FIXING elections

The Failure of America's Winner Take All Politics

Steven Hill

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—Philadelphia Inquirer

Steven Hill is co-founder and Associate Director of the Center for Voting and Democracy, a nonprofit organization promoting election reform. He frequently appears on radio and TV to discuss political issues, and his articles have appeared in dozens of national newspapers and magazines including *The Nation, Salon, Ms.,*

New York Daily News, Los Angeles Times, The Wall Street Journal, The American Prospect, and *The Washington Post*. He is also co-author of the book *Whose Vote Counts?*

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STEVEN HILL

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The Landscape of Post-Democracy

> It has been said that democracy is the worst form of government—except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.
>
> —WINSTON CHURCHILL

The numbers would be comical if they weren't so alarming: only 5 percent voter turnout in a recent Dallas mayoral election. Six percent in Charlotte, 7.5 percent in San Antonio. Seven percent in Austin.[1] Seven percent in Tennessee's congressional primaries, 6 percent for a statewide gubernatorial primary in Kentucky,[2] 3 percent for a U.S. Senate primary in Texas, and 3 percent for a statewide runoff in North Carolina.[3] Several cities and towns in southeastern Massachusetts reported single-digit turnouts, with Rochester at 7 percent;[4] their 2000 state primary election drew less than 10 percent, a modern record low according to the Massachusetts Secretary of State.[5] Outside Detroit, turnout for several school board elections was in single digits, one as low as 1.1 percent of registered voters; in Ann Arbor, an area that has a reputation for emphasizing education, turnout for school board elections has been well under 6 percent for the past several years, with one election sinking as low as 4.4 percent of eligible voters.[6] In Virginia, the 1997 primary for attorney general, the state's top law enforcement official overseeing criminal as well as civil matters for the entire state, turned out 5 percent of registered voters, the lowest figure since 1949.[7] For the first time, we have been seeing an increase in *single-digit* voter turnout levels all across the nation.

In numerous other cities and states, turnout for local, state, and even congressional elections has fallen into the teens and twenties. In politically charged San Francisco, which some liken to a kind of Athens of American democracy, turnout for the 2001 runoff for city attorney plummeted to about 13 percent of eligible voters. In seven cities in Los Angeles County, California, elections for city council were *canceled* when no challengers emerged to contest against the safe-seat incumbents.[8] The 1996 presidential election produced the lowest voter turnout in America's premier election in the last seventy years, less than half of eligible voters; the 2000 election was barely an improvement.[9] For all the pyrotechnics surrounding the 2000 presidential election, it is easy to lose sight of the fact that nearly half of

eligible voters once again sat it out. More people watched the Super Bowl or TV fad *Survivor* than cast ballots for either Gore or Bush.[10]

The 1998 midterm congressional elections dipped even further, to just over one-third of eligible voters, despite the first midterm use of motor voter laws, which greatly boosted voter registration rolls. The 2000 congressional elections clawed to a marginally higher level.[11] A week of *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* or O.J.'s freeway ride in his white Bronco drew a comparable audience.[12] Voter turnout in the world's lone remaining superpower has lurched to 138th in the world—sandwiched between Botswana and Chad.[13] Perhaps most disturbing, only 12 percent of eighteen- to twenty-four-year-olds and 8.5 percent of eighteen- to nineteen-year-olds voted in the 1998 congressional elections.[14] The future adults of America have tuned out and dropped out, electorally speaking, even more than their 1960s hippie counterparts.[15]

Rational choice theorists should instantly recognize the sanity of their reasons: for most people, voting doesn't matter anymore. The act of voting on the first Tuesday in November seems increasingly pointless and—particularly in the middle of a busy workday—a waste of precious time.[16] The "voting incentive" in recent years has seriously eroded, producing what Anthony Downs once called a "rationality crisis."[17] Washington, DC, has emerged as a kind of House of Horrors theme park, with much of what passes for politics today having degenerated into an obnoxiously partisan brew of bickering, spin, hype, petty scandal, name-calling, blaming, money-chasing, and pandering. Politics today certainly puts to the test that famous Churchill witticism, that democracy is the worst form of government—except for all the rest.

Americans, now the least exuberant participants in the established democratic world, have become used to diminished expectations. But in addition to our severe underparticipation—which amounts to nothing less than a political depression—recent national episodes have pulled back the curtain to reveal that, besides being a politically *depressed* nation, we appear to be a raucously *divided* nation as well. The impeachment debacle, the resignation of two House Speakers, piled on top of Elian, O.J., Monica, and various other deracinations now too numerous to list—and all of *that* capped by the astonishing UnElection 2000—have each in their national moment exposed critical fault lines and fissures simmering beneath the surface.

How deep these divisions go has been the subject of conflicting opinion and keen debate in venues ranging from the *New York Times* to Internet chat rooms, from the conservative *National Journal* to the liberal *Atlantic Monthly*.[18] Immediately following the November 2000 election, *USA Today* published a much-discussed red and blue map showing the counties all across the nation won by either George W.Bush or Al Gore. At the very least, what the map revealed in its huge swaths of fiery red (Bush counties) and royal blue (Gore counties), was that the national divide has a certain shape to it: it is partisan, of course, but that partisanship has a strong regional element, as well as a cultural and racial component. If nothing else, it was this potent combination of national divisions— partisan, cultural, racial, and regional—that raised the hairs on more than a few necks, for whenever that

combination has emerged in our history it has been explosive. Think of the Civil War in 1865; the aftermath of Reconstruction that produced Jim Crow and the "solid South"; the disenfranchisement and terrorizing of the freed slaves and their descendants; the violent struggles for civil rights one hundred years later, and numerous conflicts in between and since.

Our national division has emerged like that volcano that suddenly arose in the middle of a Mexican cornfield, its orogenesis completely unannounced and unexpected, growing larger and its shadow looming ominously over the surrounding landscape. Moreover, Census 2000 has revealed the galloping pace of our nation's rapidly shifting diversity. Are our political institutions and practices ready for this? The 1990s began with the Rodney King riots that combusted South Central and other parts of Los Angeles; the decade ended and the new century began with a series of police shootings of unarmed black men in New York City; Washington, DC; Seattle; and elsewhere. In Cincinnati, a police shooting resulted in four days of the worst street fighting since the death of Martin Luther King. The 2000 presidential election displayed eye-opening levels of racially polarized voting, as did a statewide referendum in Mississippi in April 2001 that retained the use of Confederate symbols on their state flag.[19] There are ongoing and disturbing signs of national *frisson* on various horizons, and they seem loaded and capable of erupting without much notice if we don't deal with some of the precipitating factors.

But what are these precipitating factors? Obviously there are many complex interwoven social, political, historical, and economic elements. In this book, I tackle one element that I believe is fundamental to the rest, yet it has been over-looked in the past and will be overlooked again unless we pull it to center stage, and fully, carefully, examine it.

The central thesis of my examination is what is known as the Winner Take All voting system—Winner Take All for short. No, I'm not talking about voting *machines,* like the antiquated punch card voting machines known as Votomatics that burst upon the national scene during the botched 2000 presidential election. I'm not talking about chads, paper ballots or Internet voting, nor am I talking about the byzantine hodgepodge of voter registration or ballot access laws or even campaign finance laws enacted in the fifty states. While those are all undeniably important, and part of the many components of our "democracy technology" that operate to allow our republic to express and renew itself via periodic elections, I am talking about a type of "democracy technology" that is even more basic than those.

Rather, I'm talking about the rules and practices that determine how the votes of millions of American voters get translated into who wins and who loses elections, resulting in who gets to sit at the legislative table and make policy. I am talking about the voting system itself, the engine of a democracy. Voting systems are to a democracy what the "operating system" is to a computer—voting systems are the software that makes everything else possible. Like a computer's operating system, a voting system functions silently and largely invisibly in the background, and yet it has an enormous impact on the five defining dimensions of a democratic republic:

representation, participation, political discourse and campaigns, legislative policy, and national unity.

What is a "voting system?" Popular reality TV shows like *Survivor* and *The Weakest Link* have been conspicuous in recent years in their use of elections. Remember when the Tribal Council voted for the final winner on *Survivor II: The Australian Outback?* The seven voters had to choose between the last two players, Tina and Colby; everyone had one vote, and the highest vote-getter won. Well, that was a type of voting system, and it even has a name—Winner Take All—because only one person, Tina or Colby, could win. The winner was going to get the million dollars, and the loser was going to get nothing (well, actually, the loser, Colby, got the consolation prize, $100,000). In fact, *Survivor* used the same selection method, that is, voting system, in each episode. For six weeks the highest vote-getter was voted off the show, whether that person had a majority of the votes or not.

The Winner Take All voting system—highest vote-getter wins—and variations of it, as well as other voting systems that are quite different, are used in thousands of elections all over the United States. Yet most people take for granted the voting system used by their town, state, or nation. It is invisible; just like a computer's operating system, we only notice it when it breaks down, when something goes awry like it did in Florida. But in fact there are different voting systems employed all over the United States, indeed, all over the world. For instance, we use one kind of voting system to elect the president that gives a state's Electoral College votes to whichever candidate wins the most votes, even if that candidate has less than a popular majority—that's Winner Take All again, just like on *Survivor,* but with a lot more voters. And the Machiavellian tactics used in our public elections aren't much different than on *Survivor,* either.

We *noticed* the voting system during UnElection 2000 because it broke down badly in various and unfortunate ways, well beyond malfunctioning voting machines, as we will see. Remember, Winner Take All is so named because the highest vote-getter wins everything, and all the other candidates win nothing. There was a lot at stake in the final official Florida vote for president, when George W.Bush won *all* of Florida's electoral votes even though he beat Al Gore—amid great controversy—by only a few hundred votes in the official count.

Many Americans think that this "highest vote-getter wins" method is the only way to hold an election because that method is so prevalent in the United States, but it isn't. *Survivor II,* for instance, could have required that the person "elected" for rejection in each round have a majority of the vote, instead of simply the "highest number of votes." The fact that they didn't created problems on Episode 7, when two players tied, one of them being Colby, an eventual finalist. They resolved the tie by using votes in previous rounds as the tiebreaker, not a very elegant solution from a democratic point of view, since voters in previous rounds may have selected differently had they known the eventual stakes.

Similarly, each state could require, for instance, that the winner of their state's Electoral College votes must have majority support, and use a two-round runoff (which is used in many Southern states for state elections) or an "instant" runoff[20]

to arrive at that majority. Those would be two other types of voting systems, both of which get rid of the problem of "spoilers" and allow fields of multiple candidates to compete, raising issues and presenting electoral options to voters, without fear of strange results like "split votes" and winners with less than a popular majority. Had we used a two-round runoff or instant runoff in the 2000 presidential election, we certainly would have avoided the five-week Florida fiasco, and probably ended up with a different winner besides. That's because voting systems *matter;* different voting systems can produce different results, and some primitive voting systems produce distorted results.

As this book demonstrates, our antiquated Winner Take All voting system is at the root of much of what is perplexing and polarizing about our politics today, not only in presidential elections but in legislative elections as well. Outside the brief display of "rally 'round the flag" domestic unity following the September 11 attacks, numerous pundits and commentators have observed that the general level of national division and partisan warfare has reached unsettling proportions not seen by our nation for many years. And even with the unifying stimulus of foreign aggression, by December 28, 2001 *USA Today* was running headlines like "Lawmakers Back at Each Other's Throats." But this hardly should be surprising, given how the "winner take all" nature of our electoral contests exacerbates the stakes, and hence the division and conflict.

Worse than antiquated, Winner Take All is downright *dangerous*. It distorts national policy, robs voters of representation, and pits partisan voters as well as racial, ethnic, and religious minorities against each other for a scarce commodity—political representation. Americans are used to thinking of unstable democracy occurring in places like India, Italy, and Israel, where collapsing coalitions for parliamentary government can topple the government. But when a presidential candidate can win with less than a majority of votes, and with fewer votes than his main opponent, raising eyebrows as well as shouts of illegitimacy; or when one man, one Senator, Jim Jeffords from Vermont, can switch from Republican to independent and foment "a coup of one," throwing control of the U.S. Senate to the opposition party;[21] or when a small number of Senators representing a tiny fraction of the U.S. population consistently can torpedo legislation supported by the majority; or when one political party, the Republicans, can win less than a majority of congressional votes nationwide yet still end up with a majority of seats, as happened in 2000, those are clues that something is woefully amiss with our own democratic structures and practices.

This book analyzes the extent that the eighteenth-century "democracy technology" known as the Winner Take All voting system is affecting the five key dimensions of our democratic republic: representation, voter participation, campaigns and political discourse, legislative policy, and national unity These five dimensions are like the sturdy poles of the great tent of the republic, of representative democracy,[22] holding it aloft. Winner Take All relies near exclusively on (1) geographic-based representation and/or (2) a two-choice/two-party political duopoly. From those two defining characteristics of Winner Take All other

dynamics and tensions are unleashed that impact the five dimensions, often with unintended and damaging results.

This analysis finds that the impacts of Winner Take All are considerable; that the impacts are sweeping and, as we will see, decidedly troubling. Winner Take All is robbing voters of viable choices in the voting booth and is contributing to an entrenched decline in voter participation and engagement. As we will see, most voters have become bunkered down into "safe" one-party districts gerrymandered during a secretive redistricting process that guarantees reelection of incumbents. Winner Take All also is distorting representation of the majority as well as the minority, including millions of "orphaned" Democratic and Republican voters living in opposition legislative districts, as well as racial minorities, women, independents, and third-party supporters.

Moreover, Winner Take All's geographic-based paradigm is exacerbating national tensions that are turning entire geographic regions of the country into virtual wastelands for one political party or the other. It is producing "phantom representation" and "artificial majorities" where a minority of voters sometimes wins a majority of legislative seats and a disproportionate, exaggerated amount of political power. In short, as we will see, Winner Take All has produced a national legislature that does not look like "the people" it purports to represent, nor does it think like us or act as we wish it would. No, under the distortions of Winner Take All, the majority in the United States does *not* necessarily rule.

Winner Take All also underlies an alarming debasement of campaigns and political discourse, which have grown increasingly harsh, negative, and uninformative; it affects how political campaigns are conducted, as candidates and political consultants chase the infamous "swing voters," that small slice of fuzzy-headed and disengaged voters who determine the outcome of elections in a Winner Take All system. New campaigning technologies like polling and focus groups, it turns out, are *malignantly* suited to the Winner Take All system and its typical two-choice/two-party field, allowing the precise targeting of political spin and hack-attack sound bites to ever smaller slices of swing voters, while everybody else and the issues they care about are relegated to the political sidelines. The dynamics unleashed by Winner Take All also are affecting how much money is needed to run a viable campaign, how the media covers those campaigns, and how political ideas are debated and decided.

Finally, Winner Take All is draining the vitality out of well-meaning political reforms like campaign finance reform, the Voting Rights Act, term limits, and redistricting reform. Indeed, as we will see, the impact of Winner Take All is pandemic and indiscriminate, reaching into our communities and neighborhoods, into our psyches and attitudes toward government and elections, indeed into our very self-identity as a nation. Generally speaking, the pervasive impact of Winner Take All on participation, representation, campaigns and discourse, policy, and national unity is hurling us toward chronic national division and political depression.

In short, Winner Take All is making *losers* of us all. Even the apparent winners lose when our representative democracy is so sickly. This escalating combination of nagging national division and dispirited political depression is particularly perilous because each are mutually reinforcing of the other. As most players (i.e., voters) abandon the field in frustration, the game is left to be played by increasingly partisan careerists and professionals, and by the most zealous activists who seize center stage, further polarizing politics and policy. And as politics becomes more polarized, negative, and downright nasty, more and more people turn off and tune out.

One cannot help but wonder: what will be the political destiny of a nation that, on the one hand, has fewer and fewer voters and diminishing electoral engagement, but, on the other hand, is so rife with the heated passions of political division and acrimony, cleaved along the volatile lines of partisanship, regionalism, and racial and cultural polarization? It's a confounding and alarming paradox. Much like stagflation has bedeviled economists with the twin scourges of inflation *and* recession —theoretically impossible, the textbooks once informed us—our national politics is being squeezed between the Scylla and Charybdis of a passionless political depression intertwined with the torrid fervor of partisan obsession and divide. And our eighteenth-century Winner Take All system is at the root of the problem.

Despite the enormity of its impact, the Winner Take All voting system has been mostly overlooked or ignored by various political commentators, scholars, and reformers, much to the detriment of our national discussion and efforts at reform. Yet the gravity of the moment requires a new term to describe what is happening to the national consciousness: post-democracy—that is, a polarized, splintered nation, nominally democratic, but with fewer and fewer voters. A nation where many of our civil institutions are still vital and our individual rights reasonably well-protected, but where elections fail to inspire or mobilize, or to touch the issues most important in our lives, or to bind us as a nation. A nation where an emerging trend of regional balkanization—exacerbated by, as we will see, our Winner Take All practices—is alarmingly suggestive of the geographic-based polarization faced by other large Winner Take All democracies like India and Canada. What are we to make of this fractured, voterless, post-democracy? Its onset is an alarming development in our nation's political history.

It is important to note that post-democracy will not be merely the latest stage of an old, familiar specimen; post-democracy is not the same as pre-democracy or proto-democracy. In fact, it will have transmogrified into a new and unexpected phyla of political life, a new evolutionary form without precedent in human history. Post-democracy is a type where huge numbers of citizens simply have given up. And they have given up because they don't think politics or elections matter in their lives. They have made a decision, conscious or unconscious, that political/electoral participation is a waste of time and that withdrawing makes more rational sense, despite its obvious perils. They have *chosen* to toss their political fate to the winds, keeping their fingers crossed that whatever emerges, or whatever faction is in control, won't screw them over. The specter of post-democracy unearths from the

historical crypt Gaetano Mosca's disquieting theory of an elite ruling class, which asserted at the beginning of the twentieth century that "the history of all societies has been, is, and will be, the history of dominant minorities," contrary to any theories of majority rule.[23]

Post-democracy is a political iceberg of staggering proportions, and we are heading straight for it. Yet it is rarely talked about around American dinner tables, there is no presidential-sponsored national dialogue, there are no gavels pounding in Senate committee hearings or in august courtrooms. There are few opinion-page rants or *60 Minutes* documentaries attempting to galvanize public attention and mobilize the national brain trust, seeking a solution. Instead, all there is, is silence. A silence that is occasionally broken by a few well-meaning but misguided missives about the impact of private money in elections, or TV talking heads debating the passions of presidential ejaculatory stains on a dress—and now the vagaries of chad, Votomatics, and butterfly ballots. All the while the iceberg drifts, relentlessly closer, and practically nobody is talking about it. It's downright spooky.

* * * *

The Framers and Founders of our nation prided themselves on being on the cutting edge of all manner of things.[24] Ben Franklin, besides being a statesman, philosopher, and author, was an inveterate tinkerer and inventor whose numerous scientific and practical innovations included the lightning rod, bifocal spectacles, and a stove. The equally brilliant and eclectic Jefferson, besides authoring the Declaration of Independence and serving as President and Secretary of State, was also an architect, designing his own elegant estate, Monticello, and buildings for the University of Virginia. Washington was a successful farmer who tried to keep abreast of the latest scientific advances, giving assiduous attention to the rotation of crops, fertilization of the soil, and the management of livestock.

Not surprisingly, the Framers also were on the cutting edge of "democracy technology." They paid close attention to the secular political theory of their times, and were well versed in the political practices and theories of the ancient Greeks as well as the Roman Republic (although, it must be said over and over, their "enlightened" politics was not so informed by what we know today as human rights, either seeing nothing wrong with or not being troubled enough by slavery and sexual inequality in their midst). Invoking a clock as the technological symbol of their Deist age, John Adams called the government "a complicated Piece of Machinery," requiring a "nice and exact Adjustment" of its "Spring Wheels and Weights."[25] Madison, Hamilton, and Jay, as coauthors of the *Federalist Papers,* presented a masterly exposition of the new federal system, as well as the burgeoning ideals of justice, the general welfare, and the rights of individuals. In *Federalist* No. 10, Madison weighed the causes and consequences of political factions; Washington, in his farewell address, warned—prophesied, actually—about the excesses of political parties. In *Federalist* No. 9, Hamilton wrote that

> the science of politics…like most other sciences has received great improvement. The efficacy of various principles is now understood, which

> were either not known at all, or imperfectly known to the ancients. The regular distribution of power into distinct departments—the introduction of legislative balances—…the representation of the people in the legislature by deputies of their own election—diese are either wholly new discoveries or have made their principal progress towards perfection in modern times.

When we inherited our Winner Take All system from our eighteenth-century British colonizers, it was the cutting edge of democracy technology compared to the rule of a despotic king. As political scientist Robert Dahl and others have pointed out, the Winner Take All voting system was pretty much all that the Framers knew, since other voting systems like cumulative voting, choice voting, limited voting, proportional representation, instant runoff voting, and the like had not yet been invented. Nor would these other voting systems be invented until the middle of the nineteenth century or later, so, like the locomotive or the steam boat, we can hardly blame the Framers for not employing democracy technology that did not yet exist.

But today, just past the launch of the twenty-first century, Winner Take All is horse and buggy technology. It is akin to using DOS 1.0 rather than Windows XP or Mac OS X. More than simple, the eighteenth-century Winner Take All system is *primitive*. We will see how the internal mechanics of Winner Take All render it archaic and antiquated for the modern demands of representation, political discourse, and policy formation in an extremely mobile, pluralistic, Internet-connected, multinational, multipartisan, multiracial, multireligious, multitasking, multi-World Wide Webbed and free trading mass society. Obviously the world today is a much different place that it was at the dawn of our nation. We should think carefully about the ramifications of using an eighteenth-century piece of democracy technology in the twenty-first century.

What Hamilton called the "science of politics" must continue to study and research our democracy technology with fresh eyes. This book presupposes, quite optimistically, that we can diagnose what ails our political system, that we can upgrade our political institutions and practices. I am quite certain that the Framers, being the enlightened rationalists that they were, would have applauded the effort to peer into the political fog and figure out the next step, or even the next ten steps, as their piece of handiwork continues to evolve into one that lives up to the lofty rhetoric and aspirations of their astonishing age.

To understand more fully how far we've fallen, consider the words of Alexis de Tocqueville, writing in his 1835 seminal work *Democracy in America*. Tocqueville had this to say about our political ancestors:

> How happens it that in the United States, where the inhabitants arrived but as yesterday upon the soil which they now occupy, and brought neither customs nor traditions with them there; where they met each other for the first time with no previous acquaintance; where, in short, the instinctive love of country can scarcely exist;—how happens it that every one takes as zealous

> an interest in the affairs of the township, his county, and the whole State, as if they were his own? It is because every one, in his sphere, takes an active part in the government of society…. The citizen looks upon the fortune of the public as his own, and he labors for the good of the State…. The political activity that pervades the United States must be seen in order to be understood. No sooner do you set foot on American ground than you are stunned by a kind of tumult.[26]

The "tumult" of democracy, the animal spirits of popular sovereignty, have grown rather timeworn and tame in the United States today. The contrast between Tocqueville's description of that nineteenth-century democratic paragon and its deformed somnambular twenty-first-century descendant could not be more stark. So come, I invite you to fly over the terrain of the American political landscape, as we chart our descent into the twin black holes of political depression and national division, where an anxious future of post democracy awaits.

PART ONE

Geography Is Destiny

CHAPTER ONE
"A House Divided…"

A house divided against itself cannot stand.

—ABRAHAM LINCOLN

The Geographic Divide

On November 9, 2000, two days after the presidential election, as the nation was beginning to absorb the full extent of the five-week debacle that was about to ensue, *USA Today* published a map (similar to the one printed on the back cover of this book) that was portentous in its message. They say a picture is worth a thousand words, and this map was like flying in a spaceship high above the Earth, surveiling an aerial snapshot of the American political landscape.

What the map showed, specifically, was which candidate won the most presidential votes in each of the 3,111 counties in the fifty states. The Gore counties were in navy blue, the Bush counties in a fiery red. With such a close election and with so many counties in play, one might have expected to see a smattering of red and blue counties sprinkled all across the land. Not so. Instead, what one saw was solid blocs of red, engulfing entire states, starting about the Mississippi River and sweeping west. The Deep South was also nearly solid red, with scattered patches of blue. Huge chunks of the Appalachians moving north and west into Indiana and Ohio were also solid red. Most of the blue counties clung thinly to both coasts, thoroughly dominating there, and the blue also peppered various Midwest and Western pockets, but near-exclusively the urban areas of those regions. All told, the flaming Bush red formed a kind of Berlin Wall running north-south at the Mississippi River, fanning out in two directions to engulf most of the West and bending east near Missouri to embrace the southern areas stretching to Bull Run and Sherman's March to the Sea. It looked like the territory of two conflicting armies in a new kind of uncivil war.

George Bush's "army" captured an astounding amount of territory: 2,434 counties to Al Gore's 677, nearly 2.5 million square miles to Gore's 575,000 square miles. Yet Bush country was low-population and rural, while Gore's were the major population centers, [1] enough to give Gore over 500,000 more popular votes

nationwide. Unquestionably, as the map revealed, ours is a divided nation—but there is a particular geography to the divide: a vast sea of fiery Republican red across the rural heartland, framed and trellised by bicoastal and urban patches of blue, the island outposts of Gore and the Democrats. If Al Gore had succeeded in winning the presidency, he would have been able to fly from Washington, DC, to the California border without passing over a single state that voted for him. The trend was unmistakable, and it has become more pronounced with each passing election. To view the aerial map was to feel a lump in one's throat, a creepy chill of the spine, north to south. There was no mistaking its alarming message, nor its ramifications—railing national division with a distinct *regional* axis.

But there was another axis to the national division. As illuminated by exit polls, the *cultural* differences between Bush's and Gore's voters were similarly striking. Bush attracted people who go to church more than once a week; who think it's more important that the president be a moral leader than a good government manager; who oppose stricter gun laws; and who believe that if a public school is failing, the government should pay for private school. In a throwback to the election of Jimmy Carter and the fallout from Watergate, Bush supporters believed honesty was the quality they valued most in a leader, followed by leadership and likeability. A great majority of Bush's rural voters felt government was stepping on their religious beliefs and out of step with their views on crime, abortion, and handguns. Nearly half of all voters across the country said the impeachment scandal was very or somewhat important in determining their vote, and three-quarters of them voted for Bush.[2] Voters with incomes over $100,000 also strongly preferred Bush.[3]

Gore drew heavy majorities of liberal and more secular voters who rarely or never attend church; who support stricter gun laws; and who say a public school should be fixed if it is failing. Their paramount value was experience, followed by competence to handle complex issues and caring about "people like me." Gore's more urban voters were defined by tolerance, progressive cultural views, and a fear that Christian conservatives want to impose their views on everyone. Union members went 63 percent to 32 percent for Gore;[4] low-income voters (making $30,000 or less) favored Gore, as did heavy majorities of gay and Jewish voters.[5]

Besides the stark regional and cultural divisions, the presidential exit polls revealed a third axis to our national division: *racial polarization*. Despite a relatively weak record by the Clinton-Gore administration on civil rights, affirmative action, racial profiling, sentencing disparities between crack and powder cocaine offenses, and welfare reform, an astonishing 90 percent of African Americans voted for Gore, as did 62 percent of Latinos and 55 percent of Asians (95 percent of blacks and over 60 percent of Latinos voted against Bush in his home state of Texas, a stunning rejection of the Texas governor's symbolic racial overtures and self-proclaimed "compassionate conservatism").[6] Combined, people of color accounted for an unprecedented 30 percent of Gore's total vote, and nearly 20 percent of all voters.

On the other hand, whites constituted almost 95 percent of Bush's total vote, with white men in particular preferring Bush, as did 80 percent of the white reli gious right.[7] More revealing, while women overall voted 54–43 for Gore, *white*

women actually favored Bush by one point, 49–48. *Women of color* created the gender gap.[8] The same can be said of the poor: while 57 percent of voters with incomes under $15,000 voted for Gore, poor whites broke slightly for Bush. Moreover, of the demographic groups that had a fairly unified vote of 60 percent or more for one candidate—blacks, Latinos, Jews, union members, gays, residents of large cities, and white males—all but union members, gays and big-city residents were racial or ethnic groups. And the large numbers of people of color in big cities and unions (about 25 percent of the latter) largely accounted for the heavy Democratic vote of those demographic groups.[9]

These combined axes of division—regional, cultural, racial, and partisan— in essence defined the contested terrain between the two opposing camps. *USA Today* perhaps summed it up best: "Compassionate conservative Bush and New Democrat Gore tried broader appeals to change the color code of the presidential map. But ultimately, both wound up winning little more than their traditional political turfs."[10] The national fractures and fault lines revealed by UnElection 2000, then, were geographic, particularly city versus rural; they were regional, with the old Confederate South and the rural and Mountain West opposing the old Union states of the North and Northeast plus the West Coast, with New Mexico, Florida, New Hampshire, and the Midwest as toss-ups; they were heavily racial, with voting patterns starkly polarized along racial lines approaching that of South Africa's in its first post-apartheid elections; and they were somewhat gendered and income-based, but with an obvious racial component.

Visually, looking at the national map, it was red versus blue like two rival armies, each with their own geographic strongholds and legions of foot soldiers. And it solidified the suburbs and collar counties, particularly those in key battleground states, as the crucial swing districts for national politics. Suburbanites, so avidly stalked by both nominees via millions of dollars in obstreperous TV ads, tend to be a little more Republican than Democrat, and the candidate that wins this group tends to win the election. In the 2000 presidential election they split 50–50, with the suburbs casting well over 40 percent of the total vote. Fifty years ago, fewer than a quarter of Americans lived in the suburbs, now roughly half do; every ten years another ten members of Congress represent predominantly snburban districts.[11]

Taken as a whole, the emerging electoral demographic amounted to a stratagraphic mix kind of like Neapolitan ice cream—the vanilla rural layer and the chocolate urban layer sandwiching the mitigation of the tonier strawberry suburbs. This is the stratified political landscape for which the Winner Take All voting system, with it's zero-sum "if I win, you lose" calculations, is supposed to act as the political filter that translates votes into political power. As we will see, this augurs a worrisome national future.

The Geography of Division

> In America, there is more space where nobody is than where anybody is —that is what makes America what it is.
>
> —GERTRUDE STEIN

Flying high above the political landscape, one gets an urge to descend like a lunar rover and explore a bit of the terrain below to really get a feel for the miseen-scène of national disunity. First, we touch down somewhere within that vast prairie of Bush red—the territory of Idaho. Idaho is a state some say was shaped like a logger's boot to reflect its rugged forests and mountain terrain, dominated by loggers and miners. Bordered to the east by the jagged teeth of the Continental Divide, with small and sparse towns meandering along the course of the Snake and other rivers, and with its interior subsumed by dark dense jungles such as the "No Return" Wilderness Area, Idaho provides some of the largest tracts of unspoiled primitive areas in the Lower 48. Legend has it that this is Bigfoot country, a vast canopied expanse where a gigantic and enigmatic apespecies can live undetected.

Idaho has been the terminus for all sorts of pioneers, wanderers, and vagabonds, including fur trappers, homesteaders, wild mustangs, the remarkable potato,[12] former Confederate soldiers (who settled here following the Civil War and dominated the legislature), vigilantes, Populist Party farmers, and tenacious trade unionists and miners.[13] More recent arrivals include racist skinheads, white Aryans, anti-United Nations separatists, ex-hippies, high-tech businesses fleeing California, radio talk show pull-yourself-up-by-your-boot-strappers, and anti-government back-to-the-landers like Randy Weaver, who fought off FBI and ATF agents for ten days at Ruby Ridge before surrendering after the shooting deaths of his wife, son, dog, and one agent. Yes, Idaho, which is smack in the heart of Bush country, has a little bit of everything—except elected officials who are liberal or Democrat. Those are practically extinct species, with sightings nearly as rare as Bigfoot.

For instance, the Idaho state House currently sits sixty-one Republicans and only nine Democrats, an astounding 87 percent Republican. The Senate is worse, with thirty-two Republicans and a lonely three Democrats. The handful of elected Democrats can be more properly described as political spectators rather than political players. Idaho's governor is Republican, as are both U.S. Senators. Elected Democrats are so rare in Idaho that the state's two seats for the U.S. House were won easily by Republicans in 2000 with landslide margins of 40 percentage points, on average; one seat was won by the Republican lieutenant governor, a fellow by the name of Butch Otter, despite a checkered past including a 1993 drunken driving conviction. He won the seat of retiring congresswoman Helen Chenoweth, herself the subject of a firestorm over a previous extramarital affair after her harsh condemnation of Clinton peccadilloes, particularly since she had been elected six years earlier partly by capitalizing on the admitted extramarital affair of her opponent.

As an indicator of how much Idaho had tilted Republican in recent years, in 1998 Idaho's former Democratic Congressman Richard Stallings tried to win back his old seat, which he had held from 1985 through 1993. Even though the seat had no incumbent and even though Stallings outspent his GOP opponent Mike Simpson, still he lost 53–45 percent. The state simply had changed too much. Thus, no matter how bad or kakistocratic the Republican candidate, Democrats and liberals in Idaho now have a hard time winning. Not that there aren't plenty of Democratic voters, especially in university towns like Boise and Pocatello; but they are effectively buried beneath the avalanche of Republicans. conservatives, Rush Limbaugh ditto heads, NRA Second Amendment fundamentalists, anti-government patriots, and Mormon communards. If people of color are the most consistent Democratic voter, it should be no surprise that Idaho is snowfield white.

The same is true in neighboring Utah. In November 2000, the Republican governor, Mike Leavitt, won his third term, and voters approved an initiative making English the official language of the state. Both its U.S. Senators are Republican, as are two-thirds of Utah's U.S. House seats and 69 percent of its state House and Senate seats. Ross Perot actually outpolled Bill Clinton in Utah during the 1992 presidential election, 27 percent versus 25 percent of the popular vote, with George H.W.Bush easily beating them both. In fact, the electoral outlook is so grim for Democrats in Utah that Democratic party leader Scott Howell has threatened the possibility of running no Democratic legislative candidates at all. The Democrats threatened this also in 1996, the point being, said Howell, to "make Utahans wake up to what local political life would be like with no alternative voice, no alternative power, to the majority Republicans. We have one-party rule in Utah."[14]

It's ironic hearing a Democrat bleat like this, given how hostile the national Democratic Party establishment was to Ralph Nader and his Green Party alternative. Yet Howell can sound positively vestal in making his case. "The Republicans give us no opportunities," he says. The GOP leadership, especially in the Senate, "crush[es] us at every turn." In the Utah Legislature, even motions that take two-thirds vote can fly through the House and Senate because Democrats don't have sufficient numbers of legislators to stop them. Thus, Howell maintains petulantly that the "No Democrats" alternative is viable. "The reality is we live in a one-party state. Maybe it's time to have no Democrats in the Legislature. Then let citizens see how they like that "[15]

Liberals and Democrats in the Western and Mountain states of Montana, Wyoming, Nevada, North and South Dakota, Colorado, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Arizona can bleat similar complaints. They too play more of a spectator role in state and local politics. That's a vast area of fiery red Bush country —for convenience of identification, let's call it Bushlandia—stretching from the Canadian to the Mexican borders, over 1 million square miles, the size of all of Western Europe including Scandinavia. If we add in Alaska, the region is practically the size of a continent. Bushlandia is its own nation of sorts, of over 26 million people, but sparsely settled with about the same population as the states of New

York and Massachusetts—yet over five times the representation of New York and Massachusetts in the U.S. Senate, and nine more votes in the Electoral College.[16]

Although the denizens of Bushlandia have seen what must seem to them like a flood of immigrants in recent years, particularly Latino laborers, the region is still 85 percent white; Colorado, Arizona, and Nevada have seen the biggest influx, and without their numbers Bushlandia is 90 percent white.[17] Bushlandia has its own distinctive rural culture beyond the blandness of national TV culture, even its own distinctive art. Walking into an art gallery in, say, Jackson Hole, Wyoming, or Scottsdale, Arizona, is like visiting a temple to the myth of the Cowboy. Finely crafted paintings and bronze statuettes, replete with chaps, stirrups, lariats, rifles, six-shooters, and ten-gallon hats, have been sculpted into occupational poses and framed on the walls for the admiration of the customers and cowboy cognoscenti.[18]

Surprisingly, the southern United States, particularly the states of the Deep South, do not appear at first glance to be charter members of the nation of Bushlandia. Because of historical factors stretching as far back as the Civil War and Reconstruction, when the hostility of white Southerners toward Lincoln's slave-liberating Republican Party cemented their support for the Democratic Party, Democrats still win many elections in the formerly Confederate land. For instance, the states of Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and North Carolina all have Democratic majorities in both statehouses, as well as Democratic control of the governors' seats (a trifecta that was decisive for Democrats in these states during the recently concluded round of redistricting). In the states of Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Arkansas, Democrats still control a whopping average of 69 percent of state legislative seats, and George W.Bush's own state of Texas has a Democratic state House and a majority of Democrats in its congressional delegation.

But these are not necessarily Gore-blue types of Democrats; rather, most are fairly conservative, reflecting the schizophrenic history of the Democratic Party in the South, now as the civil rights party but previously as the party of segregation. Jim Crow, George Wallace, and now-Republican Strom Thurmond's States' Rights Democratic Party (the infamous Dixiecrats in 1948), which drew their strength from racially conservative working-class whites, are estranged stepbrothers of Lyndon Johnson, John Lewis, and the civil rights legislators of the post-1960s.[19] Truth be told, most white Southern Democratic elected officials would be *Republicans* above the Mason-Dixon line.[20]

Completing the Democratic Party profile in the South, more than half of all African Americans still live in the former Confederacy, and black voters, who are some of the most consistently liberal and Democratic voters in the country, have been able to take advantage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and subsequent amendments to elect a few of their own type of Democrat. This has woven an uneasy coalition in the Southern Democratic Party between conservative "Boll Weevil" or "Blue Dog" Democrats, with roots among those remaining working-class whites who have not defected to the Republican Party, and black Democrats who tend to be liberal.[21] Because of this historical freak circumstance, most national Democratic Party leaders—like Al Gore—are too liberal for most Southern

Democratic voters (in fact, many *Northern Republican* legislators, such as Republican Senator Olympia Snowe of Maine, probably could not be elected south of the Mason-Dixon line in *either* party, since they would be seen as too liberal).[22]

So while the South may not be solidly Republican, it *is* solidly conservative, with the conservative vote generally pulling "R" for presidential and statewide offices and most U.S. House seats and "D" for many state legislative and a few U.S. House races, with island outposts of black and liberal Gore-blue electing some black Democrats. While one would have to place the core of Bushlandia in the Mountain and Prairie states, the conservative South contributes its own Confederate flavor to the mix. Together, these two regions form the solid geographic craton of the conservative movement. In the cowboy and formerly Confederate nation of Bushlandia, liberals and/or Democrats are effectively politically smothered, like a field of flowers snowed over by an avalanche.

The Land of New Goreia

> A San Francisco Republican? What's a San Francisco Republican? That's a contradiction in terms.
>
> —A DEMOCRATIC PARTY ACTIVIST IN SAN FRANCISCO

But let's not feel too badly for Democrats and liberals. Next we touch down in … liberal San Francisco. Here, we overhear standing jokes about that rare and exotic bird, a San Francisco Republican. This species has zero representation at the city, state Assembly, Senate, or congressional levels. In fact, a Republican candidate hasn't won a local San Francisco election in decades. "In the San Francisco area, one of the wealthiest places in the country, there are now places where the Republican Party has all but disappeared," says one Republican strategist.[23] In California at large, where fully 12 percent of the nation's population resides, Democrats control the governor's seat, both U.S. Senate seats, all state executive offices except the Secretary of State, and over 60 percent of U.S. House, state Assembly, and state Senate seats. In the Assembly races the average margin of victory was nearly 35 percent.

Democratic gains in the U.S. House in 2000 were largely due to California, where shifting racial demographics combined with politically short-sighted, antiracial policies pursued by previous Republican Gov. Pete Wilson have made California a GOP wasteland. Even Republican bedrock Orange County now elects Latino Democrats due to the rapid Latinoization of that area, and state Republican leaders are scratching their heads over a viable strategy. Rather comically, an effort was made to draft Hollywood movie star Arnold Schwarzenegger as the white knight—or in this case the gubernatorial candidate for 2002—that might ride in and save the California Republicans from themselves. Ah-nold, after initially being flattered by the attention, declined the invitation.[24]

In Massachusetts, we discover a similar story. Democrats in Massachusetts have a complete monopoly on congressional representation; for the second election in a row, not a single Massachusetts Republican was elected to one of its ten U.S. House seats or to the Senate. Republican voters in the Bay State might as well not have showed up to the polls; they completely wasted their votes and their time. Of Massachusetts' ten Democratic House incumbents in 2000, five had no Republican opponent; of the other five incumbents, only two had opponents who had ever run for elective office.[25] In the Massachusetts state Senate, six lonely Republicans hold the ramparts against thirty-four Democrats, and in the state House Democrats hold 86 percent of the seats. Sixty-three percent of Massachusetts' state legislative races weren't even *contested,* mostly by Republicans, because they either couldn't find candidates or didn't want to waste resources fielding candidates in races where they didn't stand a chance (but hey, that was slightly better than 1998, when 70 percent of state races went uncontested). Of the remaining fifty-six contested seats, Democrats won thirtynine of these—70 percent—by huge landslide margins.

The problems Massachusetts Republicans have in fielding credible candidates for elective offices have now become predictable, and its chances for changing in the near future are dismal. There is no better example of this than Massachusetts' senior senator, Ted Kennedy. Chappaquidick, personal family tragedy, infidelity, persistent bouts with alcoholism—none of these have been able to knock from the saddle a Kennedy in heavily Democratic Massachusetts. First elected to the Senate in 1962, Kennedy has never had a truly close contest. He won with 58 percent in 1994 even in the face of a big-spending challenge by Republican businessman Mitt Romney, even during the Republican national sweep. Kennedy's personal shortcomings would end the career of any Democrat in Bushlandia (although not the career of a Republican, like the aforementioned Butch Otter in Idaho, elected to the House), but in Massachusetts they are forgivable. It seems that, for Massachusetts voters, given a polar choice between any Republican and a scandal-plagued Democrat, the "D" trumps all else nearly every time.[26]

The outstanding exception has been the governor's seat from 1990 to the present, where the post-Dukakis era made Massachusetts ripe for a change— but to one of the more moderate GOP elected officials in the nation. Compared to many southern Democrats, Republican governor William Weld was so liberal that his later nomination by the Clinton administration to the ambassadorship of Mexico was blocked by Sen. Jesse Helms and hard core conservatives, who labeled Weld an "ardent advocate of abortion rights, promoter of the militant homosexual agenda, and champion of liberalized drug laws."[27] In other words, in liberal Massachusetts, successful Republicans are in step with their state's *voters,* not with their own national party.

Other states like Maryland and Rhode Island are similar Democratic Party strongholds. Both chambers of their state legislatures are at least 70 percent Democratic, and Republicans didn't bother contesting nearly 55 percent of the Rhode Island seats. All of Maryland's five highest profile statewide offices (governor, two U.S. Senators, lieutenant governor, and Attorney General) are held

by Democrats, as are most of Rhode Island's. Major urban areas like Los Angeles, New York City, Seattle, Atlanta, Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia, Newark, New Haven, Boston, Washington, DC, and others, where the population density is up to a thousand times greater than the sparse tundra of Bushlandia, are similar near-wastelands of GOP representation (and when Republicans do get elected—like New York City's last two mayors—almost always they are pro-choice, pro-affirmative action moderates who never could get elected in Bush-landia). In these areas, elected Republicans are, practically speaking, spectators in the legislatures. These bicoastal areas and urban strongholds of Democrats, combined with still-strong labor areas in the Midwest and scattered urban islands in the heart of Bushlandia red, comprise the latticework of blue Gore country—for convenience, let's call it New Goreia—that outlines and cross-hatches Bushlandia like a trellised picture frame.

New Goreia too is a nation of sorts, a shimmering urban peacock with nodal points of high population density, traffic jams, skyrocketing rents, and gritty crime; cities filled with a multiracial beat, jazzy Web sites, and a new demographic of affluent young dot.commers. Entire sections of cities today cling to the edge of livability, with ghastly extremes of poverty living in the shadows of sumptuous wealth, increasingly separated by castlelike gated condos and exclusive complexes, drawbridges pulled up. Nevertheless, when Election Day rolls around, most urban denizens are united—in the nation of New Goreia, conservatives and Republicans are effectively and politically smothered, just like Democrats and liberals are in Bushlandia.

Compounding the urban mosaic of New Goreia is a rapidly shifting racial demographic. For the first time in our nation's history since the early colonies, certain regions of New Goreia are galloping toward a demographic that will see whites eclipsed as a majority.[28] Minorities now make up roughly one-third of the nation's population, up from one-quarter in 1990. Those with Spanish surnames are increasing five times faster than the general population, and in Los Angeles, Houston, San Antonio, and Dallas, Latinos outnumber non-Hispanic whites. The 2000 U.S. Census reports that the Latino population, now 35.3 million nationwide, rose 58 percent over the past decade and now surpasses that of African Americans. Los Angeles has a Salvadoran population as large as San Salvador, and New York City has as many Puerto Ricans as San Juan and as many Dominicans as Santo Domingo. According to the Bureau of the Census, our largest state, California, no longer has a white majority, and our second largest state, Texas, will soon follow. By 2025, our third and fourth largest, New York and Florida, also will follow, and about one-fourth of the total U.S. population will be living in states where the racial "minority" population exceeds the white population. By 2050, Latinos will have supplied fully two-thirds of the nation's population growth, and U.S. Latinos will compose the third-largest Latino nation in the world, with only Brazil and Mexico having more Latinos.[29]

If Latinos are the slumbering giant of U.S. politics, Asians are keeping up the pace. The Asian population increased by 41 percent over the past decade, and it is projected that by the year 2025 Asians will comprise over 17 percent of California

and 9 percent of New York State, most of this population growth centered in cities and 60 percent of Asian Americans being foreign born. While over a third of Asians live in California and New York, large communities now can be found in Georgia, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, and several other states. African Americans will hold at their present level, about 13 percent of the nation, most of that in the South where blacks now comprise 19 percent of the region's population. All told, nearly 40 percent of the U.S. population under age 18 is Hispanic, Asian, black, or another minority; minorities account for more than half of the non-adult population in five states—Arizona, California, Texas, New Mexico, and Hawaii.[30] Thus, the very terms "majority" and "minority" are being turned on their heads.[31] These are demographic shifts of epic proportions.

Viewed from the hinterlands of white Bushlandia, no doubt the salsa-raphip-hop beat and rainbow density of New Goreia must look like an "alien" nation, and possibly a hostile one, particularly as it becomes a launching pad for a Latino invasion of Bushlandia itself. In the 1990s, the white voting-age population rose by more than 22 percent in the Bushlandia states of Utah, Idaho, Nevada, Colorado, and Arizona, with most of the white migrants coming out of mongrelizing California. In the South, Georgia, North and South Carolina, and Tennessee also saw their white voting-age populations increase by more than twice the national average.[32] Nevertheless, by 2025 the Bushlandia states of Nevada and Arizona are projected to increase to over 40 percent minority, and Colorado and Oklahoma to over 25 percent minority; even the states of Idaho, Wyoming, Kansas, and Utah are projected to increase to over 15 percent minor ity within 25 years.[33] While the Hispanic population mostly is concentrated in major metropolitan areas, smaller cities and rural areas in the West, Midwest, South, and Northwest experienced the largest *percentage* increases, with states like Arkansas seeing an increase of 337 percent in its Hispanic population. Yes, the cowboy white nation of Bushlandia will be dramatically affected by the ongoing racial "coloring" of American society.[34]

One of the obvious ramifications of this demographic tide is that it is becoming increasingly difficult for a single representative to straddle the diverse constituencies residing in many of these districts. To paraphrase a rascal-turned-momentary-prophet, Rodney King, "How will all this diversity get along?" More importantly, *will* it get along? Or will pockets of demophobic white resistance spring up in Bushlandia and elsewhere, erecting legal and extra-legal barricades to try to hold back the tide?[35] Is America standing at the edge of an abyss, awaiting yet another anxious epoch of racial strife, turmoil, and violence? Bill McInturff, a Republican pollster, told the *Washington Post:* "We have two massive colliding forces. One is rural, Christian, religiously conservative. [The other] is socially tolerant, pro-choice, secular, living in New England and the Pacific coast."[36] Add the gun powder of race to this volatile brew, shake it a bit, and you may end up with a volatile cocktail that we are more accustomed to reading about in other large Winner Take All nations like Canada and India.

Between Bushlandia and New Goreia exist real differences of temperament, social values, and politics that appear to be, once again, muscularly implanted in regional

geography, culture, and race. Whenever that combination—region, race, culture, and partisanship—has emerged in our nation's history, the impact usually has been explosive. Other previous episodes of fervent racialized sectionalism—the Civil War and Reconstruction, of course, but also the desegregation battles of the 1940s, 50s and 60s, which produced political factions in the South like Strom Thurmond's Dixiecrats and George Wallace's American Independent Party—inevitably were times of great political turmoil and violence. One study has found that presidential election results since the Reagan era most closely resemble the presidential election results from the two historical eras when the two parties were most polarized over racial issues: the antebellum period of the 1850s and the civil rights era of the 1960s. As it turns out, the "red states" taken by George W.Bush were much the same as those taken by James Buchanan in 1856, an alarming continuity separated by 144 years.[37]

As one recalls the bitter partisan battles of the past decade, capped by UnElection 2000 and the first one hundred days of the Bush administration which culminated in moderate Sen. Jim Jeffords bolting a rightwardly flailing Republican Party, one can't help but wonder about the future of our nation. The patriotic swell following the September 11 attacks postponed the bitter partisanship that had been building to a boil for the first eight months of 2001 (over, let us recall, wedge issues like tax cuts, a sudden deficit, arsenic levels in drinking water, national energy spikes, insider coziness among the Bush oilmen, and finally a looming budget battle). While the simmering lid was retamped under the weight of the collapsed Twin Towers, can there be any doubt that the underlying steam still is building pressure? It is, of course, always challenging to see far enough to know where we sit on the great wheel of history. Certainly opinions range about *how* deep is the Red America/Blue America divide. But in thinking about the level of recent national division, historian Robert Dalek has observed, "Maybe it's an overstatement on my part, but I have the scent of the Civil War in my nostrils. It reminds me of the tensions in Vietnam during the 1960s. Now we are moving into a similar kind of moment."[38]

More to the point, as we will now see, these are the molten demographics that must be squeezed through the pinhole of the clunky eighteenth-century Winner Take All voting system. Winner Take All, it turns out, with its exclusive reliance on geographic-based representation and a two-choice/two-party duopoly, is exacerbating greatly this national division, and is polarizing our politics along regional, racial, partisan, and cultural lines.

The New Berlin Wall

> Toto, we aren't in Kansas anymore.
> —DOROTHY, SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW

Because we use electoral practices that elect one representative per district, Democratic and/or liberal voters in Bushlandia and Republican and/or conservative

voters in New Goreia are consistently and unsurprisingly outvoted for just about everything. For each individual contest, for each single-seat race, there are simply too many of one type of voter—Republicans in Idaho or Kansas, say, or Democrats in Massachusetts or California or in most cities— overwhelming the other type of voter. The resulting monopoly politics not only affects representation—to the point where elected opposition has become a nearly extinct species—but also creates a new classification of voters: "orphaned" voters.

Orphaned voters are those Democrats and Republicans who, like the supporters of third parties everywhere and most non-white voters, are *geographic* minorities in out-of-favor districts and states with little hope of electing a representative. Orphaned voters have no electoral or governmental outlet for their political sympathies or passions. Ironically, though, it's not as if there aren't millions of Republican voters *living* in Democratic districts, and vice versa, all across the country. It's just that these orphaned voters—these geographic minorities—never win representation because, district after district, they don't have sufficient votes and are outvoted.

Using the presidential vote as an indicator of the numbers of Democratic and Republican voters in each state, we can estimate how badly—and unfairly— these orphaned voters are smothered. We can compare the disproportion between the presidential popular vote and the number of legislative seats won by each party to arrive at a vote-to-seats ratio (the presidential popular vote is used rather than the aggregate statewide vote for each party in state legislative races, since so many state legislative races are uncontested—41 percent in 2000—which serves to depress voter turnout totals for state legislative races).[39] So comparing the popular vote for Gore to the number of seats won by Democrats at the state legislative level, we find that the 29 percent of Idaho voters who pulled the Democratic tab for president in November 2000 ended up with only 13 percent of Democratic seats in the state House of Representatives. In essence, these voters won 16 percent less representation than their numbers would indicate they deserve. In Kansas, Democrats were similarly subsumed, winning 39 percent of the presidential vote but only 25 percent of state House seats. In Nebraska, Democratic voters didn't win a single seat in the U.S. House; just like Republicans in Massachusetts these voters have no representation at all.

This disproportionality works both ways, naturally, and in Rhode Island Republican voters accumulated about 34 percent of the presidential vote for Bush but ended up with only 16 percent of the state representation, a "representation ripoff" of 18 percent. In Maryland, 42 percent of voters pulled Bush—approaching a majority—but they ended up with only 25 percent of the Republican state House seats, a ripoff of 17 percent. In Massachusetts, 35 percent of voters pulling R in the presidential race won only 14 percent of state House seats, a huge representation ripoff of 21 percent.[40]

In all of these states and more, orphaned voters are smothered by the partisan avalanche that blankets the single-seat districts of their respective region or state. Consequently, the political cultures of these states and regions, which ideally should

thrive on exchanges of ideas and robust public debate, have become political monocultures, lacking the most basic levels of political pluralism.[41] The bitter partisan divide gets exacerbated by the Representation Ripoff, as one side effectively wins more representation than they deserve, while the other side is frustrated and unfairly marginalized. Oftentimes these representation ripoffs produce undeserved veto-proof majorities that can ram through radical policies without a popular mandate. The resulting monopoly politics creates a dangerous tension—fenced off, district by district, into political turf where victorious majorities lord over vanquished minorities, it's nothing less than a new kind of political feudalism.

These sectional/regional schisms are becoming more and more cemented into the nation's bedrock—Bushlandia versus New Goreia. The politically schizophrenic South, which for years voted Republican for president but elected Democrats to the U.S. House, has all but disappeared. As recently as the beginning of Clinton's presidency, the breakdown of Southern House seats was 85–52 in favor of the Democrats; now it is 81–55 Republican (with one conser vative independent). And the number of districts across the South that split Republican for president, Democrat for House, has plummeted from nearly seventy-five a decade ago to fourteen in 1996.[42]

This regional realignment in the South, as many observers have pointed out, has turned the politics of the South—and of the GOP congressional leadership on Capitol Hill—upside down. Since the civil rights era, the once-Democratic "Solid South" has shifted to predominantly Republican territory, leaving the Democratic Party more uniformly liberal and the GOP more solidly conservative—with the two sides more rabidly polarized than ever.[43] Moderates of either party are quietly but conspicuously disappearing—of the thirty-six U.S. House members in the Deep South, for instance, only six today could be described as moderate to conservative Democrats, and one or two as moderate Republicans, with the rest right-wing Republicans and a scattering of black liberal Democrats.

Gone also are most of the Democratic House seats in the Plains and Mountain states; Mike Mansfield-style prairie populism and Democratic congressional beachheads in this vast sector of the country are few and far between, buried beneath the Republican avalanche. The Northeast, meanwhile, has been moving in the opposite direction; moderate-to-liberal Rockefeller Republicans and New England congregationalists, once a granitic mainstay of Yankee politics, are now an endangered species.[44] Sarah Binder, a congressional scholar at the Brookings Institution, has charted the recent disappearance of centrists, estimating a decline from about one-quarter of all Members of Congress in 1980 to 10 percent in 1996.[45] Increasing numbers of liberal and conservative safe seats won by huge landslide margins of at least 40 percentage points make the political chasm once bridged by moderates implacably wide and deep.

"The divisions between the two parties are probably larger than they've been any time in the modern era," says Roger Davidson, a leading congressional scholar at the University of Maryland. On the full range of social and international issues, many experts observed that the House may be as polarized as at any time since

Reconstruction in the late 1860s–the last time an American president was impeached.[46]

The Paralysis of the Two-Party System

Most portentous for the future, however, these schisms strongly reflect the degree to which national politics and partisan competition *still* are centered around appeals to culturally and racially conservative white voters, who *still* comprise the bulk of American voters. The University of Michigan's National Election Studies (NES), a series of public opinion polls taken over the last three decades, gives an interesting snapshot of political attitudes since the early 1970s. For a whole host of questions, including abortion, government intervention in the economy, the size of government, the amount of services government ought to provide, the desirability of a national health plan, and more, the general public has barely budged in its attitudes over the last three decades, even as both political parties have become more partisan in their platforms and their rhetoric. But in two areas the country indeed has become more conservative since the mid-1980s—the first, a decisive appetite for cutting government spending; and the second, decreasing government aid to blacks and minorities. And in the public mind these two are closely fused, half of the NES respondents now agreeing that "the government should not make any special effort to help blacks because they should help themselves," up from a third of the population in 1984.[47]

Another study of this attitudinal shift attempted to differentiate between Southern and Northern attitudes, and found that a link between Southern racial animosity and evangelical religion seemed to be fueling much of the shift toward conservative Republicanism among white Southerners. The old Confederacy, it turns out, "continues to be unique in generating great support for a conservative political party based distinctively on *racial* conservatism—just as it did in the years before the Civil War, and during the period of aggressive civil rights action in the 1960s."[48] This attitudinal shift once formed the basis of Richard Nixon's successful "Southern strategy" in the early 1970s, which used coded words and symbolic gestures and actions directed at white people in the South, particularly white men, to paint the Democratic Party as the party of racial minorities, rioting cities, and civil rights agendas.

Ronald Reagan continued the Nixon strategy, peeling off white Democrats, particularly in the South, with his attacks on race-based policies, government spending, and stereotyping of cities. George H.W.Bush used his infamous Willie Horton ads and coded language to finger Dukakis and the Democrats as the party of liberals, big spenders and, again, as being "soft on crime", that is, racial minorities. One study found evidence that the Jesse Jackson presidential bid in 1984 drove prejudiced Southern whites to the Republican Party.[49] New Democrat Clinton hoisted his finger in the air and, taking note of the political winds, tried to expropriate parts of the GOP strategy by taking high-profile steps to distance the Democratic Party from the racial tag. As the polarized voting patterns of the 2000

presidential election reveal, much of *current* U.S. politics still can be explained by the dynamics unleashed during this not-so-distant era by Nixon's politically shrewd yet racially reprehensible tactics.

Thus, in both acutely obvious and subtly subcutaneous ways, race still matters.[50] Today, while the portion of the national Democratic Party's agenda that speaks to broad-based economic security targets the white working class—the so-called Bubba vote—the association of the Democrats with urban areas, civil rights agendas, and racial minority groups alienates some of these same white working class voters.[51] Despite eight years of Clinton's racial-distancing, the Democrats now provide near-exclusive representation for the densely populated cities, the Republicans for the vast territory of sparse rural areas; the Democ rats are now the "colored party," the party preferred by racial minorities,[52] while the GOP is the party of most whites, especially most white men who perceive that they have gotten next to nothing from governmental policy over the past generation and have been hurt by affirmative action and taxpayer-funded programs like welfare. Between 1979 and 1997, for instance, male workers with only a high school diploma saw a decline in real wages (after inflation) of 12 percent and high school dropouts saw a stunning 26 percent decline in pay. Their confidence in "government's willingness or ability to 'represent me' or 'get the job done' is at or near all-time lows."[53]

Given the rapidly shifting demographic picture, and the "if I win, you lose" calculations of a two-choice Winner Take All system, both political parties are tiptoeing as carefully as they can around the color line, strategizing as they go. Both parties try to attract white swing and suburban voters—but in qualitatively different ways. The Republican Party of George W.Bush appeals, ironically, by trying to appear less racist and more "compassionate," by softening the rhetoric and the harsh edges of the 1992–1998 Republican Party of Gingrich and Pat Buchanan, highlighting people of color at their nominating convention (raising charges of "minstrel show" tokenism), and appointing them to a few high-level positions in an effort to send a signal of reassurance to *white moderate suburbanites* that they intend to govern from the center, at least racially. And the Democratic Party of Clinton/Gore appeals by trying to appear less beholden to racial minorities, publicly distancing themselves from racially based policies (e.g., the 1992 version of Bill Clinton taking pains to distance himself from African Americans by dissing Sister Souljah and Jesse Jackson), in an effort to send a signal of reassurance to the *white working class and suburbanites* that they intend to govern from the center, at least racially, even as a prominent liberal segment of their party remains the only political bloc remotely interested in racially based solutions.

But if the Democrats bend too far toward conservative whites, they will lose the enthusiasm of racial minorities that handed Al Gore 30 percent of his overall vote. And if the Democrats are too vocal or visible in pushing race-based policies, they will alienate even more of the white swing vote. This is a real puzzle for the Democrats; it appears that for the time being they will have a hard time appealing to both racial minorities *and* white swing voters. No matter how hard they try, their national party and candidates cannot straddle that line and not suffer electorally.

Even on the municipal level this dynamic raises problems for Democratic candidates, as was evident in the 2001 New York City mayoral race. The Democratic candidate, Mark Green, could not rally Democratic Hispanic voters after attacking their candidate Fernando Ferrer in the Democratic primary. Consequently, Green ended up blowing his lead and losing to a moderate Republican millionaire businessman, Michael Bloomberg.

The Republicans, on the other hand, are caught in a similar dilemma. They have been the obvious beneficiaries of the white vote migration since the Nixon presidency, particularly among white men. Yet in the longer term, facing an exploding racial demographic, the GOP has painted itself into a corner. At this point no amount of "compassionate conservatism" can easily erase the ghoulish site of Pat Buchanan at the podium during the 1992 Republican National Convention, nor the race-baiting rhetoric and policy of the Reagan-Bush-Gingrich era, nor the mean-spirited rollback policies of California's Republican Gov. Pete Wilson in the 1990s. Most racial minorities, both their leaders and their voters, can recognize the difference between a con job and a sincere effort at coalitionbuilding. Certainly the racially polarized 2000 presidential election results indicate that the GOP has a long way to go in order to attract votes from the most rapidly expanding demographic in the nation—Latinos and, to a lesser extent, Asians.

Longer term, the shifting racial demographic can only hurt the Republican Party nationally, as it has in California, if their efforts at outreach to racial minorities don't go beyond symbolic overtures to actual substantive policy But if they move too far in that direction, become too cloying or pandering with their "compassion," it will snap back on them in the form of Buchanan's "peasant army" abandoning them like Buchanan did. For perhaps the next ten years or so, the Republican Party as the incumbents perhaps will retain a leg up; but on the order of fifteen to twenty-five years, as the Latinoization of the United States proceeds in full swing, the GOP will be faced with the burden of its past and the dilemma of its future: whether to embrace racial minorities at the risk of alienating its base of white, racially conservative supporters. At that point, we may see the rumblings of another George Wallace–type party emerge, challenging the GOP for the white working class vote.

Thus, the two parties are pinned and wriggling between the twin horns of their Winner Take All dilemma. Given the regional splits and the shifting racial demographic, and with the two sides roughly tied nationally in terms of voters' sympathies, national politics is likely to careen for some time from bumper to bumper like a frenetic pinball. As each side bunkers down in their foxholes of Bushlandia and New Goreia, calculating ways to triangulate into pockets of white swing voters, cross-partisanship and cross-fertilization of ideas have become increasingly difficult (except in campaign rhetoric around election time or when rallying around the flag following the September 11 attacks).

Curiously, most assessments of the future of Red and Blue America have concluded that the national divide, while evident in numerous polls and measures, is not all that deep or wide; that it is most vociferous in talk radio blather and during moments of crisis like UnElection 2000, but it soon subsides and life goes

on. Author David Brooks wrote not long after September 11 in the pages of the liberal *Atlantic Monthly,* "although there are some real differences …there is no fundamental conflict. There may be cracks, but there is no chasm." Political journalist Michael Barone, opining in the conservative *National Journal,* concluded similarly, stating, "the two Americas face no revolution …. The two nations with the different faiths will continue to live together, mostly peaceably…often seeming to spin out of control, but ultimately stable—as two nations united by the politics that seems to divide us." Gertrude Himmelfarb in her book *One Nation, Two Cultures* and Alan Wolfe in his *One Nation, After All* arrived at approximately the same horizon.[54]

But there were two missing elements in their crystal ball gazing. For the most part, they limited their exegetic journey down the blue highways of the American divide to the axes of religion/morality or class. The question of race was given surprisingly little attention in their contemplations, despite its tide of influence stretching all the way back to Nixon's Southern strategy and beyond.

Moreover, these authors and others completely failed to gauge the prototypal impact of our Winner Take All political system, and how its zero-sum "If I win, you lose" dynamic exaggerates existing tensions and polarization. Only one side can win in a winner take all system, and under the helter-skelter imperatives of trying to win elections and legislative majorities under Winner Take All and the carving up of the political map into single-seat partisan fiefdoms, the two parties have ceased being vehicles for articulating a national course of fairness, equilibrium, or national unity. With the two parties effectively acting as proxies on geographic region, culture, and race, representing one side or the other of the divide, and with the Winner Take All calculations a tricky zero-sum game incapable of letting the steam off these mounting pressures, the racially conservative white vote and the multiracial burgeoning of our population are on a collision course.

CHAPTER TWO
Ex Uno Plures
"One System, Two Nations"

UnElection 2000: Paralysis in the Presidency

But the static of UnElection 2000 that hissed in the territories of Bushlandia and New Goreia was just a sideshow for the main event. In the state of Florida, stranger things occurred, courtesy of not only voting machines, but also our Winner Take All voting system.

Recall the taxonomy, so strange and exotic-sounding: Pregnant chad. Butterfly ballots. Dimpled punch cards. Votomatics. The new vernacular and vocabulary will no doubt redound in the national consciousness, history books, and TV game shows for years to come. Glued to our television sets, radios, and Web news pages, we watched the American republic spasming in crisis, as a presidential race hung in the balance in Florida. Ballot after ballot, lawsuit after lawsuit, the nation braced and we held our collective breath, as we lived through another breathlessly historical presidential moment.

The memory of the impeachment trial, which had carved a valley of shadow down the middle of the American soul, still throbbed in the not-so-distant-past. The ghosts of two expunged House Speakers, of relentless congressional investigations unmasked as political muggings, of "drive-by" confirmation hearings —all in all an unsettling decade of partisan civil war that the nation had wished to lay to rest—suddenly was stomping again around the national stage, refusing to the. We wondered if our political institutions, and some sense of our national comity, would survive intact. These kinds of thing aren't supposed to happen here, not to the American democratic paragon, not to the lone remaining superpower, not at this time with the nation enjoying its longest economic expansion in history. What had gone wrong?

The events in Florida were like a national Rorschach test—held up to the national gaze, a person could see anything she or he wanted to see. If you wanted to see Vice President Gore winning, you focused on 19,000 spoiled butterfly ballots in Palm Beach County, on antiquated punch card voting machines in Miami-Dade County that failed to count another 10,000 ballots, or on the fact that Gore won over 500, 000 more votes nationwide than George W.Bush. If you wanted Bush to win, you focused on the vagaries of chad and the partisan leanings of Democratic Party

county commissioners, holding disputed ballots to the divining light, searching for dispensation for their candidate. Despite being the world's lone remaining superpower, and the most technologically advanced nation in the history of the world, we were not up to the simple task of counting the ballots in our presidential election.[1] Bewilderingly, even after George W.Bush was declared the forty-third president, thousands of Florida ballots still sat in piles across the state, having never been tallied because the antiquated Votomatic punch card machines, for one reason or another, could not count them. The tragedy was that, as every pair of eyes quickly surmised, there could be no quick or clean resolution for partisans so bitterly at war.

The rest of the world watched our dilemma with utter and sardonic amusement. U.S. representatives and our proxies had poked our self-righteous noses into the electoral affairs of numerous nations with the sanctimony of Saint Peter at the Gates. But now the world was having a good laugh at our expense. "America today is a laughing stock," wrote the British tabloid *Mirror*. One British *Guardian* article included a reference to Stalin's famous quip that "it's not who votes that counts, but who counts the votes." The German daily *Die Welt* called the UnElection a "macabre spectacle." In a case of the sanctimonious shoe being on the other foot, the democratically flat-footed Italians, whose collapsing governments frequently have been the target of sneering missives from the *New York Times* and its syndicators, marked the occasion by lampooning us, Rome's daily newspaper *La Repubblica* leading with "A Day as a Banana Republic." American electoral turmoil gave the Chinese Foreign Ministry an unaccustomed glow of moral authority, as a spokesman pronounced, "Every country must decide which election method it should use according to local conditions." Mexicans drew eerie comparisons between Gov. Jeb Bush, the brother of the presidential nominee, and Raul Salinas, the brother of former Mexican President Carlos Salinas, who probably had stolen the 1988 Mexican election for his brother after a government-run computer system tallying the vote suspiciously crashed when early results showed the opposition candidate ahead.[2]

But truth be told, it wasn't only voting machine error, recount administration, screw-ups over ballot design, and ultimately a legally embarrassing Supreme Court decision that determined our forty-third president. So did the defects of the Winner Take All method we used for *electing* the president. For instance, as everyone knows, neither George W.Bush nor Al Gore won a majority (more than 50 percent) of popular votes across the nation; and as Gore supporters have pointed out endlessly, Gore ended up with more popular votes than the crowned winner, Bush. Yet if either the states of Florida or New Hampshire had required the winner of their state's electoral votes to win a popular majority—"majority rule," after all—and had used a two-round runoff(like that used in most Southern states for all nonpresidential elections or in France for its presidential election) or a ranked-ballot system known as instant runoff voting (used to elect the president of Ireland and the mayor of London)[3] to elect a majority winner, we probably would have a different president right now. Al Gore would have picked up enough "runoff" support from

100,000 Ralph Nader voters to surpass George W.Bush in Florida and perhaps New Hampshire for the popular and electoral college vote tally. More importantly, one candidate would have crossed the magic "majority" victory threshold, and we would have avoided the five-week Florida debacle and a presidency now tarnished by charges of illegitimacy.

Or, if we had used a "majority rules" provision in all fifty states, requiring a two-round runoff or instant runoff in each state so that the winner of each state's electors was favored by a popular majority, Al Gore likely would be president. Or, if we had used a national direct election of the president with a "majority rules" requirement for a national runoff (requiring a second election) or instant runoff (not requiring a second election) to reach the magic majority threshold, most likely Al Gore would be president, having picked up enough second-choice, "lesser of two evils" support from the nearly 3 million Nader voters to surpass the majority threshold.

But if we had used a direct national election of the president without a majority requirement, it is difficult to say which candidate would have won. The candidates would have campaigned differently nationwide, and the support for third-party candidates like Ralph Nader and Pat Buchanan was enough of a wildcard "spoiler" factor that their impact would have been impossible to predict. If each state had used a method of allocating electors by congressional district, such that a presidential candidate picked up an electoral vote for each congressional district won, allowing a state to split their electoral vote among competing candidates—like the states of Maine and Nebraska do now, which in the aftermath of Florida has been proposed in several states—George W.Bush would have won the presidency by an even wider margin in the Electoral College than with the current method. Bush won more congressional districts across the country, even though he had fewer national popular votes than Gore, due to the vagaries and distortions of single-seat districts created during the redistricting process.

Or, if each state had used what is known as a "proportional allocation" of electors, meaning that whatever percentage of the popular vote a candidate wins in a particular state they win the same corresponding percentage of electoral votes for that state, it is very possible that we would have a different president right now. With a proportional allocation, for example, if in California Gore had won 60 percent of the popular vote and Bush 40 percent, Gore would have won 60 percent —thirty-two—of California's fifty-four electoral votes, and Bush would have won twenty-two; in Florida, both candidates would have won about half of the state's electoral votes, matching their percentages of the popular vote (interestingly, both the Democratic and Republican parties use such a method for their presidential primaries, the Democrats in all states and the GOP for about one-third of the states).[4] In many respects, that would have been the method that comes closest to guaranteeing "majority rule" and better ensures that the Electoral College vote matches the national popular vote.[5]

What should be obvious from this exercise is that the exact *method* we used to elect our president in 2000—in addition to voting machine malfunction, election

administration screw ups, and a bushwhacking Supreme Court—elected our forty-third president. You can take the same votes and count them using different voting methods and end up with completely different results. Summarizing, if we had used any kind of "majority rules" system, Al Gore probably would have won the presidential election because the "liberal/left-of-center" vote split itself between Gore and Nader. Together, they had a majority of the popular vote, more than all conservative/right-of-center candidates combined, including Bush and Pat Buchanan. In fact, their combined vote of 51.1 percent was the highest center-left total since Lyndon Johnson's 1964 landslide. With a split in the liberal/left-of-center support, Nader swiped enough votes that would in all likelihood have gone to Gore, allowing George W.Bush to eke out a slim victory in Florida and New Hampshire, and ultimately in the Electoral College. Thus, amid great controversy, Bush won the presidency with less than a majority of the popular vote and fewer national votes than Al Gore.

It didn't need to happen that way. We didn't need to end up as an international laughingstock. It is deeply ironic: we can send a man to the moon and map the human genome, yet we cannot adopt a method of electing our president that allows multiple candidates to run and guarantees that the winner will have support from a popular majority. That is ludicrous, a reflection of our lack of inventiveness and our clinging to outdated, outmoded methods. This is not rocket science, yet just like in the realm of voting *machines,* our eighteenth-century voting *system* is hopelessly backward compared to many other democratic nations. In democracies like France, Ireland, Australia, and to a lesser extent Great Britain, which tend to use either a two-round runoff or "instant" runoff to elect majority winners for offices like president, mayor, or district representatives, such an outcome as the UnElection 2000 is unthinkable, laughable even.

Allocation of electoral votes, whether by congressional district, proportional allocation, Winner Take All, or "majority rules by state," can be decided on a state-by-state basis without any changes to the U.S. Constitution. Only a proposal to abolish the Electoral College entirely would require a constitutional amendment; as the cases of Maine and Nebraska show, states are free to decide for themselves how to allocate their electoral votes. The fact is, the specific *method* we use for the Electoral College in forty-eight states, called "Winner Take All plurality by state"—*not* simply the Electoral College itself—produced a president with a minority of popular votes and fewer popular votes than his main opponent.

In the aftermath of the presidential election, particularly following the national outcry and mobilization following the September 11 attacks, that distortion seems to have been swallowed and digested by the media and most of the public, albeit like a chicken bone and not easily. Unfortunately, there were other troubling aspects of the 2000 presidential election related to our Winner Take All method that have not been as widely recognized or reported.