

THE PRESIDENCY OF
George W. Bush

A First Historical Assessment

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In memory of Julio and Rosita Rotman

MINORITIES, MULTICULTURALISM, AND THE PRESIDENCY OF GEORGE W. BUSH

GARY GERSTLE

IN THE ORIGINAL VISION OF GEORGE W. BUSH AND KARL ROVE, the new and permanent Republican electoral majority was to emerge only in part from the relentless mobilization of conservatives and their moderate allies. It was also to emerge from the Republican Party's success in peeling significant percentages of voters away from traditional Democratic constituencies, most notably Hispanics, but even to some degree African Americans. Bush had done well among minorities in Texas during his successful races for the governorship in the 1990s, capturing 49 percent of the Texas Hispanic vote and 27 percent of the Texas black vote when he ran for reelection in 1998.¹ By 2004 Bush had almost doubled the Republican portion of the Hispanic presidential vote to 40 percent from the 21 percent that Robert Dole had achieved in 1996.² Success did not require winning majorities of either of the two principal minority groups. If the Republicans could consistently win 40 to 45 percent of the Hispanic vote and 25 to 30 percent of the African American vote, then the party could declare its minority strategy a success and use it to establish what it most wanted, a permanent Republican majority.

Bush and Rove believed that their Republicanism offered groups of minority voters reason to rethink their traditional hostility to the GOP. On questions of immigration and diversity, Bush was worlds apart from Patrick Buchanan and the social-conservative wing of the

Republican Party that wanted to restore America to its imagined Anglo Saxon and Anglo Celtic glory. Bush wanted relatively open borders with Mexico and a road to citizenship for illegal aliens. Bush was comfortable with diversity, bilingualism, and cultural pluralism, as long as members of America's ethnic and racial subcultures shared his patriotism, religious faith, and political conservatism. He became the first president in U.S. history to appoint a black man and a black woman to the position of secretary of state, and to make a Hispanic attorney general. During a time in which the United States was at war and Europe was exploding with tension and violence over Islam, Bush played a positive role in keeping interethnic and interracial relations in the United States relatively calm. During his presidency, too, the U.S. military continued to burnish its reputation as the most successfully integrated institution in America, at the level both of enlisted men and women and of the top brass. Generals with such names as Shinseki, Abizaid, Sanchez, and Odierno rose to prominence during the years when Bush was commander in chief.

In regard to the two controversial issues for which Bush stood to suffer at the hands of minority voters, his antagonism to the welfare state and to affirmative action, he and his advisers launched new policies to convince African Americans and Hispanics that Republicans were concerned about underlying issues of poverty, education, and jobs. The Republicans would deliver welfare through private rather than public institutions (churches in particular) and would improve minority education (and then success in the workforce) through the provisions of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. Because of its scale and boldness, NCLB is likely the most significant social policy initiative of the Bush years. Rather than promote racial equality through affirmative action, which conservatives had long decried as the promotion of the unqualified, the act held schools responsible for ensuring that all students and faculty reached satisfactory levels of competence. It is arguably the most ambitious public school initiative ever sponsored by the federal government, and it is currently convulsing education at all levels, from the first grade through the public universities.

Whatever one thinks about the particulars of this Bush program, it possessed a coherence that liberal critics of the administration too often overlooked. It promised immigrants tolerance and opportunity and African Americans achievement. It sought to appeal to the religiosity and social conservatism of many Hispanics and African Americans. Its preference for delivering welfare through churches rather than government agencies was calculated in part to resonate among minority communities in which religious institutions played an important a role.

This essay probes the roots of the Bush multicultural program, and analyzes how it fared during his presidency. It identifies several important roots: first, Bush's comfort with Hispanics and Hispanic culture, an unanticipated yet significant consequence of his family's relocation to Texas in the 1940s; second, Bush's religiosity and the commitment to *religious* pluralism it impelled him to embrace; and third, Bush's principled and strategic opposition to the "Fortress America" style of cultural politics that was dominating Republican Party conventions and political races when he entered politics in the 1990s. Bush believed that such politics were consigning the Republican Party to a minority status, a trend he was determined to reverse. The essay then examines what difference Bush's multiculturalism made to the United States during the years of his presidency. Overall, I judge it to have been a failure, if measured by its success in winning the favor of the Republican Party base and becoming a serious rival to the multiculturalism of the Democratic Party. Within that record of overall failure, however, Bush's multicultural initiatives resulted in some lasting gains, evident in the numbers of minorities holding high political office and in the demonstrated ability of a Republican to appeal to the country's largest and most rapidly growing minority, Latinos.

. . .

The Bush family's move to Midland, Texas, in 1948 was part of a group effort by elite New York and New England corporate and financial families to stake their Ivy-educated sons to promising careers in the booming Permian oil fields of West Texas. The heirs of

these families imagined that their sons would colonize a large portion of the Texas oil industry for corporate family interests in the Northeast. What they understood less clearly is how the migration of their sons to the Lone Star State would, over two generations, do less to expand the power of old New England elites than to create new southern elites with distinct economic and political interests. The Texas Republicanism of George W. Bush would end up a great distance away from the New England Republicanism of his grandfather, Connecticut senator Prescott Bush.³ Partly this had to do with the web of economic associations in Texas and south of the Rio Grande in which these new Texans became enmeshed and the embrace of a political economy with deep roots in Anglo Texas politics; another part resulted from these elite Anglo migrants' exposure to and engagement with Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Texas.

Exposure to Mexicans in the oil business, in school, and at home is a consistent theme of George W.'s young life. George H. W. Bush's choice of the name Zapata Petroleum Corporation for his oil exploration enterprise signaled his transnational business ambitions, as did his decision to take as one of his partners Jorge Díaz Serrano, a Mexican oligarch and onetime candidate for the Mexican presidency. George W. saw Mexican laborers working in his father's oil fields and Mexican children at public school in Midland in the 1950s.⁴

A Mexican woman entered the Bush household in 1959 when Bush père moved the family to Houston. Hired to be the Bushes' live-in housekeeper, Paula Rendon became a fixture in the family, staying with the Bushes through all the moves they made between 1960 and 1992 (including the one that brought the family to the White House). She served as an emotional anchor for the Bush boys during their adolescence, especially as Barbara Bush became more remote, battling the depression that accompanied her growing isolation as Republican politics and public service increasingly preoccupied her husband. George W. has referred to Rendon as his second mother. Jeb Bush recalled that he "adore[d] her. . . . I got pretty good at Spanish thanks to her."⁵ Jeb's comfort with the

Spanish language and Mexican culture may have played a role in his decision at age seventeen, while a student at Andover, to spend part of the year in León, Mexico, helping build a school for the poor. There he was smitten with a local convent girl who knew no English. Columba Garnica Gallo would become the love of Jeb's life and his wife, bringing Mexicanness and grandchildren of mixed Anglo Mexican descent directly into the Bush family. These grandchildren were the "little brown ones," as George H. W. affectionately (or condescendingly, depending on one's perspective) liked to refer to them.⁶

George W. returned to Midland in 1975 after a ten-year sojourn through New England's elite educational institutions (Andover, Yale, and Harvard Business School) to make his father's path to business and then political success his own. Like his father, George W. went as part of a group of Ivy Leaguers from wealthy backgrounds whose families sensed their sons could make fortunes from another Permian Basin oil rush, this one made possible by the quadrupling of oil prices in the wake of the Yom Kippur War and the formation of OPEC in 1973 and 1974.

Most of these young men quickly made fabulous amounts of money and indulged in a *nouveau riche* and exclusively Anglo lifestyle of mansions, private schools, private clubs, and private planes for their business and pleasure. George W., however, didn't follow this script, in part because he showed little aptitude for making money and in part because he seems to have preferred to live in a less insulated, less anglicized, and less rarified world. His closest friends were buddies from the Northeast, men such as Donald Evans, future secretary of commerce, but the social circuit of the Bush crowd revolved more around family backyard barbecues and visiting local Mexican American restaurants than around posh Anglo country clubs.⁷

Doña Anita's Mexican restaurant was one of their favorite hang-outs, where they went almost every Friday night. Bush befriended the Reyes family that owned the restaurant, as he did other Mexican American men such as José Cuevas and George Veloz, also involved in thriving family restaurant businesses.⁸ Bush identified

with them as aspiring businessmen and grew comfortable with the biculturalism of these encounters, a biculturalism strengthened by the middlebrow Texas culture of sports, Mexican food, and beer that all these men shared. Bush's young wife, Laura, influenced his openness to Mexican American culture too, as immediately prior to her marriage to George W. she had been teaching poor Latino kids in Austin's public schools.⁹ Thus the arrival of many more Mexican laborers in the Permian oil fields in the 1970s and 1980s did not disturb Bush; to the contrary, he welcomed the cultural diversity their presence generated. His friends remember how Bush developed a "particular empathy for the new Mexican immigrants who worked hard on the farms, in oil fields and in people's homes and went on to raise children who built businesses and raised families of their own, without the advantages he had as the scion of a wealthy New England family."¹⁰ Bush's long-standing interest in Mexicans prompted Israel Hernandez, an assistant secretary for commerce in the Bush administration, to remark that "in every dimension of his career, whether it was politics or the private sector or the sports world, he's been engaged with the Hispanic population."¹¹

The way in which Bush took religion into his life in the 1980s further contributed to the formation of his multicultural consciousness. Bush's embrace of Christ as his savior was born of personal crisis: failure in business, his parents' disappointment in him, alcoholism, and Laura's threat to leave him. Faith in Christ gave Bush a purpose, a discipline, and an ability to inject strong moral values into his life—characteristics he felt he had lacked. Being born again made possible his recovery from addiction, the salvaging of his marriage, and the launch of a successful political career. In an unusual twist, it also imbued him with a deep respect for other religions and other ways of finding faith.

Nominally, Bush's embrace of evangelicalism prompted him to abandon Episcopalianism for Methodism. But Bush was never much interested in denominational or doctrinal battles, nor does he ever seem to have believed that there was one, or even an exclusively Protestant or Christian, path to God. His introduction to

Christ occurred not in church but in personal meetings with evangelical ministers, such as Billy Graham, and in Bible study groups, such as the Community Bible Study group he joined in Midland in 1984. What he took from such meetings and study was not a message about the superiority of the Christian God and the evangelizing zeal that this God demanded of all his faithful but rather the command to have faith and to lead a moral life. As Jacob Weisberg has observed, “Bush believes that everyone who prays prays to the same God, and that there is ‘truth’ in all religions.” As president, Bush would come to feel a keen partnership with the Muslim prime minister of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, because the two men shared, in Bush’s words, a strong belief “in the almighty.” And the Russian Orthodox cross that Bush saw Vladimir Putin wearing around his neck inclined Bush to think that he and Putin would work well together.¹² Bush’s attraction to the “new” Europe of the East rested in part on his conviction that the Poles, Russians, and others who lived there were far more inclined than the “old Europeans” who lived in Western Europe to embrace a godly life.

In foreign policy, these attitudes sometimes led Bush in remarkably naive directions, as in blithe declarations that he and Putin were soul mates and that all religious groups of the world were eager, if given the chance, to interweave their faith with Western notions of freedom. But they also yielded some successes, as in Bush’s ability to feel closely connected to the peoples of Africa, whom he included in his community of “God’s children.” This connectedness led him to authorize a massive anti-AIDS and anti-malarial campaign in Africa, a campaign that even Bush’s critics concede has probably saved millions of lives.¹³

In domestic affairs, Bush’s ecumenism also had positive ramifications, most of them stemming from his comfort in reaching out to religious groups in the United States that were not white or Protestant. Through such outreach to religious Catholics, Jews, and even Muslims, he laid the foundation for what we might call a multiculturalism of the godly. Bush’s ability to develop an alliance with Hispanic Catholics would be the earliest and most important consequence of his godly multiculturalism.

The opportunity to pursue this sort of multiculturalism presented itself to Bush from the moment he entered Texas politics in the 1990s to run for governor. The “culture wars” were then an obsession of American domestic politics. These were battles fought between Left and Right over the place in American life of the “hard” multiculturalism that had emerged in the 1970s and 1980s. Hard multiculturalists argued that America had been so compromised by racism and sexism that the nation could never redeem its promise to minorities. Members of subordinate groups had no alternative but to craft identities for themselves that were grounded not in American patriotism but in racial, gender, or sexual communities or in a cosmopolitanism that partook of no national identity whatsoever. Conservatives reacted angrily to this rejection of America’s promise and sought to extirpate hard multiculturalism wherever it had advanced in public institutions. Conservatives especially targeted the teaching of American history in public schools and the portrayals of the American past in public museums (such as the Smithsonian); in both cases they argued that the perspective on America advanced in such institutions had become unacceptably negative. Conservatives repeatedly attacked the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities for supporting art and scholarship they regarded as immoral, anti-American, or both.¹⁴

Conservatives also believed that multiculturalist principles had led government social policy astray, especially in regard to the welfare state. Welfare, in their eyes, had become a way of coddling “welfare queens,” tolerating a debilitating drug culture and its associated violence, and encouraging widespread promiscuity and moral laxity. A harsh vision of the inner-city poor emerged from these conservative fusillades; America’s ghettos were depicted by many conservatives as homes to a vast underclass that lay beyond the reach of civilization. These attitudes encouraged conservatives to rehabilitate old racist stereotypes, such as the use of the Willie Horton image in the 1988 presidential campaign, to associate black men with criminality and rape. The spread of these stereotypes intensified a climate of racial hatred and fear and helps to explain

the savage beating that Los Angeles cops administered to a black motorist, Rodney King, arrested for speeding, actions that in turn triggered the L.A. riots of 1992. Those riots revealed not only that black-white relations were on the edge but that immigrant-native-born relations in cities like Los Angeles had become tense as well, especially as the numbers of Mexican immigrants in Los Angeles and elsewhere, many of them illegal, were increasing rapidly. Negotiations with Mexico and Canada to make North America a common market further stoked fears among some conservatives that Hispanic America was about to reconquer America's Southwest and take back what Mexico had ceded to the United States in the U.S.-Mexican War of 1846-48.¹⁵

These developments brought to the fore Republican politicians determined to vanquish the hard multiculturalism they blamed these problems on with a law-and-order, morally absolutist, and nativist conservatism. Leading the way was Republican firebrand Patrick Buchanan. Party leaders handed him one of most important speaking slots at the 1992 Republican convention, and he used his time to call for retaking America's cities from the "mobs" who had rendered them areas of criminality, immorality, and barbarism.¹⁶ Vying with Buchanan for the leadership of the "Fortress America" faction was Pete Wilson, former San Diego mayor and U.S. senator who, in 1991, became governor of California. In running for reelection in 1994, Wilson became one of the most enthusiastic supporters of anti-immigrant Proposition 187, a harsh initiative meant to strip California's illegal immigrants of their access to public services, including social services, health care, and public schooling. Wilson and Proposition 187 won by large margins, making it seem as though Fortress America politics were carrying the day. Indeed, Wilson began laying plans to ride this anti-immigrant, law-and-order wave into the White House. By 1995 he was an odds-on favorite to capture the 1996 Republican nomination.¹⁷

From the moment George W. Bush decided to run for the Texas governorship in 1994, he cast himself as the anti-Wilson. If Wilson was going to build a national reputation by positioning himself

as the enemy of Latino immigrants, Bush would construct his by posing as their friend. If Wilson was going to become the unforgiving, law-and-order Republican determined either to purge America of every last one of its criminals or else seal off every remaining crime-ridden ghetto and barrio with police force, Bush would become the "compassionate conservative," finding a way to bring the poor, even those who were sinners, into American life under the aegis of conservative values.¹⁸

Bush had instrumentalist reasons for positioning himself as Wilson's opposite. He may have sensed that the support for Buchanan's and Wilson's nativism was, in actuality, softer than it appeared to be at the time. With Karl Rove already at his side, Bush understood in precise, district-by-district terms how indispensable the Texas Hispanic vote had become to his and Rove's largest ambition, building a permanent Republican majority in Texas and then in the nation, and he wanted to bring those voters into the Republican tent.¹⁹ In political-economic terms, Bush intended to seize on California's deepening anti-Latino hostility to enlarge Texas's importance as the crossroads for hemispheric trade and as the gatekeeper for the huge volume of goods already passing between the United States and Latin America (a subject to which we will return).²⁰ Nevertheless, Bush's willingness to give these instrumentalist concerns prominence in his thinking and in his politics revealed how comfortable he already was living in a bicultural state and how deeply he believed that a properly constructed and religiously inflected multiculturalism was compatible with the conservative values he cherished.

In this respect, it may be appropriate to see Bush as the Republican Bill Clinton. Bush was the GOP candidate who intended to lance the boil of the culture wars by putting forward a soft multiculturalism that merged diversity and patriotism. In the process of doing so, he, Clinton, and others would relieve the American body politic of the distress and distraction that the culture wars had caused. Of course, the road to soft multiculturalism was different for each man. Clinton had to attack and discredit his hard multi-

cultural left, as he did when he condemned the black hip-hop artist Sister Souljah in 1992 for her separatist, antiwhite diatribes. At the same time, he embraced African Americans as few Democratic presidents before him had done.²¹ Bush had to attack the Fortress America faction on his hard right—the likes of Buchanan, Wilson, and then Ross Perot and his allies—and he did. And he matched Clinton's embrace of blacks with his own embrace of Hispanics.

Bush's multicultural politics as governor first became apparent in the close economic and cultural relations he sought with Mexico. He invited the governors of the Mexican states that bordered Texas to attend his inauguration, and seated them prominently at his swearing-in ceremony. He repeatedly expressed his support for improved relations with Mexico and endorsed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) from the start. In 1995 he supported a \$20 billion stabilization package that the Clinton administration had proposed for Mexico.²² That same year, Bush led the opposition to fellow Texan Ross Perot's United We Stand America Conference and its anti-NAFTA and anti-immigrant agenda. Bush expressed indignation at remarks by Buchanan, speaking at Perot's conference, that if "he [Buchanan] were elected president he would dump NAFTA, build a wall along the border and never again offer Mexico a bailout plan."²³ While Pete Wilson refused to meet with the new Mexican president, Ernesto Zedillo, Bush attended Zedillo's inauguration and visited him three times during Zedillo's first year in office.²⁴

Bush matched his insistence on close relations with Mexico with a desire to make Mexican immigrants feel at home in Texas. Immigrants, Bush told reporters at one point, "come to Texas to provide for their families." And, he added, in a curious aside, "they come for love."²⁵ A law such as California's Proposition 187, meant to keep the children of illegal immigrants out of public schools, would have no place in Bush's Texas. "Once children are in Texas," Bush declared in 1995, "Texans know it is in our best interest and their interest to educate them, regardless of the nationality of their parents. An educated child is a child less likely to commit a crime;

an educated child is much more likely to become a responsible member of society."²⁶

Bush even supported bilingualism. Bush unveiled a program in Texas that he called "English Plus" and that made clear his belief that Spanish ought to be taught in schools and spoken in Texas. "English plus," he wrote in a letter to Texas Republicans, "recognizes the important richness that other languages and cultures bring to our nation of immigrants. Here in Texas, the Spanish language enhances and helps define our state's history and tradition. I think that if a bilingual education program is teaching to read and comprehend English as quickly as possible we should keep it."²⁷ Several years later, Secretary of State Tony Garza elaborated on Bush's remarks by saying that Bush believed that "bilingualism adds to a student's literacy in English" and that "the ability to speak several languages is an important asset for all Texans."²⁸

Bush also positioned himself as a progressive Republican on the vexed issue of affirmative action. When the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in 1996 that state universities could not consider the race of applicants in their admission decisions, Bush did not use the opportunity to take a stand against affirmative action. Instead he proposed a new plan that he called "affirmative access," by which he meant that affirmative steps needed to be taken to ensure that "every person will get a fair shot based on his or her potential or merit."²⁹ The phrase "affirmative access" was meant to free the discussion of affirmative action from the stigma of quotas. As Bush declared in 1999, "I support the spirit of no quotas, no preferences . . . but what's important to say is not what you're against—[but] what you're for. I'm for increasing the pool of applicants and opening the door so that more people are eligible to go to the university systems."³⁰ In practice, Bush actually supported a quota plan, but not one explicitly grounded in race. This was the 1997 plan to admit to the University of Texas all Texas high school graduates who ranked in the top 10 percent of their class. To fulfill this 10 percent obligation, Texas expanded the University of Texas system to accommodate those eligible for admission. As a result, Texas developed one of the more rapidly growing and accessible

systems of higher education in the country. As the liberal *New York Times* columnist Anthony Lewis conceded in 1999, this plan “had considerable success in maintaining student diversity.”³¹

Bush himself was a supporter of diversity and believed that cultural variety strengthened America. In a 1997 speech to the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce he declared, “We are the United States of America, not the divided states of America. One of our strengths is in our differences.”³² On another occasion he said, “Texas is a diverse state enriched by its many cultures and heritages. We can achieve racial harmony by demonstrating understanding and mutual respect for our fellow Texans.”³³ In an address to a group of Hispanics in Miami in August 2000, Bush became effusive in his praise for a new, multicultural America:

America has one national creed, but many accents. We’re now one of the largest Spanish-speaking nations in the world. We’re a major source of Latin music, journalism, and culture. Just go to Miami, or San Antonio, Los Angeles, Chicago, or West New York, New Jersey . . . and close your eyes and listen. You could just as easily be in Santo Domingo or Santiago or San Miguel de Allende. For years, our nation has debated this change—some have praised it and others have resented it. By nominating me, my party has made a choice to welcome the New America.³⁴

By 2008 it had become difficult to envision a presidential nominee of either major party talking in such open and glowing terms about the multicultural possibilities of the “New America.”

Bush believed that this embrace of diversity, especially in connection to Hispanics, would strengthen his conservative political agenda. In addition to Rove, Lionel Sosa, a Republican media strategist from San Antonio, helped show him the way. Sosa had been inspired by Ronald Reagan in the late 1970s. As Sosa would later recall, Reagan had told him in 1978 that “Hispanics are Republicans; they just don’t know it.” By that Reagan meant that Hispanic families cherished Republican values: “family, faith in God, hard work, and personal responsibility” and the belief that

“America is the greatest country in the world.” Given their identification with bedrock Republican values, Sosa and Bush both believed, Hispanics’ desire to preserve elements of their native culture in their home need not threaten Republican dreams or ambitions.³⁵ To the contrary, Republicans such as Bush believed they could harness Hispanic values to advance their conservative agenda, both on symbolic but potent matters—faith in God, love of country, family values—as well as on social policies that Bush hoped to advance, most notably the substitution of a private, faith-based set of welfare institutions for the public one that had become so expensive and had allegedly caused so much moral deterioration among the nation’s poor.

The willingness of poor Hispanics in the United States to acquiesce in the dismantling of public welfare institutions was arguably the weakest link in the Bush-Rove blueprint for corralling the Hispanic vote in Texas and the United States. But it may have been the case that Bush and Rove believed that if their multicultural program was alluring enough, Hispanics would make fewer demands on the Republican Party to service the material needs of the immigrant poor. This, then, would free Bush and his economic allies in Texas, including an increasingly numerous and wealthy Mexican-Texan business elite, to pursue a hemisphere-wide capitalist free market in which the imperatives of investment and capital accumulation would take precedence over the needs of the poor and maintaining a low-tax, union-free, and weakly regulated economy would be the primary ambition of government in economic affairs. If these goals were in fact as central to the Bush business model as they appear to have been, it would not have been the first instance of multiculturalism being turned to the service of corporate expansion and enrichment.

If we shift our gaze from cultural politics to political economy, it becomes clear that part of Bush’s interest in the Hispanic world emerged from his desire to make the hemisphere a single free market in which capitalists throughout the Americas would flourish. Bush and other Texans dreamed about making their state the pivot of what we might label a “Union of the Americas” (UA), a

trading bloc that would rival the European Union and East Asia in size, significance, and ease of trade. Unlike the EU, which gave Brussels the power to impose binding economic rules on all EU members, the UA would eschew a centralized model of economic regulation in favor of a decentralized one: each member state would determine its own regulatory, wage, and tax regime. However, all the countries would be part of a single free trade and migration zone, thus putting the different economic regimes in competition with each other. Bush and his allies believed that corporations and investors in the hemisphere would gravitate away from Latin American countries with their burdensome welfare states and histories of interfering with free markets and toward those countries, such as the United States, that were sporting “low-tax, lightly regulated economies with modest levels of social benefits.” Bush believed that his economic plan would resonate among the capitalist classes of Mexico and other Latin countries, especially those portions that had embraced what North Americans called “free market capitalism” and what Latin Americans labeled “neoliberalism.”³⁶

Many Texans, like Bush, believed that the Lone Star State would be at the center of this UA, attracting investment and capitalists from every part of the hemisphere and generating new businesses that would draw to the United States vast pools of underemployed labor in Mexico and other Latin countries. The United States would, in turn, become a major exporter of goods to Latin America. All these inflows and outflows would pass through Texan banks, ports, rail termini, and truck depots. Texas was a state advantaged by history, geography, and capitalist leadership to play this key hemispheric role.³⁷

This king-size Texas dream was on the one hand a long-term proposition. On the other hand, its supporters were already in the 1990s discussing the infrastructural improvements that would be required to bring it into being. A city on the west coast of Mexico, Lázaro Cárdenas, had been identified as having the physical attributes necessary to make it a major port for the entry of Asian goods into the Americas, thereby siphoning the Pacific trade away from the union-strong, high-wage southern California ports of

Los Angeles and Long Beach. Making such a port a success would require other infrastructural improvements too, most notably new north-south superhighways leading from Lázaro Cárdenas through Texas to Kansas City, and then branching into several northern routes ranging from Winnipeg and Chicago to Detroit and Toronto.³⁸ Here were plans for capitalist growth and transformation on the grandest scale, and ones that, if successful, would substitute a north-south grid of transportation for the existing east-west one. These kinds of improvements would vault Texas over California as the most important state in the nation for international trade. These dreams came easily to Texans, both because dreaming big was part of their cultural inheritance and because of the specific ways in which this modern desire to be a hemispheric powerhouse linked up with the old antebellum Texas ambition of spreading the state’s economic and cultural power (and its slavery) throughout the Caribbean and Central America.³⁹

The seriousness with which Bush had internalized this dream can be gleaned from three of his earliest foreign policy initiatives as president. He became the first U.S. president to make a Latin American country, Mexico, the destination of his inaugural foreign trip. Another early initiative was a hemispheric conference in Quebec to explore elongating the hemispheric free trading zone beyond NAFTA to encompass all of the Americas, from the Arctic Circle in the North to Tierra del Fuego in the South. Bush called this zone a Free Trade Area of the Americas.⁴⁰ Third, he scheduled a summit with President Vicente Fox of Mexico in September 2001 to develop a bilateral treaty on trade, immigration, and economic development. The summit was about to convene when al Qaeda’s attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon not only scuttled the meeting but put dreams of a hemispheric union indefinitely on hold.⁴¹

Hispanics and Latin America were at the core of Bush’s multiculturalist and transnational economic vision. Blacks were not as important to the Republicans’ grand strategy either electorally or economically, and Bush did not expend the same kind of energy on them as he did on attempting to bring Hispanics into his

coalition. Bush had had important and positive encounters with African Americans, including his work with poor black youths in Houston in 1973, a volunteer duty he undertook to mollify his father's anger toward him for his lack of focus and ambition. By one account, George W.'s casual, even hip, style and his talent for banter proved to be a big hit among his charges, and he formed strong bonds with several of them.⁴² When Bush ran for reelection as Texas governor a quarter century later, he asked a group of well-heeled African American Republicans in Houston to promote his candidacy in Texas's black communities, and they succeeded in turning out for him an impressive fraction—27 percent—of the total African American vote. But neither in his gubernatorial nor in his presidential campaigns did Bush ever make the kind of effort to appear in black churches or before black secular organizations that rivaled his Hispanic initiatives in comprehensiveness or intensity. Moreover, blacks occupied no strategic place in the grand Republican hemispheric economic vision that paralleled the important role accorded Latin Americans. This may help to explain why Bush and his political gurus were willing to jettison their efforts to bring blacks into the new Republican Party. Soon after winning his first race for the governorship in 1994, Bush told a Texas reporter that “Blacks didn't come out for me like the Hispanics did. So they're not gonna see much help from me.”⁴³

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Bush brought his multiculturalism to the White House. He appointed more minorities to positions requiring Senate confirmation than any Republican president in history.⁴⁴ At the highest level, these appointees included the first two African American secretaries of state, the first female African American national security advisor, and the first Hispanic attorney general in American history. Thirty years earlier these minority appointments would have been unimaginable in either a Democratic or a Republican administration. Whatever one thinks of the particular accomplishments and failures of the individuals holding these positions, their presence in or alongside the cabinet, with two of them, Attorney

General Alberto Gonzales and National Security Advisor (and then Secretary of State) Condoleezza Rice, having exceptional access to the president, broke the glass ceiling that previously limited how high minority presidential appointees could rise. In light of those advances, it is worth thinking seriously about Hendrik Hertzberg's claim that “by appointing first Colin Powell and then Rice to the most senior job in the Cabinet, a job of global scope, Bush changed the way millions of white Americans think about black public officials.”⁴⁵

Few sitting presidents (and probably no other Republican president) have had the kind of close relationship with an African American woman that Bush enjoyed with Rice. The two evidently delighted being in each other's company, a circle of friendship that included Laura, and easily shifted back and forth between their professional and personal relationships. The many white Americans who watched a black woman sit so close to the presidency and be involved with the president at so many different levels likely helped many of them envision living in an America in which an African American occupied the presidential seat itself. In such ways, perhaps, did Bush contribute to Barack Obama's pathbreaking bid for the presidency.⁴⁶

The Bush administration also made a significant contribution toward maintaining a climate of cultural toleration in the wake of September 11, when it would have been easy and popular to make America a Buchanan-like fortress. While the administration did subject Muslim and Arab communities and immigrants to intensive and intrusive surveillance, it also insisted on distinguishing between the radical Islamic fringe and the Islamic mainstream. In one of his first public speeches after September 11, Bush called on Americans to respect the legitimacy of Islam and the law-abiding Muslims who practiced it. In so doing he distinguished himself from two of his presidential forebears, Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt, who in the era of their own wars made no parallel effort to demand toleration for law-abiding German Americans in World War I or law-abiding Japanese Americans in World War II. World War I marked the end of public displays of German

culture in the United States, as anti-German hostility drove these displays either underground or out of existence altogether. And in World War II the federal government imprisoned virtually the entire West Coast Japanese and Japanese American population in the belief that this community was, for reasons of race, uniquely prone to subversion and treason.⁴⁷

The Bush administration undertook no such extreme action against the Muslim or Arab populations. Bush was keenly aware of the Japanese American incarceration precedent, in part because Norman Mineta, a Japanese American who had been “relocated” in 1942, sat in Bush’s cabinet as secretary of transportation. At a cabinet meeting the day after September 11, Bush declared (looking at Mineta) that his administration didn’t “want what happened to Norm in 1942 to happen again” to Arab and Muslim Americans.⁴⁸ Instead, the Bush administration worked to create attitudes toward the latter groups that were more tolerant than those deployed against Germans in World War I and Japanese in World War II. It often was not successful in these efforts, as anti-Arab and anti-Muslim sentiment continued to bubble up among many groups of Americans at the grass roots. But the Bush administration’s efforts to encourage toleration did make a difference. The dramatic growth in interest in Muslim culture and history and in the commitment of universities to teaching Arabic during the war on terror era stands in contrast to the World War I era, when many local and state governments banned the teaching of the German language and the study of German culture in schools and eliminated the names of foods, streets, and towns that gave evidence of German influence on American culture.⁴⁹

The greatest benefits of this predisposition to cultural toleration no doubt accrued to immigrant populations that did not originate in Muslim or Arab lands. It would hardly have been surprising if the United States had shut off immigration in the first year or two after September 11, much as the nation had done in 1921, two years after the anarchist bombings and the Red Scare of 1919. The United States did make it far more difficult for some immigrant groups to gain entry after September 11, especially those

originating in Arab and Muslim countries. And pathways for some other migrants, most notably foreign students wanting to study in the United States, became so obstructed by national-security-inflected visa rules that they altered course. Europe in particular became a more popular destination for many of these Third World students than the United States, a development that now poses a long-term threat to the soft power of American imperialism. Nevertheless, for almost six full years after September 11, the United States retained its reputation as a society open to immigrants. During that time, millions of immigrants, especially from Latin America, the Caribbean, and parts of Africa and East Asia, continued to come to the United States. The Bush administration played a significant role in keeping the immigrant gates open, and it took on powerful nativist groups in the Republican Party in order to do so.⁵⁰ Hispanics in particular believed they had a friend in the White House. They expressed their gratitude to Bush in 2004 by casting 40 percent of their votes for him—a doubling of the Republican percentage of Hispanic votes over what Robert Dole had achieved for the Republican Party in 1996.

The importance of multiculturalism to the Bush domestic agenda can be gleaned, finally, from a signature piece of legislation passed just as Bush began his second year in office, the No Child Left Behind Act. This legislation required every public school in the country to ensure that a large majority of students in every one of the school’s racial groups meet or surpass government-mandated achievement levels in math, English, and other basic subjects. Schools that failed to achieve these levels would be given a number of years to remedy the situation. If they failed, they would face sanctions: the loss of federal funds, the loss of students (who would be given permission to enroll in better schools), the firing of school administrators and teachers, and ultimately the closing or state-ordered takeover of the failing schools themselves. NCLB in effect shifted responsibility for achievement from the individual child and his or her family to the state: local school districts in the front lines, state governments overseeing them, and the central government as the ultimate enforcer of standards and penalties.⁵¹

Although the NCLB attracted bipartisan support in Congress—Senator Ted Kennedy was one of its congressional sponsors—it originated with the Bush administration and Bush himself. Other than tax cuts and immigration, education was the policy issue that Bush knew and cared about the most. Still, what could have prompted a conservative president to design legislation that so disregarded a sacred principle of American governance, local control of American public schools? And what could have prevailed on him to overlook a basic conservative belief that individuals and families, not the state, are responsible for their own well-being?

Bush's willingness to overlook such bedrock conservative principles suggests that a great deal was at stake in this legislation. Indeed it was. Through NCLB, Bush and his advisers thought they could hammer the final nails into the coffin of affirmative action by offering minorities a new route to socioeconomic achievement. The seriousness of the Republicans' effort to address racial inequities through NCLB is apparent in their insistence (written into the law) that school achievement data be disaggregated by racial group, and that each racial group in every school reach a mandated level of achievement for the school as a whole to receive a passing grade. If the Republican Party were to succeed in raising achievement standards across the board through NCLB and in closing the historic achievement gap between whites, on the one hand, and blacks and Hispanics on the other, they could then take credit for spurring minority success and advancement in ways that liberals, with their "soft bigotry of low expectations," never had.⁵² Minority voters, blacks and Hispanics, would then reward Bush's "tough love" Republican Party with their votes, thus ensuring that Bush would become the architect of that which he and Karl Rove most ardently desired: a permanent and multicultural Republican majority.

By embracing the kind of "social engineering" project that conservatives repeatedly castigated liberals for undertaking, Bush revealed his willingness to challenge key conservative orthodoxies. And he did so in the interests of furthering his multicultural vision

of America in which differences grounded in race would no longer impede minority advancement.

Whether or not NCLB will succeed in reducing historic racial divergences in academic achievement is not yet clear. What is clear is that the implementation of NCLB, and of Bush's multicultural program more generally, suffered from his unwillingness to modify other aspects of conservative orthodoxy. Bush was deeply committed to slashing taxes paid by the wealthy, even at the cost of depriving the government of needed revenue for the NCLB and other social programs, and Bush tolerated in his administration and in the executive branch more broadly a hostility toward public governance that undermined some of his most cherished domestic and foreign ambitions.

The package of tax cuts passed during 2001 was a signature legislative accomplishment of Bush's first term. Equally important was his administration's refusal to rescind any of those cuts between 2001 and 2008, even in light of an expensive war, exploding budget deficits, and the underfunding of social programs that were important to Bush but that languished because he did not commit sufficient funds to them. The consequences of this lack of funding for Bush's multicultural program and for the pursuit of a permanent Republican majority were severe. A month after Bush engineered the passage of NCLB, he cut its funding by \$90 million. The funds appropriated for NCLB after that time were never adequate, prompting Ted Kennedy and his allies to scream betrayal and impelling local school districts and state governments throughout the country to look for ways to evade the unfunded mandates imposed on them by the federal government. Meanwhile, the Bush Administration set aside only meager funds for its faith-based welfare state, consigning what might have been a major legislative initiative and a root-and-branch reconstruction of welfare services to the status of a mere slogan.⁵³

A disdain for public governance among some of those close to Bush and within important GOP circles was equally damaging to the Republican Party and to Bush's multicultural ambitions. Many Republicans had become so enamored of an extreme version of

free market ideology—one that declared that the market could solve all problems and the government none—that they proved surprisingly cavalier about the discharge of even basic government duties. Some Bush lieutenants filled government posts with individuals whose only qualification seems to have been their party loyalty or their ability to channel public money into the pockets of private contractors.⁵⁴

The Bush administration even allowed this cynical appointments policy to penetrate critical government agencies charged with rebuilding Iraq and leading relief and reconstruction efforts along the Gulf Coast in the aftermath of Katrina. In both cases the results hurt Bush. In Iraq, the U.S. occupation force failed for years to protect the lives and security of the Iraqi people. At home, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, under the direction of the political appointee Mike Brown, proved to be spectacularly inept in its response to Katrina, allowing a great American city, and its African American majority, to descend into disaster.⁵⁵

The failure in Iraq and New Orleans became apparent at roughly the same time, in the fall of 2005, and changed the tenor of politics in the United States. Among blacks, already angered by the Republican Party's machinations to keep them from voting in 2000 and 2004, the federal government's neglect of New Orleans in the hurricane's aftermath evoked memories of a long-standing racist tradition in American life: that black life was cheap and not worth saving. Whatever gains the Republican Party had made among African Americans vanished, and it would be beyond Bush's power to repair the damage. Many whites who had supported Bush, meanwhile, began to wonder why the basic task of maintaining public order in New Orleans and Baghdad seemed beyond the capacity of the U.S. government. Some began actively to examine what they had long sensed about the Bush administration but had declined to confront: perhaps this administration did not possess the competence to lead the country either abroad or at home.

Falling prestige occasioned by administrative failures undid the greatest achievement of Bush's multicultural strategy, the Republican Party's capture in 2004 of 40 percent of the Hispanic vote.

Bush's multiculturalism had never been popular among white, socially conservative Republicans. As long as the Bush administration retained its aura of invincibility, the social conservatives held their fire. But once that prestige was damaged, and Bush's poll numbers plummeted, social conservatives revolted. Worried that Bush's slide meant that political power in Washington would slip from their grasp in the 2006 elections, they seized on immigration as a law-and-order issue that could rally the party's demoralized base and restore the party's credibility. Conservative Republicans increasingly depicted both the country's toleration of porous borders and the presence of Spanish-speaking immigrants on U.S. soil as threats to core American values. They made known their belief that there could be no compromise with the twelve million illegals in the United States, and certainly no road to citizenship for them. In December 2005 Republicans pushed through the House of Representatives a draconian anti-immigrant bill that made illegal entry into the United States a felony punishable by imprisonment. Hispanics reacted with fury and launched an immigrant-rights protest movement that brought millions into the streets in spring 2006. In its breadth, intensity, and public militancy, this immigrant-rights movement had no precedent in American history. It acted as a brake on anti-immigrant legislation, evident in the Senate's declining to take up the House bill. Senators from both parties, with the Bush administration's support, began framing a new immigration initiative that they hoped would achieve both improved border security and a road to citizenship for the undocumented.⁵⁶

Neither the Senate nor Bush, however, could persuade the House Republican hard-liners to support this balanced effort at immigration reform. Indeed, the latter dug in their heels, becoming the mouthpieces on Capitol Hill for rising anti-immigrant sentiment among the Republican rank and file throughout the country. By the fall of 2007, the Senate immigration initiative had collapsed. Conservative Republicans, meanwhile, were compelling Republican presidential hopefuls, even those with liberal records on immigration, to take hard anti-immigrant stances. Conservatives

also conscripted a reluctant but weakened Bush administration into a nationwide campaign of raids to deport thousands of immigrants directly and to scare hundreds of thousands more into leaving of their own accord.⁵⁷

Hispanics, as a result, began exiting the Republican Party in large numbers. Bush was not the only Republican absent from the party's convention in St. Paul, Minnesota, in August 2008. So too were the Hispanic Republicans and other minorities. By every measure the convention was the least diverse one that the Republicans had sponsored in more than forty years. The proportion of Hispanics casting their votes for Republicans in November 2008 plummeted by 25 percent from the 40 percent high that Bush had achieved in 2004.⁵⁸ The administrative ineptitude that so damaged the Bush presidency in the fall of 2005 and that triggered the revolt of Republican social conservatives cost Bush a prize, Republican popularity among Hispanic voters, that he had spent his entire political career attempting to win.

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What lay at the root of the collapse of Bush's multiculturalist program? We cannot yet answer this question with certainty because too many presidential documents pertinent to the subject are not yet available to historians. But we can identify four factors that an explanation ought to consider: first, Bush's personal limitations as president; second, the effect of war on Bush and his presidency; third, the way in which Bush and his closest advisers interpreted the results of the 2000 election and altered their electoral strategies as a result; and finally, the corrosive effects of the Republican Party's contempt for public governance.

Bush's personal limitations. Jacob Weisberg has argued that Bush should be understood as a tragic figure, his virtues—evident, in this case, in a serious commitment to creating a new America in which minorities and immigrants would feel at home—compromised by character flaws that undermined Bush's ability to lead either in foreign or domestic affairs.⁵⁹ We don't have to subscribe to Weisberg's preference for a psychologically inflected view of

Bush's weaknesses (most notably a love-hate relationship with his father) to acknowledge that Bush could be incurious about important policy matters, that he sometimes reached decisions without a full airing of the options before him, and that he did not always keep his subordinates to whom he delegated important tasks on a firm enough leash. David Kuo's chronicle of Bush's failure to make headway with his faith-based welfare state portrays Bush as a man of good intentions who was betrayed by his ineffectuality as commander of his own administration.⁶⁰

The pressures of war. Bush was a wartime president for all but nine months of his eight years in office. We must consider the possibility that September 11 and the ensuing war on terror and the Iraq War profoundly changed Bush and the ambitions of his presidency. Just as World War I ended Woodrow Wilson's efforts to establish a Progressive America and the Vietnam War undermined Lyndon Johnson's efforts to create a Great Society, so too the war on terror may have compromised Bush's ability to pursue his dream of compassionate conservatism. After September 11, much of what Bush wanted to do, from a well-funded NCLB policy to inventing a faith-based welfare state, from immigration reform to pursuing a hemispheric union, became far more difficult to accomplish. Robert Draper has further argued that the burden of waging war also changed Bush, inclining him to rigidity and robbing him of the flexibility, imagination, and improvisational ability that had characterized his earlier career.⁶¹

Republican reactions to the 2000 election. The Republicans put forward a resolute public face in the wake of the uncertainty of the 2000 election results; indeed, their self-assurance, in combination with the skillfulness and ruthlessness of their electoral maneuverings (far more impressive than what the Democrats could muster), arguably turned Florida election laws and judicial rulings in their favor and secured the presidency for their candidate. But this impressive GOP blitzkrieg should not cause us to overlook the private shock that Bush's loss of the popular vote triggered among his inner circle of political strategists.⁶² For the 2000 campaign, Karl Rove had devised for Bush a centrist, big-tent, compassionate

conservative campaign, believing that independent voters would decide the election. After the election, another Bush strategist, Matthew Dowd, undertook a study to understand why the Rove strategy had failed to yield a popular vote victory. The results of his investigation stunned Republican insiders: Rove's vaunted independent electorate, Dowd claimed, had shrunk to a paltry 6 percent of the total number of voters, down from the 25 percent range it had occupied during the Reagan years. Independent voters were now too small in numbers, Dowd argued, to be a decisive force in most elections. Meanwhile, Bush's pursuit of the "phantom middle" of the electorate had cost him votes among hard-core Republicans, especially those who identified themselves as evangelicals.⁶³

Influenced by Dowd's memo, Rove did not therefore give up on his big-tent vision of a permanent Republican majority. But he did decide that he had to match efforts by Republicans to reach out to independent or new voters (such as Hispanics) with efforts to mobilize much greater proportions of the socially conservative, white evangelical base. This is the strategy that Rove, with Dowd's assistance, pursued in 2004 in states such as Ohio, choosing the emotional issue of gay marriage to pry large numbers of evangelical voters out of their homes and churches and send them scurrying to the polls.⁶⁴

Rove's adjusted strategy was brilliantly successful in the short term, bringing Bush what many observers regarded as a surprising reelection victory. But it was also a strategy that was inherently difficult to execute, for it required balancing contradictory ambitions, broadening the party's appeal while persuading the conservative base that the party was a vehicle for their views alone. The strategy unraveled only a year after the 2004 victory. The Katrina catastrophe gave Republican social conservatives, reenergized by the 2004 election, the opportunity to release themselves from the control of Bush and Rove and to scuttle, through anti-immigration agitation, the big-tent portion of the Bush-Rove strategy. The Republicans' 2006 and 2008 electoral defeats reveal how shortsighted the plan embodied in the Dowd memo had been.

A Republican contempt for public governance. From the days of Ronald Reagan until the financial crash of 2008, market fundamentalism was ideologically dominant in the Republican Party. This faith rested on two principles: first, that free markets were the source of everything that was good in society—economic growth, affluence, personal freedom, and democracy; and second, that government could do little that was right in the economy and so should be barred from interfering with the markets and the freedoms that those markets made available.⁶⁵ Many Republicans, moreover, disliked the "big government society" that liberals had built up across nearly a half century of their influence (1932–80) and wanted to dismantle the government institutions that made this society possible. The Republicans' failure, however, to eliminate sizable bureaucracies or even to shrink their size substantially during the period of Republican ascendancy (1980–2008) bred deep frustration. Too many permitted this frustration to shade into contempt for government and become an excuse for undermining the work of essential government institutions. Thus, Republicans during the Bush years filled many important government posts with political appointees whose qualifications were ideological rather than skill-based; frequently these appointees did not possess either the knowledge or the desire necessary to carry out their agency's work. Many among them became cynical, using their government positions and access to make themselves and their families rich. A general contempt for government justified such cynicism: if government were truly bad, it really didn't matter whether or not its employees abused its authority or neglected its responsibilities. So unfolded one of the extraordinary spectacles of the Bush years: critical government agencies, including the Provisional Government in Iraq, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the Securities and Exchange Commission, became populated by individuals who did not have either the skill or the desire to carry out the important work these agencies were charged with doing.

If Bush's own ambitions for social policy had been modest (and if Katrina had occurred on someone else's watch), the contempt

for government that his administration tolerated might not have been calamitous. But Bush's ambitions for the government were in fact grand, bordering on the utopian: his determination to bring democracy to the Middle East was a project of social engineering that required a U.S.-superintended program of government reconstruction in Iraq that would exceed in cost, expertise, and duration the reconstructions that previous administrations had undertaken in Germany and Japan. The NCLB agenda was one of the most ambitious programs for minority educational achievement ever undertaken by the federal government, and Bush's desire to make America an ownership society and, in the process, to avail poor Americans, and especially racial minorities among the poor, unprecedented access to homeownership required careful government regulation of the subprime mortgage market. In none of these areas did the work of the federal government come close to matching the policy challenge Bush had set for it.⁶⁶ And the blame must lie both with Bush, for his chronic inattention to the details of his policies, and with a general contempt for public governance in which so many Republicans had for a generation indulged.

The multiple failures of the Bush administration may incline some to believe that its multiculturalist project never could have succeeded. But this would be to sell short the significance of Bush's multicultural initiatives: the commitment to appointing minorities to the highest positions in government, the search for a way to eliminate racial inequities that did not rely on affirmative action, assembling a multicultural coalition of the godly that welcomed god-fearing minorities into its ranks and that weakened the control of the Democratic Party over minority voters, and the construction of an economic and multicultural Union of the Americas. These initiatives have left their mark on America. Future Republican politicians will likely return to them as a way of building winning electoral coalitions.

Likewise, future Republican strategists will recognize, as Rove did, the centrality of a multiculturalist project to the success of the Republican Party over the long term. During his years as Bush's principal adviser, Rove was fond of invoking the presidency of

William B. McKinley (1896–1901) for its success in developing a big-tent strategy for the Republican Party that made it the majority party in American politics for thirty years.⁶⁷ Rove remarked far less on when this Republican Party lost its big-tent appeal, and on what the consequences were. But surely he knew that the McKinley era of Republican dominance weakened in the 1920s and ended in the early 1930s. This was a moment when nativist conservatives took over the Republican Party, turned the party against immigration and the New America, and, with a little help from a collapsing financial structure that brought on the Great Depression, cost their party its hold on national power for nearly forty years.

The Republican Party of today once again stands in danger of returning itself to a minority party status, its ability to win elections limited to one region, the South, and a few outlier states such as Alaska.⁶⁸ Should the tendencies that have been creating this insurmountable electoral map harden in coming years, the Republican Party may come to regret its repudiation of Bush's and Rove's embrace of the New America more than it can currently imagine.

CHAPTER 11
*Minorities, Multiculturalism, and the Presidency
of George W. Bush*

Robert Chase provided invaluable research assistance and shared with me his remarkable knowledge of Texas politics. A seminar at the University of Tokyo Center for Pacific and American Studies gave me an opportunity to present the earliest iteration of the ideas contained in this essay; special thanks to Jun Furuya and Ken Endo for making this presentation possible. Julian Zelizer, Larry Bartels, George Edwards, and other participants in the April 2008 Princeton Conference on the Bush Presidency provided excellent comments on an earlier version of this essay, as did my colleagues at Vanderbilt University, where I presented the arguments contained in this work as the James G. Stahlman inaugural lecture in September 2008. Robert Draper, Monte Holman, Sarah Igo, Tamar Jacoby, and Elizabeth Lunbeck offered me valuable feedback on earlier written versions of this essay. I am in debt to them all.

¹ Ralph Reed, *National Review*, July 12, 1999, 38; Don Van Natta Jr., "The 2000 Campaign: The Ad Campaign; Republicans Open a Big Drive to Appeal to Hispanic Voters," *New York Times*, January 15, 2000.

² Estimates of the percentage of the Hispanic vote won by Bush in 2004 vary from 35 to 45 percent, but the "standard statistic," writes a leading group of political scientists, "has become 40%." See David L. Leal, Stephen A. Nuno, Johngo Lee, and Rudolpho O. de la Garza, "Latinos, Immigration, and the 2006 Midterm Election," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 41 (April 2008): 309. See also David L. Leal, Matt A. Barreto, Jongho Lee, and Rodolfo O. de la Garza, "The Latino Vote in the 2004 Election," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 38 (January 2005): 41–49; Ruy Texeira, "44 Percent of Hispanics Voted for Bush?" <http://www.alternet.org/election04/2006/>, November 24, 2004; and Roberto Suro, Richard Fry, and Jeffrey Passel, "Hispanics and the 2004 Election: Pop-

ulation, Electorate and Voters." Pew Hispanic Center, A Pew Research Center Project, June 27, 2005, <http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/48.pdf>.

³ Kevin Phillips, *American Dynasty: Aristocracy, Fortune, and the Politics of Deceit in the House of Bush* (New York: Viking, 2004), chap. 4.

⁴ Jim Rutenberg, "Texas Town, Now Divided, Forged Bush's Stand on Immigration," *New York Times*, June 24, 2007; Elisabeth Bumiller, "Behind Bush's Address Lies a Deep History," *New York Times*, May 16, 2006, http://www.nytimes.com/2006/05/16/washington/16assess.html?_r=1&oref=login&page. Serrano would later be sent to a Mexican jail for fraud.

⁵ Rutenberg, "Texas Town, Now Divided."

⁶ Jacob Weisberg, *The Bush Tragedy* (New York: Random House, 2008), 53–54.

⁷ Karen Olsson, "A Shrub Grows in Midland," *Texas Observer*, June 25, 1999, <http://www.texasobserver.org/article.php?aid=1175>.

⁸ Rutenberg, "Texas Town, Now Divided."

⁹ Weisberg, *The Bush Tragedy*, 51.

¹⁰ Rutenberg, "Texas Town, Now Divided."

¹¹ Bumiller, "Behind Bush's Address."

¹² Weisberg, *The Bush Tragedy*, 82–83.

¹³ Bob Geldof, "Geldof and Bush: Diary from the Road," *Time*, February 28, 2008, <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1717934,00.html>; Jemima Kiss, "Time magazine: Geldof confronts Bush on a number of issues," *Guardian*, February 28, 2009, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2008/feb/28/pressandpublishing.geo>; Michael M. Rosen, "The Greatest Story Never Told," *Politico*, April 7, 2008, <http://dyn.politico.com/printstory.cfm?uid==2A4B7FB6-3048-5C12-0>. Bush's interest in Africa is part of a much broader engagement on the part of evangelical Protestants in the United States with Africa, the motivation being both to relieve poverty, illness, and other forms of distress and to convert souls. We don't yet know enough about the nature of this engagement to understand the mix of humanitarian and evangelical motives that has energized this new interest and a new wave of mis-

sionaries. But it likely marks an important moment of transition in the history of American evangelicals, in particular in terms of their relationship with peoples beyond U.S. borders.

¹⁴ Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), epilogue.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Patrick Buchanan, “Text of Buchanan’s Speech to the Republican Convention, on Aug. 17, 1992,” Republican National Committee, <http://www.qrd.org/qrd/usa/federal/1992/campaign.92/buchanan-RNC-.txt>. In this speech, Buchanan also made himself the foe of other groups in the liberal multicultural coalition, such as those advocating for gay rights and feminism.

¹⁷ Aristide R. Zolberg, *A Nation by Design: Immigration Policy in the Fashioning of America* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation and Harvard University Press, 2006), chap. 11.

¹⁸ The intellectual architect of compassionate conservatism and an important influence on Bush was Marvin Olasky, a professor of journalism at the University of Texas at Austin whose intellectual and political journey led him from Judaism to Protestantism and from the New Left to the New Right. For an analysis of his life and work, see Michael King, “The Last Puritan,” *Texas Observer*, May 14, 1999, <http://texasobserver.org/article.php?aid==1079>.

¹⁹ In 1995, Hispanics formed 25 percent of the Texas population. Dave McNeely, “Texas Governor Builds Goodwill Toward Mexico,” *Austin American-Statesman*, December 3, 1995, E3; Karl C. Rove, “Patterns of Partisan Change in Texas, 1970 to 1996,” seminar paper, Government 340M, University of Texas at Austin (May 1997), 33–36, Governor George W. Bush Records, Senior Advisor’s Office, Box 2002/151-261, Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

²⁰ For an interesting and complex argument for why Mexican Americans exerted more influence in politics in Texas than in California in the 1980s and 1990s, see Peter Skerry, *Mexican Americans: The Ambivalent Minority* (New York: Free Press, 1993).

²¹ On Clinton’s role in ending the culture wars and promoting a “soft multiculturalism,” see Gerstle, *American Crucible*, epilogue.

²² McNeely, “Texas Governor Builds Goodwill Toward Mexico”; James Garcia, “Immigration Issues Set Bush Outside GOP Fold,” *Austin American-Statesman*, August, 20, 1995, D1.

²³ “Bush Assails GOP Candidate for Isolationism,” *Austin American-Statesman*, August 15, 1995, B3.

²⁴ Garcia, “Immigration Issues Set Bush Outside GOP Fold.”

²⁵ Ibid.; McNeely, “Texas Governor Builds Goodwill Toward Mexico”; “Bush Stands Firm on Principle,” editorial, *Austin American-Statesman*, August 16, 1995, A16.

²⁶ George W. Bush, “Monterrey Mexico Teleconference: The Importance of Friendship and Cooperation between Texas and Mexico,” Executive Office Speeches, November 6, 1995, transcript, Governor George W. Bush Records, Box 2002/151-166, Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

²⁷ George W. Bush, letter outlining his position on bilingual education and “English plus,” Press Office Speech Files, Background Information, n.d., Governor George W. Bush Records, Box 2002/151-321, Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

²⁸ Tony Garza, memorandum, Press Office Speech Files, Hispanic/Mexican American Relations—Hispanic Issues, February 10, 1999, Governor George W. Bush Records, Box 2002/151-321, Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

²⁹ Ibid. The case in question is *Texas vs. Hopwood*, 95-1773.

³⁰ Quoted in Richard L. Berke, “California, Here Bush Comes, a Moderate on Immigration and Racial Quotas,” *New York Times*, June 30, 1999, <http://www.nytimes.com/1999/06/30/us/california-here-bush-comes-a-moderate-on-immigration-and-racial-quotas.html>.

³¹ Anthony Lewis, “A Simple Question Reveals Much about George W. Bush,” *Austin American-Statesman*, December 1, 1999; Fred Hiatt, “Texas’s Ten Percent Experiment,” *Washington Post*, October 28, 2002, A19, <http://aad.english.ucsb.edu/docs/fredhiatt.html>; Scott Jaschik, “10 Percent Plan Survives in Texas,” *Inside Higher Education*, May 29, 2007, <http://www.insidehighered.com>.

com/news/2007/05/29/percent. For a more critical appraisal of the Texas 10 percent plan, see Mark C. Long and Marta Tienda, "Winners and Losers: Changes in Texas University Admissions Post-Hopwood," *Education Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 30 (2008): 255–80.

³² George W. Bush, Executive Office speech to U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, October 3, 1997, transcript, Governor George W. Bush Records, Box 2002/151-168, Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

³³ Garza, memorandum.

³⁴ John O'Sullivan, "Bush's Latin Beat: A Vision, But a Faulty One," *National Review*, July 23, 2001, 35–36.

³⁵ Garance Franke-Ruta, "Minority Report," *American Prospect*, July 2005, http://www.lexisnexis.com/us/lnacademic/results/docview/docview.do?docLinkInd=true&risb=21_T8043322405&format=GNBFI&sort=BOOLEAN&startDocNo=1&resultsUrlKey=29_T8043322410&cisb=22_T8043322409&treeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=161341&docNo=1.

³⁶ O'Sullivan, "Bush's Latin Beat," 35.

³⁷ McNeely, "Texas Governor Builds Goodwill Toward Mexico."

³⁸ Christopher Hayes, "The NAFTA Superhighway," *Nation*, August 27–September 3, 2007, 13–22, esp. 14, 17.

³⁹ Michael Lind, *Made in Texas: George W. Bush and the Southern Takeover of American Politics* (New York: Basic Books, 2002); Phillips, *American Dynasty*, chap. 4.

⁴⁰ O'Sullivan, "Bush's Latin Beat," 35.

⁴¹ Jena Heath, "Bush's First State Dinner: A Party and a Promise; Elegant Affair in Honor of Fox Symbolizes U.S. President's Intent to Fortify Ties with Mexico," *Austin American-Statesman*, September 6, 2001; Mike Allen, "Immigration Reform on Bush Agenda," *Washington Post*, December 24, 2003, A01.

⁴² Robert Draper, *Dead Certain: The Presidency of George W. Bush* (New York: Free Press, 2007), 32–33.

⁴³ Draper, *Dead Certain*, 46; Weisberg, *The Bush Tragedy*, 128; Louis Dubose, "The Souls of White Folk," *Texas Observer*, August 25, 2000, <http://texasobserver.org/article.php?aid=815>; Z. Z.

Packer, "Sorry, Not Buying," *American Prospect*, December 2005, 46ff.; Franke-Ruta, "Minority Report."

⁴⁴ Franke-Ruta, "Minority Report."

⁴⁵ Hendrik Hertzberg, Talk of the Town, *New Yorker*, March 17, 2008, 32.

⁴⁶ Elisabeth Bumiller's *Condoleezza Rice: An American Life. A Biography* (New York: Random House, 2007) makes clear the intensity and multifaceted character of the Bush-Rice relationship.

⁴⁷ Gary Gerstle, "Pluralism and the War on Terror," *Dissent*, Spring 2003, 31–38; idem, "The Immigrant as Threat to National Security: A Historical Perspective," in *From Arrival to Incorporation: Migrants to the U.S. in a Global Age*, ed. Elliott R. Barkan, Hasia Diner, and Alan M. Kraut (New York: New York University Press, 2008), 217–45.

⁴⁸ Draper, *Dead Certain*, 147.

⁴⁹ Gerstle, "Pluralism and the War on Terror"; idem, "The Immigrant as Threat to National Security."

⁵⁰ Gary Gerstle, "America's Encounter with Immigrants," in *In Search of Progressive America*, ed. Michael Kazin (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 37–53.

⁵¹ Patrick J. McGuinn, *No Child Left Behind and the Transformation of Federal Education Policy, 1965–2005* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006), chaps. 8 and 9; Scott Franklin Abernathy, *No Child Left Behind and the Public Schools* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007).

⁵² These were originally the words of Michael Gerson, one of Bush's principal speechwriters. Draper, *Dead Certain*, 114.

⁵³ David Kuo, *Tempting Faith: An Inside Story of Political Seduction* (New York: Free Press, 2006).

⁵⁴ Thomas Frank, *The Wrecking Crew: How Conservatives Rule* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2008).

⁵⁵ George Packer, *The Assassins' Gate: America in Iraq* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, Giroux, 2005); Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006); Rajiv Chandrasekaran, *Imperial Life in the Emerald City: Inside Iraq's Green Zone* (New York: Knopf, 2006); Douglas Brinkley, *The Great*

Deluge: Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans, and the Mississippi Gulf Coast (New York: Morrow, 2006).

⁵⁶ Gerstle, "America's Encounter with Immigrants."

⁵⁷ Ibid.; see also Solomon Moore, "Push on Immigration Crimes Is Said to Shift Focus," *New York Times*, January 12, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/12/us/12prosecute.html?scp=2&sq=immigration&st=nyt>; idem, editorial, "A Sense of Who We Are," January 13, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/13/opinion/13tue1.html?scp=15&sq=immigration&st=nyt>.

⁵⁸ Mark Hugo Lopez, "The Hispanic Vote in the 2008 election," Pew Hispanic Center, November 5 and 7, 2008, ii, <http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/98.pdf>; Frank Rich, "The Palin-Whats hisname Ticket," *New York Times*, September 14, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/14/opinion/14rich.html?sq=Frank Rich 2008 Republican Convention&st=c>; "Results of 2005 National Latino Survey: Republicans Rapidly Losing Ground Among Hispanic Voters," *U.S. Newswire*, Washington, DC, January 5, 2006, <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=141&sid=2&srchmode=1&vinst=PROD&fmt=3>.

⁵⁹ Weisberg, *The Bush Tragedy*.

⁶⁰ Kuo, *Tempting Faith*.

⁶¹ Draper, *Dead Certain*.

⁶² Bush received more than a half million fewer votes than Gore did in the 2000 election, out of 100 million cast.

⁶³ Thomas B. Edsall, *Building Red America: The New Conservative Coalition and the Drive for Permanent Power* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), chap. 2. George W. Bush received 68 percent of the evangelical vote, significantly less than the 81 percent received by his father in 1988. See also Weisberg, *The Bush Tragedy*, 99.

⁶⁴ Edsall, *Building Red America*, chap. 3.

⁶⁵ Paul Krugman, *The Return of Depression Economics and the Crisis of 2008* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2009), chap. 1.

⁶⁶ On the gap between Bush's dreams for broad-based minority homeownership and the Bush administration's fumbling of efforts to make those dreams a reality, see "White House Philosophy Stoked Mortgage Bonfire," *New York Times*, December 21, 2008, 1, 30–31.

⁶⁷ See, e.g., Paul Alexander, *Machiavelli's Shadow: The Rise and Fall of Karl Rove* (New York: Modern Times, 2008), 11, and James Moore and Wayne Slater, *The Architect: Karl Rove and the Dream of Absolute Power* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2006), 103–4. See also Michael Gerson, "What History Taught Karl Rove," *Washington Post*, August 17, 2007, A23. If Rove saw Bush as the second coming of McKinley, he saw himself as the second coming of McKinley's brilliant campaign manager, Marcus Alonzo Hanna. For a perceptive portrait of Hanna, see Herbert Croly, *Marcus Alonzo Hanna* (New York: Macmillan, 1912).

⁶⁸ "We can't be the party of America," Rove has said, "and get 13 percent of the African American vote." Gerson, "What History Taught Karl Rove."

CHAPTER 12 *From Hubris to Despair*

I am grateful to Keith Whittington, Julian Zelizer, and Gary Gerstle for their comments on an earlier draft of this essay.

¹ The best survey of modern conservatism as an intellectual project remains George Nash's *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945*, 2nd ed. (Wilmington, DE: Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 1998). See also Donald T. Critchlow, *The Conservative Ascendancy: How the GOP Right Made Political History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007).

² Peggy Noonan, *What I Saw at the Revolution: A Political Life in the Reagan Era* (New York: Random House, 1990), 149, 152.

³ Noonan, columns of January 20, 2003, and February 19, 2004, <http://www.opinionjournal.com>.

⁴ Noonan, column of June 1, 2007, <http://www.opinionjournal.com>.

⁵ Michael J. Gerson, in conversation with author, May 15, 2006.

⁶ Michael J. Gerson, *Heroic Conservatism: Why Republicans Need to Embrace America's Ideals (And Why They Deserve to Fail If They Don't)* (New York: HarperOne, 2007), 289 et passim.