⁷⁸

For Wallace, the concept of major political parties having only skin-deep differences extended even beyond the American context. In a message for a British audience,

77. Speech by Henry A. Wallace, National Broadcasting Company, September 20, 1948, MS 312, W. E. B. Du Bois Papers, University of Massachusetts-Amherst, 4.

78. Oscar Brand, “The Same Merry Go-Round,” *Presidential Campaign Songs, 1789-1996*, (Washington D.C, 1999).

Wallace claimed that the Labour Party, Republican Party, and Democratic Party had all essentially become Tories.⁷⁹

Of greatest concern for Progressives was the growing bipartisan agreement on foreign policy. Wallace criticized the recently coined adage “politics stops at the water’s edge.” In an NBC Radio address, he argued that such a perspective could only serve to stifle debate and bring about a uniform support for war.⁸⁰ The bipartisan Marshall Plan, designed to help rebuild Europe in the aftermath of World War II, and the Truman Doctrine of support for democracies threatened by communism drew strong ire from Wallace. He saw Truman as simply acquiescing to conservative views on foreign policy. In another radio address, picked up by national newsreels, Wallace said, “There is no real fight between a Truman and a Republican. Both stand for a policy which can lead to war in our lifetime and make war certain for our children.”⁸¹ Wallace liked to attribute Truman Administration decisions to a select group of Republican and Democratic leaders who he blamed for the emerging uniformity. In a September 20th speech, Wallace explicitly blamed the group for the Cold War, arguing, “But the men of the bipartisan bloc—Dewey, Truman, Dulles and Forrestal—started the cold war.”⁸²

79. Wallace RCA Cable, October 7, 1948, Reel 45, n. 458, Henry A. Wallace Correspondence June 1948- March 1949, Henry A. Wallace Collection, University of Iowa Libraries, <http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/wallace/id/43395/rec/45>.

80. Henry A. Wallace NBC Radio Address, July 29, 1948, Gordon Skene Sound Collection.

81. Film Announcement Henry Wallace for President, January 5, 1948, Associated Press Archive, British Movietone Collection, <http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/0086f6aac93b458a96f8175ff95c9d99>.

82. Speech by Henry A. Wallace, September 20, 1948, W.E.B. Du Bois Papers, 3.

Progressives argued that there was nearly perfect agreement between the two major parties in their ideology of militarism. In a statement to *Scholastic Magazine* in August, Wallace warned: “The Republicans and Democrats want to put our young people under the command of generals.”⁸³ In the same statement, the former vice-president claimed: “The Old Parties would regiment your minds as well as your bodies, teach doctrines of hate and prejudice against other peoples.”⁸⁴ The memory of World War II and the impending risk of World War III were common in Progressive appeals for an end to bipartisanship. While Dewey and Truman placed blame for the risk squarely with the Soviet Union, Wallace criticized American leadership. He told the Peace Publications Fund, “Our government today stands committed to an aggressive bipartisan foreign policy, which has its end result in expenditures for armaments and in the militarization of America’s resources, both physical and human.”⁸⁵ In similar statements, Wallace blasted bipartisan aggression and support for arms expenditures.⁸⁶

While Wallace’s foreign policy focus certainly stood apart from Dewey’s and Truman’s, he also painted the Republicans and Democrats as agreeing on domestic issues. Wallace detailed several agreements between Republicans and Democrats, but he was most vocal on the issue of organized labor. Despite Truman’s veto of the Taft-

83. Wallace Statement to Scholastic Magazine, August 18, 1948, Henry A. Wallace Collection.

84. Ibid.

85. Wallace Statement to the Peace Publications Fund, August 23, 1948, Henry A. Wallace Collection.

86. Letter to the President of the New Mexico Association of Indian Affairs; Wallace Interview with *Future Magazine*, August 23, 1948, Henry A. Wallace Collection.

Hartley Act, Wallace repeatedly accused the incumbent president of supporting the bill, which restricted the powers of labor unions. In letters to the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, the National Railroad Committee, and the Bakery & Confectionary Workers Union in New York, Wallace grouped Republicans and Democrats together and accused them of a joint conspiracy to curtail unions.⁸⁷ In his letter to the National Railroad Labor Committee, Wallace claimed, “Railroad workers living under injunction rule and administration destruction certainly know the devastating effects of bipartisan anti-labor words and actions.”⁸⁸

As the second half of this chapter notes, there was a great deal of polarizing rhetoric between Democrats and Republicans in 1948. To reconcile this apparent partisanship with their portrayal of bipartisan agreement, Progressives suggested that the prevailing partisan sentiments were at least disingenuous but more likely manufactured.

87. Letter from Wallace to the National Railroad Labor Committee, June 12, 1948, Reel 45, n. 71, Henry A. Wallace Correspondence June 1948- March 1949, Henry A. Wallace Collection, University of Iowa Libraries, <http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/wallace/id/43395/rec/45>; Letter to Mr. M. E. Travis, August 11, 1948, Reel 45, n. 266-267, Henry A. Wallace Correspondence June 1948- March 1949, Henry A. Wallace Collection, University of Iowa Libraries, <http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/wallace/id/43395/rec/45>; Wallace Letter to Frank Dutto, September 3, 1948, Reel 45, n. 379, Henry A. Wallace Correspondence June 1948- March 1949, Henry A. Wallace Collection, University of Iowa Libraries, <http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/wallace/id/43395/rec/45>.

88. Letter from Wallace to the National Railroad Labor Committee, June 12, 1948, Henry A. Wallace Collection.

Wallace took aim at Truman's decision to call a special session of Congress to pressure Republicans to vote for popular aid and price control programs. What many in the Democratic Party saw as evidence of Truman's dedication to the New Deal, Wallace presented as a charade. During his NBC Radio address just four days into the special session Wallace claimed:

As a close student of the utterly corrupt Democratic Party machinery, Mr. Truman was completely confident that he could hoodwink millions of Americans with a gesture of calling a special session. This was a coldly calculated maneuver to create the election year impression that there is a real struggle between the two old parties. Nothing would please me more than to find honest reasons for believing that the President wants to fight for progressive measures, but the evidence is all to the contrary.⁸⁹

Wallace repeated the claim on August 5th in a statement at the "People's Lobby" at the Sylvan Theater in Washington D.C. There he accused the president of using liberal language but not following through with concrete action.⁹⁰

Wallace issued regular attacks against Truman and the Democrats but almost never targeted Republicans without targeting Democrats in the same utterance. Even in his July 29th address and in his final statements of the campaign, Wallace openly attacked Dewey but also drew direct parallels between Dewey and the Democrats. Wallace rejected the voting mentality that would require a choice between "the lesser of evils."⁹¹

89. Henry A. Wallace NBC Radio Address, July 29, 1948, Gordon Skene Sound Collection.

90. Statement of Henry A. Wallace to be Given at the "People's Lobby" at the Sylvan Theater, August 5, 1948, 1948, Reel 45, n. 240, Henry A. Wallace Correspondence June 1948- March 1949, Henry A. Wallace Collection, University of Iowa Libraries, <http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/wallace/id/43395/rec/45>.

91. Wallace Letter to Rev. Roy Shikles, October 1948, Reel 45, n. 484, Henry A. Wallace Correspondence June 1948- March 1949, Henry A. Wallace Collection, University of Iowa Libraries,

Neville-Shepard references several instances of this claim in third-party movements across American history, but Wallace made the case that it would be nearly impossible to distinguish between the two major parties.⁹²

Even if the parties were fundamentally similar, systemic disidentification still requires rhetors to justify their decision to work outside the system rather than from within. Progressives needed to demonstrate that the homogeneity of the major parties rose beyond accidental similarities to the level of organized malevolence. According to Wallace and the Progressives, Democrats and Republicans had conspired to subvert the will of the people. In the party platform, the Progressives claimed that they were part of a long tradition of movements who had taken back control following acts of betrayal on the part of political parties.⁹³ Wallace made the claim of disloyalty even more explicit in a September 20th speech when he noted, “How completely the bipartisans have betrayed humanity.”⁹⁴ He further claimed that the major parties had simply chosen to ignore input of the general public. In a radio address answering letters he had received from voters on October 20th, Wallace said, “This is something that the politicians and professional

<http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/wallace/id/43395/rec/45>; Film Announcement Henry Wallace for President, January 5, 1948, British Movietone Collection.

92. Ryan Neville-Shepard, "Triumph in defeat: The Genre of Third Party Presidential Concessions," *Communication Quarterly* 62, no. 2 (2014): 224; Ryan Neville-Shepard, "Presidential Campaign Announcements: A Third-Party variant." *Southern Communication Journal* 79, no. 2 (2014): 139.

93. Progressive Party, "Progressive National Platform," 519.

94. Speech by Henry A. Wallace, September 20, 1948, W.E.B. Du Bois Papers, 3.

speech makers of the two major parties can never understand: that the people have the answers.”⁹⁵

If the major parties had rejected the public will and betrayed the people as Wallace claimed, then it was also incumbent upon Progressives to identify and rectify the cause of this betrayal. It was that underlying cause of the betrayal that Progressives positioned as their impetus for seeking recourse outside of their former party. The following section suggests that the Progressives’ systemic disidentification was grounded in a rhetoric that claimed the major parties had been corrupted by profit motives and the interests of economic and political elites.

Corporate Control

The Progressive platform left no uncertainty in identifying the motives of Republicans and Democrats in Washington, saying, “The root cause of this crisis is Big Business control of our economy and government.”⁹⁶ The two major parties had become of one mind, according to the Progressives, because they served the same power: wealthy business owners. Wallace presented the parties’ willingness to collaborate as a sign that their loyalties were for sale. He wrote in a letter to the Cuban Trade Union: “Truman acted as a true representative of the bipartisan political combination in whose hands the government of our country is. All acts of this political combination are taken in behalf of

95. Wallace Radio Address, October 20, 1948, Gordon Skene Sound Collection.

96. Progressive Party, “Progressive National Platform,” 519.

Wall Street.”⁹⁷ Wallace frequently referred to the major parties as either “servants” or “puppets” of business.⁹⁸ The Progressives further argued that the only major difference between the two parties was the Republicans’ willingness to admit their subservience to business where, as the Progressive platform claimed, “the Democratic platform attempts to conceal it.”⁹⁹

Stanley Deetz suggests that in the modern era, corporate influence has permeated government decision making and other facets of everyday life in a way that is corrosive to our institutions and our general wellbeing.¹⁰⁰ Deetz points to corporate colonization as a decidedly modern phenomenon.¹⁰¹ It is unclear how the party machines and explicit bribery of the late 19th century fit with Deetz’s model, but certainly Wallace’s rhetoric fits the mold of a rhetor attempting to break from what is described as corporate colonization. In the present, Deetz alleges that fear of regulation and collectivism dictate much of modern politics, but Wallace observes similar phenomena even in the immediate aftermath of the New Deal.

97. Henry A. Wallace Reply to Questionnaire from CTC, July 2, 1948, 1948, Reel 45, n. 131-133, Henry A. Wallace Correspondence June 1948- March 1949, Henry A. Wallace Collection, University of Iowa Libraries, <http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/wallace/id/43395/rec/45>.

98. Henry A. Wallace NBC Radio Address, July 29, 1948, Gordon Skene Sound Collection; Progressive Party, “Progressive National Platform,” 519.

99. Progressive Party, “Progressive National Platform,” 521.

100. Stanley Deetz, *Democracy in an Age of Corporate Colonization: Developments in Communication and the Politics of Everyday Life*. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992).

101. *Ibid.*, 17.

Wallace contended that the influence of business in politics had infiltrated not only the major parties but democracy itself. In this formulation, corporations and the general public were locked in a battle over their ability to influence government, and the people were losing. The Progressive Party platform described American industry as a machine created by the people for the betterment of society, but then seized by the wealthy as a tool for personal enrichment.¹⁰² In an op-ed in *Uncensored Magazine*, Wallace promoted the idea that the Progressive Party was “the people’s party” and invited the public to take part in party platform conventions to share their input.¹⁰³ He framed the campaign as a David and Goliath response to the overarching power of business. In his acceptance speech at the Progressive Party convention, he told the delegates, “We ally ourselves to stand against the kings of privilege who own the old parties—the corrupted parties.”¹⁰⁴ The parties, Wallace suggested, had lost their ability to function as agents of change and had instead become the agency of a select economic elite.

Wallace also argued that these elite business owners were exploiting government and the two-party system for the purpose of preserving their monopolies. In a July 29th NBC Radio broadcast, Wallace claimed “The bipartisan Congress and the bipartisan administration will not tackle the fundamental problems of monopoly control of our

102. Progressive Party, “Progressive National Platform,” 519.

103. Henry A. Wallace, “Greetings from Wallace,” *Uncensored*, July 1948, <http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/wallace/id/43395/rec/45>.

104. Wallace, “Henry A. Wallace Acceptance Speech,” 128.

economy, because old parties-both of them-are the servants of monopoly.”¹⁰⁵ In the same broadcast, Wallace accused Truman of surrounding himself with Wall Street elitists determined to break down New Deal progress. In an extended list, he outlined all the former business leaders serving in government positions appointed by Truman. Wallace described these leaders as “not evil men,” instead, he said, “they are unfitted by their personal interest to hold the key administrative posts in a government that should be of the people, by the people, and for the people.”¹⁰⁶ Wallace asserted that the collective power of the public was the only solution to rising corporate control. In his letter to the Cuban Trade Union, he wrote, “The American people must unite to throw off monopoly’s grip on our government.”¹⁰⁷ The only available mechanism for unification, from Wallace’s perspective, was the newly formed Progressive Party.

As motivation for collective action, Wallace turned to one of the issues of greatest societal concern in 1948: the issue of rising prices. Writing to the Child Care Parent’s Association, Wallace said, “The delivery of our economy into the hands of profiteering monopolies and Wall Street speculators by the Republican and Democratic parties threatens us with even deeper inflation.”¹⁰⁸ Wallace called inflation “monopoly made”

105. Henry A. Wallace NBC Radio Address, July 29, 1948, Gordon Skene Sound Collection.

106. Ibid.

107. Henry A. Wallace Reply to Questionnaire from CTC, July 2, 1948, Henry A. Wallace Collection.

108. Wallace Letter to Edyth Lutzker, July 2, 1948, Reel 45, n. 132-144, Henry A. Wallace Correspondence June 1948- March 1949, Henry A. Wallace Collection, University of Iowa Libraries, <http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/wallace/id/43395/rec/45>.

and tied it to the same actors who were driving Cold War animosity.¹⁰⁹ In a radio address on September 27th, he presented a more sinister depiction of the relationship between big business and inflation, saying, “Yes, the men of monopoly wanted inflation. They planned for inflation, and they got inflation.”¹¹⁰ For the Progressives, both Republicans and Democrats were subservient to business, and business maintained its monopolistic hold on power by forcing the public to pay increasingly higher prices for goods.

Disidentification is separated from traditional antithesis because the rhetor or rhetors were recently part of the organization or system against which their attacks are levied. Disidentification requires the presentation of some shift either on the part of the rhetor or on the part of the organization from which they have retreated. The following section describes how Wallace and Progressives chronicled the shift that led to their disidentification. Their position was tied explicitly to the memory of Franklin Roosevelt and the late president’s death.

The Death of a President and the Death of a Party

Public memory of the Democratic Party of the past played an important role in the rhetoric of disidentification in 1948, just as it had in 1884. The party convention, party platform, and Wallace’s nomination acceptance address were particularly filled with the language of public memory. Wallace pointed to several party leaders from across American history to make the case that something had changed with the selection of Harry Truman as the Democratic leader. In his acceptance address, Wallace discussed

109. Henry A. Wallace Radio Address, September 27, 1948, Past Daily, Gordon Skene Sound Collection, <https://pastdaily.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Henry-Wallace-Sept.-27-1948.mp3>.

110. Ibid.

Thomas Jefferson as the founder of the Democratic Party and suggested that Jefferson's impulse toward freedom and independence had been destroyed by Truman and the influence of corporations. Invoking the scene, he told the audience at the convention, "The party Jefferson founded a hundred and fifty years ago was buried here in Philadelphia last week."¹¹¹ Jefferson was not alone as a source of inspiration from the past for the Progressives.

The party platform further expanded the list of forebears of their cause, noting, "We are the political heirs of Jefferson, Jackson, and Lincoln—of Frederick Douglas[s], Altgeld and Debs—of 'Fighting Bob' La Follette, George Norris, and Franklin Roosevelt."¹¹² Public memory in the Democratic Party has long been associated with the populism of its more frequently cited founder Andrew Jackson; and late 19th century Democratic leader John Peter Altgeld was a logical choice to represent the Progressive Party's position as a left wing intraparty movement. But the list in the platform also contained the names of ardent Republicans Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass as a suggestion that the Progressives may also be heirs to a portion of the Republican legacy. In his acceptance address, Wallace further expounded on the notion of the new party's Republican inheritance, saying:

The party of a Lincoln has been reduced to the party of a Dewey. But we here tonight, we of the Progressive Party, we here dedicate ourselves to the complete fulfillment of Lincoln's promise; we consecrate ourselves to a second emancipation; an emancipation that will achieve for the Negro and all Americans of every race, creed, and national origin a full, free, and complete citizenship everywhere in these United States.¹¹³

111. Wallace, "Henry A. Wallace Acceptance Speech," 128.

112. Progressive Party, "Progressive National Platform," 519.

113. Wallace, "Henry A. Wallace Acceptance Speech," 128.

The Progressives also regularly invoked the memory of other factionalist or third-party movements. Specifically, the party platform mentioned Robert La Follette, who had used the same Progressive Party moniker for his presidential run in 1924 in which he carried his home state of Wisconsin and secured over 15% of the vote nationally.¹¹⁴

A diverse group of leaders from across partisan identities featured in Progressive rhetoric, but Wallace's movement was inseparable from its veneration of Franklin Roosevelt and its attempts to reclaim his legacy through their new party. Wallace opened his acceptance address in Philadelphia by invoking the memory of his own nomination speech on behalf of Franklin Roosevelt four years earlier.¹¹⁵ Roosevelt was cast rhetorically in opposition to the corporate backers that Progressives accused of unlimited political power under the Truman administration. Wallace argued that Roosevelt had been persecuted just as the Progressive Party was being persecuted. In his acceptance address, Wallace went on to say, "Franklin Roosevelt did not fear; he reveled in the names hurled by those who feared the shape of his vision."¹¹⁶ The Progressive Party platform quoted or mentioned Roosevelt more than twice as frequently as the Democratic Party Platform.¹¹⁷ The platform spoke of a "return to the purpose of Roosevelt," a realization "of Franklin Roosevelt's idea," a "strengthening of Franklin Roosevelt's

114. David Paul Thelen, *Robert M. La Follette and the Insurgent Spirit* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press), 179-192.

115. *Ibid.*, 122.

116. *Ibid.*, 129.

117. Progressive Party, "Progressive National Platform," 519-537.

good-neighbor policy,” among others.¹¹⁸ During a September 20th radio address, Wallace spoke about the possibility for cooperation with the Soviet Union and asked the listening audience: “Was it merely a wild dream in Franklin Roosevelt’s mind? Was he as they try to tell us now, a foolish visionary?”¹¹⁹ Progressives suggested that something had changed in Roosevelt’s Party. The president had died, and his party had died with him.

In his acceptance address, Wallace eulogized the late president under whom he had served. After reminding the audience of his nomination speech at the Democratic Convention four years earlier, Wallace recalled, “Two years later the war was over, and Franklin Roosevelt was dead. And what followed was the great betrayal.”¹²⁰ For Wallace, Roosevelt’s death marked a dramatic turning point in the history of the Democratic Party. In the same speech Wallace said, “In Hyde Park they buried our President and in Washington they buried our dreams.”¹²¹ Progressives argued that Roosevelt was the dam holding back the flood of corporate influence in American politics and that his death had opened the floodgates.¹²² According to Wallace, Truman was singlehandedly responsible for reopening government to corporate influence. In a September 27th radio address Wallace said, “And when Roosevelt died, they saw their opportunity and they moved in. They moved in on Harry Truman, and he welcomed them. The representatives of men of

118. *Ibid.*, 524-526.

119. Speech by Henry A. Wallace, September 20, 1948, W.E.B. Du Bois Papers, 4.

120. Henry A. Wallace, “Henry A. Wallace Acceptance Speech,” 123.

121. *Ibid.*, 124.

122. Speech by Henry A. Wallace, September 20, 1948, W.E.B. Du Bois Papers.

greed were his first visitors after FDR's death."¹²³ This disputed memory of Roosevelt would become a central tool for partisan disidentification among the Progressives, as well as a campaign tool for Truman.

Wallace not only built his framing of the turning point in the Democratic Party around Roosevelt's death, but also characterized the business leaders allowed to retake control of government as the ghosts of the corrupt government Roosevelt believed he had killed. In multiple letters and address, Wallace referred to these leaders as "the ghosts of the Great Depression."¹²⁴ He specifically mentioned Hoover, but also a range of wealthy aristocratic elites who were haunting politics in the aftermath of 1945.

Progressives argued that the specter of the Depression had succeeded in its mission to destroy the party built by Roosevelt. Wallace and his associates connected the death of Roosevelt directly to the death of the Democratic Party. Again, both parties were to blame. On *NBC Radio* in New York, Wallace charged the two major parties with intentionally attacking Roosevelt's legacy. With his typical plainspoken conviction, Wallace explained, "To reverse our foreign policy, both Republicans and Democrats had to break down the memory of FDR."¹²⁵ Wallace claimed that Roosevelt's true supporters had been driven out of the White House and that Roosevelt's views on foreign and domestic politics were overturned. If supporters of the man Progressives placed at the center of Democratic identity were no longer welcome in party politics, then the party

123. Henry A. Wallace Radio Address, September 27, 1948, Gordon Skene Sound Collection.

124. Speech by Henry A. Wallace, September 20, 1948, W.E.B. Du Bois Papers, 2; Wallace, "Henry A. Wallace Acceptance Speech," 124.

125. Speech by Henry A. Wallace, September 20, 1948, W.E.B. Du Bois Papers, 3.

must have transformed beyond repair. In a statement to the “People’s Lobby” at the Sylvan Theater in Washington D.C., Wallace referred to Truman’s “dying party.”¹²⁶ Appropriately, Wallace suggested that the party had died when it had made death, or war, a central focus of its politics. Wallace began referring to the Republican and Democratic Parties as “graveyard parties.”¹²⁷ In *The New Republic*, a magazine for which Wallace had previously served as editor, the candidate made the case even more explicitly, saying “the bi-party stands for death.”¹²⁸ But Wallace’s claim was not without a sense of hope. The newly formed party opened the possibility of recapturing the spirit of Roosevelt and the Democratic Party he had created. Progressives argued that the Democratic label could be abandoned but the ideals of the party could be reborn through Roosevelt’s former vice president.

A Resurrection

The newness of Wallace’s Progressive Party played a central role in the campaign’s partisan rhetoric. In articles, letters, speeches, and radio addresses, Wallace referred to the Progressive Party as “the New Party.”¹²⁹ He often contrasted the oldness

126. Statement of Henry A. Wallace to be Given at the “People’s Lobby” at the Sylvan Theater, August 5, 1948, Henry A. Wallace Collection.

127. Wallace, “Henry A. Wallace Acceptance Speech,” 130-131.

128. Henry A. Wallace Article for Submission to *New Republic*, June 27, 1948, Reel 45, n. 116-119, Henry A. Wallace Correspondence June 1948- March 1949, Henry A. Wallace Collection, University of Iowa Libraries, <http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/wallace/id/43395/rec/45>, 4.

129. Speech by Henry A. Wallace, September 20, 1948, W.E.B. Du Bois Papers, 3; Wallace, “Greeting from Wallace,” 1; Wallace, “Henry A. Wallace Acceptance Speech,” 129; Henry A. Wallace Article for Submission to *New Republic*, June 27, 1948, Henry A. Wallace Collection; Wallace Letter to

of the Republicans and Democrats with the Progressives, who were a new party for a modern age. Wallace highlighted the enthusiasm of young people and expressed in a letter to Irvin R. Kuenzli, the head of the American Federation of Teachers, his belief, “that young people are the nation’s most valuable assets.”¹³⁰ The party framed their opposition to the Cold War as essential to the wellbeing of America’s youth.

Newness and youthful energy became important components of organizational identity for the Progressives. In his acceptance speech, Wallace claimed that the party embodied the American spirit of conquering new frontiers:

Though we have reached the end of the old trails to the West; a new wilderness rises before us. The wilderness of poverty and sickness and fear. Once again America has need of frontiersmen. A new frontier awaits us no longer west to the Pacific but forward across the wilderness of poverty, and sickness, and fear. We move, as the Pilgrim ships moved, as the Conestoga wagons moved, not ahead of our time, but in the very tide. And always before us, the bright star, the dream of the promised land, of what this nation might be.¹³¹

Frank Dutto, September 3, 1948, Henry A. Wallace Collection; Statement by Henry A. Wallace for the Power Record of the Presidential Candidates National Popular Government League Bulletin, June 12, 1948, Reel 45, n. 66, Henry A. Wallace Correspondence June 1948- March 1949, Henry A. Wallace Collection, University of Iowa Libraries, <http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/wallace/id/43395/rec/45>; Letter from Wallace to the United Furniture Workers of America, June 10, 1948, Reel 45, n. 36, Henry A. Wallace Correspondence June 1948- March 1949, Henry A. Wallace Collection, University of Iowa Libraries, <http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/wallace/id/43395/rec/45>.

130. Wallace Letter to Irvin R. Kuenzli, September 28, 1948, Reel 45, n. 418, Henry A. Wallace Correspondence June 1948- March 1949, Henry A. Wallace Collection, University of Iowa Libraries, <http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/wallace/id/43395/rec/45>.

131. Wallace, “Henry A. Wallace Acceptance Speech,” 130.

In invoking American history as a call for reaching new heights, Wallace highlighted the tensions of the new party drawing identification from partisan movements of the past. The new party borrowed elements of identification from Republican, Democratic, and Independent factions and suggested that these movements had been resurrected in the Progressive Party.

Wallace eagerly claimed the mantel of Jefferson, saying: “the spirit which animated that party in the days of Jefferson has been captured anew.”¹³² He also claimed the mantel to the exclusion of the other parties, noting, “Only those who take the spirit of Jefferson and Lincoln and apply it to the present world situation can bring the peace and security which will end fear and unleash creative force beyond the power of man to imagine.”¹³³ Despite forming a new party label, Progressives drew elements of identification from the major-parties. Wallace told the party faithful, “We of the Progressive Party must and will carry on where Roosevelt and Norris, and LaGuardia left off.”¹³⁴ In an era of what Progressives saw as a fundamentally corrupt politics, their only recourse was to reject the system altogether and start anew with a party label of their own.

Progressives were not alone in their challenge of Truman. White Southerners had also become increasingly frustrated with the Truman administration over the president’s support for civil rights. Progressives and Dixiecrats represented diametrically opposed interest groups in the Democratic coalition, but they utilized some similar rhetorical

132. *Ibid.*, 128.

133. *Ibid.*

134. *Ibid.*, 129.

strategies, including a grouping together of the major party candidates. Still, there were important distinctions. For example, while the rhetoric of the Progressives was steeped in a sense of new frontiers, the rhetoric of Dixiecrats was inextricably tied to tradition, race, and regionalism. The next section details the approach to disidentification taken by the Dixiecrats, including some of the major distinctions between their movement and the Progressives.

The Rhetoric of the Dixiecrats

The position of the Dixiecrats was inseparably tied to the issue of civil rights. Thurmond and other leaders of the factionalist movement often mocked the labeling of Truman's plan, referring to it as the "so-called civil rights program" or the "mis-named civil rights program."¹³⁵ Instead, the Dixiecrats built their campaign around fear of centralization and claims of state sovereignty in response to the national push for legal protections against racism.¹³⁶ In nearly every stump speech or radio address, Thurmond described the four policies to which the Dixiecrats objected most vehemently: anti-

135. Thurmond Address Accepting the States' Rights Democratic Nomination as President of the United States, August 11, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection; Thurmond Address at the Watermelon Festival, Cherryville, North Carolina, July 31, 1948, mss 100, 596, Strom Thurmond Collection, Clemson University, <https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/strom/596>.

136. Thurmond Statement in Reply to Statement of Chairman J. Howard McGrath of the National Democratic Committee, March 14, 1948, mss 100, 299, Strom Thurmond Collection, Clemson University, <https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/strom/299>; Civil Rights and States' Rights Statement by the Southern Governors Committee, February 23, 1948, mss 100, 295, Strom Thurmond Collection, Clemson University, <https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/strom/295>.

lynching laws, anti-poll tax laws, anti-segregation laws, and the Fair Employment Practice Committee (FEPC).¹³⁷

Thurmond framed lynching as a problem of the distant past and argued that there was universal agreement that lynching was a crime. The South Carolina governor further denied allegations of bias in state and local courts and suggested that the federal government was merely attempting to seize control from the state judiciary in order to establish a “police state.”¹³⁸ He argued that legislation outlawing poll-taxes would undermine the ability of people to set their own election laws and therefore their ability to select their own representatives.¹³⁹ Thurmond presented the issue of segregation as a regional question, arguing that even if desegregation was effective in other parts of the country, it would not work in the South.¹⁴⁰ The candidate reserved his greatest rhetorical fire for the FEPC, which outlawed hiring discrimination. Thurmond charged that the policy was an attempt by communists to seize control of private industry and recounted to

137. Civil Rights and States’ Rights, February 23, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection.

138. Thurmond Address Accepting the States’ Rights Democratic Nomination as President of the United States, August 11, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection; Thurmond Address at Florida State Labor Day Celebration, Wildwood, Florida, September 6, 1948, mss 100, 598, Strom Thurmond Collection, Clemson University, <https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/strom/598>; Thurmond Address at the Watermelon Festival, Cherryville, North Carolina, July 31, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection.

139. Civil Rights and States’ Rights, February 23, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection.

140. Thurmond Address at West Palm Beach, Florida, October 18, 1948, mss 100, 604, Strom Thurmond Collection, Clemson University, <https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/strom/604>.

audiences all of the questions that would be banned in interviews if the committee was made permanent.¹⁴¹

As previously noted, Dixiecrats presented themselves as the true Democratic party in the South. Their approach was dramatically different than Wallace's. Like Wallace, they argued that both parties were becoming increasingly similar, but only on the issue of civil rights. They did not hope, as Wallace did, that the election of 1948 would put an end to the two-party system. Instead, they hoped that the House of Representatives would select their candidate over Truman, giving legitimacy to their claim on the Democratic Party label.¹⁴² Conflict over the right to call one's party Democratic shaped the rhetoric of identification for Dixiecrats in 1948, but these questions of identification were secondary to a pronounced rhetoric of legitimacy. In the section that follows, I begin by describing the rhetoric of legitimacy in Dixiecrat rhetoric, outlining the multifaced claims that they were the true Democrats and Truman was merely a usurper. I then return to the question of identity and cross-pressures, to demonstrate how race and regionalism intersected with partisan identity in 1948.

The Legitimate Party

Dowling and Pfeffer argue that legitimacy concerns the relationship between internal and external norms and values. The authors explain: "Organizations seek to establish congruence between the social values associated with or implied by their activities and the norms of acceptable behavior in the larger social system of which they

141. Thurmond Address at Texarkana, Texas, October 27, 1948, mss 100, 601 Strom Thurmond Collection, Clemson University, <https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/strom/601>.

142. States' Rights, October 1, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection, 2.

are a part. Insofar as these two value systems are congruent we can speak of organizational legitimacy.”¹⁴³ According to Dowling and Pfeffer, one of the mechanisms by which these norms and values are transformed is competition with other organizations.¹⁴⁴

Because of the zero-sum nature of electoral politics, competition is grounded in an assumption of exclusivity for partisan legitimacy. Candidates and parties have a vested interest in establishing their legitimacy to the exclusion of other parties. In intraparty politics, legitimacy is often the determinant of access to the party label and therefore becomes a central element in the question of identification. The party must not only be externally legitimized relative to the opposing party, but must also be seen as conforming to the norms and values of the broader political ideology or interest groups it claims to represent. Farrell discusses political party nominating conventions as “legitimation rituals.”¹⁴⁵ While Farrell establishes that conventions can serve the purpose of legitimating a candidate or a party, legitimation extends well beyond conventions. The ongoing process of legitimation is especially pronounced in election years where the party label is under pressure from both internal and external forces.

Thurmond and the Dixiecrats challenged the legitimacy of the Democratic Party under Truman. They suggested that Truman had abandoned the historical legacy and

143. John Dowling and Jeffrey Pfeffer, “Organizational Legitimacy: Social Values and Organizational Behavior,” *The Pacific Sociological Review* 18, no. 1 (1975): 122.

144. *Ibid.* 125

145. Farrell Thomas B. Farrell, “Political Conventions as Legitimation Ritual,” *Communication Monographs* 45, no. 4 (1978): 293-305.

ideological identifiers of the party. They also challenged the Democratic Party on the basis that its norms and values were incongruous with the broader societal norms established by the Constitution and the economic system of the United States. In each case, these norms were presented as alternative sources of legitimacy, in contrast with the traditional source of partisan legitimacy which is derived from the outcome of a convention or primary campaign.

Like the Mugwumps and Progressives, the Dixiecrats looked to history for signs of their claim to be the legitimate heirs of the party. In the same way that Wallace exalted Jefferson as a party leader, Thurmond and the Dixiecrats pointed to the author of the Declaration of Independence as a sign of their fidelity to party ideals. Where Wallace only highlighted Jefferson's vague belief in liberty, Thurmond pointed to more specific beliefs of Jefferson that conformed to the Dixiecrats' worldview. In a rare radio broadcast in Europe, Thurmond downplayed the issue of race and strayed from his traditional stump speech opposing segregation.¹⁴⁶ Instead, Thurmond outlined two visions of American democracy: the Jeffersonian vision and, what is not explicitly labeled as such but could be presumed to be, the Hamiltonian vision.¹⁴⁷ Thurmond told European listeners that he was a defender of Jeffersonian Democracy and only hoped to see power returned to the individual states and communities. Dixiecrats viewed themselves as continuing the mission of Jefferson. In the party's declaration of principles in July, they borrowed

146. States' Rights 1948 October 30 Thurmond Address for Broadcast Overseas, From WURL Boston October 13, 1948, mss 100, 429, Strom Thurmond Collection, Clemson University, <https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/strom/429>.

147. Ibid.

directly from Jefferson's language in the Declaration of Independence, accusing Democratic leaders of "a long train of abuses and usurpations."¹⁴⁸

Thurmond presented both the Jeffersonian vision of decentralization and Jacksonian populism as signs that the Dixiecrats were more in line with the history of the Democratic Party than Truman and his followers.¹⁴⁹ Thurmond's rhetoric avoided explicit claims regarding Jefferson and Jackson's views on race, but discussing the views of these two slave-owning presidents on civil rights necessarily evoked collective memory of an American past tied to white supremacy. Dixiecrats also invoked Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt, although their veneration of Roosevelt paled in comparison to Wallace and the Progressives. Thurmond also veered away from mid-nineteenth century Democrats whose ideas had come to be connected with the Confederacy in public consciousness.

The heritage of these Democrats from which Thurmond claimed an inheritance was an ideological one. All of these leaders, Thurmond suggested, had agreed with an underlying principle of subsidiarity and decentralization, especially in the area of states'

148. States' Rights Democratic Party Declaration of Principles. 1948 July 17. Place: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, July 17, 1948, mss 100, 355, Strom Thurmond Collection, Clemson University, <https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/strom/355>.

149. Thurmond Statement On Appealing to President Truman to Withdraw as a Candidate for the Democratic Nomination for President of the United States, January 1, 1948, mss 100, 556, Strom Thurmond Collection, Clemson University, <https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/strom/556>; Civil Rights and States' Rights, February 23, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection; States' Rights Democratic Party Declaration of Principles, July 17, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection.

rights. As Thurmond repeatedly observed, the Democratic Party platform had long expressed support for the issue of states' rights, but the 1948 convention broke that trend. At the Watermelon Festival in Cherryville, North Carolina Thurmond said: "The platform adopted by the so-called Democrats at Philadelphia marks the first time the Democrats have not pledged themselves to protect the rights of states in 108 years."¹⁵⁰ In fact, the platform for the Democratic Party had not explicitly mentioned the rights of states since the election of 1928; and the 1948 platform called for independence of states in the area of education, but it was a claim that Thurmond would repeat often during the campaign.¹⁵¹

For Thurmond, adherence to a doctrine of states' rights was inseparable from what it meant to be a Democrat. Various statements and speeches during the campaign accused Truman and the national Democratic Party of having "deserted the principles of government upon which the Democratic party was founded."¹⁵² At other times, Thurmond used the terminology of the "scrapping," "selling," or "debasing" of party principles.¹⁵³ From the Dixiecrats' perspective, those who did not respect states' rights

150. Thurmond Address at the Watermelon Festival, Cherryville, North Carolina, July 31, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection, 5.

151. The American Presidency Project, "National Political Party Platforms," *University of California Santa Barbara*, last modified 2018, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/presidential-documents-archive-guidebook/national-political-party-platforms>.

152. Civil Rights and States' Rights, February 23, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection.

153. Thurmond Address at West Palm Beach, Florida, October 18, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection.; Thurmond Address at Florida State Labor Day Celebration, Wildwood, Florida, September 6,

could not claim the Democratic Party label for themselves, because they had rejected its most fundamental precept.

When Democratic Chairman Howard McGrath accused Thurmond of abandoning the party, Thurmond fired back, saying that it was McGrath who had abandoned the party by abandoning the principle of states' rights.¹⁵⁴ In another statement in October, Thurmond applied his attack on McGrath more broadly, saying: "We are not bolters; the bolters are those who have betrayed the Party's principles."¹⁵⁵ Thurmond drew a stark distinction between party leaders, who he argued were temporary, and principles like states' rights, which he presented as timeless.¹⁵⁶ This temporary leadership maintained fleeting control, and in the Dixiecrats' framing, they were usurpers who had seized the power from true Democrats: "The Democratic Party belongs to the people who make it up. It does not belong to the temporary national leadership. That leadership has 'kidnapped' the Party. The Democrats of the South have repudiated that leadership and

1948, Strom Thurmond Collection; Thurmond Address at Texarkana, Texas, October 27, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection.

154. Thurmond Statement in Response to Questions on Remarks of National Democratic Chairman J. Howard McGrath, September 2, 1948, mss 100, 575, Strom Thurmond Collection, Clemson University, <https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/strom/575>.

155. Thurmond Statement Concerning Repudiation of Democratic National Leadership, September 3, 1948, mss 100, 578 Strom Thurmond Collection, Clemson University, <https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/strom/578>.

156. States' Rights Democratic Party Declaration of Principles, July 17, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection; Thurmond Statement Concerning Repudiation of Democratic National Leadership, September 3, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection.

are fighting to return the Party to its traditional principles.”¹⁵⁷ Truman, McGrath, and others were usurping leadership out of what Thurmond called a “lust for power.”¹⁵⁸ Throughout the campaign, Thurmond repeated his belief that power, and not commitment, was the primary motivating factor for Truman.¹⁵⁹

Thurmond further challenged the legitimacy of Truman on the basis that nothing distinguished him from Dewey or Wallace on the issue of civil rights. If the Democratic Party did not present an alternative view on the issue, then their position could not be a Democratic one. In his stump speeches, Thurmond claimed that Truman had bought on to Dewey’s FEPC program and now agreed with the other candidates on integrating the military.¹⁶⁰ In his August 11th address accepting the nomination, Thurmond remarked, “How beautiful it is for such brethren -Dewey, Truman and Wallace- to dwell together in unity!”¹⁶¹ Where Wallace relied on bipartisan agreement as evidence of a corrupt system,

157. Thurmond Statement Concerning Repudiation of Democratic National Leadership, September 3, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection.

158. Thurmond Address at the Watermelon Festival, Cherryville, North Carolina, July 31, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection.

159. States’ Rights Democratic Party Declaration of Principles, July 17, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection; Thurmond Address at Jacksonville, Florida, October 16, 1948, mss 100, 600, Strom Thurmond Collection, Clemson University, <https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/strom/600>.

160. Thurmond Address at Florida State Labor Day Celebration, Wildwood, Florida, September 6, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection; Thurmond Address Accepting the States’ Rights Democratic Nomination as President of the United States, August 11, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection.

161. Thurmond Address Accepting the States’ Rights Democratic Nomination as President of the United States, August 11, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection.

Thurmond pointed to agreements between the other parties as evidence that the real Democratic Party was the party of the South.

Beyond the incongruence between Truman's Democratic Party and the Democratic Party of history, Thurmond suggested two other dominant areas in which broader social norms came into conflict with the actions of Truman's Democratic Party. First, Thurmond argued that Truman's civil rights policies conflicted with the Constitution, which is the foundation for norms in American government. Second, Thurmond asserted that Truman had abandoned an American perspective altogether and joined with the communists, agitators, and subversives.

The activities of American governmental actors are subject to an additional layer of legitimacy derived from the Constitution. The relationship between laws and norms or values is complex. As Dowling and Pfeffer note, "Though in a democratic polity laws are likely to be correlated with societal norms and values, their correlations are less than perfect."¹⁶² The authors suggest that changes in values and norms tend to be more dynamic than changes in the law.¹⁶³ This is certainly the case with the Constitution, which requires an onerous system of ratification for all amendments. However, where changes in norms and values do not align with laws, laws can still be pointed to as powerful sources of legitimacy. Constitutions uniquely afford legitimacy to governmental actors because they provide the legal foundation for the polity.

162. Dowling and Pfeffer, "Organizational Legitimacy: Social Values and Organizational Behavior," 128.

163. *Ibid.*

Thurmond's attacks on Truman in 1948 used the Constitution as a major source for challenging the party's legitimacy. The persistent claim from Dixiecrats was that the civil rights plank of the Party platform pledged to violate the Constitution. In addresses throughout the campaign, Thurmond accused Truman of attempting to "scuttle," "trample," or "make a shambles of," the Constitution.¹⁶⁴ Thurmond also routinely grouped Republicans, Democrats, and Progressives together in challenging the constitutional legitimacy of their approaches.¹⁶⁵ During the campaign, Henry Wallace embarked on an extensive speaking tour in the American South, where he was extremely unpopular.¹⁶⁶ After Southern audiences began to hurl threats and rotten food at the candidate, Thurmond issued a statement advocating that Wallace, Dewey, and Truman be granted their constitutional protections in the South, while maintaining that these other candidates hoped to violate the Constitution if elected. He told the people of South Carolina regarding the other candidates: "I, as Governor of the State, call upon the people

164. Thurmond Statement on President Truman's Visit to North Carolina, October 20, 1948, mss 100, 414, Strom Thurmond Collection, Clemson University, <https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/strom/414>; Thurmond Address at the Watermelon Festival, Cherryville, North Carolina, July 31, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection; Thurmond Address Accepting the States' Rights Democratic Nomination as President of the United States, August 11, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection.

165. Thurmond Address at Florida State Labor Day Celebration, Wildwood, Florida, September 6, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection; Thurmond Address Accepting the States' Rights Democratic Nomination as President of the United States, August 11, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection; Thurmond Address at the Watermelon Festival, Cherryville, North Carolina, July 31, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection.

166. Devine, Henry Wallace's 1948 Presidential Campaign, 249.

to see to it that their [the other candidates'] rights under the Constitution shall be fully respected, although they may advocate a program we think is wholly unconstitutional and un-American, and contrary to the best interests of our people."¹⁶⁷ According to Thurmond, the text of the Constitution delegitimized the national Democratic Party and left the Dixiecrats standing alone as the country's sole legitimate partisan organization.

The Dixiecrats did not present the current leadership of the Democratic Party as merely mistaken on issues of civil rights or constitutionality. Instead, they accused the Democrats of being both fascists and communists. Thurmond and his associates likened Democratic leaders to the tyrants and dictators of the 20th century. Dixiecrat Vice Presidential nominee Fielding Wright alleged that "pressure groups" were seeking to establish a dictatorship and therefore hoped to undermine the constitution.¹⁶⁸ Thurmond himself repeatedly and ironically compared the Democrats to Adolph Hitler and Benito Mussolini because of the party's support for civil rights.¹⁶⁹ One of Thurmond's most consistent allegations against Truman was that Truman hoped to establish a police-state

167. Thurmond Statement Concerning Respect for the Constitutional Rights of Candidates for President of the United States While Speaking in the South, August 31, 1948, mss 100, 574 Strom Thurmond Collection, Clemson University, <https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/strom/574>.

168. Fielding Wright Address Accepting the States' Rights Democratic Nomination as Vice President of the United States, August 11, 1948, mss 100, 366, Strom Thurmond Collection, Clemson University, <https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/strom/366>.

169. Thurmond Address at West Palm Beach, Florida, October 18, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection; Thurmond Address at Florida State Labor Day Celebration, Wildwood, Florida, September 6, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection; Thurmond Address at Jacksonville, Florida, October 16, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection.

to enforce civil rights laws.¹⁷⁰ The inflammatory comparisons to fascists were especially pointed only three years after Victory Day in Europe.

In addition to allegations of fascism, Thurmond attempted to place Democratic actions outside of the norms and values of society by labeling the Democratic leaders communists, agitators, and subversives. In a fiery speech in Jacksonville, Florida, in October, Thurmond said: “Every vote cast for the States’ Rights Democrats will be a powerful repudiation of those petty politicians who have joined the Reds, the parlor pinks, and the subversives in the Democratic Party.”¹⁷¹ In the same speech, Thurmond referred to Truman’s civil rights plans as “Communistic claptrap.”¹⁷² Thurmond tried to connect the Truman administration with ongoing investigations in the House Un-American Activities Committee, alleging that Truman’s administration and the Democratic Party had been infiltrated by communists. In a statement released in August, Thurmond charged that Truman and other party leaders were “making a desperate effort to hide the extent to which communists and communist sympathizers have honey-

170. Platform of the States’ Rights Democratic Party, August 14, 1948, American Presidency Project; States’ Rights, October 1, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection; Thurmond Address Accepting the States’ Rights Democratic Nomination as President of the United States, August 11, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection; Thurmond Address at Florida State Labor Day Celebration, Wildwood, Florida, September 6, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection; Thurmond Address at Jacksonville, Florida, Strom Thurmond Collection; States’ Rights Democratic Party Declaration of Principles, July 17, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection.

171. Thurmond Address at Jacksonville, Florida, October 16, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection.

172. *Ibid.*, 7.

combed the administration and have dictated its policies.”¹⁷³ Even as Wallace was campaigning against Truman for his hardline stance on the Soviet Union, Thurmond was alleging that Truman and his cabinet were communist sympathizers.

Questions of legitimacy played a prominent role in the rhetoric of the Dixiecrats in 1948. The Dixiecrats expressed a sentiment common among party bolters and party defectors, typically phrased along the lines of, “I did not leave the party. The party left me.” Thurmond also relied on facets of group-identity and challenged shifting geographic and racial cross-pressures within the Democratic coalition. The next section outlines how Thurmond attempted to realign racial and geographic identification with partisan identification.

Identity and Cross-Pressures

Racist rhetoric played a central role in the Dixiecrat movement. Thurmond and his colleagues found their place firmly in what historian Kari Frederickson called, “the gutter of white supremacy.”¹⁷⁴ Though some media outlets of the day praised Thurmond for his avoidance of racially charged language, his rhetoric is replete with transparent racial antagonism and “dog-whistles.”¹⁷⁵ This racist rhetoric was thinly veiled by the language of states’ rights. Though Thurmond attempted to soften his rhetoric on race to make it more palatable to a Northern audience, not all of his fellow Dixiecrats fell in line.

173. Thurmond Statement on President Truman, August 21, 1948, mss 100, 571, Strom Thurmond Collection, Clemson University, <https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/strom/571>.

174. Frederickson, *The Dixiecrat Revolt*, 37.

175. States’ Rights Democratic Party Statement for the Press, July 27, 1948, mss 100, 562, Strom Thurmond Collection, Clemson University, <https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/strom/562>.

The day before the Dixiecrat convention in Birmingham, Mississippi governor and eventual Thurmond running mate Fielding Wright addressed black residents of Mississippi via radio, saying: “If any of you have become so deluded as to want to enter our white schools, patronize our hotels and cafes, enjoy social equality with the whites, then true kindness and sympathy requires me to advise you to make your homes in some other state.”¹⁷⁶ At the convention, delegates waved Confederate battle flags as former Alabama Governor Frank Dixon gave the keynote address. Dixon’s address centered on fear appeals regarding integration and played to the basest instincts of Democratic Party history. In referencing the Democrat’s new civil rights agenda, Dixon proclaimed:

This vicious program means to eliminate all differences, all separation between black and white. It so declares itself, in words. It means to create a great melting pot of the South, with white and Negroes intermingled socially, politically, economically. It means to reduce us to the status of a mongrel, inferior race, mixed in blood, our Anglo-Saxon heritage a mockery; to crush with imprisonment our leadership, and thereby kill our hopes, our aspirations, our future and the future of our children.¹⁷⁷

The vitriolic rhetoric of the Dixiecrat convention illustrates the improbability that the New Deal Coalition had survived throughout Roosevelt’s presidency containing both Dixiecrat bolters and many black workers and Northern civil rights advocates. Those tensions were made manifest by the rhetoric of the 1948 campaign, and that rhetoric on

176. John M. Coski, *The Confederate Battle Flag: America’s Most Embattled Emblem* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005),100.

177. Alabama Historical Quarterly “History in the Making: States Rights Issue Revisited,” *The Alabama Historical Quarterly* 8, no. 1, (1946): 19, https://archive.org/stream/alabamahistorica08mont/alabamahistorica08mont_djvu.txt.

the issue of race would have ripple effects across the next 70 years of Democratic Party politics.

Thurmond's rhetoric of disidentification turned to racial polarization as a justification for rejecting partisan ties and retreating into a different element of group identity. Where Mugwumps and Blaine supporters highlighted internal divisions based on loyalty and morality, the Dixiecrats focused on the elements of identity. A collation-based understanding of political parties often means that when coalitions split, new dividing lines are already evident. In 1948, this spilt exposed the seams of the coalition and supercharged the language of racial animus.

Thurmond avoided much of the same language that characterized the speeches of Fielding Wright and Frank Dixon. Instead, Thurmond relied on the imagery of a powerful and corrupt "minority machine," which he suggested had seized control of the politics of Northern cities and eventually the Democratic Party.¹⁷⁸ He argued that this machine controlled the major-party candidates and alleged that those candidates did not actually believe in civil rights, but were willing to pander to the machine to get elected.¹⁷⁹

Thurmond frequently invoked fear of what he framed as racially-motivated bloc voting.¹⁸⁰ He characterized the votes of black Americans as being for sale at a low price.

178. Thurmond Address at Texarkana, Texas, October 27, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection.

179. Thurmond Address at Texarkana, Texas, October 27, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection; Thurmond Address Accepting the States' Rights Democratic Nomination as President of the United States, August 11, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection; Thurmond Address at Jacksonville, Florida, October 16, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection.

180. States' Rights, October 1, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection.

At an address in Lynchburg, Virginia in October, Thurmond accused the major-party candidates of seeking to violate the Constitution and then claimed: “But the shameful thing about it, is that the three candidates – – Truman, Dewey, and Wallace – – have made these promises and a cheap bid for the bloc of votes of a racial minority.”¹⁸¹

Turning to a trope of white supremacist rhetoric, Thurmond compared these bloc voters to swarms of flies or bees.¹⁸² Throughout the campaign, Thurmond would criticize unity among Northern black voters but praise the same bloc voting among white Southerners.

The Dixiecrat nominee claimed that black voters were anti-democratic and hoped to destroy the American Constitution. An early press release for the campaign referred to “unAmerican minorities.”¹⁸³ The statement set the stage for the campaign rhetoric that was to come. During a speech in Texarkana, Texas, Thurmond said, “And now, by forcing the National Democrats and the Republicans to bargain with them, certain racial groups have forced two once-great political groups to indirectly say they don’t give a hoot for the Constitution.”¹⁸⁴ He further argued that the voters wanted to undo popular elections and undermine the democratic process. In Jacksonville, he told the crowd, “Let

181. States’ Rights, 1948 October 11 Thurmond Address in Lynchburg, Virginia, October 11, 1948, mss 100, 405, Strom Thurmond Collection, Clemson University, <https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/strom/405>.

182. Thurmond Address at the Watermelon Festival, Cherryville, North Carolina, July 31, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection; Thurmond Address at Texarkana, Texas, October 27, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection.

183. States’ Rights Democratic Party Statement on Presidential Campaign Plans, August 1, 1948, mss 100, 564, Strom Thurmond Collection, Clemson University, <https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/strom/564>.

184. Thurmond Address at Texarkana, Texas, October 27, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection.

us remind Truman, Dewey, and Wallace that the American people will be rendered powerless to resist the encroachments of the total state, if their promises to the minority machines are carried out.”¹⁸⁵ Thurmond attempted to make the case during the campaign that advocating equal voting rights and employment protections were masked efforts to destroy democracy.

Dixiecrats also suggested that the civil rights agenda was driven by an underlying selfishness or ignorance based on race. They accused party leaders of attempting to “mollify the selfish minority machine,” and characterized black voters as “bloc voting, ignorant minorities.”¹⁸⁶ Thurmond also warned that civil rights supporters were tricksters, seeking to persuade politicians and white voters to give up their freedoms. In Texas, Thurmond claimed, “Many well-meaning Americans are blinded by the sweet phrases of these human rights agitators. Some have been stricken so blind that they cannot see the dangers beneath the sweet talk.”¹⁸⁷ The “minority machine,” which Thurmond railed against was almost universally presented as having nefarious or malevolent intent.

Underlying Thurmond’s rhetoric of partisan disidentification based on race was a claim of role-reversal, or that black voters hoped to turn the tables and subjugate white people. Thurmond argued that the party, now driven by “minority machines” was attempting to sell them “down the river,” and that racial and religious equality would

185. Thurmond Address at Jacksonville, Florida, October 16, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection.

186. States’ Rights, October 1, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection; Thurmond Address at Jacksonville, Florida, October 16, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection.

187. Thurmond Address at Texarkana, Texas, October 27, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection.

come at the expense of the rights of white people.¹⁸⁸ Using imagery of slavery, Thurmond further implied that white Southerners would become subservient to the will of black Northerners. In North Carolina, Thurmond said:

Therefore, they have chosen the South as a whipping-boy in an effort to gain minority votes. But, my friends, the South would not be worthy of its heritage, if it lay down and took this whipping any longer. The rotten and degenerate political leaders are put on notice that we will no longer submit to such treatment, and that we are going to stand up and fight.¹⁸⁹

During the campaign, Thurmond even borrowed language from the spiritual “We Shall Not Be Moved,” a song inspired by Psalms but having originated with the victims of slavery in the American South.¹⁹⁰ Using this victim framing, the Dixiecrats suggested that the Democratic Party, under the control of nefarious actors, was attempting to seize control of the only mechanism that had preserved Southern freedom: the Democratic Party. Through what King and Anderson label *subversion*, Thurmond relied on racial

188. Thurmond Address at West Palm Beach, Florida, October 18, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection.

189. Thurmond Address at the Watermelon Festival, Cherryville, North Carolina, July 31, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection.

190. States’ Rights, 1948 October 11 Thurmond Address in Lynchburg, Virginia, October 11, 1948, mss 100, 405, Strom Thurmond Collection, Clemson University, <https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/strom/405>; Thurmond Address at West Palm Beach, Florida, October 18, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection; David Spener, *We Shall Not Be Moved/No Nos Moverán: Biography of a Song of Struggle*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2016).

polarization to suggest that fidelity to one's race should supersede questions of partisan identity.¹⁹¹

In addition to questions of race, Dixiecrats exploited other elements of group identity to justify their temporary disidentification from the Democratic label. The most salient of these other categories was geography and pride in Southern regionalism. Dixiecrat rhetoric served to constitute the new party as racially and geographically homogenous, eliminating the cross-cutting cleavages of the New Deal Coalition.

In a 1953 post-mortem of the Dixiecrat movement, political scientist Emile B. Ader wrote, "The whole fabric of southern history had developed a sectional consciousness which should have been very receptive to the appeals of the States' Righters."¹⁹² As subsequent paragraphs will demonstrate, Southern identity played a major role in Dixiecrat rhetoric, but Thurmond publicly claimed that the movement would extend well beyond the South. During an October 1st radio interview in Baltimore, Thurmond was asked regarding the civil rights platform, "Do you believe that all the South is opposed to these measures?" In response, Thurmond said:

Certainly. But it is not only all the South. A majority -- vast majority -- of all Americans. This is not a sectional fight. I wish you could see the mail we get from Pennsylvania, Illinois, New York, and places all over the nation. We are not asking anything for the South -- we are asking that all the people of America be allowed to keep their rights to govern themselves in their own states and their own communities.¹⁹³

191. Andrew A. King and Floyd Douglas Anderson. "Nixon, Agnew, and the "Silent Majority": A Case Study in the Rhetoric of Polarization." *Western Speech* 35, no. 4 (1971): 243-244.

192. Emile B. Ader, "Why the Dixiecrats Failed," *The Journal of Politics* 15, no. 3 (1953): 356.

193. States' Rights, October 1, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection, 7.

Elsewhere the Dixiecrats bragged about having received letters of support from the home counties of President Truman in Missouri and Governor Dewey in New York.¹⁹⁴

While Dixiecrats claimed a nation-wide campaign, the movement was inseparable from their Southern identity. The party's Executive Committee was comprised entirely of Southern lawmakers, and the party's campaign efforts were almost completely focused on the Southern states.¹⁹⁵ Thurmond told a crowd in West Palm Beach, Florida that the Dixiecrat campaign was designed to, "restore the South to her proper position of respect in the political life of the nation."¹⁹⁶ In doing so, the Dixiecrats elevated regional identification over and above partisan identification.

Dixiecrat rhetoric reinvigorated Civil War animosities and transformed the divide in American politics from Republican versus Democrat to North versus South. Thurmond held up the South for its beauty and its uniqueness. Speeches and press releases often mentioned Thurmond's love and respect for the American South. He regularly utilized the phrase "our people" when referencing Southerners and their responses to national politics. He claimed that Southerners were unified and had not fallen victim to the

194. In the press release, the Thurmond campaign incorrectly identified the home county of Harry Truman as Kansas City, MO rather than Jackson County. States' Rights Democratic Party Statement for the Press, July 27, 1948, ms 100, 563, Strom Thurmond Collection, Clemson University, <https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/strom/563>.

195. States' Rights Democratic Party Statement on Presidential Campaign Plans, August 1, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection.

196. Thurmond Address at West Palm Beach, Florida, October 18, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection.

invasive communism of Northern cities.¹⁹⁷ According to Thurmond, because of its uniqueness, the South must be governed by its own set of laws and norms, especially concerning issues of race.¹⁹⁸ The liberal wings of the Democratic Party were welcome to end segregation in their own states, he suggested, but they should not venture to bring such progressive ideas to the South.¹⁹⁹

Dixiecrat affirmation of Southern life was only surpassed by their stated disdain for Northern intervention. In his response to Democratic Chairman McGrath, Thurmond said Southern legislators “will not be dictated to by a New Englander.”²⁰⁰ He labeled Northern activists “traitors” and asserted that they were attempting to reduce the South to political pawns. On the question of ending segregation, Thurmond said, “It is intended to divide the people of the South, in order to gain political advantage over them.”²⁰¹ In this framing, Northern life had become infiltrated by Communists and extremists, and using

197. Thurmond Statement Concerning the Valiant Fight of Southern Legislators to Prevent Passage of the So-Called Civil Rights Demands of President Truman, August 3, 1948, mss 100, 566, Strom Thurmond Collection, Clemson University, <https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/strom/566>.

198. Thurmond Address at West Palm Beach, Florida, October 18, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection, 9.

199. Ibid.

200. Thurmond Statement in Response to Questions on Remarks of National Democratic Chairman, September 2, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection; Thurmond Statement Concerning the Valiant Fight of Southern Legislators, August 3, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection.

201. Thurmond Address at the Watermelon Festival, Cherryville, North Carolina, July 31, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection, 6.

an ironically Truman-esque strategy of containment was the only hope to keep such ideas out of the South.

Thurmond presented the narrative of regionalist identification with the Democratic Party as one of Southern loyalty and Northern betrayal. Thurmond called the South “the backbone of the Democratic Party” and noted that their loyalty had extended for 100 years (conveniently omitting the years of reconstruction).²⁰² Early Dixiecrat campaign messages utilized the image of the “solid South,” but Thurmond argued that Democratic loyalty was far from unquestioning.²⁰³ The decision to bolt from the party was rooted in what Dixiecrats labeled an act of betrayal on the part of Truman. The Dixiecrats’ Statement of Principles, issued in July, read “The latest response to our entreaties was a Democratic Convention in Philadelphia rigged to embarrass and humiliate the South.”²⁰⁴ Dixiecrats alleged that Democrats had abandoned white Southerners despite generations of support for Democratic candidates, and Thurmond’s candidacy was designed to penalize the party for its act of disloyalty.

Dixiecrats did not stop with framing Southerners as victims of corruption. Instead, Thurmond made the case that Southerners were the saviors of both the Democratic Party and of America. By bolting from the party and creating a party that they believed held firm to the true principles of the Democrats, Dixiecrats planned to rescue the nation from

202. Civil Rights and States’ Rights, February 23, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection.

203. *Ibid.*, 15.

204. States’ Rights Democratic Party Declaration of Principles, July 17, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection.

the threat posed by “minority machines” and those who represented them on the ballot.²⁰⁵ Only through “strong and effective action” Thurmond claimed, could Southerners come to the rescue of the Democratic Party and the constitutional republic.

The rhetoric of disidentification among the Dixiecrats was distinct from either the Mugwumps or the Progressives. Rather than turning to elements of associative morality or systemic corruption, Dixiecrats took on questions of legitimacy and identity. Dixiecrats demonstrated the unique attributes of disidentification in a coalition-based political movement. Involvement in the Dixiecrat rebellion eliminated the cross-pressures of race and geography and instead called for a homogenous party, or, at least a party where white Southerners maintained exclusive control over the electoral, social, and economic decisions of their states.

Challenged by forces within his own party, on the grounds of ideology, corruption, legitimacy, and identity, Harry Truman faced seemingly impossible odds in the 1948 presidential election. The remaining sections of this chapter are dedicated to Truman’s attempts to hold the Democratic coalition together and find new bases for support despite these intraparty obstacles. Like Blaine, Truman engaged the rhetoric of *party repair*. Truman’s convention address and national whistle-stop tour are remembered for resurrecting the campaign despite the challenges posed by two of the largest bases of support in the Democratic Party.

Harry S. Truman and the Rhetoric of Party Repair in the 1948 Campaign

The two biggest issues tearing the Democratic coalition apart at the seams were Truman’s containment strategy with respect to the Soviet Union and his civil rights

205. Civil Rights and States’ Rights, February 23, 1948, Strom Thurmond Collection.

agenda. Between July and November of 1948, Truman and his associates would address these fissures in the party coalition and attempt to restore the electoral base that had won Franklin Roosevelt the four previous presidential elections. Partisan identity, antithesis, and polarization all played a significant role in Truman's repair rhetoric; but so too did his use of incumbency and his ability to exploit the two intraparty movements as shields against one another. I begin by providing some context for Truman's rhetoric on containment and civil rights and his general campaign strategy in 1948 before turning to the texts of Truman's candidacy to understand his use of party repair.

A speech delivered by Truman on October 27th, 1945 represented a major turning point in the president's rhetoric and in American foreign policy.²⁰⁶ The speech, delivered in Central Park in New York City to a crowd of nearly 80,000, was broadcast via radio and television across the county.²⁰⁷ In the address, Truman outlined a twelve-point plan for post-war American foreign policy, including a condemnation of any "foreign power" attempting to forcefully impose a government on another country. Truman's statement was characterized as the first clear denunciation of the nation's most powerful World War II ally: the USSR. Less than two months after VJ Day, the administration signaled a pivot away from East Asia, to focus on Soviet aggression.²⁰⁸ Rhetorical critic William

206. William R. Underhill, "Harry S. Truman: A Spokesman for Containment," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 47, no. 3 (1961): 270-271.

207. *Ibid.*

208. *Ibid.*

Underhill suggested that between 1945 and 1947, Truman reconstructed American foreign policy to focus almost entirely on containment of the Russian threat.²⁰⁹

As previously noted, Truman's shift was met with some consternation by members of his own party, who insisted that the Soviet Union was an American ally rather than an adversary. However, the Soviet Union was not a major source of controversy between Dewey and Truman during the campaign.²¹⁰ What Wallace presented as evidence of a conspiracy between the two parties, historian Zachary Karbell noted as general agreement on the threat posed by Russia and evidence that Republicans did not see the Cold War as a point of vulnerability for Truman.²¹¹ The belief that politics should "stop at the water's edge" became the dominant sentiment of the campaign.²¹² As detailed in the coming pages, Truman returned to the Lincolnesque strategy of strategic or eloquent silence concerning intraparty disagreement over the emerging Cold War.²¹³

Where Truman dove headlong into containing the Soviet Union, he attempted to play a delicate balancing act with respect to his stance on civil rights. Early in Truman's preparations for the 1948 campaign, White House Counsel Clark M. Clifford delivered a memo to Truman outlining a broad political strategy including the importance of black voters to Truman's electoral chances.²¹⁴ Often referred to as the *Clifford memo*, much of

209. Ibid.

210. Karabell, *The Last Campaign*, 29.

211. Ibid.

212. Goldzwig, *Truman's Whistle-stop Campaign*, 10.

213. Robert G. Gunderson, "Lincoln and the Policy of Eloquent Silence: November 1860, to March 1861," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 47, no. 1 (1961): 1-2.

214. Goldzwig, *Truman's Whistle-stop Campaign*, 7-9.

the memorandum was actually the original work of James Rowe, a staff member in Truman's budget office.²¹⁵ Rowe and Clifford argued that the South would remain solidly Democratic, and winning the election would depend on victories in the western states and Democratic support from northern black voters, who the memo argued could easily be persuaded to support Dewey.²¹⁶

Despite the assurances of Clifford and Rowe, Truman remained cautious about the possibility of a Southern bolt and chose to stay relatively quiet on the issue between his initial announcement of the civil rights agenda and the end of the Democratic Convention in Philadelphia.²¹⁷ While the Dixiecrats framed Truman as a radical supporter of civil rights, historians have presented a much more reluctant image of Truman's evolution on the issue.²¹⁸ Truman made bold promises on civil rights in February of 1948, but as the election approached he had put very few of those promises into practice.²¹⁹ Privately, Truman sought to placate Southern leaders by assuring them that the agenda

215. Gary A. Donaldson, "Who Wrote the Clifford Memo? The Origins of Campaign Strategy in the Truman Administration," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 23, no. 4 (1993): 747-754.

216. Memo Clark Clifford to Harry S. Truman, November 19, 1947, Political File, Clifford Papers, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, https://www.trumanlibrary.org/dbq/res/1948/1948Campaign_CliffordMemo.pdf.

217. Harry Sitkoff, "Harry Truman and the Election of 1948: The Coming of Age of Civil Rights in American Politics," *The Journal of Southern History* 37, no. 4 (1971), 611-612.

218. *Ibid.*, 597-616.

219. Sitkoff, "Harry Truman and the Election of 1948," 601-605; Carol Anderson, *Eyes off the Prize: The United Nations and the African American Struggle for Human Rights, 1944-1955* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 121-122.

had almost no chance of becoming law through Congress.²²⁰ It was only after the Dixiecrat convention that Truman began to take concrete policy action on civil rights.²²¹ On July 26th, Truman issued Executive Order 9981, integrating the United States Armed forces.²²² Even during the general election, Truman did not focus on civil rights for fear of further ostracizing Southern Democrats. The significance of the Rowe-Clifford memo would only come into full view in the final days of the campaign, when Truman, confident in his ability to carry several Southern states despite Thurmond's candidacy, spoke before a crowd of 65,000 black voters in Harlem, New York, making Truman the first sitting president to speak in the neighborhood.²²³

Rhetorical critics have often characterized Truman's speaking style as homey or folksy.²²⁴ Underhill described Truman as a "plain rather provincial man from Missouri."²²⁵ The last president without a college degree, Truman lacked a formal education in public address, but was very well read and later told public address scholars Eugene E. White and Clair R. Henderlinder that he learned the art of rhetoric by translating Cicero's writings from the original Latin along with his future Press Secretary

220. Sitkoff, "Harry Truman and the Election of 1948," 602-603.

221. *Ibid.*, 612.

222. Sherie Mershon and Steven L. Schlossman, *Foxholes and Color Lines: Desegregating the U.S. Armed Forces* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998).

223. Sitkoff, "Harry Truman and the Election of 1948," 612-613.

224. Jennings Randolph, "The 1948 Presidential Campaign Speakers: Harry S. Truman," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 34, no. 3 (1948): 301; Cole S. Brembeck, "Harry Truman at the Whistle Stops," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 38, no. 1(1952): 42.

225. Underhill, "Harry S. Truman," 269.

Charlie Ross.²²⁶ Unlike his predecessor, Truman was not known for his ability to deliver prepared remarks in a conversational tone. In an article in the *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, toward the end of Truman's presidency, the rhetorical critic Cole Brembeck said, "In reading his prepared manuscripts Truman's voice tightened up; he galloped along, emphasized the wrong words, slurred others, and rarely showed himself at his best."²²⁷ Brembeck confirmed the opinion of many critics of the era that Truman's best speaking was extemporaneous, and Truman's campaign seized on this understanding often encouraging the president to speak without notes or only with limited notes about the community.

While Truman delivered many radio addresses and formal speeches during the campaign, the two high points in his rhetoric of party repair were his 2:00 a.m. acceptance speech at the Philadelphia convention and his whistle-stop tour across the country. Speaking the day after the Dixiecrat walkout, and as Wallace was already stumping around the country, Truman delivered a fiery acceptance address that grabbed national headlines and shifted the narrative of the campaign.²²⁸ Truman told White and Henderlider of the address, "That speech was something of a personal spiritual milestone. From that time on, I never doubted that we would win."²²⁹ As discussed in chapters one and two, the dynamics of party conventions has changed considerably over time, and

226. Eugene E. White and Clair R. Henderlider, "What Harry S. Truman Told Us About His Speaking," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 40, no. 1 (2009), 39.

227. *Ibid.*, 38-42; Brembeck, "Harry Truman at the Whistle Stops," 42.

228. Randolph, "The 1948 Presidential Campaign Speakers," 301-302.

229. White and Henderlider, "What Harry S. Truman Told Us," 39.

Truman's acceptance address came to be regarded as an important exemplar of convention rhetoric aimed toward partisan reunification.²³⁰

Unlike Grover Cleveland, Truman actively campaigned across the country, appearing before as many as 15 million Americans.²³¹ Truman launched an historic campaign tour, traveling the country by train and often speaking to large crowds from the train's rear platform. The public would come to call Truman's campaign a "whistle-stop" tour, but when Republican Senator Robert Taft first used the term in June 1948, he was met with intense backlash from communities who had been honored to receive a visit from the president and saw the expression as devaluing.²³² Truman exploited that sentiment and repurposed the whistle-stop terminology as a defiance of coastal elitism in the same way that modern political forces have embraced "flyover country" as a source of regional pride.²³³ In the glass-producing community of Fostoria, Ohio, Truman said:

Unity has helped you people build a strong community, the kind of community that some of these Ohio Republicans call, 'whistle-stops.' Well, I say thank God for the whistle-stops of our country. They are the backbone of the Nation. They have got the people who produce that Nation's goods and the Nation's food—and they have got the people who are going to keep the Democratic administration in

230. Sharon E. Jarvis, "Campaigning alone: Partisan versus personal language in the presidential nominating convention acceptance addresses, 1948-2000." *American Behavioral Scientist* 44, no. 12 (2001): 2153.

231. Goldzwig, *Truman's Whistle-stop Campaign*, 120.

232. New York Times June 20 p. 7 *The New-York Times*, June 20, 1948, 7, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1948/06/20/96427034.html?pageNumber=7>.

233. See for example: Dana Loesch, *Flyover Nation: You Can't Run a Country You've Never Been to* (New York: Sentinel, 2016).

the White House and elect a Democratic House and a Democratic Senate in the coming election.²³⁴

By July, Truman had fully embraced the “whistle stop” terminology as a source of pride of the average citizen in small towns across the country. On the tour, Truman traveled over 20,000 miles across the U.S., often delivering more than 10 speeches in a single day.²³⁵ By the end of his second whistle-stop tour, Truman had spoken to 275 audiences, often numbering in the thousands.²³⁶

Questions of political partisanship played a significant role on the whistle-stop tour. Truman’s whistle stop addresses were always extemporaneous, and the president would later claim that his remarks were drawn entirely from knowledge about the community and the major artifacts of partisan identity: the party platform and party history.²³⁷ Goldzwig suggests that the whistle-stop tour was essential in crowding out the intraparty noise to bring voters back to the central question of Democrats versus Republicans.²³⁸ The pages that follow will examine Truman’s rhetorical moves at the convention and on the whistle stop tour that allowed him to repair the deeply divided Democratic Party.

Truman’s Rhetoric of Polarization

234. Transcript of Rear Platform and Other Informal Remarks in Ohio, October 11, 1948, Public Papers Harry S. Truman 1945-1953, n. 231, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, <https://www.trumanlibrary.org/publicpapers/index.php?pid=1981&st=&st1=>.

235. Brembeck, “Harry Truman at the Whistle Stops,” 42.

236. *Ibid.*; Goldzwig, *Truman’s Whistle-stop Campaign*, 25.

237. White and Henderlider, “What Harry S. Truman Told Us,” 41.

238. Goldzwig, *Truman’s Whistle-stop Campaign*, 123.

King and Anderson argue that polarization depends on in-group affirmation and outgroup subversion; but for Truman, the candidacies of Wallace and Thurmond complicated the rhetoric of in-group praise.²³⁹ With limited options for extolling in-group unity, Truman turned his attention to the Republicans. More than any other single characteristic, the Truman campaign was defined by its unrelenting attacks on the Republican Party. Truman's primary strategy of organizational identification was what Cheney labels *antithesis*.²⁴⁰ Rather than highlighting the common ground between the Democrats, Dixiecrats, and Progressives, Truman devoted most of his campaign rhetoric to fostering the image of a shared enemy between the disparate groups of the New Deal Coalition.

The common enemy for black voters, union workers, civil rights opponents, and northern progressives was the Republican Party, and Truman argued that fear of Republicans should motivate all elements of the coalition to unify behind the party label. Steve Neal, who catalogued much of Truman's campaign rhetoric in 1948, argued that Truman, "understood that the whole concept of a campaign was to motivate the voter and to galvanize support for the candidate and the political party."²⁴¹ Beginning at the Philadelphia convention and continuing through his final radio address the night before

239. King and Anderson. "Nixon, Agnew, and the "Silent Majority," 244-245.

240. George Cheney, "The Rhetoric of Identification and the Study of Organizational Communication," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 69, (1983), 148.

241. Steve Neal, *Miracle of '48: Harry Truman's Major Campaign Speeches & Selected Whistle-Stops*, ed. Steve Neal (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2003): 4.

the election on November 1st, Truman consistently blasted Republicans as the party of the Great Depression and of special interests.

Just as 1884 saw the beginning of the end for “bloody shirt” politics in the nineteenth century, some wondered if sufficient time had elapsed since the stock market crash of 1929 that the depression may have lost some of its political salience or at least its association with the Republican Party. While Blaine initially backed away from bloody shirt rhetoric, Truman wholeheartedly embraced the narrative that connected Republicans to the Great Depression. In Dexter, Iowa Truman exclaimed: “How well you must remember the depression of the 1930s! The Republicans gave you that depression, as I said before, when hogs went down to 3 cents, and corn was so cheap you were burning it up.”²⁴² In Springfield, Illinois On October 11th, Truman further attempted to disabuse voters of any belief that the former Republican administration was not wholly responsible for the depression.²⁴³ During major speeches in Detroit, Michigan and Raleigh, North Carolina, as well as at whistle-stops in Winona, Minnesota, McAlester, Oklahoma, and Deshler, Ohio, Truman dubbed the economic crisis of the 1930s “the Republican depression.”²⁴⁴ Audiences at Truman rallies were regularly reminded of the specific characteristics of life under an economic downturn.

242. Harry S. Truman, *Miracle of '48*: 72.

243. *Ibid.*, 115.

244. *Ibid.*, 62; 121; 133; Transcript of Rear Platform and Other Informal Remarks in Ohio, October 11, 1948, Public Papers Harry S. Truman 1945-1953, n. 231, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, <https://www.trumanlibrary.org/publicpapers/index.php?pid=1981>; Transcript of Rear Platform and Other Informal Remarks in Oklahoma and Missouri, September 29, 1948, Public Papers Harry S. Truman

Truman became fond of comparing the value of produce and farm products during the Hoover administration to their present value under his own leadership.²⁴⁵ In Raleigh, Truman noted the impressive farming equipment he had seen in his travels across the country and asked those in attendance at the state fairgrounds to recall the *Hoover carts* that became a common mode of transportation at the height of the depression.²⁴⁶ *Hoover carts* was the name given to automobiles during the depression that had been converted into horse-drawn transportation when their owners could no longer afford to pay for the necessary repairs or gasoline to keep the vehicles in working condition.²⁴⁷ The contrast between emerging technologies and the reversion of past advancements during the depression provided a clear division between Republicans, which Truman labeled the party of the past, and the Democratic Party, which he dubbed the party of the future.²⁴⁸ Throughout the campaign, Truman and his running mate Alben Barkley of Kentucky tied these competing visions of depression and prosperity to the Republican and Democratic Party labels.

Other forms of public memory also played a role in Truman's rhetoric of polarization. Truman juxtaposed the Republican depression with the Democratic

1945-1953, n. 216, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, <https://www.trumanlibrary.org/publicpapers/index.php?pid=1966>.

245. Harry S. Truman, *Miracle of '48*: 136.

246. *Ibid.*, 134.

247. Anita Price Davis, *North Carolina During the Great Depression: A Documentary Portrait of a Decade* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company Inc., 2003), 6.

248. Harry S. Truman, *Miracle of '48*: 76.

leadership of Franklin Roosevelt.²⁴⁹ Speaking in Chicago Stadium, Truman invoked the nomination of Roosevelt sixteen years prior in the same building.²⁵⁰ Truman's positive memorialization of Democratic heroes reflected that some unifying symbols held their strength even at a time of intraparty division. By contrast, Truman suggested that Republican heroes like Abraham Lincoln would have rebuked the modern party. Speaking near Lincoln's home in Springfield, Illinois, Truman said, "I just wonder tonight, as I have wondered many times in the past, what Lincoln would say if he could see how far the Republican Party has departed from the fundamental principles in which he so deeply believed."²⁵¹ In Truman's formulation, the Republican Party had split from its abolitionist roots and become a vehicle for the interests of a wealthy, economic elite.

Truman's most common attack on the Republicans was that they were in the pocket of special interests. A later section of the analysis addresses this attack specifically in the context of Truman's populism, but the charge also prompted many of Truman's most controversial allegations. In a late campaign address in Chicago, Truman compared the Republicans' alignment with special interests to the Nazis during the rise of Hitler.²⁵² He claimed that concentrations of power often gave way to fascism. In the same address, Truman emphasized his belief that forces of special interest had seized control of the Republican Party and sought to curtail American liberties with the goal of making the

249. *Ibid.*, 82.

250. *Ibid.*, 151-152.

251. *Ibid.*, 115.

252. *Ibid.*, 155.

United States more akin to Nazi Germany or the Soviet Union.²⁵³ Truman emphasized throughout the campaign that the consequences of a Republican victory would be dire. In Los Angeles Truman said, “These past two years have shown us evidence—frightening evidence—that if the country falls into the hands of the leaders of the Republican Party, everything is likely to be all wrong within a very short time.”²⁵⁴ The consequences, according to Truman, involved not only depression but also the threat of tyranny and despotism.

Truman was outspoken in his opposition to the Republican Party during the campaign. He routinely maligned House and Senate Republicans, calling them out by name. Among his favorite targets was Ohio Republican Robert Taft. Truman chided Taft for hypocrisy and blasted the senator’s co-sponsored Taft-Hartley legislation.²⁵⁵ While these attacks became the cornerstone of Truman’s speeches, his silence on other issues may have been just as rhetorically powerful. The next section describes Truman’s silence on intraparty division and his attempts to downplay the importance of Wallace and Thurmond to his electoral chances and to the future of the Democratic Party.

Eloquent Silence in 1948

Just as Lincoln utilized silence strategically to prevent fracturing the Republican Party in 1860, Truman often opted for techniques that either ignored or downplayed the role of the Progressives and Dixiecrats as legitimate forces of concern in the 1948

253. *Ibid.*, 154.

254. *Ibid.*, 94.

255. *Ibid.*, 57; 96; 101; 110-111.

election.²⁵⁶ Truman and his associates preferred not to highlight elements of intraparty disagreement. Internal memoranda suggested some concern about Wallace and Thurmond, but Truman's campaign speeches and whistle stops relegated these movements to a distant afterthought, preferring instead to focus on the Republicans.²⁵⁷ While on the campaign trail, Truman avoided saying the names of his intraparty rivals altogether. Truman also avoided saying Dewey's name, referring to the New York Governor either as "the Republican candidate" or simply through pronouns. While Dewey remained an important subject of Truman's rhetoric despite not being mentioned by name, Thurmond and Wallace were almost entirely missing from Truman's speeches, press conferences, and radio addresses.

On rare occasions, Truman would vaguely reference his Progressive and Dixiecrat challengers before public audiences. These mentions were always fleeting and dismissive, an apparent afterthought to Truman's full-on attacks of Republicans. When Truman referenced these campaigns, he made a point to label them generically as "third parties," undercutting Thurmond's hope to seize the legitimacy of the Democratic Party label in the South and Wallace's claim to be the true heir to the New Deal Coalition.²⁵⁸ In

256. Robert G. Gunderson, "Lincoln and the Policy of Eloquent Silence: November 1860, to March 1861," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 47, no. 1 (1961), 1-2.

257. Memo, 'Analysis of the Southern Democratic Revolt,' September 1948, Truman Papers, President's Secretary's Files. Voting Statistics, The 1948 Election Campaign Research File, *Harry S. Truman Presidential Library*, https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/1948campaign/large/docs/documents/index.php?documentid=7-1&pagenumber=1.

258. Harry S. Truman, *Miracle of '48*: 135; 139.

one of Truman's major addresses in the South, he offered a subtle dismissal of the Dixiecrats saying, "Either the standard Republican will buy the election or the standard Democrats will win it. Other parties simply don't stand a chance."²⁵⁹ Later in the same address Truman would justify his decision to ignore the still unnamed Wallace and Thurmond candidacies and focus on the Republicans, because, Truman claimed, "a vote for any third-, fourth-, or fifth- party candidate is the same as a vote for the Republican candidate."²⁶⁰ Through his dismissal, Truman made clear that he viewed the other parties simply as the Republican Party in disguise.

One of Truman's only references to the Progressives came during his speech at Gilmore Stadium in Los Angeles where Wallace had addressed a large crowd a year earlier. During his remarks, Truman said:

There are, however, some people with true liberal convictions, whose worry over the state of the world has caused them to lean toward a third party. To these liberals I would say in all sincerity: Think again. The fact that the Communists are guiding and using the third party shows that this party does not represent American ideals. But there is another and very practical reason why it is folly for any liberal to put his hope in this third party. The third party has no power in the Government and no chance of achieving power. The simple fact is that the third party cannot achieve peace, because it is powerless. It cannot achieve better conditions here at home, because it is powerless.²⁶¹

Even after this direct charge, between September 27th and Election Day, Truman largely ignored Wallace's campaign, preferring to allow Wallace's critics in media to reinforce associations between Wallace and communism. Another of Truman's few direct mentions of Wallace came in the form of a condemnation of Wallace's treatment in the

259. *Ibid.*, 135.

260. *Ibid.*, 139.

261. *Ibid.*, 98.

South. Later, during a press conference, just before Truman's own Southern tour, a reporter asked the president if he believed he would be more welcome in the South than Wallace had been. Truman scoffed at the idea that there would be any parallel, telling the reporter: "Oh, of course, I will receive a cordial reception, I am sure, wherever I go. Without comparisons, please."²⁶² In dismissing both the comparison to Wallace and the possibility of opposition on his Southern tour, Truman positioned himself above the squabbles of intraparty conflict from both wings.

In his whistle-stop tour across Wallace's home state of Iowa, Truman never referenced the former vice president or gave any hint of awareness of Wallace's campaign.²⁶³ During a speech in Madison, Wisconsin, Truman even invoked the name of former party defector and Progressive Party hero, Bob LaFollette, who had led the liberal charge in 1924 before dying in 1925. Truman suggested that LaFollette would have sided with the Democrats in 1948.²⁶⁴ He also always presented the American approach to the Cold War as having support across the political spectrum, never acknowledging Wallace's reservations or that the progressive leader had made the issue the cornerstone of his campaign.

262. Transcript of The President's News Conference, September 2, 1948, Public Papers Harry S. Truman 1945-1953, n. 181, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, <https://www.trumanlibrary.org/publicpapers/index.php?pid=1795&st=Wallace&st1>.

263. Rear Platform and Other Informal Remarks in Illinois, Iowa, and Missouri, September 18, 1948, Public Papers Harry S. Truman 1945-1953, n. 194, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, <https://www.trumanlibrary.org/publicpapers/index.php?pid=1812>.

264. Truman, *Miracle of '48*, 123-124.

Similarly, during speeches in Florida and Texas, Truman neglected to mention either Thurmond or the Dixiecrats.²⁶⁵ Truman's silence on intraparty conflict extended beyond mere silence on Thurmond in particular to, at times, completely ignoring the issue of civil rights in his campaign rhetoric. Through months of speeches and whistle stops Truman failed to mention the issue. Only in the closing days of the campaign did Truman return to the question of civil rights. On October 25th in Chicago, Truman accused Republicans of fomenting racial prejudice and made direct comparisons between racial discrimination and Nazism. Finally, on October 29th, Truman addressed the audience in Harlem, re-outlining the civil rights accomplishments on which he had remained silent throughout the campaign.²⁶⁶ Civil rights would essentially bookend the Truman candidacy, with a major speech in February detailing an ambitious civil rights agenda and a brief return to the topic in front of sympathetic audiences in the final weeks of October.

Throughout most of the campaign, Truman was the only candidate not discussing the issue of civil rights, which may have dramatically undercut Thurmond's attempts to paint the president as a civil rights radical. Topping argues that the great failure of the Dewey campaign was its indecisiveness on civil rights and its inability to capitalize on

265. *Ibid.*, 99-106; 127-132.

266. Transcript of Address in Harlem, New York, Upon Receiving the Franklin Roosevelt Award, October 29, 1948, n. 265, Public Papers Harry S. Truman 1945-1953, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, <https://www.trumanlibrary.org/publicpapers/index.php?pid=2016&st=Harlem&st1=>

Truman's silence.²⁶⁷ Dewey made several addresses about discrimination but rarely highlighted differences between himself and his Democratic rival, allowing Truman an escape from the Faustian bargain offered by southern Democrats.²⁶⁸

When Truman finally returned to the topic of civil rights, he could point to concrete actions he had taken as president to end segregation, lynching, and voter suppression over the preceding three years. Truman was able to downplay his civil rights agenda during the campaign in the quiet confidence that his record of enacted reforms would allow him to carry the support of many black voters. Truman's ability to turn to his record on the civil rights issue illustrates another major element of Truman's rhetoric of party repair that separates him from Blaine and dozens of other party leaders across American history: the power of the presidency. The following section outlines other ways that Truman utilized presidential power and the unique advantages of incumbency to unify his party in the face of opposition.

The Power of the Presidency and Down Ballot Party Repair

Truman reconstructed the Democratic Party label around the institution of the presidency and in opposition to the Republican-controlled Congress. Given the longstanding Democratic control of the office, associations between presidential power and partisanship were readily accessible. Within moments of accepting the nomination, Truman made clear that he was able and willing to utilize presidential power to

267. Simon Topping, "Never argue with the Gallup Poll": Thomas Dewey, Civil Rights and the Election of 1948" *Journal of American Studies* 38, no. 2 (2004): 179-198.

268. *Ibid.*

institutionalize the polarizing rhetoric of his campaign and hold Republicans accountable for their campaign promises.

Truman's 24-minute convention address previewed many of the major themes of his rhetoric of party repair, including pointed attacks directed at Republicans and a notable silence regarding Wallace and Thurmond. The most memorable lines of Truman's address, however, came as Truman approached the nineteen-minute mark of the speech. Truman outlined multiple provisions of the Republican platform that he claimed Republicans did not truly believe in, including housing reform, price controls, slum clearance, education reform, and social security increases.²⁶⁹ Truman bemoaned the Republican's statements of support for these policies, when, he claimed they had failed to take any action on any of these issues during the 80th Congress. Truman questioned, "I wonder if they think they can fool the people of the United States with such poppycock as that?"²⁷⁰ Truman then delivered the climactic line of the speech, that would become a major focus of the remainder of the campaign. Truman said:

There's a long list of these promises in that Republican platform. If it weren't so late, I'd tell you about all of them. I have discussed a number of these failures of the Republican 80th Congress, and every one of them is important. Two of them are of major concern to nearly every American family: the failure to do anything about high prices and the failure to do anything about housing. My duty as President requires that I use every means within my power to get the laws the people need on matters of such importance and urgency. I am therefore calling this Congress back into session on the 26th of July!²⁷¹

269. Transcript, Address in Philadelphia Upon Accepting the Nomination of the Democratic National Convention, July 15, 1948, Public Papers Harry S. Truman 1945-1953, *Harry S. Truman Presidential Library*, <https://www.trumanlibrary.org/publicpapers/index.php?pid=1060>.

270. Ibid.

271. Ibid.

Truman's call for a special session was a dramatic move aimed at either passing major legislation or painting Republican legislators as disingenuous regarding their campaign promises. The next morning the *New York Times* declared that the South had lost dramatically at the convention, but intraparty conflict took a back seat to Truman's attacks on Republicans and call for a special session in the address.²⁷²

In the speech, Truman informed the audience that Missourians refer to July 26th, the first day of the special session, as *Turnip Day*. As a result, journalists and historians would come to call Truman's special session the *Turnip Day Session*.²⁷³ When Congress failed to pass the dramatic reforms Truman had requested during the session, the president took his case on the campaign trail. In Denver, Truman labeled the Republicans as liars, saying, "The Republican stand on housing was clearly exposed last July, when I called the Congress into special session and demanded again that they enact housing legislation."²⁷⁴ Truman further responded to allegations that his move was merely a political stunt, reminding audiences that he had also called Congress back into session in non-election years.²⁷⁵

The power of the presidency allowed Truman to not only claim leadership of the party, as all presidential candidates do, but also to provide concrete evidence of that

272. James Reston, "In a Fighting Mood," *The New York Times*, July 15, 1948, 1, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1948/07/15/issue.html>.

273. Garrison Nelson, *John William McCormack: A Political Biography* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2017), 395.

274. Truman, *Miracle of '48*, 81.

275. *Ibid.*, 82; 97.

leadership by demanding the Republicans either pass legislation or admit their hypocrisy. The Turnip Day Session was only part of a much larger strategy by Truman to unify the New Deal Coalition in response to the Republican-controlled Congress. The Republican Congress became the institutional foil of Truman's Democratic presidency.

In over 70 different speeches or whistle-stops between the end of the Democratic Convention and the general election, Truman used the phrase "do-nothing 80th Congress" or some close variant to describe the current condition of America's legislature.²⁷⁶ Truman took aim at the Congress in nearly every major address and in an abundance of his rear-platform remarks.²⁷⁷ For example, Truman blamed the Congress for high prices. Speaking generically about "the wives and mothers of this nation," Truman cast blame on Congress.²⁷⁸ He told an audience at Cadillac Square in Detroit: "I tried to help her out in this terrible price situation, but I got absolutely no help from that 'do nothing' 80th Republican Congress."²⁷⁹ The Congress, Truman suggested elsewhere, was a notorious threat to American families and aimed to entangle them under impossible burdens established in Washington, D.C.²⁸⁰ Truman invoked the legacy of Grover Cleveland during a speech in Pennsylvania, informing voters that only Cleveland had vetoed more

276. Harry S. Truman, *Truman Library & Museum*, Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, accessed March 15, 2019, <https://www.trumanlibrary.org/archivesearch/>.

277. Truman, *Miracle of '48*.

278. *Ibid.*, 64.

279. *Ibid.*

280. *Ibid.*, 79; 92.

bills; and warned the audience that without a Democrat in the White House, a Republican Congress would be unstoppable.²⁸¹

Truman made the case that the election was not a referendum on him but on the 80th Congress.²⁸² The Democratic president also made plain that he believed the blame for the actions of that Congress rested firmly with the American people. He told the crowd gathered for a whistle-stop in Winona, Wisconsin: “That 80th ‘do nothing’ Congress came about because you didn’t do your duty as voters.”²⁸³ Similarly, at Madison Square Garden Truman proclaimed: “I must say, though, that some of you are partly to blame for this, because you didn’t vote in 1946. That Republican ‘do nothing’ 80th Congress did all it could to start us back down that dismal road.”²⁸⁴ If voters wanted change, Truman argued, they could not find it in divided government.

Truman opted to run, first and foremost, against the Republican Congress rather than against Dewey, Wallace, or Thurmond. Instead of linking down-ballot Congressional candidates to an unpopular presidential candidate, Truman linked Dewey to an unpopular Congress. Truman told an audience in Springfield, Illinois of his Republican opponent: “He is bound hand and foot by the record of the 80th Congress, and he is running on that record, and nothing else. In order to get the nomination, he endorsed the record of that Congress.”²⁸⁵ Truman often suggested that his Republican opponent

281. *Ibid.*, 140.

282. *Ibid.*, 145.

283. *Ibid.*, 122.

284. *Ibid.*, 169.

285. *Ibid.*, 117-118.

refused to take a stand on anything other than his support for the 80th Congress. In his final public address of the campaign, Truman said: “He won’t talk about the issues, but he did let his foot slip when he endorsed the 80th Congress. He endorsed that Congress! He said that Congress had done great things for the future of this country.”²⁸⁶ By the end of the campaign, Truman had effectively rebranded Congress as the “do-nothing” Congress and established Dewey as its biggest supporter.

From a perspective of party repair, Truman’s strategy foregrounds partisanship rather than the four individual presidential candidates. Truman plead with voters at every whistle-stop to elect a Democratic Congress, essentially bypassing national controversies including civil rights and the Cold War through a wholesale endorsement of the Democrats over Republicans running at the state and district levels in varying regions of the country. Truman’s rhetoric highlighted the decentralized nature of party identity by prioritizing down-ballot races. At events across the country, he praised House and Senate candidates. He exalted candidates like Sam Rayburn and Lyndon Johnson in Texas, Stephen M. Young in Ohio, Cecil F. White in California, Senator Paul Douglas in Illinois, and Senator Guy Gillette in Iowa.²⁸⁷ In support of Cecil White, Truman told a California audience: “While you are doing that, elect Mr. White to Congress. You have got a terrible congressman here in this district. He is one of the worst. He is one of the worst obstructionists in Congress. He has done everything he possibly could to cut the throats of the farmer and the laboring man.”²⁸⁸ Truman may not have been able to

286. *Ibid.*, 185.

287. *Ibid.*, 101; 160; 92; 69.

288 *Ibid.*, 92.

rhetorically smooth over the divisions within his party nationally, but those divisions largely disappeared within a given congressional district, allowing Truman to signal support for the big tent, New Deal coalition. Truman endorsed liberal candidates like Douglas in Illinois, who supported civil rights and were considerably to the left of the president economically, while also endorsing loyal Southern congressmen like Rayburn and Johnson who depended on segregationist support.²⁸⁹

The whistle-stop tour allowed Truman to segment national audiences for more individualized appeals. Sproule associates this segmentation with changes in modern media, but the Magellan (Truman's train) may have been one of the earliest media to facilitate large-scale segmentation of organizational identity in American politics.²⁹⁰ Like the modern strategy of geographic micro-targeting, Truman was able to cater to individual communities. He told White and Henderlider that his primary objective before each whistle-stop was to familiarize himself with the town.²⁹¹ Armed with an understanding of the community, Truman could defer to the wisdom of local Democrats through his enthusiastic endorsement of them in comparison to the Republicans in the "do-nothing" 80th Congress.

The Congressional focus in Truman's rhetoric also afforded weight to Truman's argument that third-parties could not be taken seriously, because they lacked power in

289. James Sundquist, *Politics and Policy: The Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson Years* (Washington DC: The Brookings Institution, 1968), 65-68; 83; 233.

290. Michael J. Sproule, "The New Managerial Rhetoric and the Old Criticism." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 74, no. 4 (1988), 468-486.

291. Truman, *Miracle of '48*. 41.

government.²⁹² Only a government united behind a single party could achieve the power necessary to enact a legislative agenda. Truman reminded voters that third-parties were powerless to stand up to the Republican obstructionists in the day-to-day operations of governing.²⁹³ In Truman's formulation, the essential ingredient for change was power. Truman's use of presidential power, combined with the rhetoric that claimed that only a party with significant representation in Congress had the power to govern, presented major party candidates as the only viable options.

Party Repair and Populism in 1948

Truman's rhetoric in 1948 bore a clear resemblance to Wallace's. Truman, like Wallace, relied on a populist rhetorical style. Populism occupies an important place in the history of American political rhetoric. Often connected to the Free Silver movement in the late nineteenth century, populism has extended well beyond its original connotation.²⁹⁴ Populism has been associated with such differing movements and candidacies as the American Temperance movement, the leadership of Huey Long in Louisiana in the 1920s and 1930s, the Ross Perot campaign in 1992, and the modern Tea Party Movement.²⁹⁵ While the label has been attached to political movements across

292. Ibid., 98.

293. Ibid.

294. Paul Taggart, *Populism: Concepts in the Social Sciences* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2000), 26-27.

295. Ibid., 26-27; 37-42; Matt Guardino and Dean Snyder. "The Tea Party and the crisis of neoliberalism: Mainstreaming new right populism in the corporate news media." *New Political Science* 34, no. 4 (2012): 527-548.

generations, scholars have failed to agree on an overarching definition of this phenomenon they label populism.

Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser argue for an ideational understanding of populism.²⁹⁶ The authors define populism as, “a thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic camps, ‘the pure people’ versus ‘the corporate elite,’ and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people.”²⁹⁷ Populism, then, is concerned with the power of the people relative to elite sources of influence in a society. Especially important to the current analysis is Mudde and Kaltwasser’s understanding of the thin-centeredness of populism. This concept of thin-centeredness addresses the means by which populism is molded to fit a wide variety of social and political movements.²⁹⁸ The authors contrast populism with “thick-centered” ideologies like liberalism or communism that are tied to concrete prescriptions and are not easily reconciled to one another.²⁹⁹ By contrast, populism is malleable. In 2016, for example, both Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump were labeled populists despite occupying distant ends of the political spectrum.

296. Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, *Populism: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

297. *Ibid.*, 5-6.

298. *Ibid.*, 5-20.

299. *Ibid.*

Michael Lee argues that populist rhetoric has four fundamental characteristics.³⁰⁰ First, Lee suggests, populism requires a formulation of *the people* as the heroes of the dominant political narrative. Second, populism requires rhetors to establish a clearly defined enemy of the people. Third, Lee claims that populism requires an identification of the system which has been corrupted by the common enemy and requires saving by the heroic people. The fourth characteristic is what Lee describes as “win-at-all-cost, zero-sum rhetoric.”³⁰¹ As this section illustrates, all four of these themes emerged in Truman’s 1948 general election rhetoric; but in many ways, Truman did not embody the same position as early populist leaders like William Jennings Bryan.

Ronald Lee notes the paradox of candidates like Jimmy Carter who use the language of populism but who are far from the radical progressive causes to which the term was initially applied.³⁰² Lee reconciles this paradox by connecting populism to an “anti-party age” that praises outsiders who use the primary system to secure party nominations despite establishment opposition.³⁰³ Truman’s rhetoric of populism takes this paradox to a new level as the face of the Democratic establishment, the incumbent president, and a leader facing down his own populist challenge. Still, as the following

300. Michael Lee, “The Populist Chameleon: The People’s Party, Huey Long, George Wallace, and the Populist Argumentative Frame” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 92, no. 4 (2006), 355-378.

301. *Ibid.*

302. Ronald Lee, “The New Populist Campaign for Economic Democracy: A Rhetorical Exploration,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 72, no. 3 (1986): 274-289.

303. *Ibid.*, 274-283.

paragraphs demonstrate, Truman's campaign addresses exemplified a rhetoric of populism and attached that populist rhetoric to the major party labels.

Truman routinely presented himself as the voice of "the people." He often referred to the people as a collective and praised them for their political knowledge and for their capacity to see past Republican deceptions.³⁰⁴ Truman presented voting for Democrats as a matter of individual self-interest for the common person. Especially important for the rhetoric of party repair was the connection that Truman made between populism and party identity. The primary agency for the people was the Democratic Party. At a campaign stop in Iowa, Truman proclaimed: "The Democratic Party represents the people. It is pledged to work for agriculture. It is pledged to work for the small businessman and the white-collar worker. The Democratic Party puts human rights and human welfare first."³⁰⁵ In Truman's framing, the populist dividing lines of the people versus the elite mapped neatly onto the partisan divisions of Republicans versus Democrats. Truman also argued that this populism was deeply rooted in the history of the Democratic Party. In St. Louis, Truman said, "The Democratic Party, which I now head, stands for the people—and always has stood for the people."³⁰⁶ Truman argued that the people needed to remain unified against their wealthy adversaries.

Truman's campaign rhetoric exemplified the formula for populism advanced by Michael Lee.³⁰⁷ Truman presented the people as the heroic figures in an ongoing political

304. Truman, *Miracle of '48*.123; 140.

305. *Ibid.*, 72.

306. *Ibid.*, 182.

307. Lee, 357-362.

struggle. Two groups represented the common person for Truman: the laborer and the farmer. Both groups embodied the heroism of the general population in unique ways, but Truman argued that both groups were united in confronting a common enemy, which he described as the wealthy, special interests, who were the masters of the Republican Party. Truman suggested that strong farms and strong unions were essential to preserving the American way of life.³⁰⁸ In the rhetoric of party repair, these groups became a synecdoche for the larger American population.

Truman's populism continued his insistence that there were only two options available to the American voters, and those options were diametrically opposed in their form and function. For laborers, Truman highlighted the policy accomplishments of the past 16 years, including the Wagner Labor Relations Act that Truman described as "a bill of rights for labor."³⁰⁹ Often in the same speech, Truman blasted the policies of the Republicans, including the recently passed Taft-Hartley Act.³¹⁰ The Democratic nominee also highlighted the strength of unions and low unemployment rates during Democratic administrations.³¹¹ At Hunt Armory in Pittsburgh, Truman claimed, "In 1946 more people had jobs than ever before in the history of the country. Unions were healthier and had more members than ever before. And the working men and women of the United States produced more goods in 1946 than in any previous peacetime year."³¹² The two-

308. *Ibid.*, 144.

309. *Ibid.*, 183-184.

310. *Ibid.*, 101; 110-111.

311. *Ibid.*, 66; 144; 183-184.

312. *Ibid.*, 144.

party narrative regarding labor deflected the blame that Wallace placed on Truman and rerouted it toward the Republicans.

Truman made similar claims about farmers. He presented the Democratic Party as the hero of farmers and the Republicans as their greatest enemy, again neglecting the agricultural claims of Wallace and Thurmond. Truman opened the National Plowing Match in Dexter, Iowa with a speech in which he boldly pronounced, “The Republican Congress has already stuck a pitchfork in the farmer’s back.”³¹³ He emphasized the effects of the depression on farmers and blasted the policies of the 80th Congress.³¹⁴ Truman attempted to elevate farming as the central identity for agricultural communities in the 1948 campaign, rather than race or geography. He suggested to farmers that the Republican Party posed a direct threat to their identities and their livelihoods. At a whistle stop in Fresno, California, Truman said, “If I remember correctly, in 1932 there were 123,000 farmers kicked off their farms.”³¹⁵ His reminders of the effects of the depression suggested strong evidence that farmers should vote their identities. In the final speech of the campaign, Truman made this case explicit, asserting, “And I’ll say to you that any farmer in these United States who votes against his own interests, that is, who votes the Republican ticket, ought to have his head examined.”³¹⁶

While Truman’s rhetoric on farmers closely mirrored his approach to labor more generally, he also added elements of identification through common ground by discussing

313. *Ibid.*, 73.

314. *Ibid.*, 91; 116.

315. *Ibid.*, 91.

316. *Ibid.*, 182.

his own history as a farmer in Missouri. At the plowing match in Iowa, Truman said, “I did have a reputation, though, of being able to sow a 160-acre wheat field without a skipped place showing in it.”³¹⁷ Truman’s discussion of himself as a farmer was one of the rare moments when he departed from the position that party was the embodiment of the people and instead drew attention to himself, a strategy that is much more common among other populist leaders. Unlike many other populist rhetors, Truman did not present himself as the hero of the people, but instead argued that the party was the hero of the people and suggested that to abandon the Democratic party after it had saved the farmers and laborers was an act of betrayal.

As previous sections have noted, a sense of enmity was at the core of Truman’s rhetoric of party repair, but that enmity was even more concretely rooted in the populist notion of the masses against the masters. Truman fostered a vivid image of wealth among America’s elite. Speaking largely in front of poor and middle-class audiences, Truman characterized the Washington decision-makers as sitting behind locked doors, in smoke-filled rooms complaining about workers. Before a very large crowd in Detroit, Truman charged, “Too many Americans in dining cars, in country clubs, and fashionable resorts are repeating, like parrots, the phrase ‘Labor must be kept in its place.’”³¹⁸ Throughout the campaign Truman described Republican leaders as gluttonous.³¹⁹ Before a group of farmers, the president alleged, “The Wall Street reactionaries are not satisfied with being rich. They want to increase their power and their privileges, regardless of what happens

317. *Ibid.*, 77.

318. *Ibid.*, 65.

319. *Ibid.*, 71; 72; 90.

to the other fellow. They are gluttons of privilege.”³²⁰ He put this gluttonous image into direct contrast with the budget tightening required by farmers around the country.³²¹ In one of the most memorable populist statements of the campaign, Truman told an audience in Wisconsin, “I remember about twenty years ago that a popular Republican slogan was, ‘Two cars in every garage.’ This year their slogan is ‘Two families in every garage.’”³²²

Truman expressed a deep and enduring belief that the Republican Party was for sale to the highest bidder. He claimed that the Republican campaign was funded by big business and that various lobbies used those contributions as leverage for votes in Congress. All of this, Truman argued, occurred at the expense of laborers, farmers, and small business owners. At Chicago Stadium, Truman explained, “Great corporations have been expanding their power steadily. They have been squeezing small businesses further and further out of the picture. The lobbies which work for big business found that they could get what their bosses wanted from the Republican leaders of the 80th Congress.”³²³ Truman’s attacks on special interests conform to Michael Lee’s observation that populism typically takes on a systemic character.³²⁴ Special interests had fundamentally corrupted the democratic system designed to reflect the interests of the people.

320. *Ibid.*, 71.

321. *Ibid.*, 72.

322. *Ibid.*, 126.

323. *Ibid.*, 156.

324. Lee, “The Populist Chameleon,” 360-361.

Truman described two competing, zero-sum visions of government, the first was reflected in the Republican support for special interest and the second, embodied in the party of FDR, sought to achieve Lincoln's visions of government "of the people, by the people, for the people."³²⁵ Truman told an audience in Cleveland, "To put it in plain English, it means that I believe in one kind of government: government for the people. The Republicans believe in another kind of government: government for special interests."³²⁶ According to Truman, the Democratic label was defined by an underlying identity of "the people" versus "the powerful," and there was no way to reconcile those two visions.

Conclusion

While some view populism as possessing a radical potential in politics, capable of unseating dominant forces in contemporary society, Truman used the rhetoric of populism as a tool of the center and the status quo. Not only did Truman use populism as a mechanism to dismiss a significantly more liberal intraparty challenger, he used the language of populism to argue on behalf of himself, despite being a largely unpopular incumbent. Ronald Lee observed a similar paradox in the rhetoric of Jimmy Carter and California-based politician and peace activist Tom Hayden.³²⁷ Lee rooted his observation

325. Garry Wills, *Lincoln at Gettysburg: The Words that Remade America* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992).

326. Truman, *Miracle of '48*. 161.

327. Lee, "The New Populist Campaign for Economic Democracy," 274; 281-283.

in the declining power of parties post-Vietnam, but Truman suggests that what Lee labels “new populism” may have a much older rhetorical legacy.³²⁸

Truman effectively masked intraparty differences within the language of a “thin-centered” ideology, but such masking did little to resolve the underlying conflicts between factions and identity-groups within the broader Democratic coalition. By 1968, Democratic control of the South was no longer an assumption in American politics; and in 2019, Northern progressives continue to challenge centrist Democratic nominees for the heart and soul of their party.

Where Mugwumps and Blainiacs had battled over competing interpretations of morality in reshaping the Republican Party label, Progressives, Dixiecrats, and Democrats turned first to identity to delineate partisan boundaries. Like 1884, 1948 has not been classified as a critical or realigning election, but the rhetoric of the campaign certainly shaped the direction of the Democratic Party post-Roosevelt. The elections of 1884 and 1948 cannot be viewed in a vacuum. These campaigns provide valuable insights into our understanding of electoral realignment, party repair, and the Never Trump movement of 2016. The concluding chapter seeks to describe these implications and discuss future directions for understanding political parties based in organizational identification.

328. *Ibid.*, 275-278.

Chapter 6: Mugwumps and Never Trumps

Leaving one's political party is a powerful act of protest. Large scale bolting from a political party not only sends a message to party leaders; it strikes at the core of the organizational identity of that party. In leaving, partisans redraw the boundaries of American politics' most fundamental institutions, even if that bolting does not ultimately result in a large-scale realignment. The power of such movements in shaping and defining organizational identities lies in their rhetoric. In the opening lines of the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson writes:

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.¹

Jefferson's observation that political separation should be accompanied by a statement of the causes impelling that separation could be read as a rather banal description of the document's purpose, but its language demonstrates the power of rhetoric in shaping and defining political institutions, including governments. Governments are created rhetorically, by a statement or statements of intention. To be fully constituted, a separation, like a government, must be declared. The subsequent actions of its signers gave force to the Declaration, but it is a declaration itself that calls separation into being and that gives meaning to the actions that follow in its wake.

As with governments, political parties are rhetorically constituted. Such constitution occurs among party leaders, party followers, and the party in government;

1. Second Continental Congress, Declaration of Independence, 1776.

but party separations are also rhetorical, and the decision of one group to bolt from their previous political party challenges the extant schema for identification. Party bolting may shift the rhetoric of identification from partisan sorting to a type of ethical sorting. When partisan bonds break, actors may turn to the language of ethics to redefine their organizational ties and create new boundaries for identification. As *Harper's Weekly* editor George William Curtis suggested in 1880, "Scratching and bolting are the great restorative powers of the republic, of liberty, of political morality, and decency."² The advocates of party bolting present a unique challenge to our understanding of ethics in political parties and of organizations more broadly.

Party bolting may also depend on those other facets of identity that intersect with political partisanship. As with the election of 1948, partisan identity formation can depend on race, regionalism, or ideology. Such transformations are both gradual and rhetorical. Rhetorical criticism opens unique possibilities for understanding gradual or perpetual realignment. The tensions between partisan and group identity observed by Achen and Bartels are made manifest in the rhetoric of intraparty conflict and party repair during each election cycle.³ By focusing on identification within intraparty conflicts, critics can provide a richness to their analysis previously missing from the study of political partisanship.

2. George William Curtis, "Machine politics and the Remedy," in *Political Pamphlets, 1876-1888, Issue 1*, ed. B.A. Hinsdale, (New York, D. Appleton and Company, 1880), 10.

3. Christopher H. Achen and Larry M. Bartels, *Democracy for Realists: Why Elections Do Not Produce Responsive Government* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 228-235.

One example of such richness is an appreciation for the role of “thin-centered” ideologies like populism in reconciling disparate identity groups within a coalition. Achen and Bartels note the centrality of various social identity categories to political partisanship when they say, “We have argued that voters choose political parties, first and foremost, in order to align themselves with the appropriate coalition of social groups. Most citizens support a party not because they have carefully calculated that its policy positions are closest to their own, but rather because ‘their kind’ of person belongs to that party.”⁴ Achen and Bartels’ observation, driven by social-scientific data, does not account for the fundamentally rhetorical phenomenon of identity construction that drives citizens toward the belief that “their kind of person” is affiliated with a particular party. Such cues are fundamentally a subject of *identification*. The authors’ interpretation further cannot account for the bizarre association between diametrically opposed social identity groups under the Democratic Party label as late as the 1960s. Achen and Bartels focus on conflict between parties to make sense of partisan identity, but it is both *interparty* and *intraparty* conflict that constitute America’s partisan organizations.

Achen and Bartels suggest that policies are always subservient to social identities in partisan affiliation, but the Dixiecrat Revolt, for example, was driven by intertwined elements of social identity and policies directly tied to those social identities in the area of civil rights. Rhetorically, Truman and Thurmond elevated differing social identities (race and class) while Truman and Wallace focused on the same social identity (class). The thin-centeredness of populism allowed Truman to construct an identity that was driven not only by class, but by a top-bottom antithesis, which was able to subsume the

4. Ibid., 307.

disparate social identity groups of the New Deal coalition and bring them back into the party fold.

Gamm argues that within the Democratic Party, different social identity groups experienced their own realignments.⁵ Conducting a study of different coalitions in Boston, Gamm claimed, “each cluster of precincts responded in its own peculiar way to the events of the era.”⁶ Truman’s overarching, thin-centered narrative of populism became localized within the individual communities along his whistle stop tour where he wholeheartedly endorsed both traditional Southern Democrats and radical Northern progressives. In so doing, Truman was able to repair the broken Democratic coalition on a district-by-district basis.

By contrast, Blainiacs failed to challenge the associative moral stigma constructed by Mugwumps. While the Mugwumps were largely homogenous in their social identity, they constructed a narrative in which morality, rather than ideology or identity, directed partisan identification. The Blainiacs privileged partisan identity over individual ethics, especially when it could be demonstrated that the organization with which they identified was moral enough to shield individual immorality. These differing approaches to morality and partisanship may account for dramatically different rhetorical responses to candidate scandals and the justification or diminishing of immoral behavior carried out by one’s fellow partisans.

5. Ibid., 252.

6. Gerald H. Gamm, *The Making of the New Deal Democrats: Voting behavior and realignment in Boston, 1920-1940*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 190.

At times, disidentification can be grounded in theories of legitimacy and said legitimacy may be derived from fidelity to those identity categories that provide the building blocks for an identity-based coalition. Legitimacy may also be derived from ideology, morality, or public memory. The intraparty movements analyzed in this study deployed public memory as a tool of disidentification. Blaine and Truman also used public memory to appeal to disaffected partisans. Like the other facets of disidentification and party repair, competition over legitimacy and memory occurred even in campaigns that were not labeled *critical* or *realigning* elections.

Throughout the remainder of the 20th century, intraparty movements continued to shape the partisan landscape, not through large-scale realignment, but through the gradual process of intraparty conflict and party repair. Both the Republican and Democratic parties experienced gradual realignment and recalibration in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.⁷ For Republicans, this realignment often manifested in terms of the tenuous relationship between economic, military, and social conservatism, where for Democrats, the identity groups that constitute the Democratic coalition experienced their own gradual realignments.⁸ Movements like the Tea Party and Bernie-or-Bust, described in chapter two, put pressure on existing party labels and pulled the major parties in new directions.

7. Matthew Grossmann and David A. Hopkins, *Asymmetric Politics: Ideological Republicans and Group Interest Democrats* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 70-79; Achen and Bartels, *Democracy for Realists*, 238-258.

8. Susan Currie Sivek, "Editing Conservatism: How National Review Magazine Framed and Mobilized a Political Movement." *Mass Communication and Society* 11, no. 3 (2008): 248-274; Achen and Bartels, *Democracy for Realists*, 238-258; Grossmann and Hopkins, *Asymmetric Politics*, 70-79.

The 2016 presidential election represents a direct analogue to the elections of 1884 and 1948 with respect to intraparty movements and the analysis of organizational identification, partisan change, and party repair. Like Blaine and Truman, Donald Trump faced an uphill battle in his effort to unite a deeply divided Republican Party. Trump may provide the clearest example yet of a central argument of this dissertation: that party conflicts are not external exigencies to which candidates are responding; instead they are exigencies called into being by the partisans themselves and constituted through the language of disidentification and party repair. Trump, along with the Never Trumpers, constructed the battle of intraparty conflict in 2016 and responded to it. Craig Allen Smith's astute analysis of Trump's nomination address is instructive about the nature of Trump's party repair efforts.⁹ Smith describes Donald Trump's approach to party reunification in terms of a "hostile takeover."¹⁰ The best parallel for Trump's efforts at party repair may come from the Blainiacs of 1884 who blasted Mugwumps for their hypocrisy and lack of party loyalty. Donald Trump made headlines for viciously attacking his intraparty rivals throughout the campaign, but those attacks had a firm grounding in the legacy of intraparty conflict.¹¹

9. Craig Allen Smith "I Alone" vs. "Stronger Together": Contrasting Visions in the 2016 Nomination Acceptance Addresses," *American Behavioral Scientist* 61, no. 9, 966-985.

10. *Ibid.*, 967-969.

11. Donald Trump, "Mitt Romney 'Let us Down:' Video," *CNN Politics*, last modified 2016, <https://www.cnn.com/videos/politics/2016/06/11/trump-romney-let-us-down-sot.cnn>; Jenna Johnson, "Donald Trump has no interest in apologizing to John McCain," *Washington Post*, July 12, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2016/07/12/donald-trump-has-no-interest-in-apologizing-to-john-mccain/?utm_term=.330c05a2ca6f.

Much of the story of the 2016 election and its lasting effects on partisan alignment is yet to be written. Unlike the elections of 1884 and 1948, scholars do not yet know whether Trump represents a dramatic change in the partisan landscape or if the Republican Party will swing back in the direction of its more recent nominees. Still, some rhetorical scholarship has attempted to predict these long-term changes based on intraparty rhetoric.¹² Given the relative lack of hindsight, this chapter does not offer a full analysis of the 2016 campaign, but rather focuses on the lessons from the two case studies in chapters four and five and describes how those lessons should inform scholarship on 2016 and modern political partisanship.

The lessons of intraparty conflict from 1884 and 1948 can shape scholarly understanding of the 2016 presidential election and the Never Trump movement, as well as shape future investigations of intraparty conflict. The following sections outline some of the lessons that these two campaigns and the intraparty divisions therein can teach 21st century scholars of political communication. I begin by providing brief context for the 2016 election and the Never Trump movement before identifying some of the significant lessons provided by intraparty conflict in America's past that inform our understanding of the most recent presidential election.

2016 and the Rhetoric of Realignment

On the morning of November 9th, 2016 readers around the globe awoke to headlines that for many had seemed unimaginable. The front page of the *London Evening*

12. Mary E. Stuckey, "American Elections and the Rhetoric of Political Change: Hyperbole, Anger, and Hope in U.S. Politics," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 20 no. 4 (2017), 667-694.

Standard boasted the headline: “Trump Triumph Shocks World.”¹³ “Stunner!” said the *Boston Herald*.¹⁴ Perhaps best capturing international sentiment, *Le Journal de Québec* featured a rare English headline that simply read “Oh my God!”¹⁵ Donald Trump’s improbable victory had not only shocked media outlets and political pundits, but it has upset conventional wisdom among political scientists, campaign professionals, and scholars of political communication. At seemingly every turn, Donald Trump had violated the norms and expectations of a successful presidential candidate. The president-elect had been embroiled in scandals concerning his business dealings, his tax payments (or lack of payments), his coarse language directed at veterans and their families, and a leaked video in which the reality TV star boasted about using his fame to assault women.¹⁶ He led a party that seemed to be deeply divided over his candidacy.¹⁷ State and national polling data before the election seemed to suggest that the Trump campaign was in a dire position, but on November 8th, Donald Trump won the presidency with victories

13. Jamie Bullen, “How the world reacted to Donald Trump's stunning election win,” *Evening Standard*, November 9, 2016, <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/world/how-the-world-reacted-to-donald-trumps-stunning-us-election-win-over-hillary-clinton-a3391571.html>.

14. *Ibid.*

15. *Ibid.*

16. Nate Silver, “Trump Isn’t Teflon,” *FiveThirtyEight*, October 13, 2016, <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/trump-isnt-teflon>.

17. Ronald Brownstein “The Grand Old Divided Party,” *The Atlantic*, July 21, 2016 <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/07/the-grand-old-divided-party/492422/>.

in several key states.¹⁸ Both in popular media and in the academy, Trump's victory touched off a process of collective sensemaking, as political elites attempted to reconcile plainly violated assumptions of American politics with the outcome of the 2016 presidential election.

Nowhere was such sensemaking more apparent than with respect to political parties. In the minds of many, Donald Trump's candidacy and his victory had seriously disrupted public understanding of the Republican Party label. During the primary campaign, Trump ran as an outsider, vocally opposing the party establishment and mocking the party's most recent presidential nominees. Traditional Republicans pushed back against Trump early in the primary process. Among the most famous rebukes of Trump's candidacy during the primaries came from former Republican nominee Mitt Romney. On March 3rd, as Donald Trump was surging in the polls, Romney spoke before a sympathetic audience at the Hinckley Institute of Politics on the campus of the University of Utah. In the speech, Romney explicitly attacked the Republican frontrunner, calling Trump a "phony" and arguing that Trump's policy proposals would sink the country "into a prolonged recession."¹⁹ Mitt Romney's speech was just one sign of growing intraparty strife that extended well beyond a typical primary campaign and

18. Stockton University "Stockton Poll: Clinton Leads Trump 51-40 Percent; Casino Expansion Opposed," *Stockton University*, November 4, 2016, <https://stockton.edu/news/poll-clinton-leading-51-points.html>

19. Mitt Romney, "Transcript: Mitt Romney's takedown of Donald Trump," *Washington Post*, March 3, 2016, *Washington Post*, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2016/03/03/transcript-mitt-romneys-takedown-of-donald-trump/?utm_term=.f1ffb2952198.

suggested that regardless of which Republican won the primary, party repair would be an important task for the eventual nominee.

When Donald Trump ultimately secured the Republican nomination despite intense opposition, party elites were still deeply divided, with many vowing to bolt. Among the elite bolters of the Republican Party in 2016 were high-profile conservative commentators like George Will and William Kristol.²⁰ Then, on October 7th, 2016, just one month before the election, the *Washington Post* released a recorded conversation between Trump and *Access Hollywood* correspondent Billy Bush in which Trump bragged that his fame allowed him to grab women in a sexual manner without their consent.²¹ After the release of the video, more high-profile Republicans bolted from the party and joined their colleagues in the Never Trump movement. Republican Speaker of the House Paul Ryan, then the highest-ranking elected Republican, vowed not to defend Trump and appeared to sanction Republican members of Congress in abandoning the Republican standard bearer.²²

20. David D. Graham, "Which Republicans Oppose Donald Trump? A Cheat Sheet," *The Atlantic*, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/11/where-republicans-stand-on-donald-trump-a-cheat-sheet/481449/>.

21. David A. Fahrenthold "Trump Recorded Having Extremely Lewd Conversation About Women in 2005" *Washington Post*, October 8, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-recorded-having-extremely-lewd-conversation-about-women-in-2005/2016/10/07/3b9ce776-8cb4-11e6-bf8a-3d26847eed4_story.html?utm_term=.aa65ac2823ee.

22. Kevin Liptak, Manu Raju, and Deirdre Walsh, "Paul Ryan said he won't defend Donald Trump," *CNN*, October 11, 2016, <https://www.cnn.com/2016/10/10/politics/paul-ryan-said-he-wont-defend-donald-trump/index.html>.

On election night, as the results came in, it quickly became clear that many non-elites in the Republican Party who had opposed Trump's nomination were eventually brought back on board with his candidacy.²³ As the sensemaking process began, many in media and the academy turned to grand explanations for how Trump could have reunited the Republican Party.²⁴ Trump had rejected some long-held Republican policy positions, including support for free-trade and military intervention. He had appeared on the show InfoWars, whose host had been a leading proponent of the conspiracy theory that former Republican president George Bush had staged the September 11th terror attacks that killed nearly 3,000 Americans.²⁵ Trump had rejected traditional "family values" conservatism, often publicly flaunting his own sexual history and making degrading comments about women's bodies on programs like the *Howard Stern Show*. Given these departures from past Republican candidates, journalists and scholars soon began to use the language of "realignment."²⁶

23. BBC News, "Reality Check: Who voted for Donald Trump?" *BBC News*, November 9, 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/election-us-2016-37922587>.

24. See for example: Jim Tankersley, "How Trump won: The revenge of working-class whites" *Washington Post*, November 9, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2016/11/09/how-trump-won-the-revenge-of-working-class-whites/?utm_term=.bfe04ed383f2.

25. Tucker Higgins, "The bizarre political rise and fall of Infowars' Alex Jones," *CNBC News*, September 14, 2018, <https://www.cNBC.com/2018/09/14/alex-jones-rise-and-fall-of-infowars-conspiracy-pusher.html>.

26. See for example: Lee Drutman, "Donald Trump Will Dramatically Realign America's Political Parties," *Foreign Policy*, November 11, 2016, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/11/11/why-democrats-should-abandon-angry-working-class-whites/>.

In a *New York Times* editorial the day after Trump's victory, historian Beverly Gage wrote, "This essential political idea — that a vast segment of the nation's white citizens have been overlooked, or looked down upon — has driven every major realignment in American politics since the New Deal."²⁷ Even before the election, Trump and his rhetoric were treated as signs of the coming realignment. For example, former DNC official Mark Siegel wrote for the *Huffington Post* about three signs of realignment, one of which was explicitly tied to Trump's effect on the GOP. Siegel wrote, "the Trump phenomenon has ruptured the Republican political brand and accelerated the party's fatal weaknesses with the expanding constituencies of this new America."²⁸ Siegel, as with many others, viewed Trump as a signal of the demise of the current iteration of the GOP.

In the academy, Stuckey's 2017 article on what the author dubbed "the rhetoric of political change" argues that 2016 signaled a coming partisan realignment.²⁹ She pointed to hyperbolic, angry, and even hopeful partisan rhetoric as the signs of an impending transformation.³⁰ Stuckey's argument depends on an understanding of realignment that is tied to *party systems* and *critical elections*. As noted in the early chapters of this dissertation, there is already considerable question about whether critical elections can be said to exist and whether "party systems" are easily or neatly separated from one another.

27. Beverly Gage, "Who is the Forgotten Man?" *The New York Times*, November 9, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/projects/cp/opinion/election-night-2016/who-is-the-forgotten-man>.

28. Mark Siegel, "A New Political Era: The 2016-2020 Realignment Is Underway," *The Huffington Post*, September 8, 2016, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/a-new-political-era-the-2_b_11392304.

29. Stuckey, "American Elections and the Rhetoric of Political Change," 671.

30. *Ibid.*, 667-694.

Stuckey argues that intraparty conflict may signal the emergence of a new party system. Stuckey writes, “Even more revealing are the ways in which these moments of political change may be characterized by a rise in intraparty incivility.”³¹ The elections of 1884 and 1948 illustrate that intense intraparty incivility existed deep within what would traditionally be labeled as *party systems*. The next two sections seek to illustrate that Trump’s candidacy and the intraparty conflict that surrounded it was largely a routine example of partisan disidentification and party repair that has characterized much of the existence of American political parties rather than a sign of a partisan realignment. I conclude by arguing that rhetorical criticism may better understand political parties by examining the constitutive power of rhetoric from both interparty and intraparty repair.

Never Trump Moralism

The parallels between the Mugwumps of 1884 and the Never Trump Movement of 2016 are easily noticeable. Like the Mugwumps, the Never Trumpers represented the intellectual elite of their party.³² Many were retired or nearing retirement from their elective posts.³³ They often relied on the language of public moralism in justifying their bolt, and they advanced a similar construct to *associative morality*. Never Trumpers made

31. *Ibid.*, 670.

32. Emerald Robinson “The Collapse of the Never-Trump Conservatives,” *The American Spectator*, January 15, 2019, <https://spectator.org/the-collapse-of-the-never-trump-conservatives/>.

33. William Bryan Paul, Josh C. Bramlett, and Joel Lansing Reed, “Mr. Flake Gets Out of Washington: Republican Retirement Rhetoric and the Martyr’s Continuum in the Age of Trump,” Paper presented at the Central States Communication Association Conference, Political Communication Division, Omaha, NE, April 2019.

the case that voting for Trump would stigmatize the Republican Party.³⁴ Never Trump leaders tended to rely on the language of character or of moral virtue in making their case against the Republican nominee. For example, Former Republican governor and primary candidate Jeb Bush cited Trump's "temperament, character, trustworthiness, and integrity" as reasons for opposing Trump's candidacy.³⁵ Former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said, "as a Republican, I hope to support someone who has the dignity and stature to run for the highest office in the greatest democracy on earth."³⁶ A letter signed by over 150 conservative professors and researchers said of Donald Trump, "He is a unique and dire threat to the political principles, liberties, and cultural values of justice, fairness, honesty, and decency we have long defended."³⁷ Each of these statements, as well as numerous others issued by anti-Trump Republicans, could easily be substituted for Mugwump moralizing from the nineteenth century. Moral opposition to Trump put pressure on the "family values" and "free trade" labels of the GOP, but many socially and

34. Reuters "Rich Republican Donors Are Worried Trump Will Tarnish Their Reputations," *Reuters*, March 16, 2016, <http://fortune.com/2016/03/16/rich-republicans-worried-trump-tarnish-reputations/>.

35. Jeb Bush "Jeb Bush on voting in 2016: 'I can't do it,'" *NBC News*, July 11, 2016, <https://www.nbcnews.com/dateline/video/jeb-bush-on-voting-in-2016-i-can-t-do-it-723183683554>.

36. Condoleezza Rice, "Condi Rice: 'Enough' With Trump," by David M. Jackson, *USA Today*, October 8, 2016, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/onpolitics/2016/10/08/donald-trump-condoleezza-rice/91802176/>.

37. Scholars and Writers Against Trump, "Letter," *Scholars and Writers Against Trump*, accessed April 14, 2019, <https://scholarsandwritersagainsttrump.wordpress.com/>.

fiscally conservative Republicans returned to the party fold prior to the general election nonetheless.

One of the major distinctions between the rhetoric of Mugwumps and Never Trumps may be the Never Trump movement's reluctance to back Trump's opponent, Hillary Clinton. Many in the Never Trump movement sought out viable third-party alternatives.³⁸ Others who eventually endorsed Clinton did so while still expressing serious reservations. Former New Jersey Republican Governor Christine Todd Whitman, for example, said in her "endorsement" of Clinton, "A Hillary presidency promises more of the Obama failed policies, but she would at least walk into the oval office ready to govern."³⁹ Many, including Jeb Bush, chose to pull their support from Trump and not endorse any candidate.⁴⁰ Never Trump Republicans were consistently vocal in their support of down-ballot Republicans.⁴¹ The rhetoric of the Never Trump movement suggests that for most bolters, Trump's nomination had not disrupted their underlying

38. Patrick Condon, "McMullin, other third-party presidential candidates also on Minnesota ballot," *Star Tribune*, October 16, 2016, <http://www.startribune.com/mcmullin-other-third-party-presidential-candidates-also-on-minnesota-ballot/397255481>.

39. Christine Todd Whitman, "Gov. Whitman: Why Clinton is the only choice for president: Opinion," *The Star-Ledger*, October 7, 2016, https://www.nj.com/opinion/2016/10/gov_whitman_why_clinton_is_the_only_true_choice_fo.html.

40. Bush "Jeb Bush on voting in 2016."

41. Quin Hilyer, "I'm a 'Never Trumper.' I'm still voting Republican on Tuesday," *Washington Examiner*, November 2, 2018, <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/im-a-never-trumper-im-still-voting-republican-on-tuesday>.

faith in the Republican Party.⁴² Given the continued opposition to the Democratic Party and to Clinton, and general support for Republican policies, the election of 2016 may be even less suggestive of traditional partisan realignment than the election of 1884.

Efforts at party repair challenged the moral framing of the Never Trump movement and relied on antithesis and organizational morality to make the case that Trump's misdeeds did not change the fundamental partisan calculation of the 2016 election. One of Trump's most vocal evangelical supporters was First Baptist Dallas pastor Robert Jeffress. In an interview with *Fox News*, Jeffress used the language of organizational morality to justify his continued support of Trump in the aftermath of the *Access Hollywood* tapes.⁴³ Individual morality was subservient to the morality of the ingroup and amorality of the outgroup. After explaining his continued support of Trump, Jeffress said, "And I just remind my conservative friends, don't lose focus about what this election is about. It's about the Supreme Court and the future of our country."⁴⁴ Another evangelical leader, Franklin Graham, said in a Facebook post just after the release of the *Access Hollywood* tape: "The crude comments made by Donald J. Trump more than 11 years ago cannot be defended. But the godless progressive agenda of Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton likewise cannot be defended."⁴⁵ Strong opposition to

42. Jay Caruso, "I'm Not Leaving the Republican Party," *The Atlantic*, October 18, 2018 <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2018/10/trump-cant-make-me-leave-gop/573259/>.

43. Robert Jeffress "Pastor: Trump's Comments Not Enough for Me to Back Clinton," *Fox News*, October 9, 2016, <https://video.foxnews.com/v/5163050429001/#sp=show-clips>.

44. Ibid.

45. Franklin Graham, "The crude comments made by Donald J. Trump," *Facebook*, October 8, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/FranklinGraham/posts/1271741769548668>.

Clinton and the Democratic Party animated much of the Republican defense of Trump throughout the campaign even after the *Access Hollywood* tape. There were certainly nuanced differences between the positions of Jeffress and the Blainiacs of 1884, but those distinctions seem to suggest that intraparty conflict in 2016 was even less indicative of realignment than the conflict of 1884.

The election of 2016, like all presidential elections, engaged a rhetoric of partisan identification. In that sense, the 2016 election could be labeled *realigning*, but such realignment is not made evident by the uniqueness of the 2016 campaign but rather by its typicality. Realignment is a rhetorical process of continuous organizational identification and identity formation. The prevalence of hyperbolic intraparty rhetoric in 2016 could easily be misread as a sign of a coming transformation in America's party system, but rhetoric is not a *sign* of realignment; it is the *stuff* of realignment. That substance manifests routinely in American politics, as intraparty movements, both bolting and non-bolting, reconstitute the party through language. The Bitzerean approach to rhetoric often prompts critics to see movements as responding to exigencies of their time, rather than constructing those central exigencies.⁴⁶ Stuckey's approach to the election of 2016, influenced by Bitzerean conceptions of the rhetorical situation, runs the risk of oversimplifying partisan transformations and returning critics to theories of realignment that view rhetoric simply as responsive to political change.

Trump, Identity, and Populism

Political scientist Lee Drutman wrote an article for *Foreign Policy* three days after Trump's victory entitled "Donald Trump Will Dramatically Realign America's Political

46. Lloyd F. Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 1, no.1: 3.

Parties.”⁴⁷ Drutman acknowledged that the 2016 election results were typical when compared to recent elections, but argued that rhetorically Trump had dramatically altered American politics through his brand of nationalist populism.⁴⁸ The subtitle to Drutman’s article read, “The GOP has become the party of populism. Now the Democrats have to build a new party of multicultural cosmopolitanism.”⁴⁹ Drutman’s position that Trump’s populism signaled realignment became a popular component of the sensemaking narrative during and after the 2016 election.⁵⁰ Authors often spoke of Trump’s *transformation* of the Republican Party. As *New Yorker* staff writer John Cassidy wrote, “Trump has been drawing on a base of alienated white working-class and middle-class voters, seeking to remake the G.O.P. into a more populist, nativist, avowedly protectionist, and semi-isolationist party that is skeptical of immigration, free trade, and military interventionism.”⁵¹ Populism was certainly far from the rhetoric of recent Republican nominees John McCain and Mitt Romney, but Republican rhetoric had been

47. Drutman, “Donald Trump Will Dramatically Realign America’s Political Parties.”

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid.

50. See for example: Joe Clements, “Donald Trump and America’s Political Realignment,” *Florida Politics*, December 13, 2018, <https://floridapolitics.com/archives/283352-trump-political-realignment>; John Cassidy, “Donald Trump Is Transforming the G.O.P. Into a Populist, Nativist Party,” *The New Yorker*, February 19, 2016, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/john-cassidy/donald-trump-is-transforming-the-g-o-p-into-a-populist-nativist-party>.

51. Cassidy, “Donald Trump Is Transforming the G.O.P. Into a Populist, Nativist Party.”

animated by populism before.⁵² The role of populism in the election of 1948 may help scholars better understand what populism means for partisan alignment in the 21st century.

In 1948, populism became a tool for the ultimate insider, the incumbent Democratic president whose party had controlled the White House for 16 years. Truman had been handpicked by party elites to replace a firebrand liberal vice president on the ballot in 1944, and that former vice president was now challenging him as a left-wing populist. In 1948, Truman was facing challenges from two different factions within his own party. Truman was able to adopt a populist message, not because of his individual policy positions, but because the thin-centeredness of populism allows it to be molded to a variety of economic, social, and foreign policy perspectives. In 1948, populism was an instrument of party repair rather than partisan realignment, meaning that it represented small-scale rhetorical changes to partisan identity rather than dramatic transformations in the meta-narratives of the party organizations.

The argument that Donald Trump's populist rhetoric amounts to a seismic shift in American political parties betrays a lack of understanding for how parties are routinely constituted and reconstituted through rhetoric. Donald Trump ran for president on a platform of cutting taxes, opposing abortion, rolling back regulations, increasing border security, and restoring sanctions on Iran. Donald Trump departed from Republican orthodoxy primarily on free trade and military intervention, but scholars need not look

52. See for example: Michael Weiler "The Reagan Attack on Welfare," in *Reagan and Public Discourse in America*, eds. Michael Weiler and W. Barnett Pearce (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1992), 227-250.

beyond the 2008 and 2012 presidential primaries for examples of Republican candidates challenging their party's establishment on these and other major policy positions.⁵³ Populism, antithesis, hyperbole, public memory, and appeals to social identity represent just some of the techniques of identification typically deployed by partisans across the political spectrum. As chapters four and five illustrate, the rhetoric of disidentification and party repair are a rich mechanism for understanding political parties as well as the gradual and continuous process through which partisan change occurs. Parties are not merely constituted at their founding but are regularly transformed across their histories through rhetoric. The current project reveals unique facets of this transformation process, and in so doing, sheds new light on political parties, organizational rhetoric, and realignment.

Conclusion

This dissertation makes contributions to four major areas within the study of political communication and presidential campaign rhetoric. The project contributes to our scholarly understanding of political *parties*, *elections*, *identification*, and *populism*. First, it advances the argument that political *parties* are rhetorically constituted, not only at their origination, as observed by Chaput, Brummans, and Cooren, but continuously

53. Mitt Romney, "Presidential Candidate Debates: Republican Candidates Debate in Rochester, Michigan," from The American Presidency Project, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/republican-candidates-debate-rochester-michigan>; Tim Pawlenty, "Republican Candidates Debate at Saint Anselm College in Manchester, New Hampshire," from The American Presidency Project, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/republican-candidates-debate-saint-anselm-college-manchester-new-hampshire>.

over the course of their long histories.⁵⁴ Even well-established parties are subject to contest and constitution through organizational rhetoric. This chapter further builds on that finding to make the case that partisan change should be viewed through the lens of identification and constitutive rhetoric, rather than through the traditional lens of realignment borrowed from political science.

The case studies in chapters four and five advance a new approach to understanding *elections* and campaign rhetoric. Studies abound about the role of identification in political campaign communication, but the extant research has postulated a candidate-focused form of identification, through which individual candidates seek consubstantiality with members of their audience. A study of campaigns rooted in organizational identification with a specific party rather than a specific candidate may better reflect the reality of American politics in which most Americans report a prior partisan identity.⁵⁵ Rhetoricians of the past have understood the role of political parties largely within the framework of primaries and conventions, but chapters four and five illustrate that party identification extends well beyond the nominating convention and shapes much of the rhetoric of a general election campaign.

This dissertation further advances the theory of *identification*. Chapters four and five suggest a variety of mechanisms beyond Cheney's tactics of organizational

54. Mathieu Chaput, Boris H. J. M. Brummans and François Cooren, "The Role of Organizational Identification in the Communicative Constitution of an Organization: A Study of Consensualization in a Young Political Party," *Management Communication Quarterly* 25 (2011): 252-282.

55. Gallup "Party Affiliation" Gallup, last modified April 2019, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/15370/party-affiliation.aspx>.

identification that shape partisan identity. Two specific findings stand out as unique contributions to the discipline. The first notable contribution is the element of identification by either *associative morality* or *organizational morality*. These two conceptions of morality advanced by Republicans in the 1884 presidential election may shed some light on the role played by morality in how individuals construct and justify their partisan identities more broadly.

Second, this project has identified some significant approaches to *disidentification* that directly push back against Cheney's schema of organization and introduce an element of *disorganizing* to the study of parties.⁵⁶ Where Chaput, Brummans, and Cooren argue that disidentification plays some role in constitutive rhetoric, they stop short of analyzing these unique rhetorical approaches of disidentification.⁵⁷ Others, including Elsbach and Bhattacharya, investigate the key indicators and antecedents to disidentification without directly building on Cheney's theorizing with respect to tactics in organizational identification.⁵⁸ Chapters four and five revealed how disidentifying groups directly challenged the common ground, enmity, assumptions, and unifying symbols of the organizations from which they were separating themselves.

56. George Cheney, "The Rhetoric of Identification and the Study of Organizational Communication," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 69 (1983), 143-158.

57. Chaput, Brummans, and Cooren, "The Role of Organizational Identification," 254-255.

58. Kimberly D. Elsbach and C. B. Bhattacharya, "Defining Who You Are by What You're Not: Organizational Disidentification and the National Rifle Association," *Organization Science* 12, no. 4 (2001), 393-413.

Finally, this dissertation expands scholarly understanding of populism by describing how its unique ideological characteristics make it not only amenable to a variety of ideological perspectives but a significant tool for combining those ideological perspectives under a shared partisan umbrella. The concluding pages of this project seek to summarize these major contributions with an eye toward making sense of America's current partisan environment and the potential these findings represent for future research.

The theoretical divide between organizational and political communication research has prevented a full appreciation for the role of organizational rhetoric in shaping American politics and American political institutions. The study of political parties and political organizing is essential to scholarly understanding of campaign communication in the modern era. Leaving the study of political parties and interest groups to those areas of the discipline dominated by post-positivism also forecloses the possibility of examining how partisanship is socially constructed through language across time. The traditional model of studying American political rhetoric that emphasized a "good [speaker] speaking well" similarly does not address the organizational character of rhetoric.⁵⁹ In the modern era, rhetors, including political rhetors, are often the agency of a larger organization, rather than the dramatic actors of Burke's pentad.⁶⁰ This

59. Cheney, "The Rhetoric of Identification," 147-152; Carroll Brooks Ellis, "A Good Man Speaking Well," *The Southern Speech Journal* 11, no. 4 (1946): 85-89.

60. Richard E. Crable, "'Organizational Rhetoric' as the Fourth Great System: Theoretical, Critical, and Paradigmatic Implications," *Journal of Applied Communication Research* 18 no. 2 (1990), 115-128.

dissertation project has demonstrated that organizational identification plays an important role in American political campaigns. It has also contributed to understanding of identification and disidentification more generally.

Identification and disidentification are complex phenomena that manifest differently in political contexts. Building on Cheney's understanding of identification, this dissertation illustrates how rhetors in 1884 and 1948 rolled back partisan identification by shifting from an "assumed we" to a fixed in-group as the basis for disidentification. Similarly, groups attempted to remove unifying symbols from their pedestals of partisan reverence and engaged in heated competition for ownership of the public memory of their respective parties. At times, rhetors departed, not just from individual organizations, but also from larger systems that they charged with corruption. Rather than fully disidentifying from organizations, other movements simply claimed to be the rightful heirs to the organization's legitimacy.

Analysis of these intraparty movements also shed light on the intersection of morality and partisan identification in presidential campaign rhetoric. Mugwumps in the 1884 election constructed their identification around associative morality and the public perception that affiliation with the Republican Party implied an immorality or amorality, because of allegations against other members of the association. They further elevated the rhetoric of morality to a plane above partisanship by acknowledging their willingness to associate themselves with those rhetors with which they shared little ideological common ground but a common moral foundation.

This project has also revealed the extent to which intraparty conflict and party repair shape presidential campaign rhetoric. Candidates in both campaigns used a variety

of techniques in hopes of bringing the disaffected back to the party. Again, using the language of morality, some rhetors grounded their understanding of morality's relationship to partisanship in the organization and argued that the organization provided a shield able to overcome individual level immorality. Both Truman and Blaine supporters relied on antithesis directed at the other major party in order to foster a rhetoric of polarization that created stark in-group/out-group distinctions. Rhetors also used techniques rooted in the dodging of major issues or of silence, fostering the impression that intraparty claims were trivial or entirely irrelevant. Finally, Truman turned to a rhetoric of populism and decentralization that captured a wide array of interests within the broader New Deal Coalition.

Party repair differs significantly from the language of repair used elsewhere in the discipline. Benoit's theory of image repair depends on a Bitzerean response to a central exigency (for Benoit a crisis).⁶¹ Benoit acknowledges other forces that shape crisis discourses but stops well short of arguing that organizations are rhetorically constituted.⁶² In 2017, Benoit published an image repair study of Trump's responses to the *Access Hollywood* tape.⁶³ Benoit claims that his analysis, "underlines the idea that messages from others besides the accuser and the target can be important factors in the success or

61. William L. Benoit, *Accounts, Excuses, and Apologies, Second Edition: Image Repair Theory and Research* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2015), 40-47.

62. *Ibid.*, 40.

63. William Benoit, "Image Repair on the Donald Trump 'Access Hollywood' Video: 'Grab Them by the P*ssy,'" *Communication Studies* 68, no. 3 (2017): 243-259.

failure of an image repair effort.”⁶⁴ Benoit’s analysis slightly broadens the frame of actors seen as contributing to restoration and identification, but this dissertation hopes to explode the frame of relevant actors and isolates significant agency in those groups within parties who challenge party assumptions in order to better understand how parties are constituted and repaired from within. Partisanship is not the product of one “great speaker speaking well,” rather it is a product of routine negotiation between factions and interest groups.

This dissertation challenges Benoit’s assumption that parties have a fixed or stable identity that partisans can be brought back to and instead proposes that partisan identities are always open to challenge and contest both internally and externally. As chapters one and two illustrate, parties have a unique organizational structure. They are complex, comprised of formal party “organizations,” the party in the electorate, and the party in government.⁶⁵ Parties are driven by a variety of interest groups and intraparty factions that follow a wide array of trajectories on their path to partisan change.⁶⁶ These factions may be dictated by rhetorics of morality as well as identity or ideology. Furthermore, this dissertation proposes that identification in political parties is not reserved for primaries, conventions, or even for the aftermath of crises. Factions are

64. *Ibid.*, 255.

65. V.O. Key Jr., *Politics, Parties, and Pressure Groups*, 2nd ed. (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1947), 280-281, 493-494, 663-722.

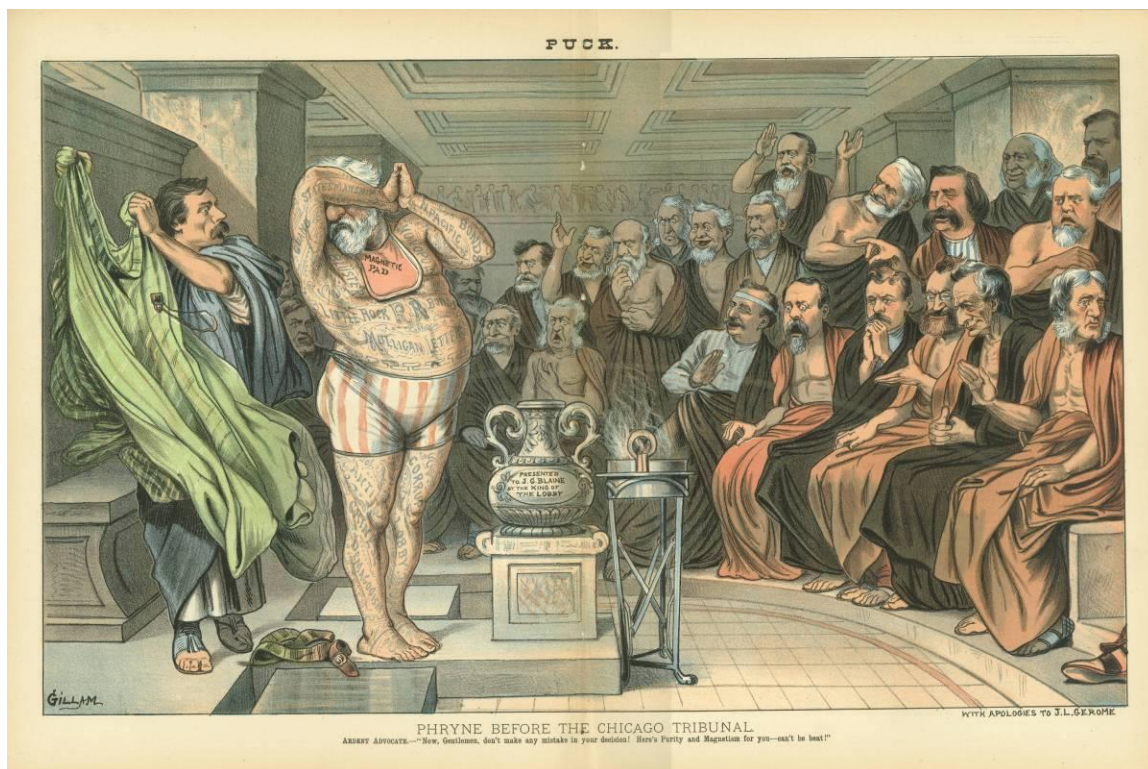
66. Thomas H. Roback and Judson L. James, “Party Factions in the United States” in *Faction Politics: Political Parties and Factionalism in Comparative Perspective*, eds. Frank P. Belloni and Dennis C. Beller (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 1978), 329-355.

always present and a competition of words between these factions dictates public understanding of what it means to be a Republican or to be a Democrat. Convention addresses and rituals may play a significant role, but they are far from exhaustive. As Burke notes, "...we must think of rhetoric not in terms of some one particular address, but as a general body of *identifications* that owe their convincingness much more to trivial repetition and daily reënforcement than to exceptional rhetorical skill."⁶⁷ For political parties, the body of identifications does not culminate in the selection of a candidate, the splintering off of a particular faction, or even a large-scale partisan realignment.

Despite the early attempts of George Washington and other founders of American government, political parties have become a permanent fixture in civic life. While parties are here to stay, their identities are not fixed. They are subject to the rhetorical push and pull of intraparty factionalism that defines the institutions and moves them slowly along the long arc of political history. In the coming years, more factions like the Mugwumps, Dixiecrats, Progressives, and Never Trumps will bolt from their party and reshape our understanding of political partisanship. Effectively examining these institutions depends on an appreciation for the unique power of constitutive rhetoric and identification within and beyond presidential campaigns. The understanding of parties and intraparty conflict advanced in these pages is only as the foundation, rather than a culmination, of understanding partisan rhetoric, intraparty factionalism, and party repair.

67. Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives*, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1969), 25-

Appendix 1



Bernhard Gillam, "Phryne Before the Chicago Tribunal," *Puck*, June 4, 1884, p. 137,

<https://elections.harpweek.com/1884/cartoon-1884-Medium.asp?UniqueID=2>

Appendix 2



Thomas Nast, "A Job Lot," Harper's Weekly, October 25, 1884, p. 695,

<https://elections.harpweek.com/1884/cartoon-1884-large.asp?UniqueID=28>



THE TEETOTAL DODGER.

St. John. "Mr. Canvasser, you are not going to dodge me and call me a local issue."

Thomas Nast, "The Teetotal Dodger," Harper's Weekly, September 27, 1884, p. 634,

<https://elections.harperweek.com/1884/cartoons-1884f.asp?UniqueID=45>

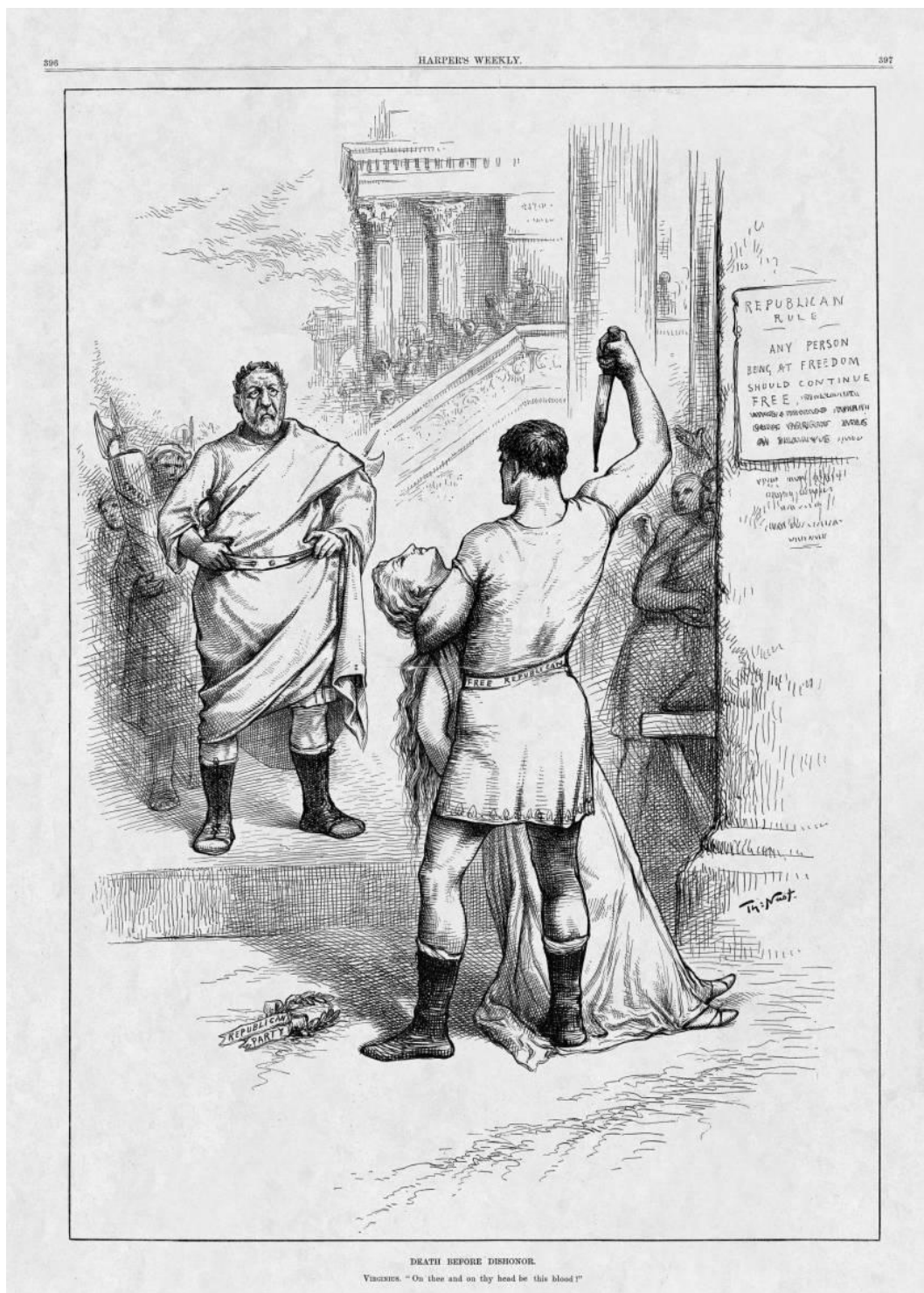
Appendix 3



Joseph Keppler, "Men May Come, and Men May Go," *Puck*, November 5, 1884, p. 305,

<https://elections.harpreweek.com/1884/cartoon-1884-large.asp?UniqueID=58>

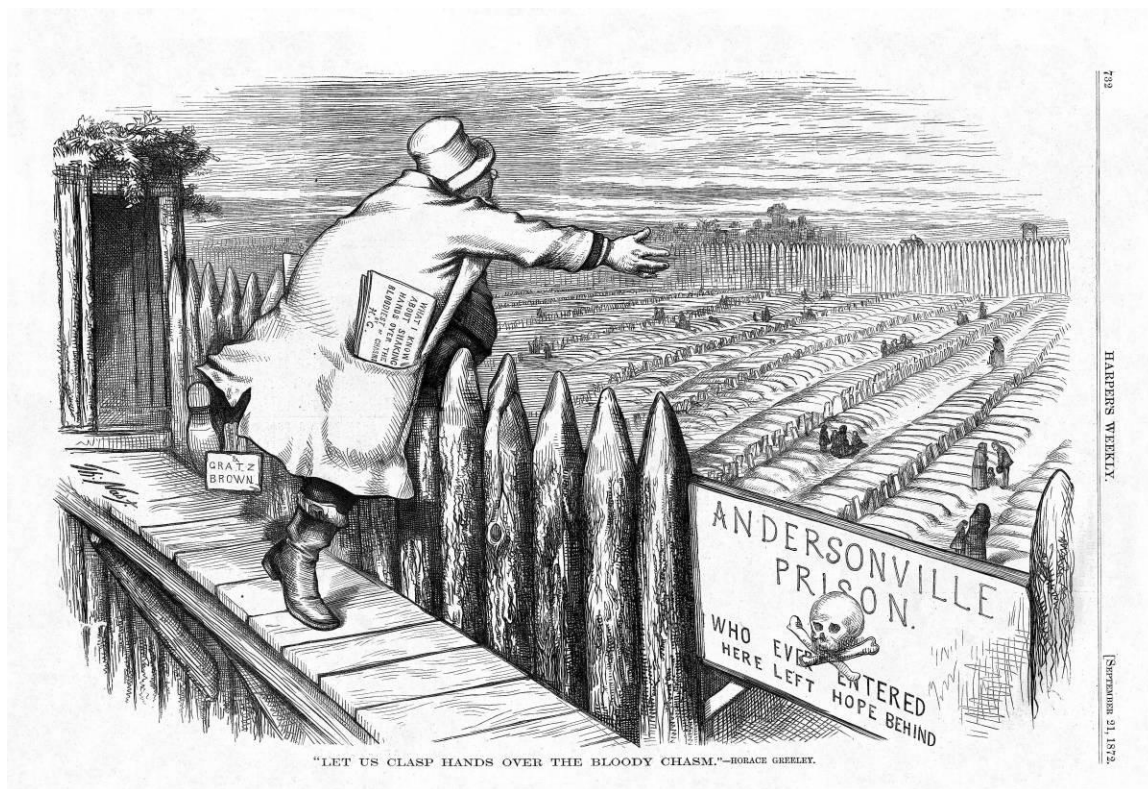
Appendix 4



Thomas Nast, "Death Before Dishonor," Harper's Weekly, June 21, 1884, p. 396-397,

<https://elections.harperweek.com/1884/cartoon-1884-large.asp?UniqueID=4>

Appendix 5



Thomas Nast, "Let Us Clasp Hands Over the Bloody Chasm," *Harper's Weekly*,
 September 21, 1872, p. 732, <https://www.harperweek.com/09Cartoon/BrowseByDateCartoon.asp?Month=September&Date=21>

Appendix 6



THE CLEAN SHIRT—A BAD FIT.

SIR BLAINE. "I haven't felt so uncomfortable for twenty years. Ever since I put this on I've had to defend myself. Oh, give me back my old shirt!"

Hired Editor. "Patience, my dear boss. WASHINGTON and LINCOLN always put on the bloody shirt for the last week of the campaign—just too late for the brigadier-generals to hear of it."

Thomas Nast, "The Clean Shirt-A Bad Fit," *Harper's Weekly*, October 18, 1884, p. 685,

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=pst.000020243289;view=1up;seq=693;size=175>

VITA

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