

The Evolution of the Republican Party
from 1854-Present:
What Changed and What Stayed the
Same

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Abstract:

The Republican Party, also known as the Grand Old Party (GOP), has evolved substantially since the party's formation in 1854. Its ideological structure has been adjusted several times over the course of history which can be broken down into four eras: the Liberal Era, the Transition Era, the Conservative Era, and the Modern Era. This research will include a brief historical overview of each era, a discussion on how the ideological fabric of the GOP changed from one era to the next, a special focus on four key Republican presidents (Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, Ronald Reagan, and Donald Trump), and an examination of the three key American values that define the party: adherence to morality, individualism, and nationalism. These values have remained consistent in the party over the course of its existence and continue to connect the Republican Party of yesterday to the Republican party of today.

I. Introduction

The Republican Party, also known as the Grand Old Party or GOP, has long been an instrumental entity in American Politics. Many people associate the party with key figures, mainly presidential administrations, that made the party noteworthy and successful throughout American history. With the amount of power and prestige that any U.S. President holds, these key figures and their respective time periods in history can better be examined in order to discover the ideals and practices that make up the foundation of the Republican Party. It is important to understand the many historical complexities of the party because of its massive contribution and influence in the American Political system as one of the two major political parties. The Republican Party is sometimes called the "Party of Lincoln," referring to the first

Republican president, but as history will attest, the party is somewhat different today than from the era of the Lincoln Presidency.

A party's ideology is the system of ideas and ideals that form a particular economic or political theory and set of policies. Author John Gerring, in the book, *Party Ideologies in America, 1828-1996*, states that an ideology of a party consists of views that were and are coherent, differentiated, and stable (1998: 16). These stated definitions will be utilized when examining the ideological evolution of the Republican Party. There have been a great many ideological shifts within the party since the time of Abraham Lincoln, which begs the question: how is the modern Republican Party different, ideologically, from when it first began? To put it in simpler words: what changed in the party and what stayed the same?

There have not been many works that contributed to answering the question of how the Republican Party changed and how it stayed the same. Some scholars have tried, but because history was not thoroughly examined in their research, many have jumped to their conclusions too soon. Conclusions have been met arguing both that the party did not change from the time of its origins, and the opposing conclusion, that the party vastly changed and essentially has no ties linking today's Republican Party to its beginning. One author, Tim Stanley, in his article titled, "The Changing Face of the GOP," offers a different conclusion in answering the research question listed above. Stanley mentions that the GOP is not the same, ideologically, today as it was in the beginning, but certain values that the party holds have remained consistent (2016: 18). Values such as individualism and equality before the law have largely stayed the same through the evolutionary process of the party, Stanley argues (2016: 11). Though Stanley offers a different and beneficial way of examining the consistencies of the GOP, and does so by

researching the history of the party, he does not go far enough to explain the values that make the party Republican. There still remains some confusion as to what changed and what remained consistent in the GOP. Therefore, further research is needed to explore, through a historical context, the values that form the basis of Republicanism.

The ideological fabric of the modern Republican Party, though not completely identical to the original Republican Party founded in a schoolhouse in Ripon, Wisconsin, remains largely consistent with its origins in terms of its embrace of key American values, including an adherence to morality, individualism, and nationalism. Examining the Republican values of morality, individualism, and nationalism, while looking closely at history, specifically at key Republican presidential administrations and other important moments in time, will help to discover the “changing face of the GOP” in terms of its ideology. It will also help in making the connections between the first Republican president, Abraham Lincoln, and the current Republican president, Donald Trump. This historical approach will be the best way to examine the evolution of the Republican Party from 1854 to the present day.

This paper will consist of a historical overview of the Republican Party. The historical timeline will be split into four parts, each part concentrating on major events and presidential administrations that had a role in the ideological changes of the party. The presidents that will be looked at in depth include: Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, Ronald Reagan, and Donald Trump. The first time period will start in the year 1854, when the Republican Party was officially formed, to 1901 when Theodore Roosevelt came into office. This will be referred to as the Liberal Era. The next time period will look at the years 1901 to 1964, ending with the emergence of modern conservatism when Barry Goldwater ran for president on the Republican ticket in

1964. This is the Transition Era. The third time period will examine the years 1964 to 2017, ending with the rise of the quasi-populist president, Donald Trump. This is the Conservative Era. The final time period will be an overview of 2017 and part of 2018 as well as predictions of how the party will change or stay the same in the future. This will simply be referred to as the Modern Era. Each time period, or era, presented a new way of thinking in the party which was ultimately challenged and led to a new set of ideals that the party followed. Even with the rise and fall of each era, certain key American values remained consistent through them all which is what links the “Party of Lincoln” to the modern Republican Party.

II. Arguments

A. Liberal Era (1854-1901)

The era between 1854 and 1901 will be known as the Liberal Era. The word “liberal” is used here to refer to the ideals of classical liberalism that were extensively used during this era, specifically by the Republican Party. It is not to be confused with the modern approach of liberalism. Classical liberalism involves an adherence to the ideas of freedom, individual liberty, free markets, and natural law - the idea that all people have certain God-given rights. Overall, it emphasizes government that works to promote the rights of individuals while working for the good of the community.

When discussing the history of the Republican Party, it is best to trace it to the very beginning of its formation. In March of 1854, reformist leaders met in a little schoolhouse in Ripon, Wisconsin, which was often used as a meeting center for the community in the 19th century, and began to discuss their contempt toward Congress for expanding slavery to western territories through the Kansas-Nebraska Act. The Act did not directly expand slavery but it did

allow for the people of new territories to decide whether or not slavery would be permitted. Among the individuals who met at the schoolhouse was Alvan Bovay from New York who was heavily involved in politics and was a good friend of Horace Greeley, the editor of the *New York Herald Tribune*. The resentment of the Kansas-Nebraska Act led Bovay to form a new national political party that would be dedicated to the principles of the “Republic.” Along with these principles, the party would concern itself with issues of women’s rights, temperance, immigration, and slavery. Bovay and others endorsed resolutions and also called for the formation of a new “northern party,” and with the help of Horace Greeley, news of this new political party spread nationwide. Then on March 20, 1854, the first local organization of this new northern party met and the Republican Party was officially formed (“A Little White Schoolhouse” 2017: 10).

The newfound Republican Party tapped into many of the same philosophies and policy commitments that the former Federalist and Whig parties had. The Whigs were state builders committed to improving the infrastructure, but they had a weak platform and were not very successful at building a coalition at the national level (Harris and Bailey 2014: xvi). The GOP took ideas from these past parties and resurrected the policies and reformed them into their own, more contemporary set of ideals (Harris and Bailey 2014: xv). Republicans united against the Democrats who sought to expand the institution of slavery. The Republicans based their opposition on the famous line from the Declaration of Independence, “all men are created equal,” appealing to the party’s more patriotic senses (Harris and Bailey 2014: xvi).

The election of Abraham Lincoln, the first Republican president, in 1860, presented a problem for the South because Lincoln sought to use aggressive government power to destroy

the inklings of anarchy, as presented through secessionist movements, that were sprouting throughout the South, and perhaps even use that power to threaten the institution of slavery itself. South Carolina chose to secede, and upon doing so, launched an attack on a United States military stronghold known as Fort Sumter. South Carolina was the first of many southern states that joined together to form their own country known as the Confederate States of America, contributing more to the degradation of the U.S. and its Constitution (Harris and Bailey 2014: xvii). Lincoln's goal was to preserve the United States, also known as the Union, during the Civil War, and the party attempted to do this by committing themselves to a nationalist ideology of using the powers of government to better strengthen "order over anarchy" within the Union (Harris and Bailey 2014: xv). It was not until later that Lincoln's goals expanded into demolishing the institution of slavery and freeing all slaves from bondage. The war lasted five years and concluded with a Union victory over the Confederacy. With the passage of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth amendments, slavery was officially abolished, rights were guaranteed to all U.S. citizens no matter their race, and voting rights were given to minority groups ("America's Founding Documents" 2016). Following the war, Lincoln was assassinated in 1865, and U.S. efforts of reconstruction in the South largely failed, sprouting divisions within the Republican Party.

The divisions within the party were largely internal but did not hinder the party as it continued to dominate American politics throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century. There were progressive factions that began to form within the party, but they would not be a dominating force until after the turn of the century. They desired a stronger role of government

and an expansion of its institutions to be better equipped to protect its citizens (Harris and Bailey 2014: xvii).

The second half of the nineteenth century consisted of rapid economic growth and increased industrialization. This period is largely referred to as the “Gilded Age” (Stanley 2016: 13). The Republican Party favored pro-business protectionism as long as it adhered to the idea of neo-mercantilism. Neo-mercantilism is a “general economic philosophy mandating the subordination of economic activity to the interests of the state and the nation” (Gerring 1998: 65). This idea fostered capitalism through policies like infrastructural development, credit or capital for new industries, and a search for export markets. Business transactions that benefited the country to some extent in providing economic advancement were likely supported (Gerring 1998: 65).

In addition to business benefits, the Republican Party supported labor as well. The Republican president, William McKinley, once stated, “There is no royal blood among us. There are no descended titles here; there is no way in the world of getting on and out, or earning money, except by work... the honorable way to earn [money]... [is] by labor, either labor of the hand or the labor of the brain” (Gerring 1998: 60). Prior to that, another Republican president, Benjamin Harrison, said that “the party that favors such discriminating duties as will develop American production and secure the largest amount of work for our American shops is the party whose policy will promote your interests” (Gerring 1998: 60). Republican leaders also affirmed during this era that every working man is entitled to the wages necessary to live comfortably and support his family (Gerring 1998: 61). The Republican Party did what it could to promote the economic prosperity that prevailed in the U.S. in the final decades of the nineteenth century, but

with the turn of the century a new era was about to begin. This era took government-business relations in a new direction and also challenged the classical liberal approach to governing.

i. Morality of the Liberal Era

Morality is an extensive topic that embodies many forms. There are two main types of morality that can be focused on: spiritual morality and secular morality. Republicans of the Liberal Era largely adhered to both forms of morality. Many of its leaders, including Lincoln, had moral stances shaped by religion, or spiritual morality, but also had moral stances shaped by society which can be more of a secular approach to morality. This is by no means saying that societies are inherently secular, but certain actions such as rape or murder are condemned by many in society without necessarily appealing to religion. Those actions are condemned not necessarily because God outlaws them, but because society considers them to be unjust, improper, and wrong.

President Lincoln was known by many names, “honest Abe” being one of them, which can help to define Lincoln’s moral character. One characterization that really defines Lincoln’s moral code was that he was a “self-made man” (Howe 2008). This term does not mean what it does today, where it exists as a measurement of material or financial gain. In the nineteenth century, a self-made man was able to self-consciously expand his human potential. With this “self-made” embodiment, Lincoln used his restrictiveness from indulgences, his virtue, honesty, integrity, and intellectual prowess to shape the newly founded Republican Party into a party that represented his own core morals and beliefs (Howe 2008). Lincoln mastered control of himself through the “highest standard of personal and official bearing” which allowed him to win the hearts of others, particularly in the North (Gerring 1998: 102).

Duty and obligation were also big parts of the party's moral code. Daniel Webster said in the 1840 presidential campaign that "the feelings are to be disciplined, the passions are to be restrained, true and worthy motives are to be inspired, a profound religious feeling is to be instilled, and pure morality inculcated under all circumstances" (Gerring 1998: 103). Webster goes on to say that all this ought to be comprised in education, and it is the duty and obligation of all to pass these principles on (Gerring 1998: 103). This quote best sums up not only Abraham Lincoln's moral stances but also the moral stance that the Republican Party took through much of the nineteenth century and beyond.

The Republican stance to reduce or eliminate slavery in the mid-nineteenth century can be seen as a moral stance that may have been influenced from a divine power or by a more secular, and purely societal, influence. The idea of men as property appalled many in the North, and it eventually became part of Lincoln's agenda during the Civil War to free the slaves. In addition, Christian morality was prevalent in the party, and it was the belief of many that sins like premarital sex and overuse of alcohol ought to be entirely removed from people's lives. The abolition of slavery and the practice of virtue were greatly encouraged in the party, as well as the belief that "capitalism, like the Holy Spirit, could liberate and redeem" (Stanley 2016: 13). The Republican Party promoted both secular and religious forms of morality during its early days, and it still looks to morals today as a platform of guidance for people to live by.

ii. Individualism of the Liberal Era

Individualism was widely emphasized in the Republican Party throughout history. There are also several different forms of individualism. One definition includes an unfettered freedom of action that a person has, and another definition of individualism involves the rights, limits, and

duties an individual has as it relates to the community. This type might be further defined as a “wise and regulated individualism” (Gerring 1998: 102). People that adhered to the first definition of individualism were often despised because they many times had a greedy and selfish nature, but people that adhered to the second definition tended to honor the balance between the rights and needs of the single person and the rights and needs of the community. President Lincoln had to be a master of his own mind in order to lead the country out of the turmoil of the Civil War, but he also knew that he could not do it alone. It was not about the collective versus the individual to Lincoln; rather, he knew one could not exist without the other (Rothman 2015).

Individualism in the Liberal Era harbored freedom and individual liberty but not with the complete absence of government. In an 1876 campaign pamphlet, it was stated that “the first duty of a civilized government is to protect the interests of those over whom it exercises its guardianship. It is the duty of the head of a family to provide for his household, and to use every legitimate means to advance the interests and improve the condition of each individual under his protection. It is the same with the national government” (Gerring 1998: 80). In essence, the government is to be a parent figure in the lives of its citizens. It is to protect their interests and their rights without dictating every aspect of its subjects’ lives. This version of individualism has always been a key value to many Americans, and the Republican Party sought to advance this belief, not only during the Liberal Era, but in more recent eras as well.

iii. Nationalism of the Liberal Era

Nationalism is yet another trait the Republican Party has consistently valued. Nationalism is a form of patriotism and loyalty that one has to his or her country, along with the principles

and beliefs that their country represents. There are different versions of nationalism including an extreme one that encompasses a feeling of superiority that the home country has over others. This feeling that America was better than the rest of the world did surface within the party's history, especially with the rise of American exceptionalism, which referred to the country as being more unique than other nations, but this idea rarely had lasting negative effects. The biggest part of nationalism is loyalty to one's country. Francis Lieber, a prominent Republican and German-American political theorist wrote, "We ... adhere to our country, to her institutions, to freedom, and her power, and to that great institution called the government of our country... Loyalty is pre-eminently a civic virtue in a free country" (Gerring 1998: 79). Loyalty to a country means a certain level of loyalty to the government and the ideals that it represents.

Abraham Lincoln was a strong advocate for nationalism. He placed the idea of preserving the Union at the top of his agenda, and he emphasized the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution to further his belief of America's God-given right to prosper. Saving the Union would give a "new birth of freedom" for all people and "for man's vast future" ("The Nationalism of Abraham Lincoln Revisited" 2001). Adherence to the state also meant that people's loyalty would be rewarded by the parental hand of government in the form of essential assistance to the individual so that the individual can carry out the duties to the state more effectively (Gerring 1998: 80). People of bad character, such as criminals and anarchists, were to be resented. Americans and immigrants from countries that fostered integrity, steadiness, and loyalty to government were to be respected and admitted in as true Americans (Gerring 1998: 101). Nationalism is a key trait to most Republicans, and without it the party may not have

turned out to be as successful as it was, for loyalty is just as important to the party as it is to the state.

B. Transition Era (1901-1964)

The year 1901 not only marked the beginning of the Progressive movement but it was also the start of the Transition Era for the Republican Party. The Transition Era took place between 1901 and 1964. The Progressive movement sought major reforms, particularly social reforms, and progressives often favored a strong federal government to be able to provide better conditions for its citizens. Although the Transition Era began with a strong progressive push within the Republican Party, the era ended with a fairly strong ideological shift toward a more conservative stance for the party. This transition from a progressive lean to a conservative lean is what gives the era its name.

With the rise of business, there came a rise of civil unrest. Increased power for big corporations, worker strikes, plus people's desire for a more direct democracy and expanded suffrage became the government's new issues to address. Republican Theodore Roosevelt, who was president from 1901-1909, embraced a lax form of progressivism and used his presidential authority to diminish the power that big corporations had through antitrust suits while at the same time increasing the power of the labor force. He also regulated the provision of clean food and drugs and was a keen conservationist (Stanley 2016: 13).

The Progressive movement also paved the way for large political reforms including direct elections of senators, direct primaries, and the emergence of referendum votes (Harris and Bailey 2014: xix). The movement created more direct democratic politics and used a more centralized and energetic government to counter the ills of society as well as the growing power and

influence of the business sector (Harris and Bailey 2014: xviii). Progressives thought that the national government was more virtuous than local governments and used Roosevelt's "bully pulpit," the idea that the president can educate the citizens directly, as well as the direct participation of citizens to justify its goals (Harris and Bailey 2014: xix). Following his two terms in office, Roosevelt sought another term in office but did not win the Republican nomination, so he ran as a third party member. He called his party the Bull Moose Party which took a hardline approach to progressive politics. The creation of the Bull Moose Party split the Republican ticket which inevitably gave Democrat Woodrow Wilson the victory in the 1912 presidential election (Harris and Bailey 2014: xx).

The Progressive movement offered a new perspective to American Politics, but it never was able to permanently entrench itself in the Republican Party. During the Theodore Roosevelt administration, not all Republicans were progressives, and many in the party still desired a more centrist or even right wing approach to creating policy. The Progressive movement did manage to stimulate diversity within the party, however. The Republicans elected the first woman to Congress, the first Jewish senator from outside the former Confederacy, and the first Hispanic senator (Stanley 2016: 13-14). After Wilson's term in office, Republicans would essentially abandon all remnants of progressivism with the elections of Republican presidents Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover and embrace more conservative ideals (Harris and Bailey 2014: xx).

Upon the conclusion of World War I, the Republican Party adopted stances of non-intervention when it came to foreign affairs, and the government began to shrink in size. President Herbert Hoover, president from 1929-1933, believed his program of volunteerism, a cooperative effort between government and business, could cure the growing threat of poverty,

but then in 1929 the market crashed and the Great Depression began. The Republican responses pushed the limits of how much government the party would be willing to accept. Hoover raised tariffs to protect industry, forced repatriation of thousands of Mexicans to free up jobs, and, through the Emergency Relief and Construction Act, he financed public works, but Hoover could not distance himself enough from the Republican instinct to allow the free market and individual efforts to solve all the ills of society. This cost him the election of 1932 to Democrat Franklin D. Roosevelt, a distant cousin of Theodore Roosevelt (Stanley 2016: 15).

Franklin D. Roosevelt, also known as FDR, used progressive ideals to further expand and transform the role of government. The federal government created many new programs and took responsibility over public housing, unemployment insurance, and farm prices to try to get the country out of the Depression. These large federal programs were known as “New Deal” programs. Republicans struggled to accept these large changes and tried to roll them back (Stanley 2016: 15). Despite their failures in winning over congressional seats, the Republican Party generally refused to adopt FDR’s New Deal programs which stimulated an even steeper dislike of government power that continued to fester for decades to come (Harris and Bailey 2014: xxi).

FDR’s programs did not ultimately end the Great Depression, but the Second World War allowed the U.S. to step out of the downward economic cycle. Eight years after the war, in 1953, General Dwight D. Eisenhower became the next Republican president. He felt that the New Deal should not be repealed but merely tweaked which showed his more moderate tendencies. Eisenhower expanded social security and raised the minimum wage. He also created the Interstate Highway Program which made domestic travel easier (Stanley 2016: 15). The

Eisenhower administration came to an end in 1961 with the looming threat of Communism and the threat of nuclear war with the Soviet Union.

Eisenhower's vice-president, Richard Nixon, ran for president on the GOP ticket in 1960. Nixon agreed to meet with the very progressive GOP governor of New York, Nelson Rockefeller, to discuss the party's direction. In what was known as the Treaty of Fifth Avenue, they agreed to create policies that would increase federal aid to education and attempt to eliminate segregation and discrimination which continued to prevail in the South. Essentially, they desired to create a form of comprehensive civil rights legislation (Stanley 2016: 15). This legislation was not able to be achieved because the 1960 presidential election went to Democrat John F. Kennedy. His focus was more on foreign affairs including how to deal with the communist threat. After Kennedy's assassination in 1963, his vice-president and fellow Democrat, Lyndon B. Johnson, also known as LBJ, took office. LBJ's "Great Society" policies included providing federal government aid to infrastructure, education, and reducing poverty (Chafe, Sitkoff, and Bailey 2012: 78). LBJ also created civil rights legislation to try to counter the discrimination that had existed in the South since the Civil War.

LBJ's policies resulted in yet another expansion of the federal government. Although, the Republican party consisted of several wings, some more sympathetic to New Deal and Great Society policies than others, the general pivot toward a more conservative and smaller government standard started with the nomination of Barry Goldwater on the Republican ticket in 1964. Goldwater represented a diverse conservative movement including religious conservatives who wanted to counter moral liberalism, racial conservatives who wanted to defend southern segregation, and economic conservatives who thought that government spending was too much

and posed a threat to the economy (Stanley 2016: 15). The growing welfare state under LBJ angered many working class whites because it seemed to them to only benefit the black community. Goldwater's opposition to civil rights legislation earned him many votes from the once Democratic South. Goldwater's background, however, contained little evidence of racism. He was representing the general Republican platform at the time which supported racial progress in principle but favored Hoover's volunteerism in approach (Stanley 2016: 16). The Republican Party played a mostly minor role when it came to civil rights and gave only moderate lip service to it. Thus, the party was essentially spared from the civil rights issues that plagued the Democrats. Many Republicans thought their connection to Lincoln made their anti-discrimination stance obvious, but nonetheless many African Americans shifted to the Democratic Party because of their more active responses in combating discrimination and segregation (Harris and Bailey 2014: xxii).

While there is much more history that could be discussed, for the purpose of this paper, suffice it to say that the Transition Era was an essential period for both major parties. The Republican Party started the era out as a strong supporter of an enthusiastic and centralized government through the progressive movement, but following the New Deal programs the party shifted to a more moderate stance. Then Goldwater set the stage for a solidified base in conservatism and the belief in a smaller role of government in response to LBJ's Great Society proposals. Ideologically the GOP changed immensely, but its key values of adherence to morality, individualism, and nationalism as expressed through the presidents during this period, mainly Theodore Roosevelt, kept the Republican Party consistent with its origins.

i. Morality of the Transition Era

“To educate a man in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society” (“Theodore Roosevelt Quotes”). Theodore Roosevelt, also known as TR, thought that a man who was too self-focused would be a detriment to the progression of society. TR believed that a virtuous government can foster virtuous citizens by eliminating the ills of society and promoting human welfare (Harris and Bailey 2014: 57). Developing a character that was able to respect property rights and individual rights but also willing to serve the state, which Roosevelt would say is an expression of service to all of one’s neighbors combined, is the ideal character that all should aspire to (Gerring 1998: 81). In addition, citizens who exercised self-restraint, self-control, and self-mastery were embraced as proper and “civilized” citizens (Gerring 1998: 101). Basing one’s morals on a collective approach to morality that also fostered civility is something that many societies utilize, but it is an idea that the Republican Party tended to promote as long as this approach did not interfere with their other values of individualism and nationalism.

Just as the Republican Party did what it could to combat the ills of slavery, the party also attempted to combat the ills of industrialization and business power. During the Transition Era the GOP often wavered slightly between wanting to respect the expansiveness of capitalism on one hand, and using government to limit its influence for the protection of citizens on the other. Ultimately, the GOP believed that government is needed in many cases to maintain the balance between capitalism and the welfare of citizens, and TR did not shy away from that platform. TR called for a variety of social welfare reforms involving child labor, worker safety, and limited workday laws (Harris and Bailey 2014: 57). The GOP knew that, in terms of morality, if it can

instill virtue through government, much like Lincoln did, then self-indulgent behavior would be minimized while also respecting a person's individual rights, and the duty to the state and each other would be maximized.

ii. Individualism of the Transition Era

Though Theodore Roosevelt often spoke ill of individualism in its purest form, he believed that it was necessary to an extent in order to preserve the American character. "While we should, so long as we can safely do so, give to each individual the largest possible liberty,... yet we must not hesitate to interfere whenever it is clearly seen that harm comes from excessive individualism" (Gerring 1998: 102). Liberty and individualism are linked, for liberty, which is freedom within a society that comes from lack of restrictions by an authority, can be advanced the more the political philosophy of individualism is instilled. TR knew that anything in excess can cause ills to society, so he favored the approach that "whoever claims liberty as a right must accept the responsibilities that go with the exercise of the right" (Gerring 1998: 104). In Roosevelt's view, as long as the responsibility, or duty, that comes with liberty is recognized, someone can practice individualism as long as it does not harm society; otherwise, the government must step in.

Herbert Hoover, as a Republican candidate who later became president, said in a campaign speech in 1928, that the American system of "rugged individualism," the idea that individuals can succeed with minimal involvement from the government, was under threat by the push for excessive government intervention in the lives of its citizens (Harris and Bailey 2014: 72). Hoover and Roosevelt would likely not have agreed on each other's specific interpretations, but they both recognized the value individualism has in strengthening America's prosperity.

They would agree with Lincoln that their needs to be a balance between the needs of society and the needs of the individual, and the Republican Party has continued to emulate that approach to individualism.

iii. Nationalism of the Transition Era

America is “the greatest Republic upon which the sun has ever shone” (Gerring 1998: 111). This Theodore Roosevelt quote further articulates the Republican Party’s keen view of nationalism, which also can be referred to as Americanism. The view that America is the greatest country on Earth has been passed around since the nation’s birth, but the Republicans have a long history of promoting that belief and in securing people’s allegiances to that cause. Republican president, Warren Harding, who popularized the phrase “America First,” stated, “Nationalism was the vital force that turned the dearly wrought freedom of the republic to a living impelling power. Nationalism inspired, assured, upbuilded” (Gerring 1998: 112). In other words, Harding believed that nationalism, or Americanism, is what allowed America to be a compelling power in the world.

The Republican Party was always the more likely to resort to patriotic sentiment than their Democratic colleagues. They did so even in matters pertaining to foreign policy. Although the party went from expansionist during the Liberal Era, to imperialist, and then isolationist in the 1920s, it always counted on forms of nationalism and patriotism to advance its cause and defend American rights and interests. During the imperialist stage of foreign policy, in the middle of Theodore Roosevelt’s term in office, he encouraged the populace to look at all sides of the imperial question including the greatness and honor that the practice would bring to the nation (Gerring 1998: 112).

The Republicans of the Transition Era, similar to the Republicans of the Liberal Era, saw themselves as “bearers of the national tradition; there was nothing more sacred to party leaders... than the preservation of American sovereignty, American ideals, and the American way of life” (Gerring 1998: 116). This patriotic rhetoric would be echoed by leaders of the Republican Party for decades to come. Those future leaders would continue to embrace the Republican principles of morality and individualism as well.

C. Conservative Era (1964-2017)

Barry Goldwater’s run for president in 1964, though unsuccessful, did lay the ideological groundwork for the GOP’s embrace of conservatism and ultimately set the stage for the Reagan Revolution which would take place in the 1980s (Harris and Bailey 2014: xxii). 1964 marked the official beginning of the Conservative Era. To a large extent, the policies and ideologies developed by the Republican party during this era are still in practice today. The party has always had elements of conservatism in its ranks, but never was it more apparent than in the second half of the twentieth century. Ronald Reagan, the Republican president from 1981-1989, essentially became the icon for current and future Republican leaders to follow. His conservative views and policies continue to be embraced and emulated even today.

Near the beginning of the era, Republican Richard Nixon had a second go at the presidency in 1968 and won. Nixon exploited a unifying theme to gain support from people all over the political spectrum. Similar to the anti-slavery theme that Republicans used in the 1860s, Nixon sought for the communal embrace of anti-communism. He wanted to improve the situation domestically and make the American form of democracy more attractive to the world so that Americans and foreigners alike would not easily give in to the temptation of Communism

that the Soviet Union emulated. Nixon actively pursued desegregation in education and in employment in many federal agencies on the homefront to make the U.S. more appealing. To further combat the spread of Communism, Nixon shared the conservative stance to contain and even combat the Soviet Union and their influence around the world. This led to support for the Vietnam War (which began during the Johnson administration) as well as opposition to the growing anti-war movement (Stanley 2016: 16).

At home, the Republican Party would dominate the domestic Cold War front by ridding the country of “commies in America” which ultimately led to what is known as the “Red Scare” (Harris and Bailey 2014: xxii). A Republican Wisconsin Senator, Joseph McCarthy, led the charge but the Red Scare grew out of hand when many people were being falsely accused of having ties to Communism. The Red Scare eventually died down, but it assured the public that the GOP was the strong voice against communism and the Soviet Union, both abroad and at home (Harris and Bailey 2014: xxiii). The strong conservative stance of anti-communism began in the beginning of this era and would continue to be one of the party’s main focuses for the remainder of the twentieth century.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, huge demographic shifts emerged throughout the country. The South now largely supported the Republican Party and pockets of people in the North, East, and West threw their support to the Democratic Party. Much of this can be attributed to Nixon’s “Southern Strategy,” which involved the administration’s vocal acknowledgement and support of mostly southern, middle-class whites, known as the “Forgotten Americans,” in order to gain their votes (Chafe, Sitkoff, and Bailey 2012: 263). These people felt disenfranchised by the government’s welfare policies that tended to favor more African

American communities, and they felt they were being ignored while anti-war protests and civil rights movements received all the attention. Nixon took note of their pleas, which ultimately gave him their support, and won him the election in 1968 and again in 1972 (Chafe, Sitkoff, and Bailey 2012: 263). To this day, many white, middle-class, southerners have supported the Republican Party because of Nixon's pivot toward gaining their votes. After these demographic shifts occurred, President Nixon remained somewhat moderate, but the GOP grew more solidly conservative as time went on, embracing smaller government, lower taxes, individual freedom, and a robust military (Harris and Bailey 2014: xxiii).

The Vietnam War grew largely unpopular during the Nixon Administration. The United States was winning the battles but losing the war, so Nixon promised to cease the war. Before doing so, the administration attempted to provide resources to South Vietnam so they could fend for themselves, but the communist North Vietnamese still prevailed. U.S. military involvement in Vietnam ended in 1973 around the time when President Nixon was forced to resign due to the discovery that his administration was trying to cover up illegal activity. The scandal was known as the "Watergate Scandal." Gerald Ford, Nixon's vice-president, took office and pardoned Nixon in an attempt to signify healing in the country, after the scandal and the loss of the Vietnam War. The public, however, lost a great deal of faith in the political system and in the ability of leaders to hold the public's interests above their own. As a result, Jimmy Carter, a Democrat, became the next President of the United States in 1976 (Harris and Bailey 2014: xxiv). It was unsure where the Republican Party would go from there and how it would heal after the unfortunate events of the early 1970s. With the future uncertain, the GOP tried to find a strong candidate capable of unifying the nation and who exemplified the key values that the

party held dear. In 1980, they would run the perfect candidate and manage to defeat the incumbent Democratic president. The new president's name was Ronald Reagan.

The 1970s ended with the country being in a horrific state. Not only did the U.S. lose a war and deal with a scandal that involved its most powerful leader, the economy was also in poor shape with high inflation rates, high oil prices, and a crippling recession. In addition, the Iran Hostage Crisis occurred where 52 American diplomats and citizens were held hostage in the U.S. embassy in Iran for 444 days. The Carter Administration could seemingly do nothing to evade or fix any of the problems that occurred. After Reagan took office, however, specifically on the day of his inauguration in 1981, the American hostages in Iran were released, and the issues of the economy soon withered away (Harris and Bailey 2014: xxv). Reagan had united the country and represented the healing force that it so desperately needed. His patriotic sentiment, his strength in office against foreign threats, mainly communism, and his economic policies, most notably tax cuts for citizens, were greatly valued by many; including, by people on the other side of the political spectrum who willingly referred to themselves as "Reagan Democrats" (Chafe, Sitkoff, and Bailey 2012: 340).

The Reagan Revolution, as it is known because of its lasting impact, included the series of domestic and foreign policies that were put into place during Reagan's tenure in office. Reagan reduced the size of government and its spending in certain areas, mainly in New Deal programs, while simultaneously increasing defense spending to better equip the country to fight or defend itself from the looming threat of the Soviet Union. In addition to defense escalation and New Deal roll back, taxes were cut all around in an attempt to give the consumer, not the

government, more ownership over their wallet and in turn stimulate the economy through private spending (Harris and Bailey 2014: xxv).

President Reagan's rhetoric did well to increase the effectiveness and adherence to his policies which is what contributed to his landslide victory in the 1984 election where he won the most electoral votes in presidential election history (Harris and Bailey 2014: xxvi). During his second inaugural address in 1985, Reagan voiced that "there are no constraints on the human mind, no walls around the human spirit, no barriers to our progress except those we ourselves erect. Already, pushing down tax rates has freed our economy to vault forward to record growth" (Chafe, Sitkoff, and Bailey 2012: 342).

Reagan also focused on preserving and promoting the conservative agenda by encouraging the public to support certain social stances such as pro-life, prayer in schools, family values, and individual freedom and responsibility. All together, Reagan hoped these social stances would instill a return to a more "traditional" America that respected its Christian roots (Harris and Bailey 2014: xxvi). In addition to instilling values at home, he also wanted to be on the better side of history when it came to promoting values abroad as well. "History is asking us, once again, to be a force for good in the world. Let us begin in unity, with justice and love" (Chafe, Sitkoff, and Bailey 2012: 345). His opposition to Communism was framed as the "second war against slavery," and it was up to the U.S. to be the world leader as far as these values are concerned. In a lecture in 1987, to high school students, Reagan, appealing to the rhetoric of Abraham Lincoln, said, "Lincoln understood that the idea of human liberty is bound up in the very nature of our nation. He understood that America cannot be America without standing for the cause of freedom" (Stanley 2016: 17).

Despite all of Reagan's accomplishments, including his use of aggressive negotiations and roll back stances that ultimately led to the fall of the Soviet Union shortly after his tenure in office, he also had a fair share of faults that damaged his image. For one, though he sought to reduce government spending to lower the national deficit, he ended up raising the country's deficit spending because of the increase in military spending and the lack of revenue resulting from the tax cuts (Harris and Bailey 2014: xxv). This angered many fiscal conservatives who wanted a more financially efficient government. Also, many civil rights activists were angered by Reagan's call to disinvest in the economy and in welfare programs. Reagan's association with the white middle-class electorate, because of the implemented "southern strategy" used in Nixon's last election, alienated many non-whites (Stanley 2016: 17).

There are those, including most contemporary Republicans, who appreciate President Reagan and his agenda, and there are those who feel that his actions put the nation in a bad state. Despite the varying opinions, Reagan was probably the most important political icon of the Republican Party in the twentieth century and perhaps even until today. He was able to capture the imagination of the citizenry and foster a new wave of ideological adherence. Even the Democrats would only find success with more conservative candidates in the years that followed Reagan. The weak position of the Republican Party in the 1960s and 1970s was reversed and its reinvigoration redefined politics for years to come (Harris and Bailey 2014: xxvi). Certainly the Republican Party and conservatism have not been and are still not necessarily in sync, but Reagan did help pull the party to a more rightward stance on the spectrum, and evidence of this can be found even today.

Continuing on with the party's history, Reagan's vice-president, George H.W. Bush, became the next President of the U.S. in 1989, and he was essentially a third-term Reagan, continuing many of the same policies and stances. Conservatives of the late 80s and early 90s wanted to push out all of the 'RINOs' (Republicans-in-name-only) as well as the residual Rockefeller moderates who still had their own wing in the party. They wanted to solidify the base under a more conservative banner (Harris and Bailey 2014: xxvi). Even President Bush was under question, especially after he made the comment, "read my lips, no new taxes," but then shortly after ended up raising taxes. This stunt cost him support and ultimately the election in 1992 (Harris and Bailey 2014: xxvii). It also did not help that a former Nixon speech-writer, Pat Buchanan, split the Republican ticket and offered a more populist, "America first" option for the American electorate. He believed in withdrawing the U.S. from foreign entanglements and protecting American jobs by putting the country's interests first. Buchanan's candidacy weakened Bush's chances of winning the election. Buchanan ultimately set the stage for the rise of the more populist-focused "Trump Rebellion" that took hold in the 2016 election (Stanley 2016: 17-18).

Though the official fall of the Soviet Union occurred during Bush's tenure in office, in 1991, and the first Iraq War, implemented by President Bush, was largely a success, he remained a one-term president. His successor was Arkansas native, Bill Clinton, who was known to be a fairly conservative member of the Democratic Party. Though President Clinton flirted with several conservative viewpoints, he seemed to not be conservative enough for a man named Newt Gingrich, who became the Speaker of the House and leader of the Republican Party after the successful 1994 midterm election (Harris and Bailey 2014: xxvi). Gingrich created the

“Republican Contract with America” which was a conservative manifesto that stated the policy goals that the Republican majority in both houses sought to accomplish despite the White House’s seated Democratic president. The contract called for a balanced budget/tax limitation amendment, an anti-crime package, welfare reform, tax incentives for American families, a first-ever vote on term limits to replace career politicians, and more (Chafe, Sitkoff, and Bailey 2012: 346-348). Though not everything in the contract was implemented, it made it clear what the Republican agenda was and some of the items were even backed, to some extent, by the Clinton administration. Clinton once made the comment to his aides, “I hope you’re all aware, we’re all Eisenhower Republicans... fighting the Reagan Republicans” (Chafe, Sitkoff, and Bailey 2012: 346). This comment suggests that Clinton was much like those moderate Republicans that the party was actively trying to kick out.

Whether they were on the same side or not, party politics would get in the way of a clear line of compromise. House Republicans tried to impeach President Clinton over the Monica Lewinsky scandal in the mid 90s which resulted in Clinton lying about it under oath. Though the impeachment never took place because the Senate did not approve the process, it tarnished Clinton’s reputation (Harris and Bailey 2014: xxviii).

The 2000 election resulted in George H.W. Bush’s son, George W. Bush, a Republican, narrowly winning the election against Clinton’s vice-president, Al Gore. The election itself was historical in that it was so close that it ultimately came down to the Supreme Court deciding who won Florida’s electoral votes and thus deciding who won the election. Bush offered conservatism but with a hint of compassion and was often noted for being open to making deals with liberals.

He wanted an extension of Reagan's policies but also a kinder, gentler Republican Party (Harris and Bailey 2014: xxviii).

The Republican coalition at the time consisted of economic conservatives who wanted fewer regulations and smaller government, social conservatives who desired solid family values and moral stances, and foreign policy conservatives who saw American strength abroad as key for the party. The coalition was strong and internally unified despite showing signs of wear during the 90s. The coalition was especially unified after the dreaded attacks on September 11th, 2001, where the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were hit by hijacked planes, killing nearly 3,000 Americans (Harris and Bailey 2014: xxix). Not just the Republican Party, but America was united in bringing justice to those responsible, and Bush's patriotic sentiment helped.

In addition to implementing domestic policy such as economic and education reforms, Bush initiated the "War on Terror" because it was Al Qaeda terrorists who were responsible for the hijacking of the commercial airliners and the killing of innocent Americans. Bush enhanced government surveillance and sent U.S. troops into Iraq and Afghanistan. The U.S. military was successful in toppling Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq, but the wars grew largely unpopular as time went on. As Bush's approval ratings fell, Democrats thought they had a chance to snatch the 2004 election by running John Kerry, a liberal Democrat, who opposed the war in Iraq. Bush ended up winning the election, but his approval rating continued to decline. President Bush wanted to privatize social security and focus his efforts on national security, but his stances alienated many moderates in the party, thus they severed their allegiances to the party which helped the Democrats regain both houses of Congress in 2006 (Harris and Bailey 2014: xxix).

The Republican Party was holding on by a thread, and more doubt was being cast on America's role in intervening in foreign affairs as well as whether Reagan's tax-cutting wisdom really worked (Stanley 2016: 18). There was little chance that Republicans would win the 2008 election, and their running of John McCain, an establishment candidate, did not help. Ultimately, a young Democrat would secure the White House. Barack Obama, the first African-American president, seized an overwhelming victory in 2008, and his administration sought to reverse the flaws of the Bush years.

In 2008 and 2009, the Great Recession occurred resulting in the loss of many manufacturing jobs. Banks were on the verge of collapse because of the housing market, and the stock market crashed. It was a tremendous hit on the American economy. The Obama administration approved several bailout measures to minimize the impact on certain key American industries like the automotive industry.

Many strong conservatives in the Republican Party were angered by these measures and as a result decided to form their own movement - the Tea Party. Their main source of fuel was the ever increasing national debt which further expanded after the government bailout. The Tea Party, still a subsidiary of the Republican Party, represented many new voices including libertarian, social, and populist conservatives. The movement was mainly grassroots in nature, but it did have access to many wealthy donors which kept it in the national spotlight (Harris and Bailey 2014: xxx).

The Tea Party's base of issues included encouraging conservative stances on the Second Amendment, abortion, immigration, prayer in schools, and it had a strong resistance to the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, which sought to expand healthcare coverage

through a government program. The Tea Party favored constitutionalism, calling for an American Republic that emulated the founders' vision. Their political attacks were focused mainly on Democrats, but Republicans were also not spared, with claims that members in the party were not conservative enough. Many popular Republican incumbents in Congress were getting voted out by more right wing, Tea Party candidates. This process is known as "primarying," and it worked in getting the House of Representatives back under Republican control during the 2010 midterm elections (Harris and Bailey 2014: xxxi). The Tea Party offered a vocal and practical opposition to President Obama and his policies and was the most active entity in the Republican Party.

The 2012 election still showed signs of tension within the Republican Party, but establishment candidate Mitt Romney would win the Republican nomination (Harris and Bailey 2014: xxxii). Romney held conservative stances while still trying to appeal to the moderate voter groups within and outside the party. Romney, however, was unsuccessful in getting enough electoral votes, and Obama won a second term in office. The Republicans held on to the majority in the House but still showed signs of fracture within its ranks (Harris and Bailey 2014: xxxiii). Some of these signs of fracture still exist in the party to this day, but these fractures were not enough to cause the party to completely fall apart.

The 2014 midterm election showed promising signs for the GOP as it gained control of the Senate as well as increased its majority in the House of Representatives. These victories paved the way for the pivotal election that occurred in 2016 where the Republican Party claimed many victories, including in the White House where a new type of Republican president took office. The victor was far less establishment and more so populist, but Republican nevertheless.

This president, Donald Trump, would take the GOP down a slightly new course while still holding onto many of the key values and precedents that the party holds dear.

The Conservative Era was the most expansive, but it was essential in solidifying the Republican Party's main ideological adherence. Previous eras all point to the pivotal moments of this era. The party always had elements of conservatism, but never was it as strong as it was in this era, particularly during the Reagan years in the 1980s. Reagan set the ideological base for contemporary and future Republicans to follow, and he instigated conservative politics in the form of actual policy. Ronald Reagan, like Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln did in the past, guided the GOP and kept it obedient to the key values of morality, individualism, and nationalism.

i. Morality of the Conservative Era

The GOP's approach to the subject of morality in the Conservative Era was much like how it approached the subject in the Liberal and Transition Eras. The Republicans embraced a moral code that was significantly influenced by Biblical teachings but also promoted societal values that did not alienate any of its more secular supporters. Ronald Reagan tried to promote values by claiming that a moral man could better serve the state than an immoral man, much like his predecessors, Abraham Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt, tried to promote before him. Reagan embraced Christian conservative values including a denouncement of pornography, abortion, and homosexuality, all the while promoting the American spirit of liberty (Stanley 2016: 17).

“Of all the changes that have swept America the past four years, none brings greater promise than our rediscovery of the value of faith, freedom, family, work, and neighborhood...”

and the renewal of American generosity” (Chafe, Sitkoff, and Bailey 2012: 344). This excerpt from Reagan’s 1985 State of the Union Address shows some of the values that Reagan had seen and hoped to continue to see prosper. He also mentioned the increased attendance in places of worship, brought up recent legislation that protected school prayer, and he made the claim that abortion is indeed the taking of human life (Chafe, Sitkoff, and Bailey 2012: 344). These spiritual morals appealed to many, particularly to the group that was known as the “Religious Right,” a strongly opinionated religious group that took part in the growing conservative coalition (Chafe, Sitkoff, and Bailey 2012: 330).

Reagan also spoke of more secular morals that most people would stand by even if they were not religious. He particularly mentioned violent crime and spoke of how innocents should not feel like victims. President Reagan desired to increase law enforcement presence, have harsher punishments for criminals, and implement the death penalty in necessary cases to better preserve the freedom of good people (Chafe, Sitkoff, and Bailey 2012: 344).

For years, the Republican Party encouraged the preservation of the nuclear family and the home assuming that these assets would stimulate a better moral individual and contributor to society. President Hoover once said, “the end and aim of all government was the comfort and welfare of the American family and the American home. The family is that unit of American life and the home is the sanctuary of moral inspiration and of American spirit... This is a land of homes, family life and the rearing of children in an atmosphere of ideals and religious faith” (Gerring 1998: 149). The idea that the family is the best arbiter of good morals and citizenship remained a centerpiece in Republican rhetoric for years, through Reagan’s time, and even until today. Many times, Republicans used religious sentiment as a way to foster values instead of

using the state since the government was increasingly thought of as an encroaching system (Gerring 1998: 149).

The GOP's adherence to morality was very prevalent in the Conservative Era just as it was in the previous eras. President Reagan may have been the main force to promote these values in the party, but he certainly was not the only one who shared these views. Though Reagan was far from a perfect example of the values the party was trying to instill, he knew the importance of continuing the party's traditional moral philosophies, not only for the party's sake but for America's sake as well.

ii. Individualism of the Conservative Era

During Reagan's bid for reelection, he stated, "...the right of each individual [is] to be recognized as unique, possessed of dignity and [having] the sacred right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" (Gerring 1998: 131-132). Here Reagan appeals to key words in Thomas Jefferson's written masterpiece, the Declaration of Independence, indicating in an indirect way that the document not only was vital for the country's independence but also for securing the rights of the individuals themselves. Even Barry Goldwater at the start of the era figured that the individual was the most essential part of society stating, "the private man...[is] the center of the family, the state, and [is] the prime mover and molder of the future" (Gerring 1998: 135). He warned that the private man, also referred to as the individual, was in danger of falling victim to the collectivized nature of society that government often promoted (Gerring 1998: 135).

Reagan's response to this fear was to decrease the government's role in everyone's life, mainly through tax cuts and deregulation, which would help keep the "overspent, overestimated, and

overregulated” government from interfering in people’s lives (Chafe, Sitkoff, and Bailey 2012: 339).

The GOP clearly valued individualism, but the rhetoric regarding it had slightly changed since the dawn of the party. In the Liberal and Transition Eras, a restrained individualism was deemed the best form of individual freedom so that order and communitarian values could be maintained. In the Conservative Era, the definition shifted slightly toward a more rugged, government-free individualism. But even someone as conservative as Reagan knew that order must still be maintained, even if that means more government involvement and policy making. For instance, Reagan’s stances on punishments for criminal activity, including his nudges for the death penalty to be more widely used, were firm and were meant to encourage some form of order in society (Gerring 1998: 132-133). Also, Reagan once stated, “we can’t help everyone, but everyone can help someone” (“Ronald Reagan Quotes”). This shows that there are still communitarian aspects that are alive and well within the Republican value system. Despite the more extreme rhetoric used by the party to showcase the new, government-free form of individualism, the old definition of the word, which included more communitarian aspects, still was represented throughout the Conservative Era.

iii. Nationalism of the Conservative Era

Nationalism, or Americanism, was again strong in this era especially during the Reagan years, as America was engaged in the Cold War and anti-communist interaction with the Soviet Union. Anti-communism involves sentiment and action that countered the all-controlling government that communist states possessed, most notably the Soviet Union. Inspiring the American populace to stand up and speak out against the freedom destroyers that communists

were often linked to, was a crucial part of many administrations in the second half of the twentieth century. Reagan said, “It was leadership here at home that gave us strong American influence abroad, and the collapse of imperial Communism. Great nations have responsibilities to lead, and we should always be cautious of those who would lower our profile, because they might just wind up lowering our flag” (“Ronald Reagan Quotes About Communism”). Here Reagan connects the inevitable fall of the Soviet Union to the perseverance and leadership skills possessed by the “great nation,” the United States. The U.S. was seen by many nations and peoples in this era to be the beacon of hope, freedom, democracy, and ultimately the main triumphator over Communism. These views would not be so apparent if patriotism had not succeeded in rallying others to fight for the freedom America held high.

Nationalism was also vital during George W. Bush’s response to the tragedy that occurred, known simply as “9/11.” Bush effectively declared “war on terror,” resulting in wars in both Afghanistan and Iraq, and referred to terrorists and terrorist sympathizers as part of the “axis of evil” (Chafe, Sitkoff, and Bailey 2012: 378). He went on to say, “...the civilized world faces unprecedented dangers. Yet the State of our Union has never been stronger... History has called America and our allies to action, and it is both our responsibility and our privilege to fight freedom’s fight.” (Chafe, Sitkoff, and Bailey 2012: 378,380). Here again, the word “freedom” is used to get Americans and non-Americans alike to support the goals that the U.S. hoped to accomplish.

Though the U.S. was suspicious of some international actors, both during the Cold War and the War on Terror, Republicans and many people in general were united in their loyalty to American values and in their opposition to anyone who dared to threaten such values. These

sentiments were fostered by Republican presidents, particularly Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush, because they knew, just as the party knew, how imperative nationalism was to domestic and foreign politics. Much of this knowledge on the value that words and actions had on inspiring a population, along with the ideals of having a moral code and individualism, came from past GOP presidencies, mainly Lincoln and TR.

D. Modern Era (2017-Present)

This time period is simply referred to as the Modern Era mainly because it consists of very recent history that goes into the present day. In addition, it is difficult to classify what this era entails for the Republican Party because it is too soon to tell, but one can still speculate given what we know about the current Republican leadership and the presidential administration under Donald Trump. Time will tell what the Modern Era means for the party. It will either change drastically or continue on the same path that the GOP has taken since its birth in 1854.

The 2016 election was a historical one by many measures. Many people were surprised that the outcome did not go in favor of the projected winner, the Democratic candidate, Hillary Clinton, but instead went to the very outspoken, quasi-populist candidate on the Republican ticket, Donald Trump. Trump promised the American people to “Make America Great Again” by cutting taxes, repealing and replacing the controversial universal healthcare system created by his predecessor, reduce regulations, and protect the borders specifically by building a physical wall on the United States’ southern border with Mexico. He also campaigned to prevent jobs from going overseas, strengthen the military and law enforcement, renegotiate bad trade deals, and, referencing Abraham Lincoln’s “Gettysburg Address,” create a government that is of, by, and for the people (“About: The 45th President of the United States Donald J. Trump”). Though

many of his words were seen as controversial, Trump's unprecedented attack on bias media organizations and his simple rhetoric was enough to grow a strong base of supporters from many different parts of the political spectrum.

Trump's philosophy is not strict populism, which is a catering to represent the interests of ordinary citizens, but this so-called "Trump rebellion" had been growing in the GOP since Pat Buchanan's presidential run in the early 1990s (Stanley 2016: 18). Buchanan's largely populist logic and desire to protect jobs and keep the U.S. out of foreign entanglements, was popular among "ordinary people" (Stanley 2016: 17). This ultimately planted the seed for Trump's victory in 2016, as he was not an establishment candidate. And while he is certainly not like any other president in history, he is still a Republican nonetheless.

Since Trump's term started in January of 2017, his administration, along with the Republican majority in both houses of Congress, has accomplished tax reform, repealed the individual mandate in the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare), issued travel bans for countries with suspected terrorist subjects, helped form a coalition to cripple the terrorist organization known as ISIS, and cut wasteful spending and regulations (Westwood and Morrongiello 2017). Many of these implementations, for better or for worse, have resembled a typical Republican agenda and are largely conservative policies though some, like author Tim Stanley, believe that Trump is far from a standard conservative. Stanley argues that presidents must be responsive to the times and there is not always room for sticking to a particular ideological set of policies. He believes that "Trump is not a conservative, but he very much is a Republican" (Stanley 2016: 18). For now, however, the Republican Party appears to still represent a stable and relatively

consistent platform with ongoing devotion to a stable morality, individualism, and nationalism, all of which can be seen in President Donald Trump's current tenure in office.

i. Morality of the Modern Era

Though much of Trump's personal history has come under question concerning his moral compass, as President he continues to promote the Republican tradition of securing and adhering to a moral code. At the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in February of 2018, Trump made it clear that reducing crime in the country was one of his administration's top priorities. He also said, "above all else, we know that faith and family, not government and bureaucracy, are at the center of American life. We know that. Because in America we don't worship government, we worship God" (Wolfe 2018). Being tough on crime and putting God first are both general qualities of maintaining a moral code that can be supported by secularists and religious people, respectively. Presently, Trump is considering legislative objectives that would adjust gun laws to better keep guns from falling into the hands of mentally unstable people while also protecting those who were miscategorized as being "mentally unstable" (Shackford 2018).

As for the religious sentiment, Trump has instituted several policies regarding abortion, an issue that many in the religious community hold in high regard. He proclaimed that January 19th would be the "National Sanctity of Life Day" and reinstated the Mexico City policy, which prevents non-governmental organizations from receiving federal funding if they promote abortion. Trump has also appointed many pro-life judges to various positions in the judicial branch hoping to further advance the ideal of a pro-life America (Merica 2018). These are just a few areas where Trump has encouraged the use of morals throughout society.

ii. Individualism of the Modern Era

“What separates the winners from the losers is how a person reacts to each new twist of fate” (“Donald Trump Quotes”). This quote from Donald Trump is a good indicator of what he feels individuals are - they are either winners or losers, and their outcomes are based on how they respond to the changes of life. Individuals, using this mindset, should have the ability to form their own destiny while being conscious of the fact that only the winners can bolster American prosperity. Trump has not exclusively said that he supports the type of individualism that many of his Republican predecessors embodied, but it can be inferred, despite his relatively brief time in office at this point, that Trump recognizes that a strong individual creates a strong community which then stimulates a strong nation. Individualism, in the classic Republican tradition, is seemingly just as much about the community as it is about the individual. Everyone ought to have their rights granted to them by the Constitution, but their actions should not infringe on the rights of others, thus giving the meaning of the word a slight communitarian aspect.

Trump’s tax cuts and deregulation efforts have also paved the way for greater freedoms to individuals (“About: The 45th President of the United States Donald J. Trump”). This is reminiscent of Reagan’s policies which did many of the same things to try to get government out of people’s lives so that they have better control over their own destiny. Trump’s push for greater respect for law enforcement has also brought to the surface his desire of a society predicated on order so that nobody finds their rights infringed upon by another person or entity. To a large extent, individualism, as seen through President Trump and the Republican leadership, is alive and well in the party, as it has been for nearly a century and a half.

iii. Nationalism of the Modern Era

Inspiring nationalism is likely one of Trump's greatest claims to fame. His entire campaign was structured around the slogan, "Make America Great Again." From his stated policies on building a border wall with Mexico to protect American citizens, to his will to renegotiate trade deals in order to make them more in America's favor, to his desire to keeping American jobs in the States, all are policies that advance America and its interests ("About: The 45th President of the United States Donald J. Trump"). This "America first" mentality that President Warren Harding introduced is again resurfacing as Trump pledges to "...make America strong again. We will make America proud again. We will make America safe again. And we will make America great again" ("Donald Trump Quotes").

"When you open your heart to patriotism, there is no room for prejudice." ("Donald Trump Quotes"). Inspiring patriotic emotion and American unity is not a difficult task for Trump. This form of nationalism, including the belief that the U.S. tops all other countries in most, if not all, categories, is similar to the type of nationalism carried out by Republican presidents in previous eras.

The Modern Era, though brief, is just like the previous eras in that each one had its own set of differences when it came to the evolution of the Republican Party, but there was also several elements that remained consistent, most notably the key Republican values of morality, individualism, and nationalism. Given that the Trump administration is so early in its tenure, it is hard to know what his legacy regarding these values will be, but as of now, he emulates these chief Republican values just as much as Reagan, Roosevelt, and Lincoln did before him. These key values have stood the test of time for over one hundred and fifty years, and it is likely that

these values will continue to be the standard in the GOP for many years to come no matter what Republican administration comes to power and no matter what changes occur within the party.

III. Conclusion

This historical analysis shows extensively how the three main values of the Republican Party have endured from the time of the party's birth in Ripon, Wisconsin in 1854, until the present day. There are some, however, that argue that the Republican Party of Lincoln's time has drastically changed over time in all but name. For one, its main constituency and support base used to be the northern states, but after Nixon's "southern strategy," which won over many white, southern, middle-class workers, the political map essentially switched, and the Republicans had greater political traction in the South and their adversaries gained ground in the North (Prokop 2016). As the article, "How Republicans went from the Party of Lincoln to the Party of Trump, in 13 Maps," put it, "Republicans became conservative, and southerners became Republican" (Prokop 2016). Much of this was due to many middle-class whites feeling alienated by their former Democratic allies through Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal programs and Lyndon Johnson's civil rights legislation. (Prokop 2016). This dramatic change in constituencies hints to the fact that there were ideological shifts in the party from a more moderate stance to a more conservative one, which likely contributed to voter shifts, but that does not mean the party itself significantly changed through time.

The book, *Rule and Ruin*, goes into more depth about the fall of moderate Republicans especially from the time of Eisenhower onward. Moderates in the Republican Party have greatly dissipated in recent decades, and conservatives have entrenched themselves in the party making it difficult for anyone like Eisenhower, or even Lincoln, to find contentment (Kabaservice 2012:

401). As the Republican Party increasingly goes more right wing, so too is the Democratic party going more left wing (Kabaservice 2012: 392). Kabaservice argues that the fall of moderation will make the American political system unstable and unable “to make necessary reforms to meet the long-term challenges posed by energy dependence, environmental degradation, Social Security’s shaky economic foundation, and the rising tide of government deficits and pension liabilities...” (2012: 399). He believes that some of the government’s biggest responsibilities will be cast aside under this new wave of conservatism and that compromise with the Democratic Party on necessary legislation will be nonexistent (Kabaservice 2012: 399).

No matter if this polarization is detrimental to the GOP or not, it is essential to note that, as Tim Stanley puts it, “Trump is different from George W. Bush. But the fact that Bush was different from Rockefeller who was different from Hoover who was different from Lincoln reminds us that Republicanism is flexible and responsive to social change” (2016: 18).

Pragmatism has generally been accepted as the best way to measure an idea’s effectiveness, and if the party has to become more polarized in order to get the votes and promote a specific system of ideals, it will do just that. And it has. The election of Donald Trump has also indicated that the GOP is not entirely partial to conservative leaders as he is not conservative in the strictest meaning of the word, Stanley points out (2016: 18). The Republican Party is filled with many people of differing ideologies. The great feat that it has to accomplish is attempting to balance everyone’s views on one platform. This platform may have adjusted several times as social changes occurred, but this platform remains very much Republican nonetheless.

One other area of change includes the Liberal Era concept that government should be used as a tool to foster greater communitarian efforts and to promote duty and obligation. This

practice has stayed consistent, but the rhetoric, especially from Ronald Reagan, has inferred that the government is the source of problems, and there have been more efforts to minimize government in recent decades. These differing views on the preferred level of permissible government are perhaps the biggest changes in the Republican Party from the time of its birth to today, but as the evidence has shown, it does not have any significant effects on the party or its main values.

Each era that was described had its own ideological concentrations both inside and outside of the Republican Party, but the party remained Republican through it all. The Liberal Era adhered to classical liberalism, which involved a belief that all rights of man are God-given and that it is the role of government to promote and protect those rights. The Republican Party started at the beginning of this era where one can see the establishment of three key Republican values: morality, individualism, and nationalism. Both the ideology of the time and the values could be seen through the rhetoric and policies of the first Republican president, Abraham Lincoln, who pushed to unify the country and abolish slavery once and for all. The Transition Era was marked with a certain level of progressivism led by Republican president, Theodore Roosevelt. TR sought to cut the power of big business, involve America more in international affairs, and engage in social reform to shape a more moral and engaged populace. The Conservative Era involved an official embrace of conservative politics that had been brewing since the party's birth. Ronald Reagan became the focal point for this era as he introduced a "hands off" approach to governing and implemented policies that made America strong internationally while simultaneously empowering the individual citizen with the tools needed to prosper. Finally, the Modern Era, though short, has been marked with a general continuation of

conservative policies but also with a hint of populism as expressed through Republican president, Donald Trump. Trump has invigorated patriotism in the country by putting America and its citizens first. He has also kept to Republican traditions by preserving morality, individualism, and nationalism as key tenets of the party.

From its founding, the Republican Party was particularly ideological, differentiating it from its main political opponent, the more group-based Democratic Party (Grossmann and Hopkins 2016: 315). In the book, *Party Ideologies in America, 1828-1996*, the author argues that ideological transformations in parties do not occur suddenly, and changes that do occur tend to build on the party's established traditions through time, therefore, parties mainly emphasize continuity rather than discontinuity (Gerring 1998: 19). This is evidence that although the ideas and policy stances, and even the name of a party may change in time (referencing the connections the GOP had with the Whig Party), the fact that there exists continuity provides evidence that there can be, and are, linkages that connect the Republican Party of today to the Republican Party of the past.

The Republican Party has evolved moderately in its ideological adherence, going from a more classical liberal stance to a progressive one to a more conservative and now potentially populist doctrine. Many of these adjustments can be attributed to social changes over time. The main continuity between the "party of Lincoln" and the Republican party of today are the values of morality, individualism, and nationalism, which have stood the test of time and are what make the political organization truly Republican.

Future research may look more at how the evolution of the party affected people at the micro level, such as in specific states or congressional districts. Rhetoric and policies instituted

by members of Congress and local officials can also be more closely analyzed to better discover how the party has specifically changed or stayed the same in those areas. In looking at the grassroots level of the Republican Party, it would be interesting to study if the three main tenets of the party highlighted in this paper are present and apparent at lower and more basic levels of the party's organization.

Abraham Lincoln once said, "I like to see a man proud of the place in which he lives. I like to see a man live so that his place will be proud of him" ("Abraham Lincoln Quotes"). This quote can perhaps be modified to include "the Republican Party" instead of the use of "a man." Lincoln and many other Republicans throughout history would likely appreciate seeing the Republican Party proud of where it stands in its time in history and also have the people proud of the party. No doubt there will be future changes in the Republican Party and perhaps even in the American political system in general. But if history teaches us anything, it is that the Republican party will continue to promote the three key values of morality, individualism, and nationalism. From the Republican Party's inception as the party of Lincoln all the way to the present day, these values are what truly make it the Grand Old Party.

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