

Chapter 8

“Placing American Political Development: Cities, Regions, and Regimes, 1787-2008”

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In this essay we examine the shape of power within the geopolitical history of the United States since its founding. We place the question of *the urban* in American political development within a wider context of the ways that cities and nations have developed interdependently, as first demonstrated by Max Weber and more recently by Charles Tilly and others.¹ We map the historically-developed national state within a network of cities, metropolises, and regions, and propose that there are two broad genres of “regime” that make up the nation. The *national policy regime* is, like “The New Deal,” an unstable coalition of regionally-emplaced political elites who form their governing coalition with a theme and a distinct bundle of policy goals. *Regional regimes* organize the political economies of the regions that compose the nation state. Especially since the Civil War, these regional regimes have been dominated by leadership based in their respective metropolises. National policy regimes have produced regions and the regimes governing those regions have, at key moments, organized the governing coalitions of the national state, in effect nationalizing its region’s political culture.

¹ Max Weber, *The City*, trans Don Martindale and Gertrud Neuwirth (New York: The Free Press, 1958); Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European States: AD 990 – 1992* (London: Blackwell, 1990); Hendrik Spruyt, *The Sovereign State and Its Competitors* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

Regions and regimes construct each other reciprocally. Indeed, *region* and *regime* share a common linguistic root and once meant the same thing.² Regions shape both publics and leaders: they are composed of a unique complex of production relations, cultural discourses, and inherited and newly-introduced institutions. Regions generate distinctive “political cultures,” which set the rules, logic, and parameters of ethics, ideologies, and policy concerns.³ Success of leadership and policy projects within these milieux requires mastery of the ensemble that makes the region particular. Moreover, political leaders and policies continuously re-shape the economies and cultures of pre-existing regions. Regions, therefore, are profoundly historical, dynamic, and protean. In contrast to the long tradition of sectional analysis of political behavior, which posits the socio-economic structures as bases that explain behavioral outcomes, we see regional regimes as institutional arrangements that are always under construction.⁴

Extending Clarence Stone’s model for *urban* regimes, we propose that governance of a *region* requires an adroit combination of political officeholders and economic stakeholders in an informal mix.⁵ The dynamism of our historical model proceeds from the fact that certain regional and metropolitan economies have always occupied the leading edge of innovation and wealth-creation. (Silicon Valley is only the most recent example.) In these cases, civil society alone does not drive politics, because

² See “regime” and “region,” *OED Online*, accessed October 2007.

³ Our use of “political culture” descends from the work of Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, in *The Civic Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), but also from its conceptualization as a “script” for persuasion as in Keith Michael Baker, *The Political Culture of the Old Regime*, vol. 1 of *The French Revolution and the Creation of Modern Political Culture* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1987), xii.

⁴ The best political scientists in this tradition, like Richard Bensel, offer much, but remain too geographically determinative. Bensel, *Sectionalism and American Political Development, 1880-1980* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984). Regions, as geographer Anssi Paasi shows, emerge from institutional processes. See “The institutionalization of regions: a theoretical framework for understanding the emergence of regions and the constitution of regional identity”, *Fennia* (1986) 164, 105-146. We see institutions as coordinated habits which constitute the fundamental mechanisms of society.

⁵ Clarence N. Stone, *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta, 1946-1988* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1989);

governmental policies powerfully influenced the development of leading-edge sectors. Yet at key moments, political entrepreneurs from the leading-edge regional regime have successfully made their own region's political culture the hegemonic one for the nation (and consequently pushed forward new policies). These historical junctures are rare moments of *metonymy*, when a regional part comes to stand for the national whole.

Such moments include the Civil War, the New Deal, and the Republican New Right. The social sciences have long confronted the problem of explaining the transformation from one regime era to another.⁶ By looking at the “where” rather than the “when” of power, sweeping changes in the political system become more visible. As we shall argue below, transitions from the national preeminence of one regional regime to that of another can take decades. Change is not abrupt, but continual and uneven as recent work on “intercurrence” emphasizes.⁷ Understanding the existence and operation of regional regimes explains a great deal about the dynamics of transition between the major policy regime eras of American history. We present here an account that identifies the ironic way in which national policy regimes ultimately undermine themselves by creating new regional regimes after achieving their “metonymic moment” of national hegemony.

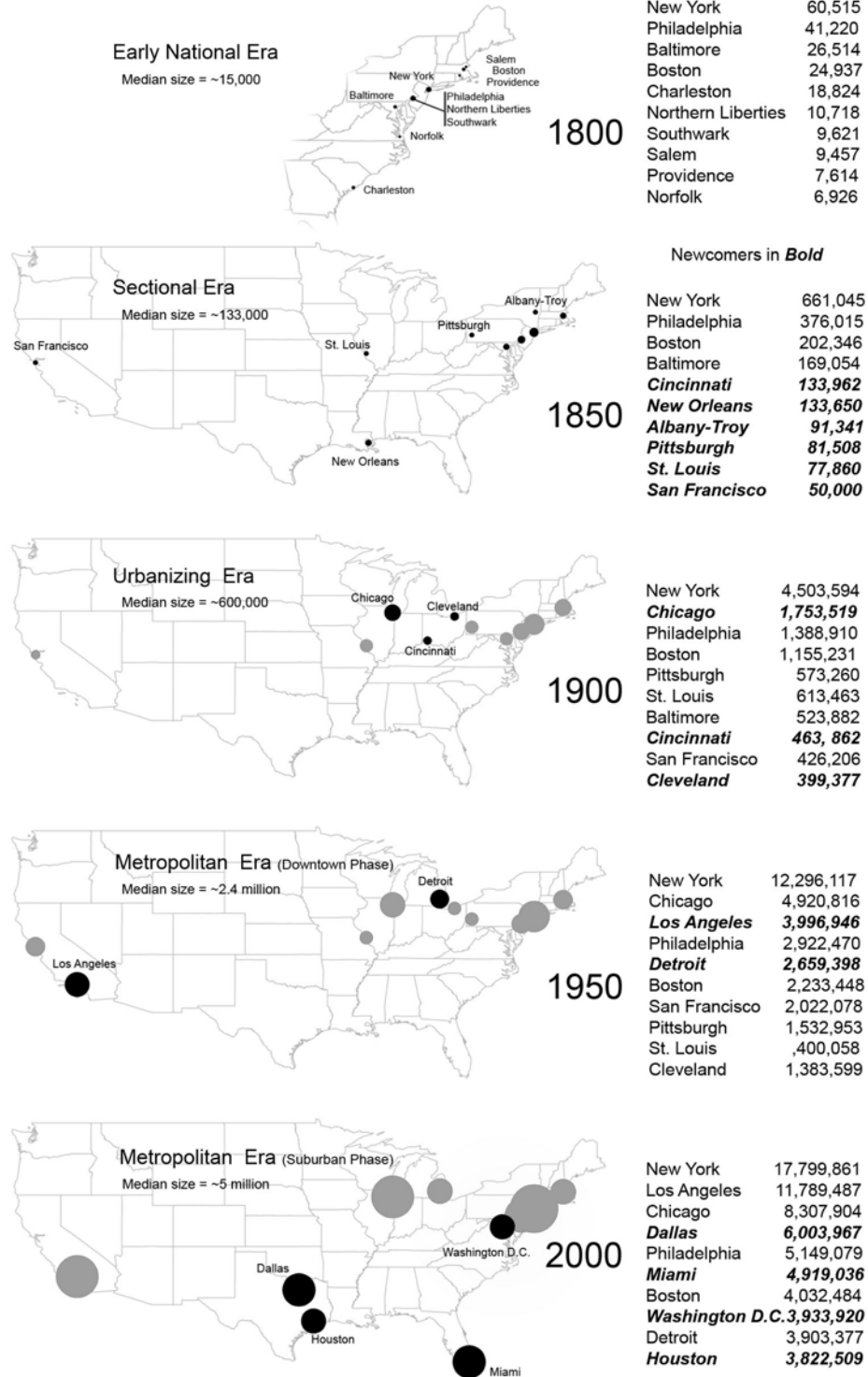
⁶ We concur with David Mayhew's analysis in *Electoral Realignment: A Critique of an American Genre* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

⁷ We owe thanks to John Barnes of the USC Department of Political Science for conversations on this issue. On “intercurrence” see Karen Orren and Stephen Skowronek, *The Search for American Political Development* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004). Skowronek's *The Politics Presidents Make* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997) partly inspired our effort to account for the entire sweep of American history. We see the Presidency as key aspect of regime transformation because “assuming the presidential office and exercising its power has an inherently disruptive effect, and that presidential leadership is a struggle to resolve that effect in the reproduction of a legitimate political order.” (xii); For Orren and Skowronek, national regimes are the “working arrangements among institutions” created and managed by a new “governing cadre” which “acts within an intellectual milieu, infusing institutions with meaning, direction and purpose.” Orren and Skowroek, “Regimes and Regime Building in American Government” *Political Science Quarterly*, 113(4), 694.**Error! Main Document Only.**

Given limitations of space, we cannot offer a complete case for re-considering American Political Development within our geo-institutional historical approach. Instead, we outline a case that we hope suggests new avenues of inquiry.⁸

⁸ This chapter focuses on the Presidency as a key aspect of our dynamic model because of limited space. Our larger study will include an account of both Congress and the Judiciary.

Top Ten Urban Places in Five Eras



Note: the intervals in this map do not equate with the “eras” discussed throughout this essay. Taken at 50-year increments, they fall at certain moments within those eras, so the labels in this map should be taken as snapshots of those eras. Data are drawn from the U.S. Bureau of Census, and include “Greater” or CMSA definitions of most metropolitan places for the years 1950 and 2000. For the 1800-1900 statistics, “urban places” are the designations. Overall, we tried to use the most comparable figures.

Colonial, and Constitutional Foundations

Even before the United States had become an urban nation, federal governing authority had been spatially allocated. As a “settler society,” American colonists and then U.S. citizens expected new opportunities to open up spatially, through conquest and expansion across the continent. Parliament’s opposition to American colonial expansion across the Appalachians after the costly Seven Year’s War was a principal grievance named in the Declaration of Independence. An obsession with territoriality structured the debates on the new Constitution, which enshrined the pre-existing divide between large colonies and small colonies through the Connecticut Compromise, producing bicameral legislature, with the representation in the House of Representatives allocated proportionately to population and with equal representation in the Senate for all states. Regional differences in economic interests, political culture, and the existence of slavery further divided the Northern and Southern colonies, temporarily mitigated by the notorious three-fifths compromise (counting slaves as three-fifths of a free person for the purposes of apportionment) and the agreement to postpone any ban on the slave trade until 1808. Even the swampland-siting of the nation’s new capital, the District of Columbia, was a part of a geopolitical compromise between these two major political and economic blocs.⁹

The Constitution was also shaped by the agrarian revolt against urban financiers, most notably Shay’s Rebellion, which pushed many of the urban-situated political elite to favor a strong national government, and thus a *federation* in place of the volatile confederation. After the Constitution’s ratification, the major conflict of American public life hinged on the competing urban vs. agrarian socio-spatial visions of Alexander

⁹ James H. McGregor, *Washington from the Ground Up* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press, 2007).

Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson--long before many Americans actually lived in urban places.¹⁰ Ultimately the Hamiltonian vision of “intensive development” to concentrate on commerce and manufacturing in Atlantic cities lost out to the Jeffersonian vision of “extensive development,” for more than a half century. Based upon its low esteem for cities, this vision successfully re-made the continent through forceful national policies of subsidizing cheap farmland, military campaigns against American Indians, and acquiring more territory via purchase and conquest. The simultaneous drive westward and the economic and cultural divergence between the North and South ultimately led to the Civil War. But if the Hamiltonian vision had triumphed initially, the U.S. might have developed as a tier of states arranged along the Atlantic Coast, remaining east of the Mississippi. The U.S.-Mexican War and the Civil War may never have happened. There were clear policy choices at the time of the Jefferson-Hamilton debates; historical contingencies are such that the Jeffersonian triumph was not inevitable.

Sectional Era, 1800-1860s

The administrations of Jefferson through Jackson and Polk pursued policies that transformed the territoriality of the new nation, and brought cataclysmic conflict onto itself and Mexico. These policies created newer regions within the nascent nation-state, and forms of urban development that spearheaded the transformation of those regions.

The urban shapes of power during the period between the 1803 Louisiana Purchase and the 1861 outbreak of the Civil War were diffused throughout a highly variegated agrarian landscape. The defining attributes of the period between the

¹⁰ Kenneth R. Bowling shows that these visions tied to the move to D.C., in *Establishing Congress: The Removal to Washington, D.C., and the Election of 1800* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005).

Revolution and the Civil War were bound up with the two great sectional issues of the entire period: slavery's limits and the fate of the great western territories, especially Mexican Cession. Informed by Romantic nationalist movements, the entire *zeitgeist* of the era put a premium on achieving political unity both within and between deeply antagonistic regions.¹¹

Cities were essential nodes of the regional and global economy during the entire Sectional period, and also home to nascent industries (often, as with gun manufacture in the Northeast and farm-machinery manufacture in Chicago, stimulated by frontier expansion). While the nation was still heavily agrarian, the rate of urban growth during this period was dramatic. The top ten urban places in 1800 were all along the Atlantic seaboard, with the largest, New York, containing merely 60,000 persons. By 1850, New York had grown by tenfold to 660,000, and six of the top ten cities were western newcomers to the list: Cincinnati, New Orleans, Albany-Troy, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, and San Francisco. (See Map and Table).

During this era the national leadership shifted from a network of elites based until the 1820s along the Atlantic Seaboard, to a network of frontier elites, who predominated in presidential elections from Jackson's 1828 victory through Lincoln's 1860 electoral success. While the North-South regional divide was always important, the competing policy visions of the pre-1820 period were the Hamiltonian and Jeffersonian ones, with the former, known as Federalist, constituting the "policy regime" until the "Revolution of 1800," and the latter, to be known as Democratic-Republican, taking control of the

¹¹ Yonatan Eyal, *The Young America Movement and the Transformation of the Democratic Party, 1828-61* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

presidency and Congress coincident with moving into the new Capitol and lasting until 1828.

The 1829 inauguration of Andrew Jackson marked the advent of a new polarity of policy visions, represented by the two emergent parties of the first genuine “party system”: the Democrats and the Whigs. The core principle of the Jacksonian Democratic vision was aggressive territorial expansion westward powered by racial nationalism and executed by military campaigns, but with minimal central control or regulation. The Whig vision was also one of Westward expansion, but typified by the policy program of Henry Clay’s updated Hamiltonian “American System,” favoring a central bank, subsidies for infrastructure, and regulatory laws. The presidencies of this period oscillated between southerners and northerners, but the common project of westward expansion forced the problem of slavery increasingly to the surface.

During this entire period, the “Great Triumvirate” in Congress of Daniel Webster, John Calhoun, and Henry Clay, represented the tenuously brokered arrangement among the North, South and trans-Appalachian West that fractured in 1850s under the sectional crisis that westward expansion had provoked. Meanwhile, a new generation of frontier politicians like Abraham Lincoln learned to join the urban developmental policies of the Whigs with the aspirations of small farmers. Lincoln would form the outlook of these politicians into a coherent vision that grew slowly between 1828 and 1860, emerging clearly with the Whig Party’s disintegration and the Republican Party’s rise in the 1850s.

Regional aspirations to establish a national political culture marked the Sectional era although all attempts failed until after the Civil War. If the defining contrast in the Early National period was between Jeffersonians and Hamiltonians, the defining contrast

for the Sectional era was between two visions of expansion: free soil, epitomized by Lincoln; and proslavery, epitomized by Calhoun. While radicals in each region proposed forms of secession to preserve their respective political cultures and economies, both Lincoln and Calhoun maintained a commitment to preserving the Union. Calhoun actually proposed a “dual presidency” as a solution to the intractable sectional crisis. Lincoln correctly predicted that the nation could not endure half slave and half free.

National Leadership from Regional Urban Centers

To this point, we have broadly outlined the ways in which political power related to regional and national development. Now we sketch the way that leaders headquartered in specific regional urban centers not only organized those regions but also competed for the authority to claim that their region’s political vision best suited for the nation as a whole.

During the nation’s first years, political leaders allied with New York City’s mercantile elite tried to leverage the authority of the national government to benefit their interests. Led by Alexander Hamilton and John Jay and bolstered by strong popular support in New England, their economic program to advance urban commerce and industry soon lost electoral dominance to the Republicans, led by wealthy Virginia planters such as Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe, who favored extensive development.¹² Led by Jefferson, these Southerners consciously battled the political influence of

¹² Martin Shefter, “New York City and American National Politics,” in Shefter, *Capital of the American Century: The National and International Influence of New York City*, (New York: Russell Sage, 1993) 97-98.

Massachusetts and Connecticut in national politics and the Federalist faction, which dominated those states.¹³

However, these two proto-parties were not simply representatives of the North and South. The Federalist leaders of Congress during the Adams administration, for example, were mostly from Virginia. But the rootedness of these competing visions eventually became clear. During the Virginia-based Democratic-Republican regime that reigned over national politics through the six consecutive terms of Jefferson, Madison and Monroe (1801-1825), the Federalist party withered away to its New England base, losing the support of the key middle states, in particular New York. Still sensitive to anti-partisan and consensual norms of governance, Jeffersonian Republicans promoted interlinked policies of universal white male enfranchisement and westward settlement.¹⁴ In the 1820s, a faction of New York Democratic-Republicans, the Bucktails, led by Martin Van Buren, pioneered a new mode of politicking, first at the state level and then nationally. Later known as the Albany Regency, the Bucktails became the first professional politicians. They had no pretensions to be above partisanship and regarded the existence of permanent opposition as beneficial to the nation. And while the development of frank partisanship was not limited to New York, the state played a particularly strong role in its incubation as a national standard. New York had a comparatively clear division between two opposing political factions. The state stood at the center of the national economy and its electoral votes had long been critical. What came to be known nationally as “the New York philosophy” emerged from the New York

¹³ Richard Hofstadter, *The Idea of a Party System: The Rise of Legitimate Opposition in the United States, 1780-1840*, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1969), pp. 114-115; 112; 144.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 198.

scene in a remarkably articulated form.¹⁵ Building on a tradition for pragmatic tolerance and coalition-building that had marked New York City since colonial times, Van Buren drew together the Albany Regency and Virginia's Richmond Junto, cementing a coalition of southern planters and northern Republicans. Not surprisingly, a large cadre of Van Buren's associates dominated New York state politics and entered national office. At the federal level, they upheld the traditional resistance to centralization, a principle that coincided with their material interests as New York already had the Erie Canal and had little incentive to fund the improvements of competing states.

While New York became the intellectual and organizational epicenter of American politics, balancing major political parties and sectional disagreements between the North and South, the driving issues of the day emerged from the frontiers, focusing on the settlement and conquest of the trans-Appalachian West as the federal government translated Jefferson's agrarian vision into action.¹⁶ The Federal government's purchase of Louisiana followed by cheap widespread grants, surveys and organization of territories, and wars against American Indians made Western development possible.¹⁷ Consequently, Van Buren's first national success came in getting Andrew Jackson – “Old Hickory,” fresh from the frontier wars – elected President in 1828. From Jackson through the election of Lincoln in 1860, a majority of presidents were either born or resided on the frontier, or fought battles on the frontier against Indians and Mexicans (Jackson, W. Harrison, Polk, Taylor, Pierce, Lincoln). The only exceptions were two New Yorkers (Van Buren, Filmore) and a Virginian (Tyler).

¹⁵ Ibid. pp. 211-231.

¹⁶ Shefter, “New York City and American National Politics,” 97-98.

¹⁷ John Farragher, “Afterword” in *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner* (New York: Holt, 1994), 234.

The western frontier was held together by the transportation system of the Mississippi and Ohio rivers. St. Louis was the most important city in the northern reaches of the Mississippi, and the “gateway” to the Far West, at the junction of the Missouri and the Mississippi. It was the headquarters of Andrew Jackson’s chief lieutenant in the Senate, and the mastermind of the military expansionists, Thomas Hart Benton. Benton held a string of local offices in St. Louis before becoming a Missouri Senator, an office he held from 1821 until 1851. Benton’s daughter Jesse Benton Frémont schemed with her father and her husband John C. Frémont, to provoke the war with Mexico, and Frémont became instrumental in the beginnings of California as a key state, with San Francisco sprouting up as a far-flung “instant city” in this western network of cities.¹⁸ Benton, like the other regional leaders, was heavily involved in commercial and real estate ventures that would benefit from his policy positions. For example, Benton’s attack on government factories in Indian territories climaxed a lengthy struggle by St. Louis merchants to break federal control of the trade along the Missouri River.¹⁹

The Ohio River Valley was the other central artery of the Midwest Frontier, sprouting a string of important frontier cities: Evansville; Louisville; Cincinnati; Pittsburgh. The hometown of Henry Clay was Lexington, which sprang up along the Wilderness Road between Louisville and the Cumberland Gap, opened by Daniel Boone in the employ of Jesse Benton (grandfather of Jesse Benton Fremont) in 1775. Clay, like Senator Benton, was an urban lawyer who spoke for his region at the same time that he looked out for the city that provided the base of his operations. When Clay went to the

¹⁸ Pamela Herr, *Jessie Benton Frémont: A Biography* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988); Gunther Barth, *Instant Cities: Urbanization and the Rise of San Francisco and Denver* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975).

¹⁹ Richard C. Wade, *The Urban Frontier: The Rise of Western Cities, 1790-1830*, (Urbana : University of Illinois Press, 1996 [1959]), p. 340.

Senate in 1806, he was one of Lexington's most prominent lawyers. But "Clay was so closely tied to Lexington that he never became very popular in Louisville, whose interests so often collided with that of its Kentucky neighbor."²⁰

Cities gained political influence in relation to rural areas despite their demographic disadvantage because of "their ability to produce leadership as economic and intellectual centers, [attracting] the talented and ambitious in all fields." Even rural gerrymandering could not prevent urban political leadership. The reason was simple. Long before farmers first plowed the surrounding fields, the towns of the Ohio River Valley facilitated and financed the settlement. In the words of Richard Wade, the towns of Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Louisville, and Lexington were "the spearheads of the frontier."²¹

Urbanizing Era, 1860s-1920s

While the Civil War violently divided the American nation along sectional lines, the resultant economic and political mobilization created the conditions for a new regional regime to emerge. As early as 1840 the most rapid urban growth was among inland river cities such as St. Louis, Cincinnati, and Pittsburgh. After the Civil War, railroads shaped the extent and size of urban development, leading to the creation of a dense industrial belt from St. Louis and Milwaukee in the West to Baltimore and Boston in the East. Chicago stood at the center of this belt, a transportation and manufacturing

²⁰ Wade, 115.

²¹ Wade, 1, 338-340.

hub, spinning goods, services and capital back and forth from its regional hinterland to the cities of the world.²²

This Antebellum growth was vastly accelerated by the federal policies enacted during the Civil War. The secession of the Confederate states allowed Northern Republicans to push through their program of economic nationalism through industrialization. Within the span of 5 years, the Republican Congress enacted the Homestead Act (1862) to give and cheaply sell (Native American) farmlands, the Morrill Land-Grant Colleges Act (1862) to create public universities in every state, the Pacific Railway Acts (1862-6) to create a transcontinental railroad, the National Banking Acts (1863-4) to create a national system of banks run from New York, higher tariffs in the Morrill Tariffs of 1861-2; and the first income tax in the Revenue Act of 1861.

The war stimulated a great demand for building materials and for troop provisions; the destruction it left behind created a decades-long “reconstruction” project. These supply demands led to the development of far-flung, vertically integrated corporations, organizing the economy on a grand scale for the first time. J.P. Morgan and John D. Rockefeller had taken advantage of the Union’s need for materiel and financing by creating massive corporations.²³ They were just two of a larger cadre of American and European financiers who made Manhattan the world’s corporate and financial capital after the war by investing millions and assembling conglomerates such as AT&T, GE, and Standard Oil.

²² Todd Gardner, “Population and Population Growth” in David R. Goldfield, ed., *Encyclopedia of Urban History*, (Sage Publications: 2007), 592.

²³ Robert Beauregard, “The Economy of Cities,” *Encyclopedia of Urban History*; Dominic Vitiello, “Urban Finance,” *Encyclopedia of Urban History*.

This intense burst of capitalization and organizational growth fueled an urbanizing boom in the Midwest. Mostly mercantile in economic orientation before the Civil War, cities like Chicago, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Detroit, Milwaukee, and Indianapolis became major industrial centers afterwards. Excellent railroad access to Eastern city markets and access to raw materials (lumber, iron ore, grain, livestock, coal) combined to make the region a center of explosive growth. Chicago's phenomenal growth was possible because of the centralization of the region's natural abundance, its fortuitous geography, its conscious positioning as the bridge between eastern and western railroad networks, and the favor showered upon it by New York City-based capitalists.²⁴

With Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Toledo, Ohio was actually more industrialized than Illinois. Moreover, thanks to Ulysses S. Grant, the Republican Party sank deep roots in Ohio: a thick institutional base for national political action. During the period from 1869 to 1923, a nearly uninterrupted string of Republican Presidents came from Ohio.²⁵ The other great source of "presidential timber," New York, was predictable. All four aberrations from the Ohio pattern were men from New York or New Jersey.²⁶ Moreover, from 1868 until the nomination of William Jennings Bryan in 1896, every single Democratic presidential candidate was from New York.²⁷

Most famously, industrialist Mark Hanna led William McKinley to decisive victory in the presidential election of 1896. A wealthy owner of a coal and iron venture in Cleveland, Hanna branched out into transportation, publishing and banking. Although

²⁴ William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*, (New York: W. W. Norton, 1991).

²⁵ Ulysses S. Grant (1869-77), Rutherford B. Hayes (1877-81), James A. Garfield (1881), Benjamin Harrison (1889-93) (son of Ohio territorial governor and President William Henry Harrison), William McKinley (1897-1901), William Howard Taft (1909-1913), and Warren Harding (1921-1923).

²⁶ Upstate New York Democrat Grover Cleveland, New Yorker Chester A. Arthur, New Yorker Theodore Roosevelt, and New Jersey Democrat Woodrow Wilson

²⁷ Horatio Seymour, Horace Greeley, Samuel Tilden, Winfield Scott Hancock, and Grover Cleveland

working as early as 1880 to secure support for Republicans among industrialists, he dedicated himself to McKinley's political career and helped the former congressman win two terms as governor of Ohio. In the 1896 election, Hanna drew upon a huge pool of business contributions and reached out with a network of Republican speakers and a massive public relations movement to counter Bryan's popular appeal.²⁸

In general, voters in the rapidly growing cities of the Midwest and Northeast saw the Republicans as the party of progress and national authority, in regard to Reconstruction, the Homestead Act, land grants, railroad loans, protective tariffs, and taxes on income and inheritance taxes, through Teddy Roosevelt's bold imperialistic policies, from the war with Spain (1898), the Great White Fleet (1907-9), to the Panama Canal (1902-1914). Appealing to (increasingly immigrant) urban workers by citing the steady rise in real wages, the party enjoyed the grass-roots support that the New Deal would later win away. Just as the Republican Party in this era was an urbanizing party, so the great cities were increasingly Republicanized. Already, in the three presidential elections of the 1880s, the majority of the nation's cities outside the south went Republican, especially Northeastern and Midwestern cities like Philadelphia, Chicago, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Buffalo, Providence, Milwaukee, Newark, Syracuse, Patterson, and Minneapolis. In 1896 Bryan lost horribly in the Northeast, including the Democratic stronghold of New York. Cities like San Francisco, Detroit, Indianapolis, Columbus and

²⁸ Michael E. McGerr, *The Decline Of Popular Politics: The American North, 1865-1928*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

St. Paul, which had been Democratic, switched to the Republican ticket in 1896 and remained in the GOP's column for decades.²⁹

The period of Republican domination from 1896 to 1932 was marked by the shift to Progressive leadership after 1901. The great cities were the proving grounds for the Progressive structural and policy innovations that came to define the national political culture by the 1930s through a regional urban insurgency. Besides re-casting the structure and operations of local government, the urban progressives proved decisive at the national level in another way. As Elizabeth Sanders has shown, on many occasions legislators from industrial Northeast deadlocked with those from the agrarian South and West. Urban policy intellectuals supplied the solutions to these deadlocks and representatives from upper Midwestern states with mixed agrarian-industrial economies provided the swing votes in Congress. To gain these votes, agrarian representatives exchanged their own plans for clear-cut statutory action for the proposals of expert bureaucracy of urban intellectuals and professionals.³⁰

The urbanization of the political system would have been much more rapid had rural interests not resisted it through spatial means, namely gerrymandering. In an attempt to preserve their political power, rural interests in the South “successfully resisted reapportionment following the 1920 census—the only time this has happened in American history.”³¹ In California, as late as 1965, Los Angeles County, with a population of six million, had just one state senator, the same number as two rural

²⁹ Carl N. Degler, “American Political Parties and the Rise of the City: An Interpretation,” *Journal of American History*, Vol. 51, No. 1. (Jun., 1964), pp. 41-59. When Wilson won the presidency in 1912, his margin was small and owed to splintering between Republicans and Progressives.

³⁰ Elizabeth Sanders, *Roots of Reform: Farmers, Workers, and the American State, 1877-1917*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 236-266.

³¹ Gardner, 594.

counties with a combined population of 14,000.³² In Georgia, the “county unit” system enacted in 1917 determined congressional and statewide elections on the basis on a similarly tortured arithmetic.³³

By the 1920s the Democratic party had divided into a “traditionalist” wing based in the Solid South and an “urban liberal” wing primarily based in the big cities, especially New York. While Republicans had been the party of the rising cities and the Northeast in general from the Civil War through the 1920s, urban citizens began voting increasingly Democratic after 1920.³⁴ In this regard, the fact that Republicans had never dislodged the Democratic Party from New York City would prove fateful for the development of a new national policy regime. New York Democrats of the liberal persuasion were moving to take leadership of an emergent national governing coalition, soon to become the New Deal.

In the 1920s, with Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover at the helm, conservatives increasingly expelled progressives from the Republican Party. Most of the Democratic Party was rural, southern, dry, evangelical, racist or all of the above, but New York City was the crucial exception. For many years, New York Democrats were politically allied with the Jim Crow South and Tammany Hall reigned locally without any liberal inclination.³⁵ But just as the populist insurgency had pushed national Democrats to accede to agrarian demands, the new progressive discourse led young up-and-comers in

³² Bruce W. Robeck, “Urban-Rural and Regional Voting Patterns in the California Senate before and after Reapportionment,” *Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No. 4. (Dec., 1970), 786;

³³ Kevin M Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 21-2. In Georgia, 1920s population figures from <http://www.census.gov/population/cencounts/ca190090.txt>, accessed 14 October 2007.

³⁴ Samuel J. Eldersveld, “The Influence of Metropolitan Party Pluralities in Presidential Elections Since 1920: A Study of Twelve Key Cities,” *APSR*, Vol 43 Issue 6 (Dec. 1949), 1189-1206.

³⁵ Terrence J. McDonald, “Introduction,” William L. Riordon, *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall: A Series of Very Plain Talks on Very Practical Politics*, (New York: Bedford/St Martins, 1994).

the Democratic Tammany Hall organization to focus on leveraging government authority to benefit the poor, working and middle-classes of the teeming metropolis. The most important moment was the Triangle Shirtwaist factory fire of 1911 and the shockingly activist Commission that came about as a result. Chaired by Alfred E. Smith and Robert Wagner, most of the Commission's scores of legislative recommendations became state law and then models for state and later federal social policy nationwide.³⁶

The 1928 presidential candidacy of Smith was the first fully national manifestation of the shift to urban leadership of both the Democratic Party and the national reform coalition. During Woodrow Wilson's administration, progressive legislation was the product of a coalition led by populist Democrats from South, West and Midwest. By contrast, in 1928 Smith won majorities in New York City, Chicago, Cleveland, St. Louis, Milwaukee, and San Francisco. Of the twelve largest cities, only Los Angeles went strongly for Hoover. Besides bringing Republican-voting immigrants to his side, he also attracted a tremendous number of *new* voters.³⁷ When Franklin Roosevelt successfully ran for President in 1932 he consummated the marriage between urbanites and the Democratic Party, which would become the backbone of the New Deal regime and inaugurate the Metropolitan Era.

Metropolitan Era: 1930s-2000

The Metropolitan Era was framed by two quintessentially urban moments: FDR led a coalition of Democrats to lead the federal government in the 1930s and 1940s with

³⁶ J. Joseph Hutmacher, *Senator Robert F. Wagner and the Rise of Urban Liberalism* (New York: Atheneum, 1968)

³⁷ Carl N. Degler, "American Political Parties and the Rise of the City: An Interpretation," *Journal of American History*, Vol. 51, No. 1. (Jun., 1964), pp. 41-59.

central city leaders and constituencies in the vanguard. When Nixon and Reagan led the Republicans back into power in the late 1960s through the 1980s, their vanguard leaders represented Sunbelt cities and suburbs all over the country. Midway through this Metropolitan Era, we can observe a massive shift in the territoriality of power, from the Chicago-Ohio-New York regional regime to the new Washington-Los Angeles regional regime. After a century of domination by politicians from Ohio and New York, politicians from Sunbelt cities, most notably Los Angeles, took the reigns of the national state. Ironically, the New Deal policies that were born and bred in the Chicago-Ohio-New York region spurred the creation of the new regional regime that displaced it.

The Metropolitan Era began in earnest with Roosevelt's 1932 landslide amidst the collapse of the Republican corporate liberal, welfare capitalist, free market governing coalition (Harding-Coolidge-Hoover administrations). Urban liberalism after 1932, under Franklin Roosevelt's masterful leadership, consolidated the network of urban liberals from the Progressive era and then nationalized it. They took full advantage of the new medium of radio--headquartered, via the new "Networks" (RCA, NBC, CBS) in New York City.

FDR's fireside chats, first developed during his tenure as governor of New York, constituted one key mechanism by which Americans came to identify with urban liberalism as national citizens. Millions across the country "looked to Washington to deliver the American dream..."³⁸ His first administration represented a metonymic moment when the part came to speak for the whole; when a metropolitan vision became appealing to a huge majority of Americans. Although he spoke to a diverse public – urban, rural, Northern, Southern, and Western – Roosevelt spoke convincingly on behalf

³⁸ Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 289.

of America and Americans. Yet his idiom, style, and message were the distilled essence of New York-centered urban liberalism.³⁹

Great cities were critical to the New Deal coalition. Between 1932 and 1948 the nation's twelve largest cities were decisive in giving the Electoral College majority to the Democrats. Significantly, the only top-ten metropolis that continued to vote Republican in the 1930s was Los Angeles (see map), the city that would eventually become the Western pole of the emerging dominant regional regime. As Samuel Eldersveld notes, the ten states with the twelve largest cities, although "geographically not adjacent, constituted a matrix of political strength, together similar in political complexion and trend, but often distinct from their special regions."⁴⁰ In other words, the "footprint" of the New Deal Coalition was firmly metropolitan. But the metropolis was sprouting suburbs.

Suburbanization after 1940 represents one of the greatest migrations in American history.⁴¹ "In 1950, a quarter of all Americans lived in suburbs; in 1960, a full third; and by 1990, a solid majority."⁴² Beginning with the Federal Housing Act of 1934 and the creation of the Federal Housing Authority, New Deal policies were largely responsible for enabling a change of this magnitude to occur. Reforming home mortgages to 30-year amortized loans, then guaranteeing them to bankers with FHA and VA backing, represented a massive intervention into the landscape of the U.S. By limiting those new residential landscapes to "whites," the New York-centered New Deal policy regime,

³⁹ Bernard R. Gifford, "New York City and Cosmopolitan Liberalism," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 93, No. 4 (Winter, 1978-1979), 559-584.

⁴⁰ Eldersveld, 1206.

⁴¹ Others include the 19th century westward drive and the 20th century bi-racial "southern diaspora." See Matthew D. Lassiter, "Race over Region," *Reviews in American History* 35:1 (2007): 98-104.

⁴² Kevin M. Kruse and Thomas J. Sugrue, "Introduction", *The New Suburban History*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 1.

compromising as always with its white Southern component, spatially fragmented its core urban constituency along increasingly rigid racial boundaries.⁴³ The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 further inscribed this new landscape by creating the transportation infrastructure that enabled the relocation of plants and office complexes outside of central cities. This massive construction program developed out of the New Deal's public works agencies, which had created state capacity to plan, build, and transform the American landscape.⁴⁴ Suburbanites mystified these federal subsidies underneath an emerging ideology of suburban autonomy, as Matthew Lassiter and other scholars in the recent metropolitan school of urban studies have shown. Nixon and successors would employ not so much of a "Southern Strategy," Kevin Phillips's attempts notwithstanding, but a *suburban* strategy.⁴⁵

As one set of fiscal policies prioritized suburbs over cities, another set of fiscal policies weakened the political ties between urbanites and their local state. The well-known accretion of federal agencies with urban mandates massively shifted cities' revenue base from local property taxes to the federal income tax, and from the city's borrowing powers to those of the United States.⁴⁶ When local governments became less dependent on local taxes, local politicians gained more autonomy from their electorates.⁴⁷

⁴³ Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford, 1985); Ira Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-century America* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005); David M.P. Freund, *Colored Property: State Policy and White Racial Politics in Suburban America*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007)

⁴⁴ Jason Scott Smith, *Building New Deal Liberalism: The Political Economy of Public Works, 1933–1956*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

⁴⁵ Matthew D. Lassiter, "Suburban Strategies: The Volatile Center in Postwar American Politics" in Meg Jacobs, William Novak, and Julian Zelizer, eds. *The Democratic Experiment: New Directions in American Political History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003) Also see the essays in Kruse and Sugrue, eds. *The New Suburban History*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

⁴⁶ Eric H. Monkkenon, *The Local State: Public Money And American Cities* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).

⁴⁷ Monkkenon, *The Local State*, 33.

Emerging municipal and regional “authorities” gained even greater independence from the deliberations of local voters.⁴⁸ All of these public officials became more Washington-oriented, seeking the new Manna from Congressional Heaven: funds overlaid on their own local tax base.⁴⁹ Lobbying for Federal mega-projects like freeways, or urban renewal projects, thereafter became a bipartisan occupation.

Thus, New Deal policies effectively federalized the metropolis in regard to political mobilization. Although New Deal funds for relief and housing administered by local authorities reinforced the power and influence of existing urban political organizations in the short run, in the long run, urban voters began to make primary connections with national political issues and the federal government, leaving the “local state” in the position of middle-man in the quest for federal largesse. In this new calculus, urban voters rearranged themselves as interest groups negotiating with federal programs and officials rather than as partisans of local machines. This process also federalized urban *issues*. Even when inappropriate, voters began holding presidential and congressional leadership responsible for municipal matters, especially in the case of schooling (Primary and Secondary Education Acts; anti-busing); Civil Rights (the movement was primarily to desegregate urban places); urban unrest (LBJ’s War on Poverty; Nixon’s Law and Order campaign); and the Tax Revolt.

The “Solid South” would eventually turn away from its century-long Democratic allegiance in reaction to the halting alliance between liberal Democrats and the civil rights movement. As Lyndon Johnson *knowingly* predicted when he signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, “We [the Democratic Party] have lost the South for a generation.”

⁴⁸ Gail Radford, “From Municipal Socialism to Public Authorities: Institutional Factors in the Shaping of American Public Enterprise,” *Journal of American History* 90:3 (2003).

⁴⁹ Thanks to Terrence McDonald for this memorable metaphor.

But “the South” was not so solid by the 1960s, as the new suburbs reconfigured interests and constituencies, and these peripheral metropolitan spaces were finding new leadership outside of the Democratic party. Simultaneously, the pressure of growth policies, begun in the New Deal, steadily dissolved the central-city pillar of the New Deal coalition.

Industrially, the shift from “snowbelt” economy of Fordist mass production to the “sunbelt” economy of post-Fordist military and information-technology economy, transformed the peripheral territories of the Cotton South, the Southwest, and the Pacific West, into the new core. As late as 1950, only one metropolitan area of the Sunbelt, Los Angeles, ranked in the top ten of U.S. metros. Fifty years later, five of those top ten were Sunbelt Metros: Los Angeles, Miami, Dallas, Washington, D.C., and Houston. Among the thirty most populous metro areas in 2000, twenty were in the Sunbelt.⁵⁰

In the shift to the Sunbelt, Washington, D.C. and Los Angeles became the two leading centers of the new footprint of American political economy, even as New York City and the Midwest remained vital elements of the new configuration of power on the ground. The two emergent poles of the new territorial regime arose according to distinct, but related logics. Both owed their rise to the policies of the Military-Industrial Complex (MIC), begun under Roosevelt in 1939 and continued by the Truman and Eisenhower administrations.

Under the New Deal, the District of Columbia finally came into its own as a mighty capital city. Once the federal government became the primary fiscal force, and then as the economy suddenly and lastingly came to revolve around military spending,

⁵⁰ Raymond Mohl, ed. *Searching for the Sunbelt: Historical Perspectives on a Region* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1993), Bruce J. Schulman, *From Cotton Belt To Sunbelt: Federal Policy, Economic Development, and the Transformation of the South, 1938-1980* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991) U.S. Bureau of Census, “Metropolitan and Micropolitan Areas,” <http://www.census.gov/population/www/estimates/metroarea.html>. Accessed May 2008.

this mostly administrative metropolis rose to the top rank of the urban hierarchy (see map and table). Large lobbying and “think-tank” industries developed to influence policy of the rapidly-expanded federal government and this “inside-the-Beltway” culture became a main source of political conventional wisdom and policy ideas, first for the Democratic Party and then later for the Republican Party.

Running against the New Deal and Great Society “liberal” (read excessive) spending, and against bloated federal bureaucracies meddling in local affairs, became important planks in the resurgent campaigns of the Republican Right. (Tellingly, however, Conservative Republicans created their own Washington “counter-establishment” of think-tanks and media outlets).⁵¹ The capital city of this anti-Washington dynamic for the rising Republican Right was Los Angeles, home to Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan.⁵²

Los Angeles’s role in the rise of the New Right mirrors New York’s role in the rise of the New Deal. Prior to their emergence as metropolises of dominant regional regimes, both metropolises had proved stubborn exceptions to the nationally-dominant political cultures and partisan affiliations. New York had been both a Democratic city among a sea of Republican metropolises and a relatively liberal voice amid Jim Crow and rural conservatism in the first two decades of the 20th century. Likewise, Los Angeles was a Republican city among a sea of Democratic metropolises and a militant reactionary voice among Eisenhower moderation from the 1930s through 1950s. Los Angeles was the only top-ten metropolis that continued to vote Republican during the 1930s. From the

⁵¹ Sidney Blumenthal, *The Rise of the Counter-Establishment* (New York: Times Books, 1986)

⁵² By “home” we do not mean technically that they were born there, although Nixon was born in Loma Linda, just over the Los Angeles County line, and raised in Whittier, within Los Angeles County. Reagan’s entire adult career was based in Hollywood.

1940s through the 1970s, it was the place where many politicians learned the ideologies, rhetoric, and policies that could appeal to voters from the South and the suburbs.

Los Angeles came to occupy an exceptional position in the course of American Political Development as a result of a confluence of several historical factors: its overlapping positions as an outpost the violent U.S.-Mexico Borderlands, as the premier site of massive military-industrial activity, as a center of mass communication, as an embodiment of the new American dream in the popular imagination.

In contrast to most major American metropolises circa 1950, Los Angeles had developed as an outpost in the violent U.S.-Mexico Borderlands. Typified by plantation labor, large migratory pools of labor, and by extractive industries like oil, gold, and copper, this region had the kind of autocratic ruling class typical of these kinds of economies.⁵³ This reactionary leadership was personified by the publishers of the Los Angeles Times, Harrison Gray Otis and his son-in-law, Harry Chandler.⁵⁴ These spokesmen for the anti-union, anti-left orthodoxy of the region's political culture were also massive investors in Mexican plantations and minerals. "Ultimately Americans came to own the majority of land along the Mexico's entire periphery."⁵⁵ Most of these American investors backed the regime of Porfirio Diaz, favoring his "policies of keeping down popular protest, muzzling the opposition press, preventing the formation of labor unions, and not allowing strikes."⁵⁶ This reactionary Borderland political culture reached its maximum definition in the 1920s, just as Richard Nixon came of age as a regional

⁵³ Terry Lynn Karl, *The Paradox of Plenty: Oil Booms and Petro-States*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

⁵⁴ Dennis McDougal, *Privileged Son: Otis Chandler and the Rise and Fall of the L.A. Times Dynasty*. (Cambridge, Mass: Perseus Publishing, 2001), 73-75.

⁵⁵ Hart, *Empire and Revolution*, p. 172. Hearst's interests are discussed at pp. 170-171.

⁵⁶ Katz, 15-16.

high school debating champion. Before he could hope to run for Congress in 1946 against New Deal liberal Jerry Voorhis, Nixon sought and received the necessary and very public blessing of the reigning Los Angeles *Times*. The key figures anointing Nixon were the Otis-Chandler dynasts: Norman Chandler, who acceded the throne of Publisher upon his father Harry's death in 1944, Norman's wife Dorothy Buffum "Buffy" Chandler, and especially the *Time's* long-lived political columnist, Kyle Palmer. In a prescient passage David Halberstam writes: "Palmer was that powerful, a Dick [Richard M.] Daley of Southern California."⁵⁷ Defanged by Progressive-Era reform laws, political parties were too weak in California to support machines; their institutional role in organizing the polity was assumed by mass media bosses.

Los Angeles emerged more generally as the global century's new leading-edge technopole: in two crucial areas: aircraft/aerospace, and mass communications (motion pictures, radio, and later television). No place was better positioned to support the new mass-mediated forms of political leadership than post-war Los Angeles. The sheer propaganda value of Hollywood was pioneered by Louis Mayer during the Hoover Administration and was magnified by the Warner Brothers' pro-war and New Deal cinema. After the Second World War, Los Angeles's regional culture became the stuff of mass media, leading the nation iconographically with the "Southern California Lifestyle." The media saturation of this seductive lifestyle coupled with the massive Cold War spending on aerospace technologies to bring millions more residents and workers to

⁵⁷ Leadership of the Times was strictly hereditary. The arch-reactionary Harry Chandler became Publisher in 1917, upon the death of his father-in-law and founder of the Los Angeles *Times*, General Harrison Gray Otis. Norman's son Otis Chandler would take the helm as Publisher in 1960. David Halberstam, *The Powers that Be* (University of Illinois Press, 2000). Quotation at p. 118.

Southern California, pushing Los Angeles to displace Chicago as the nation's "second city" by 1970.

Nixon and Reagan came to represent this region's two dominant halves: the military-industrial complex and the "media-political complex." From this base, Nixon and Reagan learned to speak for the vast space-age suburban work force which spread its footprint into wide valleys, southward into Orange County under the shadow of the giant Saturn V rocket engines tested regularly in the hills above the San Fernando Valley. Nixon called this constituency the Silent Majority and gave voice to its militarist, anti-radical, anti-civil liberties conservatism. The "suburban" strategy was more generally a sunbelt strategy, as a chain of sunbelt cities grew: San Diego, Dallas and Houston, Phoenix, Atlanta, Charlotte, and Miami.⁵⁸

Last but not least, its political culture complemented the Jim Crow political culture of the South. Both shared white supremacy, undemocratic modes of rule, and highly violent rules of engagement for dissidents (Civil Rights activists, Communists, Socialists, unions). As such, politicians from Los Angeles were in a unique position to bring together the Sunbelt and the South, suburbanites and disenchanting urban ethnics, under a banner of color-blind racism, militaristic patriotism, and the welfare state without "welfare." As the son of American oil baron in Mexico, and a Southern mother, William

⁵⁸ On Atlanta and Charlotte, see Matthew D. Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics In The Sunbelt South*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); on Atlanta only, see Kruse, *White Flight*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005). Goldwater led an independent node of the new political culture of this Sunbelt regional regime from his base in Phoenix. See Jason LaBau, "Phoenix Rising: Arizona and the Origins of Modern Conservative Politics," (PhD Dissertation in progress, University of Southern California, History Department).

F. Buckley, dean of the conservative movement *qua* establishment, represents the union of these strains.⁵⁹

The transition from the dominance of the Chicago-Ohio-New York regional regime to the Washington D.C.-Los Angeles Sunbelt regime began with the pairing of Ike and Nixon in 1952. Carrying forward the New Deal's suburbanizing infrastructural and housing policies (and of course the Military Industrial Complex), Eisenhower's administration had its left foot in the New York wing of the party: moderate, internationalist, and very much adapted to the New Deal. Nixon's Vice Presidency represented the right foot, planted squarely in the headquarters of reactionary Los Angeles. The transition took years to complete, though. In 1960 the Democrats included a Texan onto the ticket; the 1964 presidential election pitted a Texan against an Arizonian; Nixon's 1968 and 1972 victories cemented the leadership of the Sunbelt. But the "metonymic moment" was not reached until Ronald Reagan's triumph in 1980. Whereas Nixon retained key links to the moderate New York Republican regime and its compromise with the welfare statism, Reagan emerged as a paragon of the Republican Right. A true believer, Reagan encapsulated the entire conservative movement from Buckley Jr., Goldwater, Nixon, and the Orange County Christians, into a single message. Like Roosevelt, Ronald Reagan's administration regularly produced "Fireside Chat" moments for the new governing coalition, speaking for the entire "national character." Reaganism appealed all over suburbia and middle America in part because the Sunbelt lifestyle was largely predicated on a military-industrial complex, which Reagan expanded

⁵⁹ John Judis, *William F. Buckley, Jr: Patron Saint of the Conservatives* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988).

to record levels with the Star Wars and other expensive ventures that boosted the Silicon Valley-style University “high tech” park complexes.⁶⁰

By the end of the 1970s, suburban districts gained a plurality of seats in state legislatures and the U.S. Congress.⁶¹ Still during 1990s, most of the Republican leadership in the House of Representatives came from Sunbelt suburbs. Bob Barr (an early advocate of Bill Clinton’s impeachment), John Linder (head of the Republican National Congressional Campaign Committee), and Speaker Newt Gingrich (Speaker of the House) all represented the fringes of Atlanta. Majority Leader Richard Armey came from a Dallas suburb, while Tom DeLay and Bill Archer came from suburban Houston. When George W. Bush became Governor of Texas in 1994 he received his largest majorities in the ten fastest growing “collar counties” around cities. In office, he attempted to privatize the welfare system and have Lockheed Martin, a pillar of the military-industrial complex, operating it.⁶²

A New Cosmpolitan Era?

Writing from the perspective of 2008, the notoriously failed presidency of George W. Bush suggests that the Republican Right regime is nearing its end. While analysis of contemporary developments must remain somewhat speculative, major aspects of the situation today seem to support the model we have proposed in this essay. To review, we have argued that national policy regimes, such as the New Deal, have profoundly

⁶⁰ Ann Markusen, et al., *The Rise of the Sunbelt: The Military Remapping of Industrial America*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Margaret Pugh O'Mara, *Cities of Knowledge: Cold War Science and the Search for the Next Silicon Valley*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

⁶¹ Kevin M. Kruse and Thomas J. Sugrue, “Introduction”, *The New Suburban History*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 1.

⁶² Kruse, *White Flight*, 259-265

transformed the territorial footprint of American society and economy. New regional regimes have then emerged from those territories, and in several cases have achieved a “metonymic moment,” in which a region’s distinct political culture and leadership were able to speak to and act in the name of the entire nation. What could we expect to follow the Republican Right policy regime that seems to be ending?

Our starting point is the rise of the Internet, which has vastly transformed American life. The emergence of a networked world and “creative classes” are key new features of the political and economic landscape. But in keeping with our intercurrent model of development, we suggest that these new features are operating in nexus with persistent features of older regime eras. Indeed, the emphasis of the Sunbelt military and media complexes on information technologies helped to produce this new landscape. The result is *not* undifferentiated sprawl, but a very specific new geography of politics.

The Democratic primary campaigns of Howard Dean in 2004 and Barack Obama in 2008 built upon a new model of Internet-based progressive organizing. The Internet has lowered the cost of information and cultural production has consequently exploded. The de-centralization of the public sphere and cultural production is the key emergent feature of the new era. Narratives and ideologies previously marginalized by corporate-controlled media can now circulate widely. Moreover, the Internet enables increased political participation, tapping into a “cognitive surplus.” Instead of watching television, ordinary people can work collaboratively on Internet-based projects such as Wikipedia.⁶³

⁶³ See articles by Chris Bowers on the OpenLeft progressive blog: “Yes, The Medium Is The Movement” 5 May 2008 <<http://www.openleft.com/showDiary.do?diaryId=5585>>; “Putting Our Cognitive Surplus To Use” 6 May 2008 <<http://www.openleft.com/showDiary.do?diaryId=5605>>; “Obama As A Reflection of the Current Incarnation of the Progressive Movement” 13 May 2008 <<http://www.openleft.com/showDiary.do?diaryId=5738>>> accessed 26 May 2008.

Both Dean and Obama surprised established party leaders by tapping into millions of small donors and organizers via the Internet. As of May 2008, the Obama campaign claimed to have “more than 800,000 registered users on my.barackobama.com, the campaign's custom-built social network platform, which helped spawn the planning of more than 50,000 offline events and the creation of more than 10,000 local or themed groups in support of the campaign [as well as] more than 1.5 million individual donors.”⁶⁴ Such forms of dispersed, networked activism were pioneered in the late 1990s and early 2000s by independent progressive groups. MoveOn.org, formed to oppose President Clinton’s impeachment in 1998, has remained active since in a variety of progressive campaigns is the most prominent example, but there are scores of others. These Internet activists, dubbed the “netroots,” were not dispersed evenly across the United States, but clustered in “New Economy” metro areas, such as San Francisco, Seattle, Portland, Los Angeles, Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Washington D.C. The growth of the web phenom Craigslist, illustrates the trend. Until 2000, only the aforementioned cities plus Sacramento and Chicago had their own city-sites. Since then, Craigslist has rapidly spread, launching into more than 250 small cities between 2006 and 2008 alone.⁶⁵ The early concentration in select coastal metropolises was a product of the earlier federal policies. Federal funds enabled the growth of the Silicon Valley-style “high tech” hubs.⁶⁶ As Internet access spreads, the geography of participation expands, but as in other regime eras, it seems that the pioneers of the new landscape retain the initiative in formulating new narratives and strategies. Moreover, while Obama is

⁶⁴ Micah L. Sifry, “What is Obama's Movement?” 8 May 08 http://techpresident.personaldemocracy.com/blog/entry/25112/what_is_obama_s_movement accessed 26 May 2008.

⁶⁵ Noam Cohen, “Craig (of the List) Looks Beyond the Web,” *New York Times*, 12 May 2008.

⁶⁶ See note number 60 above.

reflecting the changes in the political landscape, he also promises to deepen them through his telecommunications proposals to universalize broadband access and ensure “net neutrality.”

If we are correct that the policies of the Republican Right regime have unintentionally produced a new territoriality, then what should follow is the rise of a new regional regime. However, in this case, the “region” is far less geographically contiguous than the regions that have preceded it. Thus the new political culture to match this territoriality will be more cosmopolitan and less dependent upon provincial attachments. On one hand, Republican presidential candidate John McCain is attempting to rely on the political culture of national defense and similar tropes, drawing on the dwindling constituencies of the Republican Right. On the other, the Democratic Party and specifically the “netroots” movement within it, has begun to seize the initiative, forging novel strategies and ideologies. Obama represents the cosmopolitan “children” of the recent era of “globalization,” bringing together the younger generation, the “creative classes” of professionals, African-Americans (whom Republicans suppressed rhetorically and socially to create their regime), and even many Latino immigrants. His success suggests that American identity has *begun* to transcend old racial, religious and perhaps national boundaries.⁶⁷

Of course, past performance of our model does not guarantee future results, but the uncertainty lies only in the specific shape that the emerging policy regime might take. And, as we have argued in this essay, the transition from one regime era to the next is a long and uneven process. Above all, however, our most fundamental argument seems to

⁶⁷ Harold Meyerson, “McCain's America” *Washington Post*, 14 May 2008, A19; Chris Bowers, “The End of the 1960's?” 14 December 2006 <<http://www.mydd.com/story/2006/12/14/194227/36>>.

be holding up very well in the early 21st century. That is, analysts of both the American polity and cities need to take seriously the intertwined relationships between national policy regimes, regional regimes, and the territoriality of the American political economy.