A Case Study in Multidisciplinary Realignment Theory

A conceptual-historical analysis of 'government' from the New Deal to the Reagan-realignment

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Preface

Political theory explains that which has been, and theorizes that which is. But its' holy grail would most certainly be to predict what is coming, to provide beyond a reasonable doubt a prediction of what will happen, that politicians could act upon the future, rather than the present. In its own history, this holy grail was temporarily reached in the American political theory of realigning elections, during the 1950´s and 1960´s. This theory had mathematically established a pattern in voting behavior, which recurred once every 32 to 36 years. A comfortable thought at the very least, as both Democrats and Republicans could count on this pattern. But alas, the pattern found in the 1950´s, based on four previous examples of realignments, proved to be false. The 1960´s, by its logic, should have shown a realignment, as it was 32 or 36 years after the last realigning election of 1932. It did not. Instead, it showed an electorate increasingly disinterested with politics, *de*aligning rather than *re*aligning itself. The theory appeared dead, although this did not stop political theorists from attempting to prove its worth within its own theoretical framework. But what if this framework was too narrow, too mathematical? What if it could reestablish its worth by broadening itself through a multidisciplinary approach? In this thesis, we aim to find out if this is possible, by using a case study of a multidisciplinary approach; a study of the evolution of Presidential rhetorical explanation of its fundamental self, government.

It was only recently that the United States, and in its trail the world at large, was electrified by the words of a Presidential candidate. There is little doubt that the already legendary campaign speeches of President Barack Obama have greatly contributed to his eventual rise to the highest political office in the world. "Yes we can" proved to be the necessary call to arms for so many Americans. These words seemed to have an almost magical quality to them, as they seemed to restore confidence within the American people. Obama's words remind us of the importance of rhetoric, of persuasion through words, in the electoral process. But this is not one-way traffic. It is not just the people that are influenced by rhetoric, it is also rhetoric which is influenced by the people. By studying this intricate and reciprocal bond between Presidential rhetoric and the people, we hope to find a different dimension to that which the theory of electoral realignment studies; fundamental changes within the electorate.

Before you lies not merely the fruit of my intellectual labor, but also the product of procrastination. I dare not claim the usefulness of this latter concept, as I have come to see over time that it holds absolutely no intrinsic value of its own. But it must be said that it is precisely because of this procrastination that this work came to be. Had I not taken a leave of absence at many instances during my studies, I would not have come to love the workings of rhetoric and politics in the manner I do now. It is because of my work in the Dutch Lower House of Parliament, itself a procrastination of my studies, that I chose to focus on the intricate bond of political reality and language.

I am indebted to many people for finishing the work which now lays before you. First and most important of all, I am grateful to Halbe Zijlstra and Damian Pargas. Both have greatly contributed to my knowledge and understanding of the material under scrutiny here. In my three years working for Halbe Zijlstra in the Lower House of Parliament, I have learned all that he could teach me about the inner workings of politics. Not only in this regard, but for the rest of my life, I shall be indebted to him for teaching me what I know now.

During my masters in American History, I have had the luxury of taking two classes with Damian Pargas. A young and energetic teacher, he instilled in me the will to learn more about American History than the curriculum demanded. I shall greatly enjoy that will to learn more about American history and politics in the future. Also, in being incredibly patient, he allowed me to finish my work against the background of an oft too difficult juggling act of work and thesis.

I would also like to thank Robert Tan, for his many useful comments and words of encouragement. Gentle in the beginning, harsh at the end; it was always precisely what I needed to hear. Nina Dorigo for the many years she patiently endured my juggling act of work and study and Lotte van Lidth de Jeude, my sister, who never got tired of finding me sleeping on her couch after a day´s work, and Coos Takkenberg, my good friend, who always answered the call for necessary leisure time during the writing process.

A final word of thanks to my brother, Joshua Livestro. I think it is well established that without him, for better or worse, I would not be the person I am today.

Chapter one - Introduction

"Instinctively we recognized a deeper need—the need to find through government the instrument of our united purpose to solve for the individual the ever-rising problems of a complex civilization."[1]

- Franklin Delano Roosevelt - 1937

"In this present crisis, government is not the solution to our problem. Government is the problem."[2]

- Ronald Reagan - 1981

In the wake of possibly the worst financial crisis the world has ever known, president Franklin Delano Roosevelt elevated the executive power of the American presidency to unprecedented heights. Whether part of his own preconceived ideals about the way society should be governed or merely his reaction in dealing with the crisis, the simple fact is that Roosevelt's presidency gave a new meaning to the word *government*. His New Deal coalition brought together an America previously weary of centralized power, "to find, through government, the instrument of [their] united purpose".

A mere forty years later, in 1981, Roosevelt's successor Ronald Reagan would declare from the steps of the western front of the Capitol that he was everything but the unification of American purpose. In Reagan's view, his was the job most dangerous to the prosperity of the nation: "Government is not the solution to our problem. Government is the problem." What had happened in those forty years? Did the nature of both crises differ so much that government truly had a radically different role in both of them? Or is there some other explanation, perhaps stowed away in those forty years of political history; in the gaps between the generations; in the evolution of sexual and civil morale; in the changing of common values?

This work attempts to explain the radical transition from Roosevelt's positive concept of 'government' as an instrument of united purpose to Reagan's negative concept of 'government' as a problem, set against the background of the political and social transitions of this era. In doing so, it shall lay bare the dynamic bond between the evolution of the concept

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[1] The American Presidency Project, "Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Inaugural Address, 1937", University of California http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=14473#axzz1P3fuUd6g (accessed May 16, 2011)
[2] The American Presidency Project, "Ronald Reagan, Inaugural Address 1981", University of California http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=43130#axzz1P3fuUd6g (accessed May 16, 2011)

of 'government' and social transitions. In terms of this dynamic bond, the ultimate conclusion of changes within this bond is what political historians call an electoral realignment; the long lasting change in political interests in a large part of the electorate. Political historians view Reagan's election as the last major electoral realignment. As such, it is one of only five such American realignments of the electorate; Jacksonian democrats, Lincoln republicans, McKinley republicans, New Deal democrats and, finally, the Conservative Republican Majority.[3] In order to understand what this research may add to the theories of realignment, one must first understand what these theories deal with.

1.1 Three theories of realignment

As a field of social studies, (modern) political science saw its acme of theory-development in the post-war era.[4] One of many theories developed in the three decades after the Second World war was that of electoral realignment. Of the works published on the subject after the 1970's, none can be said to have truly added an aspect to the theory of *realignment* itself. They all build on or combine one or more aspects of the three main theories developed between the 1950's and the 1970's.[5]

The first scholar to discuss electoral realignment was V.O. Key, a Harvard professor in political sciences during the post-war era. In his groundbreaking 1955 article *A theory of critical elections* he sought to describe prior changes in the American political landscape with help of statistics on voting behavior.[6] Key sees critical elections as "a category of elections in which voters are, at least from impressionistic evidence, unusually deeply concerned, in which the extent of electoral involvement is relatively quite high, and in which the decisive results of the voting reveal a sharp alteration of the pre-existing cleavage within the electorate."[7] According to Key, "the realignment made manifest in the voting in such elections seems to persist for several succeeding elections."[8] Key thus sees an electoral realignment as the outcome of a particular – realigning – election which has a lasting effect on future elections.[9]

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[3] John B. Judis and Ruy Teixera, *The Emerging Democratic Majority* (New York, Simon & Schutter, 2002), 14

[4] David R. Mayhew, *Electoral Realignments: A critique of an American Genre* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2002) , 1-6

[5] Ibid, 7-34

[6] V.O. Key, "A theory of Critical Elections" *The Journal of Politics* 17, no. 1 (1955), 3-18

[7] Ibid, 4

[8] Ibid

[9] Theodore Rosenof, *Realignment: the theory that changed the way we think about American politics* (Oxford, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003) 45-63, Mayhew, "A Critique" 11-15

The applicability of Key's theory of critical, or realigning, elections is limited by its focus. It aims to predict realignment through careful study of election results and voting behavior during past elections. Therefore, it can only predict realignment *after* its foundations – critical elections – have been laid and recognized in election data.[10] But there is another limitation to Key's model; it does not describe the societal changes which underlie the realignment. Key does not speak of the politics behind the vote.[11] He acknowledges the outcome of an election as a possible start of societal change, but only explains that possible change in terms of alteration of the future outcomes of the electoral process. The model therefore is not fit to analyze the causes of this change in electoral behavior.[12] It is clearly limited to descriptiveness, whereas, at least for political and electoral purposes, the ability to analyze societal processes and perhaps even be able to predict these would be the theory's ultimate aim. Key's model, for instance, could not have been able to predict the start of the conservative realignment during the Nixon-presidency, as a large part of Nixon's 'silent majority' got disenfranchised with politics in the wake Watergate. Although the electorate was unusually deeply *un*-concerned and the electoral involvement was relatively low in the wake of Watergate, this in no way means that the societal changes already in motion were put on hold. But Key would only have been able to analyze this shift in electoral behavior afterwards, when the effects of the silent majority became visible in the election of Ronald Reagan.

Key's lack of scrutiny of the politics behind the realignment is a flaw which cannot be found in another great work on electoral shifts; James L. Sundquist's *Dynamics of the Party System.[13]* In his textbook style work, Sundquist improves Key's method by meticulously working through the historical realigning periods and explaining these electoral shifts with help of relevant, major issues during these realigning periods. In the opposite views which exist in society on these issues, and in the alterations of these views, Sunquist finds his realigning electoral movement.[14] He thus improves Key's theory, but also repeats one of his mistakes, as he explains realignment as a process rooted in its own time rather than a consequential outcome of socio-cultural, socio-historical and socio-geographical factors *over*

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[10] Arthur C. Paulson, *Electoral Realignment and the Outlook for American Democracy* (Lebanon, Northeastern University Press, 2007) 6-26, Rosenof, "Realignment" 73-79

[11] Paulson, "Electoral Realignment" 30-36

[12] Ibid

[13] James L. Sundquist, *Dynamics of the Party System: Alignment and Realignment of Political Parties in the United States* (Washington D.C., The Brookings Institurion, 1983)

[14] Ibid, 1-19, Mayhew, "Electoral Realignments" 19-23

time.[15] After all, societal partition on current issues in itself does not hold any conclusions on lasting changes in electoral thinking, as a current event can temporarily influence the outcome of the election process in such a way that it may resemble a critical election. For instance, with some imagination, the 1968 election of Richard Nixon can be seen as such a non-critical election which might be viewed as critical in Sundquist's method.[16]

The shortcoming in Key's and Sundquist's attempts to a theory of realignment is apparent in the predictions of another, perhaps even more authoritative scholar, Kevin P. Phillips. If, in the field of realignment theories, Key's work was groundbreaking, Phillips' 1969 *The Emerging Republican Majority*[17] was positively earth shattering. Phillips successfully applied the empirical logic of Key's descriptive model of analysis of critical elections and improved the narrow socio-political model of Sunquist by making a socio-historical and socio-geographical analysis of American history and society.[18] He thereby created a model with which he could 'predict' the coming of a critical realignment.[19] "Now it is Richard Nixon's turn to build a new era on the immense middleclass impetus of Sun Belt and suburbia,"[20] Phillips concludes on the final page of his work. Was he wrong? Of course, the downfall of the Nixon administration in the wake of the Watergate scandal did not fit into his model. But even after the electorate had been deceived in such a straightforward way, the Democrats were only able to consolidate this temporary gain by getting a President elected by one of the narrowest margins in history.[21] The momentum of Phillips' realignment was not lost, as – as is now known – Reagan was able to build on its foundations a true conservative majority.

Phillips' predictive model is extensive in scope, as it needs to build on a thorough research of society at large. As its main aim is to be able to predict an upcoming electoral realignment, it needs to combine (semi-)critical election results with analysis of changes in socio-cultural and socio-political patterns. Phillips seeks the reason for the changing opinions of the electorate which Sundquist sees as the manifestation of electoral realignment. Phillips' model does so by describing socio-historical developments within a framework of socio-

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[15] Arthur C. Paulson, *Realignment and party revival: understanding American electoral politics at the turn of the twenty-first century* (Westport, Praeger Publishers, 2000) 24-36
[16] Paulson, "Realignment and party revival" 96-110
[17] Kevin P. Phillips, *The Emerging Republican Majority* (New York, 1969)
[18] Paulson, "Realignment and party revival" 112-120 and Mayhew "A critique" 30-34
[19] Ibid
[20] Philips, 474
[21] Patrick Anderson, *Electing Jimmy Carter: The Campaign of 1974* (Louisiana State University Press, 1994) 138-141

geographical patterns.[22] His choice of subdivision of chapters is indicative both of his method and the way he sees the electoral landscape, as he divides his work into four parts: 'The Northeast', 'The South', 'The Heartland' and 'The Pacific States'. After this analysis Phillips deems himself able to describe 'The Future of American Politics'. Although the apparent worth of Phillips' model is evident, it has its flaws.

The first and most obvious flaw is that, although a true objective predictive model would be the holy grail of political research, Phillips' model is in essence anything but that. The New York Times described his work aptly as "the campaign agenda for the second Nixon coming".[23] Phillips was an outspoken Republican who had a clear interest in a Republican majority. Although his work is scientific in nature and method, it is highly colored by partisanship and should be read as such.[24] Another well-known use of the Phillips model, the parodied near-namesake *The Emerging Democratic Majority* by John B. Judis and Ruy Tuxeira, is guilty of this same shortcoming.[25] Second, the model is too comprehensive, which makes it nearly impossible for one single author to make useful, scientific predictions based on his or her own research.[26] Third and final, the Phillips model has a scientific limitation of a more personal nature, in that it can only be used properly when an electoral realignment is truly forthcoming. This model therefore – as it always remains a gamble – will not be used lightly by any political scientist.[27] After all, in predicting an upcoming social or political event, the reputation of the scientist is at stake. Because of these flaws, the model is seldom used and when used the outcome is only partly of any scientific value.

Although Phillips' model is fundamentally flawed, it adds a very important aspect to the theory of realignment. Phillips´ greatest addition is the aspect of thorough historical analyses to the theory.[28] It focuses on change in society at large, rather than on changes of political opinion within groups in that society. He thereby avoids the narrow perspective Sandquist uses by merely describing electoral oppositeness on major issues. Phillips focuses on the larger and more continuous sentiments which underlie the opposite viewpoints on these major issues. Therefore, even though his method is little used and is viewed as a Republican manifesto much more than as a work of science, his theory is of great importance to the works of other, more 'objective' scientists that followed him. His viewpoint on electoral

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[22] Theodore Rosenof, "Realignment" 147-155, Mayhew "A critique" 30-34
[23] *New York Times*, "The Emerging Republican Majority", September 21, 1969
[24] Rosenof, "Realignment" 147-155
[25] Both Judis and Teixeira are prominent Democratic political operatives, who have worked on several Democratic campaigns.
[26] Rosenof, "Realignment" 147-155
[27] Ibid
[28] Paulson, "Electoral Realignment" 23-26

realignments, that they are a consequence of changes in larger and more continuous sentiments within society, has become a critical part of the modus operandi for most political scientist studying electoral realignments.

1.2 The concept of periodicity and its fundamental problem

All theories of realignment, including the many interpretations which build upon one or more of the above mentioned three, have one important thing in common. They all see a certain degree of periodicity in the process of realignment, meaning that the electorate realigns their party preferences every so many years. The study of data sets of previous elections had shown that voter behavior followed a certain pattern, largely in line with the generation gap.[29] The process, therefore, can be said to be cyclical.[30] Based on what realignment theorists saw as the realignments in American history, most argued that the process had a cycle of approximately 36 years.[31] Some, however, adhered to a wider cycle of 60 years, pointing towards the longer periods Democratic and Republican hegemonies prior to 1932.[32] But all proponents of the theory of realignment agreed that there existed a certain pattern in historical realignments.

Although the models of Key and Sundquist are inherently a posteriori descriptive, this aspect of periodicity adds to their models a degree of predictiveness. After all, when a posteriori descriptive theories have established beyond a reasonable doubt that a realignment had occurred, it should, by the logic of periodicity, be possible to predict roughly when the next realignment could establish itself.[33] It is precisely this supposed periodicity which made the theories so valuable to political science.[34] Predicting changes in voter behavior decades before they occurred could provide the means to prevent or curb these changes by actively playing into them. This is essentially what Phillips aimed to do with his model, by studying the undercurrent of society and hoping to find – and Phillips was convinced he had found – signs of realignment movements within the electorate.

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[29]Everett Carll Ladd, "Like Waiting for Godot: The Uselessness of 'Realignment' for Understanding Change in Contemporary American Politics" in: " in: *The end of Realignment?: interpreting American electoral eras,* ed. Byron E. Schafer, 31-37, Paulson, "Electoral Realignment" 13-14 and Mayhew, "A Critique" 20-24
[30] Ibid
[31] Paulson, "Electoral Realignment" 13-14
[32] Byron E. Schafer "The Notion of an Electoral Order: The Structure of Electoral Politics at the Accession of George Bush" in: *The end of Realignment?: interpreting American electoral eras,* ed. Byron E. Schafer, 40-42 (London, University of Wisconsin Press, 1991)
[33] Ladd, "Like Waiting for Godot" 31-37, Paulson, "Electoral Realignment" 13-14 and Mayhew, "A Critique" 20-24
[34] Paulson, "Electoral Realignment" 15 and Mayhew, "A Critique" 20-24

This concept of periodicity made the theories of realignment extremely vulnerable, because they could easily be falsified by reality, without the theory itself being able to explain why.[35] Essentially a study of electoral outcome, in the sense that a realignment could only be established through the study of these data sets, the theories were not of themselves able to explain why a realignment did *not* occur. It could only explain why it did.[36] To explain why it did not occur would mean to study social patterns and political thought, rather than electoral outcomes.[37] When, during the sixties, the next realignment should have occurred according to the logic of a 36 years cycle, the theory was tested to the brink of destruction. Theorists could not find a definite realignment of the electorate in election data.[38] Realignment theory was faced with a problem: the election data of the 1960's showed strong fluctuations in electoral partisan preference, which could not be explained within the traditional theory of periodicity.[39] A large proportion of the electorate seemed to have abandoned their fixed party preference in favor a nonaligned stance. The swing vote had established itself as a critical voter block.[40] The solution was found in the adaptation of the theory of realignment with help of the introduction of a multidisciplinary focus; the theory of dealignment.

1.3 Dealignment as the possible end to realignment theories

During and after the 1960's, the theory of realignment was posed with an insurmountable problem; there had been no realigning movement during this period, and during the 1970's it looked as though there would come none.[41] This does not mean that there were no major electoral reshuffles during this era. Rather, the 1960's and 1970's had been decades of constant electoral reshuffling.[42] But this movement did not constitute the traditional pattern of a realignment of a part of the electorate. Large blocks of voters appeared to be switching back and forth between the Democratic and Republican Parties. In 1964, for instance, Republican candidate Barry Goldwater lost to incumbent Johnson by an incredible margin of over 22 percent, but did win precisely those states which historically speaking were fiercely

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[35] Mayhew, "A Critique" 20-24
[36] Ibid
[37] Ladd, "Like Waiting for Godot" 31-37
[38] Martin P. Wattenberg "From a Partisan to a Candidate-centred Electorate" in: *The New American political system,* ed. Anthony King (Washington, The AEI Press, 1990) 145-151
[39] Ibid
[40] Ibid, 151-154 and 171-174
[41] David G. Lawrence, *The Collapse of the Democratic Presidential Majoricy: Realignment, Dealignment and Electoral Change from Franklin Roosevelt to Bill Clinton* (Boulder, Westview Press, 1997) 21-34
[42] Earl Black and Merle Black, *The rise of southern Republican* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2003) 32-36

Democratic, the deep southern states. But this did not constitute a permanent shift from the South to the Republican party, as four years later these states would vote for the Democratic independent candidate, George Wallace. The 1972 election was altogether different, as this time the landslide proportion victory went to incumbent President Nixon, who won all but one state. To make matters even worse for the realignment theorists, 1976 saw a return to a more traditional division of the electorate, in which all southern states, peripheral and deep, went to the Democratic candidate.[43]

Realignment theory was at a loss. It could not find a definite and lasting shift away from one party to the other. It rendered the theory almost useless, as it lost its predictive capacity and was reduced to traditional explanatory analyses of separate elections. There was no apparent connection between the separate elections to be found within the traditional framework of the theory.[44] The theory needed to be expanded to an analyses of voter behavior in general, outside the traditional partisan scope, to make sense of this electoral ping-pong movement. The theory of dealignment would prove to be the solution to this problem.

Dealignment theory added to the ´traditional´ theory of realignment the simple but crucial possibility of non-partisanship.[45] By allowing for the possibility of a realignment from a partisan-committed to a non-committed electorate, the theory of realignment could be partially restored. The electoral movements during the 1960's and 1970's were explained as a dealignment of the electorate. Voters, at least a substantial part of them, no longer associated with any party, thus did not realign their preference to another party, but only dealigned away from their old fixed preference. This addition of dealignment to the theory also allowed for the aspect of periodicity to be restored, as the dealignment movement coincided with the predicted realignment based on the cycle of 32 to 36 years. After all, the dealignment occurred 32 to 36 years after the previous realignment in 1932.[46] This partial restoration of the value of the theory of realignment, and its aspect of periodicity, made further study of the theory acceptable.[47] But the theories of realignment were not free from attack, especially after having to resort to the desperate measure of seeking a solution to its own shortcomings outside of itself, in the addition of dealignment.

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[43] Lawrence, "The collapse" 92-123
[44] Ibid, 131-134
[45] Helmut Norpoth and Jerrold G. Rusk, "Partisan dealignment in the American electorate: itemizing the deductions since 1964" *The American Political Science Review* 76, no. 3 (1982): 527-231
[46] Ibid, 535-538
[47] Lawrence, "The collapse" 211-234

1.4 Critique

With the continued use of the model also came its critique. One of its most recent and influential critics is David Mayhew.[48] Although Mayhew thought the study of realignments was "one of the most creative, engaging, and influential intellectual enterprises undertaken by American political scientists during the last half century"[49], he essentially saw no use in the model. "What has it added to the discipline [of political science]? What would we be thinking about American electoral history otherwise? What did we think before the realignments genre came along? It has always been obvious that some elections have surpassed others in engaging voters […] It is reasonable to ask, what has the realignments genre fruitfully added beyond these baselines?"[50] Mayhew asked himself. He concludes: "The claims of the realignments genre do not hold up well, and the genre's illuminative power has not proven to be great. At an analytical level, the genre has proven vulnerable to at least three counterposing ideas: contingency, strategy and valence issues."[51]

To all intends and purposes, Mayhew was right. Contingency is difficult to encompass in a theoretical model meant to ascribe certain permanent qualities to electoral changes based on the empirical study of electoral outcome. The contingent event or its effect may last longer than the empirical model can uncover, which would put it at risk of ascribing strong fluctuations in voting behavior to a realignment, whereas in reality it was nothing more than a temporary shift due to current events. The strongest point in case here, which has been mistaken for a realignment by some, has been the temporarily realigning fluctuations in voting behavior during the heyday of the civil rights struggle and the war in Vietnam, during the 1960's.[52] Political historians are in agreement that these did not constitute realigning elections, but only reflected the strong public discontent with civil rights legislation and the war in Vietnam – either because it went too far, or not go far enough.[53]

The effects of political strategy also provide an almost insurmountable difficulty for realignment theories. After all, they aim to predict lasting changes in voter preferences through a study of the outcome of elections, in order to be able to make statements on these preferences. The problem is, political strategists may deliberately focus on parts of the

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[48] Helmut Norpoth and Jerrold G. Rusk, "Electoral myth and reality: Realignments in American politics" *Electoral Studies* 26 (2007) 392-393
[49] David R. Mayhew, "Electoral Realignments" *Annual Review of Political Science,* no. 3 (2000): 449
[50] Mayhew, "Electoral Realignments" 457
[51] Ibid, 471
[52] Paulson, "Realignment and party revival" 96-110, Mayhew, "A Critique" 56-58
[53] Ibid

electorate which ´belong´ to their partisan opponents during a campaign in various ways.[54] If this strategy is effective, it results in a shift in voting patterns, but not necessarily in a change in preferences within the voter. The empirical model does not account for this possibility.

The third and final problem Mayhew sees is the problem of what psychology calls the valence effect, what may be called wishful thinking. The electorate, or a substantial part of it, may very well base their vote solely on the idea that a certain party or candidate will do better in office than their opponent, but not based on any preference or political idea. In recent history, some historians have ascribed the victory of Barack Obama to this valence effect, claiming that the electorate was influenced by the positive message of 'hope' and 'change'.[55] The theory of realignment could mistakenly explain the election outcome as a permanent change in voter preference.[56]

Mayhew mentions a fourth problem in his more comprehensive critique, "Electoral Realignment, a critique of an American genre", namely that all three counterposing ideas can coexist.[57] Political strategists may actively seek contingencies to influence voter behavior, just as well as they may try to create a valence effect. In their turn, a contingent event may cause a valence effect. A possible example of this coexistence may be found in the Iranian hostage crisis at the end of Carter's Presidency. Historians to date debate what the effect has been in terms of a valence effect beneficial to Reagan.[58] Some American voters may have changed their vote to Reagan, as he embodied the promise of tough action abroad when American lives were concerned, whereas Carter had proved unable to solve the crisis. Or to combine all counterposing ideas into one sentence: the Reagan campaign may have adapted their strategy to tap into this possible valence effect caused by the contingency of the hostage crisis.

Mayhew focuses his critique on the analytical value of the theory of realignment. The common denominator in his various points of critique may be found in the theories main limitation; its empirical focus on voter behavior. This problem underlies all three models of the theory. Where Mayhew leaves off, this thesis aims to take over. It shall not avoid the three counterposing ideas by essentially taking a side road from the empirical focus of the theories of realignment.

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[54] Mayhew, "A Critique" 74-81
[55] Ibid, 81-85
[56] Ohio State University, Harald D. Clarke et. al. *Yes we can! Valence politics and electoral choice in America, 2008* (paper published online: http://polisci.osu.edu/conferences/2008election/papers/Clarke.pdf , 2009)
[57] Mayhew, "A Critique", 94-103
[58] Andrew E. Busch, *Reagan's Victory: The presidential election of 1980 and the rise of the right* (Lawrence, University Press Kansas, 2005) 104-106

1.5 An awkward bias

The statistic descriptive model of Key, the issue based model of Sundquist and the broad predictive model of Phillips have two important things in common: First, they all aim to describe a change in society at large. Whether at the level of outcome of electoral processes, the changes in opinion or the deeper undercurrents of society, a realignment can only be said to be such when it constitutes a long-lasting societal change, or at least a change in a decisive part of that society.

The second commonality is more troublesome. As a method, electoral realignment in either of three theoretical frameworks is little used, mostly because it adds no real knowledge to the field of political science.[59] Critics of the method point to its lack of analytical value. The three methods are all limited to different levels of descriptiveness. There is an explanation for this lack of analytical value in the three theories of realignment. In general they tend to focus on the 'supply-side' of the electoral process; on the statistics and the social side of the theory and the *a posteriori* – after the realignment – influence these electoral shifts have on government – the 'demand side' of the electoral process. All three theories therefore do not take into account the possibility that the realigning process itself may have an *a priori* – during or before the realignment – effect on government and society. The current methods do not take into account that the intricate relationship between government and societal change in itself has an effect on the process of realignment.

This problem arises from a rather awkward bias which is implicit in the way all three theories are worked out; that government does not act according to the changes in society.[60] It is hard to imagine that this could actually be the case. Government would much more likely act upon changing societal patterns, in order to maintain popular support and thereby act according to the wishes of the body which provides their legitimacy: the people. The body of work which has to date been produced on electoral realignments could greatly benefit from a stronger focus on this 'demand side'. It is but an element of this, the way government deals with the realignment process, that shall be examined in this work in the form of a case study. However, much additional research into this side of electoral realignments is required, in order to form a more rounded model incorporating both ´supply´ and ´demand´ into a theory of realignment. Unfortunately, the scope of this work does not allow for a thorough examination of how such a theory might be conceived.

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[59] Mayhew "A Critique" 141-150
[60] Ibid

The core parts of all three methods of describing and analyzing electoral realignment shall be used intermittently: the statistical descriptive, the issue based descriptive and the broad predictive model. As this research aims to lay bare the relation between realignment patterns and the conceptual history of the use of the concept of 'government' by government itself, it shall sometimes be necessary to analyze the electoral outcome measured in polling data, according to Key's model, as well as the societal viewpoints on major issues and the currents which underlie possible changes. Thereby, it hopes to shed light on important questions: Does governmental rhetoric follow polls, or does it follow societal changes? Is it an instigator of societal change or is it the other way around? And perhaps most importantly, is it possible to predict realignments through analyzing governmental rhetoric, or its opposite, to predict changes in governmental rhetoric through analyzing realignments? In short: what, if any, is the causal relation between the conceptual history of governmental rhetorical mention of its own self – government – and the process of political realignment?

1.6 Why the rhetorical concept of 'government' makes for a case study

At first glance, Presidential rhetoric may seem like an odd choice for a case study into the possibilities of adding a demand side socio-political aspect to the theory of realignment. However, this is less so than in seems. In the reciprocal bond between people and politics, rhetoric is the main key for politicians to influence this bond.[61] To put it otherwise, what voting is to the electorate, its most direct form of influencing politics, rhetoric is to politicians, its most direct form of influencing the electorate. Contrary to policy, which focuses on the reality of politics through implementation of an ideological stance but can of itself have a negative effect on voter opinion, rhetoric is always aimed at convincing voters.[62] For instance, negative policy, such as severe cuts, must be explained in rhetoric, and will as rule be done so in terms most favourable to the electorate.[63] Therefore, the analyses of rhetoric may lay bare public sentiments as perceived by government at any given moment, but can certainly provide information on how the demand side of the realignment theory, government, tries to deal with

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[61] Martin J. Medhurst "From Retrospect to Prospect: The Study of Presidential Rhetoric, 1915-2005" in: *The prospect of presidential rhetoric,* ed. James Arnt Aune and Martin J. Medhurst, 9-11 (Texas A&M University Press, 2008)
[62] Ibid, 24
[63] Ibid, 25-26

and influence public sentiments. Focal point, choice of words, syntax, context, emphasis, style; all hold clues to the intentions of the rhetoric.[64]

The study of rhetoric itself has many different focal points: the relationship between policy and rhetoric; between voter preference and rhetoric, either explained in terms of elections or polls; between language and message; between crisis and rhetorical change, and of the use of concepts within rhetoric.[65] It is this latter field that shall be studied in this thesis. The use of concepts itself differs greatly over time. Presidents choose the use of their concepts carefully, aiming to fit the mood of their time.[66] When this mood is focused on 'freedom', one sees this concept frequently within Presidential rhetoric. When justice is required, be it social justice or punitive, Presidents encompasses this into their rhetoric.[67] Of course, this is not one way traffic. President's do not always merely react to the needs of their time, they may also aim to create needs through a focus on certain concepts within their rhetoric.[68] This causes problems for a comparative study of the use of one concept, because few concepts are used consistently over time. There is one exception, in the form of a concept which is used by all presidents, that of ´government´.

The concept of 'government' is perhaps the most essential rhetorical concept of all. Its substance denotes the ideological stance of the orator on what government should be and do, what should be its responsibilities, wherein its existence can be justified. And when studied in comparison to the substance of other Presidential concepts of ´government´, it provides information not only on the evolution of the concept itself, but also on the evolution of this ideological stance and the way this stance is 'sold' to the electorate, keeping in mind the necessity to fit the mood of the time. If studied over time, diachronically and synchronically, and in relation to changes within the society and the electorate, it should also be able to provide information on the relationship between changes in society and the electorate and the way Presidential ideological stance reacts on these changes, or perhaps how it precedes them.

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[64] Medhurst, "From retrospect" 27

[65] Theodore O. Windt, "Presidential Rhetoric: Definition of a Discipline of Study" in *Essays in Presidential Rhetoric,* ed. Theodore Windt and Beth Ingold, xv-xliii (Dubuque: Kendal/Hunt Publishers, 1987)

[66] David Green, *Shaping Political Consciousness: The Language of Politics in America from McKinley to Reagan* (Ithaca, 1987). 31-34

[67] Ibid, 39-45

[68] Ibid, 47-49

1.7 Choice of material

This thesis deliberately limits itself to two types of Presidential speeches; the State of the Union and Inaugural Addresses. This body of rhetorical work constitutes but a very small part of the available material. However, there is a reason for this choice of limited material.

In order to make statements about the relationship between the electorate and Presidential rhetoric, it is necessary to have a certain degree of reassurance that the rhetorical material had had an equal effect on both the electorate and the rhetoric over time. Speeches on, or held at contingent events, such as FDR´s fireside chats, Kennedy´s Berlin speech or Reagan´s Challenger address are extremely valuable in their own way, but pose problems when comparing them to each other. First of all, it is by no means clear that these speeches were heard by the same, reasonably homogenous part of the electorate. FDR's fireside chats, for instance, were only heard by those who owned a radio. Second, the contingency effect on the contents of these speeches is too high. Third, there is no continuity in the subjectmatter of these speeches.

State of the Union and Inaugural Addresses do adhere to these conditions. As they are both mandated by the constitution to be held at certain fixed occasions, they provide a continuity of time. Because of this continuity of time, both types of speeches follow a certain fixed pattern.[69] And finally, because both types of speeches are clearly meant for all Americans to hear, or read, there is a certain continuity in homogeneity of their public. It must be said that State of the Union and Inaugural Addresses are not free from change, except in terms of their constitutionally mandated fixed periodicity. However, within the body of Presidential rhetoric, these speeches provide the greatest means of comparison. This choice of material is used consistently in the course of this thesis. At certain points, therefore, Presidential speeches which have come to be well known in history, such as the above mentioned three, may be ´missed´ by the reader. Perhaps unfortunately, the omission of these well known speeches proved necessary for the comparative study over time to provide reliable results, uninfluenced by contingency.

As mentioned, this research aims to add to the discussion on electoral realignments an analysis of possible *a priori* effects realigning movements have on the demand side of the electoral process; government. As it chooses to narrow this effect down to one of its most

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[69] Medhurst, "From retrospect" 14-15

fundamental forms, the way government describes itself within the reciprocal bond between electorate and government, it is necessary to use a thorough linguistic-historical method which might lay bare these a priori effects. Because the focus lay solely on the changing contents of concepts, the theory of conceptual history, developed by German historian and linguistic philosopher Reinhard Kosseleck, provides the best means to do so. Koselleck developed a method in reaction to the linguistic turn, which made it possible to 'know' history through the careful diachronic and synchronic study of concepts. His theory, and those that exist in opposition to his, shall be discussed in chapter two.

Chapters three through five are the main body of this research. In these chapters, the evolution of the presidential rhetorical concept of 'government' in State of the Union and Inaugural speeches from the New Deal realignment to the Conservative Republican majority shall be explored. Finally, the conclusion aims to provide an overview of the most important aspects of the evolution of the concept of 'government' within the material discussed, as well as an answer to the question whether or not the evolution is synchronic to the process of electoral realignment and what this says about the theories of realignment.

Chapter two - Koselleck's theory of conceptual history

"*Die begriffsgeschichte hat die Konvergenz von Begriff und Geschichte zum Thema.*"[70]

Reinhart Koselleck's oeuvre spans the relationship between language as a means to describe events and structures on the one hand and historical reality on the other. The relationship between language and reality is such that it can never be fully comprehended by the historian.[71] *Begriffsgeschichte* attempts to create an understanding of this relationship. It does so by focusing on the relationship between historical concept and socio-political reality.

Kosellecks *Begriffsgeschichte* was initially inspired by a desire to criticize the unrefined use of concepts in historical analysis.[72] From this critique slowly but surely a new historiographic methodology evolved. This chapter deals with the basic elements of this methodology. The most important issue here is the way in which reality relates to language in concepts and counter-concepts. It is Kosselecks fundamental assumption that although words are *defined* by their definition, concepts can only be *interpreted*, because of their alteration through time. Concepts have different temporal layers and *Begriffsgeschichte* can best be seen as dealing with this aspect of the transience of temporality.

2.1 Method: Concepts and reality

By using both diachronic and synchronic approaches, *Begriffsgeschichte* can help the historian in dealing with structural and categorical continuity and change. Because it uses both methods, and thus already deals with for instance different meaning of one concept through time or different explanation of that concept in one frame of time, it shall also be necessary to use two linguistic instruments: semasiology, which is an analysis of different terms used to describe the same concept and its opposite; onomasiology, the analysis of different concepts which can be described by the same term.

These four instruments, diachronic and synchronic analyses, semasiology and onomasiology still do not provide the means for the historian to reconstruct the meaning of a concept at a given moment in time. We must accept that a concept always contains more or

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[70] Reinhard Koselleck et al, *Geschichliche Grundbegriffe* (Stuttgart, 1972), xxiii
[71] Ibid.
[72] Reinhard Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft, Zur semantik geschichtliche zeiten* (Frankfurt am Main, 1979), 115

less reality than analysis can lay bare. There will always be an aspect of reality which linguistic analysis will prove unable to capture in its entire reality.

Why this focus on concepts? Why are concepts reliable witnesses of history? It is Kosseleck's premise that "*die Geschichte sich in bestimmten Begriffen niederschlägt und überhaupt nur Geschichte ist, als sie jeweils begriffen wird.*"[73] This brings us to the central question of Kosseleck's work, "*ob die Differenzbestimmung zwischen Sprache und geschichtlicher Wirklichkeit grundsätzlicher zu fassen ist.*"[74] There are four ways in which to view this relationship. The first is to assume that language is merely an aspect of reality: "*Sprache kann grundsätzlich instrumental verstanden und in ihrer Funktion zu politischen Handlungsgruppen, sprachsoziologisch, untersucht werden. Sprache bleibt dann immer ein Epiphänomen der sogenannten Realgeschichte.*"[75] This is in essence a (neo-)Marxist concept of language. In this theory language is reduced to a function of developments in reality. The second way is the neo-Kantian perspective on language. One can distinguish between the language in which a period describes itself, the object-language, and the language a researcher uses to describe the events in the object-period he studies. The neo-Kantian perspective reduces language to a mere means for the researcher. Historical research is in no way compelled to accept the object-language. A third way would be to assume that every reality is in one way or another linguistic, that there is no reality outside of language. All three perspectives have their negative sides. The fourth and final perspective, that which Koselleck uses himself, is the idea that language and reality are in a reciprocal bond of influencing and being influenced by the other: "*Ich selber verwende für die Begriffsgeschichte den Doppelaspekt, daß Begriffsbildungen sowohl ein Faktor der geschichtlichen Bewegungen sind wie auch ein Indikator ebendieser Bewegungen. ... Immer bleibt die Wirklichkeit sprachlig vermittelt, was nicht ausschließt, daß es auch nichtsprachliche Konstitutionsbedingungen der Wirklichkeit gibt.*"[76]

A thorough understanding of the value of concepts as a source of historical information must begin with the study of the formation of concepts. Concepts originate in the necessity to reduce structural complexity to a linguistic level, for instance in political or social identity formation.[77] As mentioned, it is Koselleck's fundemental assumption that history contains itself in concepts. The historian must therefore aim for historical interpretation of

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[73] Koselleck, "Vergangene Zukunft," 85

[74] Reinhard Koselleck et.al. *Ancient Regime, Aufklarung und Revolution: Die Franzosische Revolution als Bruch des gesellschaftlichen Bewustseins* (Munchen, 1988), 224

[75] Ibid., 664

[76] Koselleck, "Franzosische Revolution," 664

[77] Koselleck, "Vergangene Zukunft," 212

these concepts. Koselleck distinguishes three different types of concepts, each with its own temporal aspect. First there are those concepts which have, since antiquity, not changed its meaning.[78] Second, there is a group of concepts that underwent a radical change in modern history, but that otherwise rarely change their meaning.[79] And third is the group of concepts of which the meaning can change rapidly due to political and social developments.[80] Koselleck studies all three types of concepts as indicators of historical continuity and change.

The first group has a special significance in Koselleck's work: "*Die Historie kann das stets sich Wandelnde und Neue nur erkennen, wenn sie um das Herkommen weiß, in dem dauerhafte Strukturen verborgen sind.*"[81] Change can only be recognized against a background of continuity. The other two groups seem to refer to the two levels on which Koselleck studies history, the levels of structure and contingency: "*Begriffe belehren uns nicht nur über die Einmaligkeit vergangener Bedeutungen (für uns), sondern enthalten strukturale Möglichkeiten, thematisieren Gleichzeitigkeiten im Ungleichzeitigkeiten, die nicht auf die reine Zeitabfolge der Geschichte reduziert werden können.*"[82] So all three temporal levels – longterm continuity, structural development and continuous change on contingency level – are object of study in *Begriffsgeschichte*. Koselleck describes these three temporal levels as coexisting in each event in history.[83] But the question remains, how do we obtain knowledge of these events? In order to understand this, we shall have to look at Koselleck's analytical instruments.

2.2 A historian's manual?

As shown a concept contains "*die Vielfalt geschichtlicher Erfahrung und eine Summe von theoretischen und praktischen Sachbezügen in einem Zusammenhang, der als solcher nur durch den Begriff gegeben ist und wirklich erfahrbar wird.*"[84] This suggests that concepts will have to be 'unwrapped' in some way, dissected in its separate layers. Begriffsgeschichte is based on the notion that concepts are the temporality of the non-transient.[85] To grasp this complex temporality of concepts it is necessary to use both the diachronic and synchronic

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[78] Koselleck, "Vergangene Zukunft,", 117
[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid., 375
[82] Ibid., 154
[83] Koselleck, "Franzosische Revolution," 658
[84] Koselleck, "Vergangene Zukunft", 120
[85] Ibid., 125

approach.[86] The particular value of the synchronic analysis is that it can lay bare the many different meanings of a concepts at a particular moment in time. A diachronic comparison of the meaning of a concept at different moments in time reveals the continuity and change at the conceptual level.[87]

To draw a map of this conceptual network, Koselleck uses two linguistic instruments in his own historical studies: semasiology, the study of the different meanings a word can have and onomasiology, the study of different words which have the same meaning. Semasiology is only used selectively: "*Der semasiologische Aspekt, der alle Bedeutungen eines Terminus advisiert, wird eingeengt auf die Sektoren, die das soziale und politische Gefüge und dessen Veränderung eindecken.*"[88] In much the same way, onomasiology is only used as an indicator of social and political change: "*Der onomasiologische Aspekt, der alle Bezeichnungen für einen vorgegebenen Sachverhalt notiert, wird nur insofern berücksichtigt, als Nachbarbezeignungen und Synonyma die historische Vielfalt oder als neu sich auRooseveltängende Benennungen soziale und politische Veränderungen indizieren.*"[89] With help of these instruments, we can uncover possible changes in meaning of concepts as well as continuity in meaning of a concept, which can possibly be expressed in different words. It also allows us to connect concepts to counter concepts, so as to eventually lay bare the historical force of the studied concept. That is why it is important to alternate semasiologic and onomasiologic research.[90] It is also important that the historian does not place too great an emphasis on either of both methods. *Begriffsgeschichte* tries to find a balance between semasiology and onomasiology.[91] The methodological apparatus allows the historian to understand the linguistic developments. The result of this linguistic research should always be supported with an account of the political and social circumstances at the time the language under research was used. We must be aware that "*[v]on der erlebten bis zur wissenschaftlich verarbeiteten Geschichte [...] Geschichte immer in sozial und persönlich bedingten, sinnhaltigen und sinnstiftenden Perspektiven vollzogen [wird].*"[92]

The interpretative character of *Begriffsgeschichte* is in essence a combination of different methods: "*Alle bisher auseinandergelegten vergleichsweise formalen Fragestellungen historischer, soziologischer, semasiologischer Methodik zielen auf die von*

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[86] Koselleck, "Vergangene Zukunft"., 115
[87] Ibid., 118
[88] Koselleck, "Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe," xxi
[89] Koselleck, "Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe," xxii
[90] Ibid.
[91] Koselleck, "Archiv," 84
[92] Koselleck, "Vergangene Zukunft," 186

uns intendierte Begriffsgeschichte. Sie ergänzen einander."[93] It is also important to note here that Koselleck uses a wide array of sources: "*Besonders für geschichtliche Grundbegriffe können theologische oder juristische, ökonomische oder naturwissenschaftliche Texte bedeutsammer sein als etwa solche der Histiriographie.*"[94] The result of this combination of sources is an interpretation of the developments which are both instigator and result of the conceptual changes.

2.3 Critique on the conceptual historical model

Conceptual history is but one part of what historians call the linguistic turn, a highly influential movement in historiography during the 20th century which focused on the relationship between language and reality.[95] Within this linguistic turn, Koselleck embodied a rare viewpoint. The French school of the linguistic turn, headed by philosophers like Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault, were in fundamental disagreement with the German school on the question of whether reality could be known.[96] Although Koselleck´s conceptual history acknowledged that the relationship between language and reality was such that it could never *fully* be known, it was convinced that a meticulous study of the change in meaning of concepts could provide a certain degree of knowledge about reality, whether in the here and now or in historical reality.

The philosophers of the linguistic turn argued that reality only existed in words, as it needed to be explained and thought of in language.[97] Without words, reality had no knowable form. Thus, as these words constituted reality, reality itself could not exist without words.[98] As they rejected the thought that history can be known in itself, historical reality needed to be found in words. The problem was, words, as giving meaning to supposed reality, were not fixed in their meaning, but constituted personal experience. In the solution to this problem lay the rift between Koselleck and Derrida.

Derrida argued that, as reality can only be explained in words, but words constituted personal experience, reality could not be known. In the debate on structuralism, which sought to lay bare the origin of personal experience by tracing structures back to their origin, so as to

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[93] Koselleck, "Archiv," 90
[94] Koselleck, "Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe," xxiv
[95] Elizabeth A. Clark *History, theory, text: historians and the linguistic turn* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2004) 1-9
[96] Ibid, 63-71
[97] Ibid, 42-44
[98] Ibid, 46-47

contextualise and provide meaning to words, Derrida took a poststructuralist stance. He pointed to the flaw in the structuralist theory, that it appointed meaning to the origin of personal experience that simply could not exist. The origin, Derrida argued, must have a structure of its own, which cannot be known unless it itself has itself an origin.[99] Because this origin cannot be known, there is only meaningful structure in personal experience itself. But, as this personal experience made any statements about a supposed reality impossible, there could be no reality as such. Reality does not exist, therefore, as a consequence, historical reality cannot be known.[100] One can study historical texts, even deconstruct them, but no knowledge about the reality of history can ever be derived from this process, according to Derrida.

Koselleck stood in opposition to this notion of non-existence of history. He thought history could be known to a certain degree, through the study of conceptual change. His periodicity of concepts allowed for a study of this conceptual change. By appointing certain basic and eternal values to conceptual opposites, he created a basis for retracing change in concepts throughout history. He argued that there was an absolute value to certain conceptual pairs, which could be used to denote subtle changes over time in the exact contents of separate concepts.[101] Good and evil, for instance, did not change their absolute meaning in relation to each other over time. Good always stands in opposition to evil. The precise substance of the concept of ´good´ may change radically over time, but it shall always exist in opposition to evil.[102] Other examples are, for instance, the conceptual opposites of beautiful and ugly, right and wrong, just and unjust, etc.

Because these opposite pairs did not change in their opposition to each other, Koselleck argued that it should be possible to 'know' history to a certain extent, through the careful study of the contents, and change thereof, of these pairs. As these pairs themselves were used over time to denote a multitude of different concepts, it should be possible, according to Koselleck, to say meaningful things about history. For instance, when the concept of 'government' was consistently referred to as being 'just' and 'good', and the concept of 'tyrany' as being 'unjust' and 'evil', this provided real ´knowledge´ of the times under consideration.[103] Government stood in direct opposition to tyranny, within a societal

[99] Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference* (London, Routledge, 2001) 193-212
[100] Ibid, 351-360
[101] Koselleck, "Vergangene zukunft" 211-243
[102] Ibid, 281
[103] Koselleck, "Franzosische revolution" 421-475

debate which worked towards ousting tyranny and creating government. This, Koselleck argued, was ´knowing´ history.

It is by no means the intention of this thesis to prove whether either Koselleck or Derrida were right in their theory. However, it uses Koselleck´s methodological apparatus, and thereby accepts as a consequence that his idea of 'knowing' history through concepts has a certain value. This assumption is necessary for the conclusion of this thesis to provide any real information.

Chapter Three – The establishment of 'we' in government

"Our greatest primary task is to put people to work. This is no unsolvable problem if we face it wisely and courageously. It can be accompanied in part by direct recruiting by the government itself, treating the task as we would treat the emergency of a war, but at the same time, through this employment, accomplishing greatly needed projects to stimulate and reorganize the use of our national resources."[104]

When Franklin Roosevelt accepted the Presidency of the United States for the first time, on 4 March 1933, the times were gloomy at best. It is testimony to the times that on that very same day, the governors of Illinois and New York shut their banks.[105] With the most severe financial and economic crisis in history slashing deep wounds in American society, Roosevelt had beaten incumbent Herbert Hoover on a ticket of broad reforms.[106] "I propose to the American people a New Deal"[107], thus ran his campaign slogan. A New Deal, with the inherent promise to end the crisis which induced the suffering of so many.

The longstanding relationship between the American people and their government, strained at best but with daggers drawn if need be, altered drastically within the course a decade. Millions of Americans came to see in government a last means to coordinate that which they themselves had been unable to coordinate through their 'own' instrument of the free market.[108] The financial market had crashed with such force and grave consequences as no-one had ever thought possible. On the day of his inauguration America had an astonishing, if in absolute terms unknown number of unemployment, approximating 25 to 33 percent. The lucky ones who got to keep their jobs could hardly count their blessings, as they lost an average of 33 percent in income over the three years prior to 4 March 1933.[109] Clearly, self-government by the mere principle of the invisible hand alone was no longer an option. Regulation needed to be forced upon those who controlled this volatile life support line of American society, in order to safeguard its very existence.

But regulation would only prohibit the crisis from resurfacing in the future. The drastic consequences still needed to be eradicated. In order to do so Roosevelt proposed to

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[104] The American Presidency Project, "Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Inaugural Address, 1937"

[105] Donald A. Ritchie, *Electing FDR: the New Deal campaign of 1932* (University of Kansas Press, 2007) 163

[106] Ibid, 134-151

[107] Ibid, 110

[108] William Leuchtenberg, *Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal*, (New York, Harper & Row, 1963) 1-18 and Robert E. Jenner, *FDR's Republicans: domestic political realignment and American foreign policy* (Plymouth, Lexington Books, 2010) 41-69

[109] Anthony J. Badger, *FDR: the first hundred days* (New York, Hill and Wang, 2008) 3

temporarily replace the invisible hand of the market economy with his own, not so invisible governmental hand. Redistribution of people, raising the value of agricultural output, preventing foreclosure of homes and farms, unification of relief activities, planning and supervision of transportation, communication and other utilities with a definitely public character; although these are the examples named by Roosevelt in his first inaugural address, they are but a few of the measures proposed by his administration during the first one hundred days of the New Deal. His now infamous first hundred days counted no less than 16 major pieces of legislation.[110] Although political historians all over the world differ greatly in their appreciation of the New Deal, they all agree that Roosevelt truly proposed a Deal to the American people which was in every sense of the word ´New´.

The New Deal was backed by the first Democratic realignment in over a century. Angered over the Great Depression and the apparent inability to deal with its consequences, former Democratic groups who had left the party during the last crisis and the following Republican McKinley realignment of 1896, rejoined the Democratic party. The return of these industrial workers, small farmers, blacks, Catholics and Jews established a Democratic majority which would last for many decades.[111] But they were not the only ones to comprise this coalition. The New Deal Coalition, as it came to be known among historians and politicians, seemed to accept the necessity of greatly expanding the responsibilities of government. To such an extend even, that presidential rhetoric did not seem to have to beat around the bush in order to sell the reforms. The New Deal Coalition not only seemed to accept its political reality of drastically increased governmental responsibilities and power, which in a way was easier to turn a blind eye to for the sake of combating the crisis, but adhered to the new presidential rhetoric which accompanied it and which was much harder to deny.

As mentioned in chapter 1, the scope of this thesis does not allow for examination of the important question why people so readily adhered to such a change in rhetoric. In working towards answering that very same question about the Reagan realignment however, this chapter examines just how this rhetoric changed during the New Deal coalition. Also, it aims to lay bare how the reciprocal bond between government and people influenced the rhetoric during this time. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, it shall lay the basis needed to

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[110] Badger "FDR" xiii. These 16 pieces of legislation gave the federal government "the power to decide which banks should or should not reopen, to regulate the stock exchange, to determine the gold value of the dollar, to prescribe minimum wages and prices, to pay farmers not to produce, to pay money to the unemployed, to plan and regenerate a whole river basin across six states, to spend billions of dollars on public works and to underwrite credit for banker, homeowners and farmers."

[111] Judis, Teixeira, *The emerging democratic majority*, 14

establish, in the following chapter, whether the end of the New Deal coalition coincided with a change in rhetoric, or perhaps preceded or followed it.

3.1 War in peacetime: from war-analogy to paternalistic us-them

The First Term

It is difficult to say without further study whether Roosevelt intended to or merely adhered to the spirit and necessity of his time, but in his first inaugural speech in 1933, he seemed to want to radically change the meaning of the concept of 'government', almost overnight. Of course, his campaign had been fought on a message of radical reform, so radical reform was to be expected. Historians like Samuel Lubell[112] and William Leuchtenberg[113] agreed early on that with his words and actions, Roosevelt changed politics drastically in comparison to the pre-New Deal age. The question then naturally arises; why did he choose to take this risk and why did it work out so well?

The answer to this question lies in the origin of the New Deal coalition realignment. One explanation for the willingness on the part of Roosevelt to use such strong rhetoric against free market and for governmental control was that it was aimed at a large crowd of fresh ears. Not 15 years prior had all political rhetoric been aimed, at least in the direct electoral sense of the word, at men only. The 19th amendment, passed in 1920, had put an end to that practice and granted women the right to vote, thereby drastically increasing the voting population and the basis at which political rhetoric was, or at least ought to be, aimed.[114]

In addition, the power of political bosses over the electoral process had deemed rhetoric aimed at the people in general relatively futile for decades, as their power could manipulate the outcome of the electoral process.[115] In 1933 however, in the wake of a crisis which to some extend at least hit every single American, women had the vote and political bosses, insofar as they had not lost their control already, were, at least for the time being, put out of play because they had been unable to control the crisis.[116] A drastically increased public now listened to presidential rhetoric for words of hope in times of severe crisis. They were not expecting it to miraculously arise out of the ashes of the crisis through free market

[112] Samuel Lubell, *The Future of American Politics* (Greenwood-Heinemann Publishing, 1952)
[113] Leuchtenberg, "Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal"
[114] Gerald H. Gamm, *The making of New Deal Democrats: Voting Behavior and Realignment in Boston, 1920-1940* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1989) pag 24-31
[115] H. F. Gosnell, *Machine Politics : Chicago Model* (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1937) 46-61
[116] Ibid, 61-73

mechanisms, as they had lost the better part of their hope in that very mechanism.[117] No, this new and much larger crowd expected guidance and steering from their president. Roosevelt was ready to hand it to them.

Political historian Gerald Gamm makes a very strong point in connecting the rise of this 'new' electorate to the New Deal realignment in his case study on electoral movement in Boston between 1920 and 1940.[118] In a thorough study of the electoral movement within ethnically homogenous groups, he argues that political historians make the mistake of studying the New Deal realignment in the traditional theoretical-conceptual framework of realignments. This old framework proscribed that at least part of the *existing* electorate had to realign itself drastically and for a longer period of time, thereby leaving out of the equation the possibility of a new political landscape evolving through the mobilization of a previously non-existing or dormant part of the electorate. Gamm studies voter behavior in the various precincts of Boston, and concludes that this phenomenon of ´mobilization-realignment´ was a large contributor to the New Deal 'realignment'. At least in Boston.[119] New Jewish voters, for instance, had been mobilized in 1928. The 'old' Jewish electorate did not realign itself until the election of 1936, at which time they switched their vote from Republican to Democratic.[120] Same applied to the Italian vote[121] and the African-American vote[122].

The political landscape Roosevelt dealt with was not so much ready for change, as that would imply change compared to a previous condition. This was a new landscape altogether. Using the tumultuous character of this new Democratic New Deal coalition as well as and in combination with the obvious necessity to somehow combat the crisis, Roosevelt was able to drastically reform American federal politics and the rhetoric which explained this reform.[123] This realization alters the focus on the presidential rhetoric, under scrutiny in this thesis. If the New Deal coalition were a realignment in the traditional sense, one must explain why over the course of a mere 40 years the opinion of this realigned electorate could change from anti-big government to drastic expansion of federal responsibilities under Roosevelt and even further than back again in the anti-government stance under Reagan. Now, one 'merely' needs to find

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[117] Lubell, "The Future", 131-147

[118] Gamm, "The making of"

[119] Gamm, "The making of", 161-182. In this chapter, Gamm explains the universal applicability of his findings with help of a control study of general data in a number of other cities and states. He states that, although the ethnical construction differs greatly, the change in voting motives within the separate ethnic voting blocks appear to be consistent throughout the country.

[120] Ibid, 45-74

[121] Ibid, 75-90

[122] Ibid, 91-104

[123] John W. Sloan, *FDR and Reagan: transformative president with clashing visions* (Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 2008) 246-286

an explanation for the shift of at least part of this new electorate, which by all accounts cannot be studied in terms of political preference prior to their partaking in the political process[124], from the Roosevelt stance to the Reagan view on government. How, then, was this 'new' form of government explained by the leader of the New Deal coalition, president Roosevelt?

It has already been established that Roosevelt chose radical language in explaining his reform program. What is not yet clear is whether he did so in opposition to previous rhetoric or in forming altogether new language. We find the answer to this question in the analogy chosen by Roosevelt in explaining the necessity of his reforms, that of a war in peacetime.[125] He not only states this literally in his inaugural address, but also alludes to it in the words for which this address came to be known in history: "[T]he only thing we have to fear is fear itself—nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance. In every dark hour of our national life a leadership of frankness and vigor has met with that understanding and support of the people themselves which is essential to victory."[126] Clearly, this is the language of war. The retreat should be converted to advance through the actions of a leadership and frankness and vigor. Most importantly, this rhetoric serves to justify the new position of government within American society. The leadership and frankness and vigor was government, which should act accordingly to a state of war, which would provide it with powers government normally does not, or should not have in peacetime.[127]

Radical though it may, this language, viewed from within the ´old´ rhetorical framework, is not new as such. The fact that Roosevelt chose to explain his reform, and the consequent change in government, through the analogy of war, shows that he was not yet ready to leave the traditional American concept of 'government' behind. War is after all a state of being differing only from a normal state in that it provides certain *temporary* powers to government. After the war has ended, or in this case the crisis resolved, all shall be restored to the previous condition. Whether or not Roosevelt had meant, in 1933, for his reforms to be permanent is not under scrutiny here. What is clear however is that he either felt unsecure in rhetorically introducing a completely new type of government, or he quite simply did not mean to do so. The question, then, is if Roosevelt changed this rhetoric during the crisis into a

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[124] Reliable, mathematical research of public opinion had not yet come into being before the New Deal realignment. Such a study would therefore only be possible if one studied personal documents, taking into account that such a method could never deal with public opinion in the same structured way as the mathematical principles of public opinion research.

[125] Halford R. Ryan, *Franklin D. Roosevelt's rhetorical presidency* (Santa Barbara, Greenwood Press, 1988) 131-161

[126] The American Presidency Project, "Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Inaugural Address, 1937"

[127] Ryan, "Franklin D. Roosevelt's" 131-161

new form of rhetoric at all. His second inaugural and his addresses on the State of the Union may provide an answer.

To this effect Roosevelt immediately provided clarity in the opening of his first State of the Union. "[Y]ou and I may cooperate to continue the restoration of our national wellbeing and, equally important, to build on the ruins of the past a new structure designed better to meet the present problems of modern civilization."[128] This new structure he explained to congress thus: "Though the machinery, hurriedly devised, may need readjustment from time to time, nevertheless I think you will agree with me that we have created a permanent feature of our modernized industrial structure and that it will continue under the supervision but not the arbitrary dictation of Government itself."[129] The enemy was on retreat, but had left behind a new reality. But unlike the modern reputation of the New Deal, as an extensive program of social reforms by Federal Government, this new reality, in the eyes of its President, only proscribed government to drastically increase its supervisory tasks over the economy.[130]

In his second State of the Union address of 1935, Roosevelt focuses on the problem of relief, which had created the largest, albeit a temporary increase in Federal power in the history of the United States.[131] Relief itself, Roosevelt states, "is in violation of the traditions of America. Work must be found for able-bodied but destitute workers. The Federal Government must and shall quit this business of relief."[132] Un-American it may be, further on in the address he states that "[t]here are, however, an additional three and one half million employable people who are on relief. […] The Federal Government is the only governmental agency with sufficient power and credit to meet this situation. We have assumed this task and we shall not shrink from it in the future."[133] At first glance, this seems directly contradictory to his statement that "the Federal Government must and shall quit" relief. However, we recognize in this construction the same principle as lies at the heart of the increased

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[128] The American Presidency Project, "Franklin Delano Roosevelt, State of the Union Address, 1934", University of California http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=14683#axzz1P3fuUd6g (accessed May 19, 2011)
[129] Ibid
[130] Ryan, "Franklin D. Roosevelt's" 152-154
[131] Ibid, 51 and Arthur M. Schlesinger *The coming of the New Deal, 1933-1935* (New York, Houghton Mifflin, 2003) 263-280 and Lubell, "The Future", 181-184
[132] The American Presidency Project, "Franklin Delano Roosevelt, State of the Union Address, 1935", University of California http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=14890#axzz1P3fuUd6g (accessed May 20, 2011)
[133] Ibid

supervisory governmental tasks which followed the crisis; that of increase in governmental powers in times of war.

Roosevelt was slowly but steadily adding to governmental rhetoric a new language of governmental control in times of 'economic' battle, which in reality of course meant severe crises.[134] Government, in Roosevelt's new rhetoric, had not gained the power to 'arbitrarily dictate' its´ will whenever it deemed necessary to do so.[135] Instead, it gained the responsibility to, in case of an economic crisis, not only solve this crisis through extensive governmental programs but also to "build on the ruins of [this crisis] a new structure designed better to meet the present problems". As at the end of military war, when government was expected to take the temporary reigns of restoration, so should government act when it had resolved an economic war. This, then, was the "permanent feature of our modernized industrial structure", that government should monitor the economy to prevent a crisis, as it monitored foreign affairs to prevent military war.[136] Necessary measures to combat the event crisis, like the Un-American institution of relief, could only be taken during a crisis, in much the same way as a state of military war provided the possibility of extraordinary, and essentially Un-American measures.

In 1936, the relative importance of the internal economic situation was pushed to the background by international developments.[137] The struggle for economic improvement within American borders was won at least to the extent that the struggle for democracy worldwide could claim the better part of the attention of the President of the United States. Where Roosevelt, as he states himself in his third State of the Union address, had devoted "far the greater part of [the 1933 inaugural] address to what [he] called, and the Nation called, critical days within our own borders"[138], the situation had drastically changed. Far the greater part of his 1936 address was devoted to international affairs. The civil war in Spain had made the possibility of war between political ideologies real.

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[134] Halford R. Ryan, "Franklin Delano Roosevelt: Rhetorical Politics and Political Rhetorics" in *Presidential speechwriting: from the New Deal to the Reagan revolution and beyond* ed. Kurt Ritter and Martin J. Medhurst, (Program in Presidential Rhetoric, 2003) 26-27
[135] Ibid, 31-34
[136] Ibid
[137] Ibid, 29
[138] The American Presidency Project, "Franklin Delano Roosevelt, State of the Union Address, 1936", University of California http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=15095#axzz1P3fuUd6g (accessed May 21, 2011)

The 1936 State of the Union address served two main purposes. The first, and most important in terms of size was to introduce to Congress and the American people the outline of American foreign policy in the increased tensions in the world.[139] Analyzing the remaining part of the speech, that which did dealt with internal affairs and the role of government within it, is further troubled by the character of address, which was to be the second purpose. Among all the international turmoil, 1936 was also to be the year of Roosevelt's first reelection. In the spirit of this upcoming political struggle, Roosevelt used his third State of the Union address to utter some strong language to warn his electorate of a possible return of the crisis, should his Republican opponents be elected. His policy achievements are summed up in short, when he calls it "a new relationship between Government and people. […] Government became the representative and the trustee of the public interest." Juxtaposed to this new relationship, Roosevelt states, is the risk of the old powers regaining their former positions. "Yes, there are still determined groups that are intent upon that very thing. […] The principle that they would instill into government if they succeed in seizing power is well shown by the principles which many of them have instilled into their own affairs: autocracy toward labor, toward stockholders, toward consumers, toward public sentiment."

Had Roosevelt left it at that, this address would not have added to his legacy. He chose, however, to vindicate his policy, perhaps only in light of the upcoming elections, towards these "determined groups" in a lengthy session of rhetorical questions, highlighting what would happen if his opponents were to revert his policies (Appendix A). What is striking in these "Shall we" questions, is that for the first time in his presidency, Roosevelt openly chose to use a paternalistic us-them view of government, although still somewhat disguised.[140] He formulates the questions in a simple form, by asking rhetorical negative questions like "Shall we say to the home owners, "We have reduced your rates of interest. We have no further concern with how you keep your home or what you pay for your money. That is your affair?""[141] If read out of context from the speech in which it was incorporated, the "we" used in this question is the same in all instances. Read within its context, the first we, or Roosevelt´s third-person question to Congress, can still be meant to denote the American people in its entirety. It may be the combined responsibility of all Americans to answer this

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[139] The American Presidency Project, "Franklin Delano Roosevelt, State of the Union Address, 1936".As Roosevelt puts it in his speech: "a point has been reached where the people of the Americas must take cognizance of growing ill-will, of marked trends toward aggression, of increasing armaments, of shortening tempers--a situation which has in it many of the elements that lead to the tragedy of general war."
[140] Ryan, "Franklin D. Roosevelt's" `13-25
[141] The American Presidency Project, "Franklin Delano Roosevelt, State of the Union Address, 1936"

question in the negative, 'No we should not'. However, the we-form used in the quotes denotes the policy of his government, and therefore government itself. It is government that reduced the rates of interest, that shall have no further concern.

This is the first time since the New Deal realignment that Roosevelt takes a side road from his analogy of war.[142] He no longer explains his policy in within the rhetorical framework of previous decades, in which his policy was alike to measures taken in a state of war. In this new rhetoric, one sees the signs of that which the Reagan-realigners came to despise; government seeing itself as the institution that can solve problems the people can't solve for themselves. Government no longer as the institution that can guide the American people through the war, but as the institution that needs to have powers normally reserved for wartime government – economic wartime, within the analogy – because without such a government, the American people would not survive in peacetime. Reagan-realigners would have read a different message in Roosevelt's "Shall we" rhetoric: 'Government reduced your rates of interest, and if government would leave you to it, you would never be able to manage your affairs. So best keep government in charge.' At least rhetorically speaking, things would not be same after this State of the Union address.

The Second Term

Had Roosevelt known the outcome of the 1936 election prior to his last State of the Union, he would perhaps have chosen to use less harsh words and instead focus on uniting his people behind his message. But his opponents were both inside and outside his own party, and although popular support for his reforms had been overwhelming, there was still no reliable data on voter preference which could predict the landslide support Roosevelt had in reality.[143] George Gallup, founder of the influential Gallup poll, started his polling agency in the election of 1936. Although he did poll the outcome of the election correctly, predicting Roosevelt's victory over his Republican opponent Alf Landon through a survey of just over 50.000 citizens, his voice was not yet heard. *Literary Digest*, the highly influential magazine, had published a poll after collecting over 2 million questionnaires from their readers, predicting Landon to be the winner. They could hardly have been more wrong and the size of

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[142] Ryan, "Franklin Delano Roosevelt" 29 and "Franklin D. Roosevelt's" 142
[143] Betty Houchin Winfield, *FDR and the news media* (Champaign, University of Illinois, 1990) 127-134

their mistake would be debated over decades to come.[144] But in this climate of apparent public hostility, Roosevelt´s choice of harsh rhetoric is understandable.

Roosevelt won the 1936 presidential elections in a historical landslide victory. He carried all states but two, the north-eastern states of Maine and Vermont, beating Alf Landon by over 10 million popular votes with almost 28 million votes and collecting 523 electoral votes, out of a total of 531.[145]

The paternalistic us-them view, which had seemed to have replaced the analogy of war rhetoric in explaining the concept of 'government' had taken root in Roosevelt's conceptual explanation. In his opening paragraphs (Appendix B) for his second inaugural address, in January 1937, he reaffirmed this new view: "When four years ago we met to inaugurate a President, the Republic, single-minded in anxiety, stood in spirit here. [...]We of the Republic pledged ourselves to drive from the temple of our ancient faith those who had profaned it; to end by action, tireless and unafraid, the stagnation and despair of that day. We did those first things first."[146] This rhetorical technique served to justify the conceptual meaning of government in its new role. Without making any statement on the success of Roosevelt's policy, it can be established that his terms in office constituted a drastic increase in governmental control over society, which as a consequence meant that this control was taken from society itself. In using the same `we´ to denote the two different concepts, we the people and we the government, Roosevelt tried, rhetorically, to show that they are in fact one and the same, while in reality they drifted further apart than ever before in American history.

To further combine these two concepts, Roosevelt elaborated on his rhetorical technique: "Our covenant with ourselves did not stop there. Instinctively we recognized a deeper need—the need to find through government the instrument of our united purpose to solve for the individual the ever-rising problems of a complex civilization."[147] This was particularly clever of Roosevelt. He succeeded in incorporating a drastically increased governmental control over society, which to all intends and purposes constituted a breach with American political tradition, within the rhetorical framework of the Founding Fathers.[148]

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[144] Maurice C. Bryson, "The Literary Digest Poll: Making of a Statistical Myth" *The American Statistician*, 30, no. 4 (November 1976)
[145] Lubell, "The Future" 83
[146] The American Presidency Project, "Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Inaugural Address, 1937", University of California http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=15349#axzz1P3fuUd6g (accessed May 21, 2011)
[147] Ibid
[148] Ryan, "Franklin D. Roosevelt's" 1-13

By not breaking with tradition, Roosevelt was thus able to rhetorically justify the new role of government within society through the rhetoric of the president Lincoln, which itself had elaborated on the ideas of the constitution and the Declaration of Independence: "government of the people, by the people, for the people."[149] It was the people that had recognized the deeper need, government was merely the instrument to fulfil this deeper need. Roosevelt was able to use this technique, some would perhaps rather call it a trick, thanks to the widespread support for his reform program, made visible in his landslide re-election. But this feeding ground would soon erode, during the first few months of his second term.

The position of the United States Supreme Court within Federal government was embedded in the constitution as one of three major powers. It was conceived thus by the Founding Fathers because they saw in this tripartite form of Federal power the ultimate system of checks and balances on governmental control over society. It would safeguard the possible rise of despotism.[150] Roosevelt had encountered the balancing task of the Supreme Court personally, when, in 1935, the unanimously deemed his National Recovery Act unconstitutional. In their verdict, the Supreme Court made a point of stating that the NRA would constitute an delegation of powers "unknown to our law, and [which] is utterly inconsistent with the constitutional prerogatives and duties of Congress."[151]

When, in early 1937, president Roosevelt sent to Congress a reform bill which would have allowed him to appoint six new Supreme Court Justices, political friends and foes viewed it as a step too far. He had successfully incorporated the drastic increase in governmental power in the traditional rhetorical framework of the Founding Fathers, because however great this increase in power had been, it had fit into the system of checks and balances. Now, however, with what came to be known as the Court Packing act, Roosevelt had overstepped this boundary, by trying to knock the system out of balance. Why Roosevelt chose to take this risk is not at debate here, although the heavy opposition from within the Supreme Court towards the reform acts during his first term, coupled with his own landslide victory and that of his party in Congress perhaps provided him with the political courage to give it a try. Fact is that the Court Packing act, which would have provided Roosevelt with the

[149] The Avalon Project, "The Gettysburg Address" Yale Law School, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/gettyb.asp (accessed May 22, 2011)
[150] Schlesinger "The coming" 263-280
[151] U.S. Supreme Court Ruling, "A.L.A. Schechter Poultry Corporation v. United States, 295 U.S. 495" Find Law, http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/getcase.pl?navby=case&court=us&vol=295&page=495 The power delegated would befall on the office of the Presidency. (accessed May 22, 2011)

unique opportunity to turn the court into his favour by appointing six new judges, met with heavy resistance, both from outside and from within his own party. In opposition to his Court Packing plan, Democrats and Republicans formed a Conservative Coalition.[152] Shockingly to friend and foe, this coalition was headed by Roosevelt´s own Vice-President, John Garner. Roosevelt had gambled and lost.

We see this loss reflected in the words of his 1938 State of the Union address. The speeches Roosevelt had given in his previous years were given to a crowd that was, overall, friendly towards his policies. The basic need of those policies needed no further explanation, they were justified in electoral results. This climate provided him with an opportunity to use his speeches for different purposes; to embed his view on the drastically changed relation between society and government in the minds of the people through the use of rhetorical techniques. That way, the perceived necessity of policies would last. Now, however, these techniques would not suffice. The necessity of the Court Packing act was far from established, the increase in power it would have provided to the office of his presidency was in no way present in the perceived needs of the times. Roosevelt had to go back to rhetorical basics and re-establish his view on government in the minds of Congress and the people, lest it be lost forever.

Roosevelt thus needed to explain his policy to a crowd that for the first time in his Presidency did not take for granted the new role of government in society. He attacked this challenge head-on: "Government has a final responsibility for the well-being of its citizenship. If private cooperative endeavor fails to provide work for willing hands and relief for the unfortunate, those suffering hardship from no fault of their own have a right to call upon the Government for aid; and a government worthy of its name must make fitting response."[153] No more clever constructions, out there in the open, for everyone to see, was Roosevelt's concept of 'government'. It may still have been a small responsibility in terms of size – only the very needy could count on governmental support – but the final responsibility of the well-being of American citizens lay not within those citizens themselves, but with the government they chose through the democratic process determined by the Founding Fathers.[154] A far cry from the ideals of the Progressive Era, which aimed to improve the

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[152] Schlesinger "The coming" 471-488
[153] The American Presidency Project, "Franklin Delano Roosevelt, State of the Union Address, 1938", University of California http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=15517#axzz1P3fuUd6g (accessed May 23, 2011)
[154] Halford R. Ryan, *Franklin D. Roosevelt's rhetorical presidency* (Santa Barbara, Greenwood Press, 1988)

conditions for the individual in order for that individual to take his own responsibilities and better his own life, Roosevelt took the final responsibilities of those individuals away and placed custody over them with government. It would prove to be the end of the rhetorical legacy of President Roosevelt.

Unbeknownst to Roosevelt at the time, his Court Packing gamble and subsequent loss to a bipartisan Conservative Coalition had very bad timing, at least from the perspective of his presidency. Where the reform bills and social legislation passed during his first term had been able to claim success at least to the degree that the crisis died down and the economy recovered, recession would again show its ugly head in 1938, giving sudden weight to the claim of the traditional anti-New Dealers and the newly formed, bipartisan Conservative Coalition, that this was not the right course of action. Roosevelt suddenly had real enemies to endure.[155] Enemies he was unable to control, with a message so different from his own that it left him unable to persuade them. He lost control over his program of reforms. The final blow for New Deal legislation followed in the mid-term elections of 1938. The voting power of the New Deal coalition was broken by a loss of 6 pro-New Deal Senators and 71 Democratic Representatives. The new Congress rapidly formed a new coalition, aimed at blocking New Deal reforms. The mid-term elections of 1938 thus marked the end of five years of New Deal legislation. No major bills would pass the Hill afterwards. In a telltale sign of things to come, the coalition was formed by Republicans, and southern Democrats. They were not only intend on blocking new legislation, but also on reversing what had already passed. Now, it seemed, only a war could save Roosevelt´s reputation. [156]

3.2 Conceptual void: government and people united behind the war effort

In terms of rhetoric in the wider scope of forty years of Presidential politics, which is under scrutiny here, the war years provide little material.[157] As established, and shall be further established below, Roosevelt's New Deal program legislation was effectively put to a halt and even reversed to a large extend between 1938 and 1945. The economic boom which went hand in hand with the war effort, almost reducing unemployment to nonexistence, provided the ideal alibi for the Conservative Coalition to reverse the most drastic of measures taken by

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[155] Schlesinger "The coming" 423-510
[156] Ibid and Leuchtenburg "Franklin Roosevelt", 239-243
[157] Ryan, "Franklin D. Roosevelt's" 131

the New Deal coalition.[158] It was no longer needed. As the internal economy had no current need for extensive government programs other than those aimed at the war effort, and as the reality of war called for a Presidential role of Commander in Chief, these were hardly the times for defending his domestic legacy. Unfortunately for Roosevelt, he did not get to see the day at which he could possibly have defended his legacy. That task befell his successor, President Harry S. Truman. In this paragraph, Presidential Addresses held between 1938 and 1945 shall not be explored further, as the rhetoric necessarily differed so great from pre and postwar rhetoric, that they do not add to this research. However, in their own right, or in different comparisons to pre and postwar addresses, they are cause for a multitude of different studies. Certain political events that occurred during the war have had their effects on postwar politics and rhetoric. Therefore, this paragraph shall aim to lay bare these events.

All was not lost after 1938. Roosevelt served the final years of his second term as a pre-war president, intent on using his Foreign Policy to keep the Americas out of the field of tensions now surrounding the continent throughout the world, whilst simultaneously trying to ensure the right outcome of these tensions by backing friendly nations with the means available to him. Although his economic and social legislative power was diminished by the Congressional Conservative Coalition of Republicans and southern Democrats, his popular support was still sizeable. The coalition may have been opposed to his New Deal program, it was a staunch supporter of isolationism. Even though Roosevelt was not an isolationist himself, his political actions had pointed in that direction prior to the start of the European war.[159] It gained him the reluctant support of the Conservative Coalition.

A sizeable isolationist opposition did mean that Roosevelt had to tread carefully in his efforts to support befriended nations. Roosevelt had started re-armament cautiously, so as not to arouse the isolationists, in 1938.[160] He found ways to allow for the British, French and Chinese allies to buy military equipment and other supplies.[161] But perhaps his greatest feat was the confusion he was able to create on the stance of the United States in the European war. Famously, Hitler had decided upon the character of his American opponent unfavourably because of Roosevelt's contradictory statements.[162] What he had not fully comprehended was that Roosevelt had to balance between wanting to aid his allies and keeping the American people convinced of the neutral position of the United States. Roosevelt learned to use this

[158] Lubell, "The Future" 321-354
[159] Leuchtenberg, "Franklin Roosevelt" 197-230
[160] Ibid, 288-291
[161] Ibid
[162] Ibid 293

instrument of confusion quickly, and was able to maintain a reasonably firm reputation of neutrality which helped him win his third term.

But Roosevelt was 'in luck' in another way as well; his New Deal program, the subject of fierce debate between the Conservative Coalition and the Democrats loyal to Roosevelt, was gradually pushed to the background by the political realities impending war had created. The political power of the Conservative Coalition lay in their opposition of his New Deal legislation. Without a focus on this legislation in the public eye, the Coalition was much less powerful in the election of 1940.[163] Although Roosevelt had never stated he would actively seek re-election, he laboured continuously to block the anti-New Deal Democratic candidates, most notable of whom was his Vice-President, southern conservative John Garner. Historians with a favourable view on Roosevelt's Presidency have explained his change of heart, which made him decide to break with American custom and run for a third term, as a deep-rooted conviction that America needed an experienced leader to guide the country through the Second World War.[164] Others, with a less favourable opinion, have pointed to the bizarre proceedings at the Democratic National Convention (DNC) of 1940 as proof of Roosevelt's intentions to cleanse the Democratic Party of Conservative factions.[165]

At the time of the DNC, in July 1940, the Republican opponent was already chosen. The Republican National Convention had been a five day event of utter chaos. Of the many candidates on the ballot, three were serious candidates, Wendell Willkie, Robert Taft and Thomas Dewey. Taft and Dewey were staunch isolationists, whereas Willkie had a stance comparable to Roosevelt, but with one difference; his stance was known beyond any doubt, as he propagated it openly. The first vote of the RNC was undecided. Willkie got 105 votes, Taft received 189 and Dewey an outweighed both with 360 votes. At this point of the convention the Taft-campaign made a crucial mistake. They launched a backroom campaign to shift votes from Dewey, who they saw as real competition, to the inexperienced but popular Willkie. Convinced as they were that they could beat Willkie in a direct faceoff, they went to work. However, instead of being successful with the Dewey voters, their campaign to shift votes caught on with voters for other candidates. The Willkie camp cleverly played into this confusion by placing its voters all over the room and having them shout 'We want Willkie!' at the top of their lungs. Over the next three votes, Willkie more than doubled his support, while Dewey's camp only decreased by 45 votes. Then the Taft-message finally hit the

[163] Lubell, "The Future" 156-171
[164] Leuchtenberg, "Franklin Roosevelt" 295-298
[165] Stewart Halsey Ross *How Roosevelt Failed America in World War II* (Jefferson, McFarland & Co Publishers, 2006) 41-52

Deweycamp, causing 65 Dewey voters to walk over to Willkies camp. The damage was done. After the fifth vote, the Dewey camp was all but empty with 57 votes. The sixth and final vote decided the ballot in favour of the inexperienced, anti-isolationist Wendell Willkie. The mistake on the side of the Taft campaign eventually cost the Republicans the election, and has since become a textbook example of bad convention politics.[166]

Against this background, the DNC had to elect its candidate. As stated, Roosevelt had refused to give clarity on his candidacy. However, he made little effort to conceal his disdain for his own Vice-President, the conservative southern candidate. And although he had mentioned to his former campaign manager and candidate and frontrunner for the candidacy James Farley that it was safe for him to run on the ballot, he had not spoken out in favor of Farley. Roosevelt´s considerations remain a matter of speculation, although historians tend to ascribe it to the recent victories of Germany in Europe and his conviction that only he could guide America through this storm, but at some point Roosevelt must have decided to run. The event that eventually decided the candidacy had great similarities to what happened just weeks before in Philadelphia, at the Republican Convention. Roosevelt had announced that he did not consider the nomination unless he was asked. The delegates were free to vote for any candidate. Once this message had landed at the convention, using the confusion that it created, the sound system started pounding out an infamous line: "We want Roosevelt. The world wants Roosevelt." The effect was similar to the scattered "We want Willkie" at the RNC; Roosevelt was asked by the crowd, that followed the outcries of the sound system. Roosevelt was elected overwhelmingly in the first vote.[167]

The campaign itself was relatively easy. Even though Willkie was a popular candidate, Roosevelt´s experienced weighed heavily on the voters. Even though Roosevelt´s stance on American participation was vague, Willkie´s outspoken anti-isolationism went too far for many Americans. In the end, Roosevelt was perhaps no longer the logical candidate in terms of domestic policy, when it came to guiding his country through the turbulence of the time, he was the safe and experienced choice.

It goes without saying that Roosevelt's third term was dominated by the Second World War. The issues on which Roosevelt had ascended office in 1933 seemed of a distant passed. Massive, widespread unemployment had turned into urban labour shortage in the areas where

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[166] Charles Peters, *Five days in Philadelphia, the amazing 'We want Willkie!' convention of 1940 and how it freed FDR to free the Western World* (New York, PublicAffairs, 2005)
[167] Ibid 98-108

the war effort production centres were concentrated, particularly in the North-East.[168] Wages and working conditions were adapted accordingly and for the first time in almost two decades, the living standards improved drastically.[169] The most drastic consequence of these improved but still scattered economic conditions, at least from the perspective of future political developments, were the migratory developments. The promise of work attracted those who had lived in poverty for so long. Hundreds of thousands of African Americans and poor white farmers and workers migrated to urban areas with labour shortages, changing the demographic landscape of the United States within the scope of a mere four years.[170]

Roosevelt's third re-election, despite its relatively close outcome, was almost a formality for the incumbent President. Not so for his incumbent Vice-President Henry Wallace. Roosevelt encountered little resistance from the conservative Democrats, who were still part of the Conservative Coalition and strongly opposed to Roosevelt's economic policies. But as the Presidential health was rapidly deteriorating and many expected him not to complete his fourth term, Roosevelt´s party opponents would not endure a risky second term for left-wing Vice-Presidential candidate Wallace. Although the first vote during the DNC of 1944 was split between the moderate candidate, Harry S. Truman, and the incumbent Vice-President, a second vote was decisive. Roosevelt reluctantly accepted Truman as his running mate, an event we now know to be of great importance.

At the very end of the Second World War, two events took place which would influence the post-war political landscape, both in terms of domestic and foreign agenda, more than any other event during the war: the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The explosions not only ended the war, they also set the tone for the arms race leading up to the principle of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD), which at the same time fed the upcoming cold war and prevented it from escalating. The new position of America as the world's (first) nuclear power, and thus as the guardian of nuclear holocaust, rendered the political stance of isolationism effectively obsolete. What had been such an important principle to the Republican party and to many Democrats alike prior to America entering the war was now no longer an option.

Although it was to be expected that the United States would become an economic superpower after the war, this still remained to be seen. But in terms of foreign affairs, America had established itself as a military superpower beyond any doubt. This not only

[168] Burton W. Folsom Jr. and Anita Folsom *FDR Goes to War: How Expanded Executive Power, Spiraling National Debt and Restricted Civil Liberties Shaped Wartime America* (Threshold Editions, 2011) 138-151
[169] Ibid, 190-197
[170] Ibid, 264-273

affected the political power of the Federal government towards the world, with the Commander in Chief of the United States as the bearer of the ultimate responsibility over nuclear war, but as a corollary, and much more important to this research, also the power this government held over its citizens. Where ten years prior their President had called himself "the instrument of our united purpose", he now quite literally held the key to their existence. It changed the office of the president forever. The only difference was, this had been a different President. After the death of Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman was now in office, and it is he that shall forever bear the historical responsibility of having dropped the only two nuclear bombs in history.

3.3 Government by necessity

The First term

When Roosevelt died on April 12, 1945, Truman was called to the White House. Allegedly upon hearing the news of his Presidents death he was mainly concerned for the welfare of Mrs. Roosevelt. When, so the story goes, he asked her if there was anything he could do for her, she replied, with over 13 years of experience as a First Lady, "Is there anything we can do for you? You are the one in trouble now!"[171] He had only been Vice-President for 82 days, during which he had barely spoken to Roosevelt, let alone been briefed on the state of the union and the war. He had no knowledge whatsoever of the Manhattan project[172], he had not been briefed on the Allied negotiations and he had not even the beginning of a Presidential understanding of the state of the economy. In short, the amusing anecdote may or may not be true, but the message conveyed in the words of the First Lady were very true indeed. Truman was in trouble.

Truman had been leading an important Senatorial committee during the war, named after him, which was responsible for exposing unlawful, inefficient or wrong government and private enterprise spending towards the war effort. The strong opposition he experienced during this time, both from within government itself and from the private sector, provided some experience of the oft difficult relationship between government and society.[173] The material he was dealing with, the wartime economy, gave him a thorough understanding of this economy. But in every other sense, he was inexperienced. For such an inexperienced

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[171] Halford R. Ryan, *Harry S. Truman: Presidential Rhetoric* (Santa Barbara, Greenwood Press,1993) 24-26
[172] Ibid, 27
[173] Robert J. Donovan, *Conflict and Crisis: The Presidency of Harry S. Truman, 1945-1948* (Columbia, University of Missouri Press, 1996) 36-54

President to have taken office at such a time in history, Truman bore an enormous amount of responsibility, both in terms of domestic and foreign policy issues. It was a humbling experience for him, all the more so as he had to make many important decisions in both his terms, which would affect the world for decades to come.[174] Within less than eight years, Truman steered the world towards a Cold War, heightened tensions with his America´s communist enemy by executing the Berlin Airlift, help creating the western power block of North Atlantic Treaty Organization, aid Western Europe with a large scale program now known as the Marshall Plan, dealt with rising tensions and civil war in Asia and during all this was responsible for steering the previously booming wartime economy towards economic prosperity for his citizens. His humble political background, combined with the humbling responsibility and weight of his decisions – and perhaps a humble character – made Truman tread very carefully when it came to his use of the concept of 'government'.

A telltale sign of this careful tread is the unique way in which Truman chose to give his first ever State of the Union.[175] Being also his first Constitutionally mandatory speech to the American citizens, he chose not to speak his words out loud, but to write them down and provide Congress with a written State of the Union. Although not uncommon at this time, that he chose to do so in such turbulent times, not six months after the end of the war, at the very beginning of the reform of the American economy and in the midst of rapidly escalating strife among the former Allies, shows that he was not a man to take a risk. Words were not his strongpoint, so he played it safe and wrote them down.[176] The written word differs from the spoken to such an extent that this State of the Union provides no further insight than that this is proof of Truman´s careful ways.

In 1947, Truman did speak out. "The power to mold the future of this Nation lies in our hands--yours and mine, and they are joined together by the Constitution."[177] The words of Roosevelt. Or not? "During the past few months we have removed at a rapid rate the emergency controls that the Federal Government had to exercise during the war. The remaining controls will be retained only as long as they are needed to protect the public. Private enterprise must be given the greatest possible freedom to continue the expansion of

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[174] Donovan, "Conflict and crisis" 61-67
[175] Ibid, 89-102 and Diana B. Carlin, "Harry S. Truman: From Whistlestop to the Halls of Congress" in *Presidential speechwriting: from the New Deal to the Reagan Revolution and beyond* ed. Kurt Ritter and Martin J. Sandhurst (Program in Presidential Rhetoric, 2003)
[176] Donovan, "Conflict", 93 and Carlin, "Harry S. Truman" 43
[177] The American Presidency Project, "Harry S. Truman, State of the Union Address, 1947", University of California http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=12762#axzz1P3fuUd6g (accessed May 24, 2011)

economy."[178] In this quote, it looks as though Truman wished to break with the rhetorical tradition of his predecessor. Government is all but the *united purpose*. Rather, it should withdraw from the scene and let private enterprise take over wherever it can. Seen in this light, the 'we' in his first quote seems all the more undetermined. He explicitly does not denote what this 'we' stands for.[179] The unambiguous use is not the same as Roosevelt's rhetorical dual use of 'we'. Truman's 'we' holds within itself both the restricted governmental form used by Roosevelt and the much more wider use of 'we' as denoting all Americans. It is simply not clear what Truman means here.

We see some hints towards his concept of 'government' reflected in the main focus of this State of the Union in terms of domestic affairs, labor strife: "One of our difficulties in avoiding labor strife arises from a lack of order in the collective bargaining process. […] Neither the parties nor the Government have a definite yardstick for determining when and how Government assistance should be invoked. There is need for integrated governmental machinery to provide the successive steps of mediation, voluntary arbitration, and--ultimately in appropriate cases--ascertainment of the facts of the dispute and the reporting of the facts to the public."[180] In this quote, Truman creates a difficult dualism in his concept. On the one hand, government does not have a ´definitive yardstick´, whilst on the other hand its ´assistance should be invoked´. It must exist, but cannot know of and by itself in what way it should do so. This justification and conceptualization must lay somewhere else. The question is, where?

The Second term

The 1948 election perhaps provided some explanation for his reluctance or hesitation, as it had been a humbling battle indeed. Commonly seen as one of the most remarkable comebacks in Presidential electoral history, Truman defied the odds and defeated his Republican opponent Thomas Dewey after having been down in the polls in double digits.[181] Even more remarkable was his victory when one realizes that he had to take on two formidable opponents from within his party, who had split from the Democratic Party during the campaign. Henry Wallace, the man who Truman came to replace on the Vice-Presidential ballot in 1944 due to his unacceptable radical progressive stance, had split from the Democratic party and ran on a

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[178] The American Presidency Project, "Harry S. Truman, State of the Union Address, 1947"
[179] Carlin, "Harry S, Truman" 47
[180] The American Presidency Project, "Harry S. Truman, State of the Union Address, 1947"
[181] Zachary Karaball, *The Last Campaign: How Harry Truman Won the Last Campaign* (New York, Random House, 2000) 219-230

ticket for the newly created Progressive Party.[182] Wallace had been fired by Truman from his cabinet position as Secretary of Commerce because of his opposition to the Truman doctrine and the American position in the Cold War.[183] In terms of popular vote, the impact of the Progressive Party was almost exactly the same as the other new political party, Strom Thurmond's States' Rights Party. They both reached 1,1 million votes, or 2,4% of the total.[184] The Progressives, however, were unable to obtain any electoral votes, whereas the States' Rights Party managed to win 39.[185]

Although this major electoral reshuffle had no significant effect on Truman's second term other than his crushing inability to pass civil rights reform bills, it had great consequences for the future of American politics.[186] The rift between the Democratic party and the States' Rights Party was not an ideological split as such, but was rooted in traditional political views of southern Democrats alone. Whereas Henry Wallace found support from progressives all over the country, Strom Thurmond's support was focused in the southern states. He did not even run in 31 states, which made him unable to actually win the election, but only focused on the southern states. In those states, Truman's attempts to enforce civil rights legislation from within the Federal government had aroused strong anti-Federal sentiments. Thurmond's candidacy was aimed at voicing these sentiments.[187] His campaign proved successful, as he carried the electoral votes from the states of Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and South Carolina, totaling 38 in all. The rift was therefore ideological, but with geographical boundaries.

In terms of electoral results, this type of geographical rift has much bigger consequences than a nationwide ideological type like the creation of the Progressive Party, as to carry support in states, based on issues concerning those states in particular, meant that elector votes were at stake.[188] Thurmond´s party had laid bare a fundamental difference of opinion between southern and other Democrats. This difference is perhaps best illustrated in the single electoral vote Thurmond´s candidacy got from a Democratic elector from Tennessee. Although this elector was sent to the vote as a representative of the Democratic Party, which to all intends and purposes meant he should have voted for Truman, he cast his

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[182] Karaball, "The last campaign", 61-76 and 116-126
[183] Ibid, 62
[184] Ibid, 256-257
[185] Ibid
[186] Lawrence, "The Collapse" 62-75
[187] Ïbid, 73
[188] Lawrence, "The Collapse" 73

vote to the States' Rights Party candidate. His sympathy for Thurmond's anti-Federal struggle was greater than his sense of duty in voting for his own candidate. Thurmond thus ended up with 39 electoral votes in total. Although in terms of popular vote both rifts were equally important, the geographical focus of Thurmond´s campaign showed the first important signs of southern Democrats breaking away from their age-old Democratic political convictions.[189]

It is against this turbulent background that Truman´s Inaugural Address should be examined. In this anti-federal climate, at least within his own political base, it is no wonder that he did not feel comfortable to provide a strong concept of his own Federal government. That the word itself – government – appears not more than four times in the entire address would seem logical, especially as the whole scope of the address was devoted to amplifying the differences between the good of Democracy and the evil of Communism. Set against the background of the Cold War, this choice of topic was logical indeed. The American people would after all no longer be the only focus of a United States Presidential Inaugural Address. From now on, the world would be listening as well. America was to all intends and purposes a military hegemony in the Western world, and other democracies depended on it for safeguarding their future. [190]

If we look at the structure of the speech itself, which was built up around a large amount of juxtaposed us-them examples, it is still rather striking that Truman chose not to point towards the many differences between the communist and democratic concept of 'government' itself. "Democracy maintains that government is established for the benefit of the individual, and is charged with the responsibility of protecting the rights of the individual and his freedom in the exercise of his abilities."[191] That is all he chose to say on the matter. He points towards differences in the concept of man, religion, freedom, social reform, etc, but allows for no further clarification on the concept of 'government' than to say that it is established for the benefit of the people and is charged with the responsibility of protecting their individual rights. A meagre explanation of the concept at best, as when juxtaposed to the communist concept of 'government' this governmental 'responsibility' holds for both radical conservatives and staunch progressives alike. After all, they both agreed that government should protect the individual from communism in some way or another. By not defining the

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[189] Lawrence, "The collapse" 62-75
[190] Ryan, "Harry S. Truman" 115-118
[191] The American Presidency Project, "Harry S. Truman, Inaugural Address, 1949", University of California http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=13282#axzz1P3fuUd6g (accessed May 24, 2011)

means by which this protection was to be incorporated in the concept of 'government', that concept itself was still void of any content.[192]

In 1949, Truman provides further conceptual substance in his State of the Union Address: "The attainment of this kind of society demands the best efforts of every citizen in every walk of life, and it imposes increasing responsibilities on the Government."[193] He continues: "Our Government has undertaken to meet these responsibilities."[194] What lies in between provides further explanation: "The Government must work with industry, labor, and the farmers in keeping our economy running at full speed. The Government must see that every American has a chance to obtain his fair share of our increasing abundance. These responsibilities go hand in hand."[195]

The 1950 and 1951 State's of the Union were no exception to the rule which seemed to be in place for Truman's concept of 'government', or rather lack thereof. They must, however, be seen in their time. Truman dealt with a seemingly rapidly escalating Cold War. Korea and China endured civil war and either risked falling or had already fallen to the communists. Eastern Europe had fallen to communism in its entirety. Clear signs, at least to Truman, that the Truman doctrine was a bare necessity to keep communism from spreading.[196] But the Cold War had also extended to domestic politics. In terms of domestic policy, anti-communist sentiment was hard to contain. Although Truman was a staunch anti-communist himself, he was not immune to accusations by the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), and by the now infamous Senator Joseph McCarthy, who ran the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Government Operations Committee of the Senate. Truman not only dealt with the fallout of the Alger Hiss trial, which started after the 1948 testimony of Whittaker Chambers and at which the State Department official Hiss was convicted of perjury, but Senator McCarthy had also accused Truman's Secretary of State Dean Acheson of having protecting communist employees.[197]

McCarthy´s attack on Truman´s administration shattered its reputation, all the more so because they went hand in hand with investigations led by another Senate committee into

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[192] Ryan, "Harry S. Truman" 126-131
[193] The American Presidency Project, "Harry S. Truman, State of the Union Address, 1949", University of California http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=13293#axzz1P3fuUd6g (accessed May 24, 2011)
[194] Ibid
[195] Ibid
[196] Robert Dallek, *Harry S. Truman* (New York, Times Books, 2008) 92-94
[197] Dallek, "Harry" 121-124

possible corruption among his Administration officials.[198] This was not the political climate to boast any new concept of 'government'. The hostilities towards the Truman administration are reflected in the words of his State's of the Union of 1950 and 1951. Most notably one sees a strong focus on rhetorical unification of the United States through references to its people as procurer of the American interests. To give a few examples: "We have taken important steps in securing the North Atlantic community against aggression. We have continued our successful support of European recovery. We have returned to our established policy of expanding international trade through reciprocal agreement. We have strengthened our support of the United Nations."[199] "We have met and reversed the first significant downturn in economic activity since the war."[200] "[W]e must curb monopoly and provide aids to independent business so that it may have the credit and capital to compete in a system of free enterprise."[201]

This third and last quote points towards an interesting use of this 'we'. After the Second World War, the theories of John Maynard Keynes, one of the most prominent economists in the Twentieth Century and intellectual father of the theory of anti-cyclic budgetary discipline, were the dominant factor in the fiscal policies of the Western World.[202] Inherent to his main thesis, which proscribed that government could control the economy by actively spending or cutting spending anti-cyclic to the development of the economy, was an increased role of governmental control over the economy compared to previous economic systems.[203] The Truman administration adhered his theories in its domestic and foreign economic policies.[204]

But even as Truman's policies actively proscribed an increased role of government, a fact which was hard to deny, he did not explain it as such in his conceptual explanation of his government.[205] Instead, he chose to consistently explain these Keynesian policies as policies enacted by 'we', as in the American people. In a way, this is an even bolder claim to their justification than had he used the concept of 'government', as Truman seems to say that it was the American people in its entirety that had decided to implement Keynesian principles. It was

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[198] Dallek, "Harry" 127
[199] The American Presidency Project, "Harry S. Truman, State of the Union Address, 1950", University of California http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=13567#axzz1P3fuUd6g (accessed May 26, 2011)
[200] Ibid
[201] Ibid
[202] Lawrence, "The Collapse" 84-87
[203] Ibid
[204] Ibid, 87-94
[205] Ryan, "Harry S Truman" 172-185 and "Carlin, "Harry S. Truman" 54-56

not the government which decided for the people to do so, but the people itself which had made the decision. But if one takes into account his reluctance to define the concept of 'government' in other, essentially non-Keynesian issues, one cannot but conclude that Truman did not mean for this justification of his Keynesian policies to be so bold, but simply wished to avoid giving meaning to the concept of 'government' itself.[206]

What is most striking in his rhetoric then, at least in terms of the concept of 'government', is that Truman systematically avoids to provide the concept with any definite substance. Government simply existed in his rhetoric, and had certain tasks, derived from the constitution or the necessities of the day. Those tasks may be wider in scope than before, but not because of any appointed meaning to the concept itself. Truman felt either insecure in providing meaning of his own office in his rhetoric, or he simply did not find it necessary to do so. In itself, the reasons for Truman not to provide any substance deserve further study. However, his reasons are not under scrutiny here, merely the substance of his concept itself. And what is clear is that Truman, whether intended or not, created an empty concept of 'government'.

3.4 Eisenhowers impartial government: 1952-1960

The First term

The campaign of 1952 ran against the same background as the final years of Truman´s administration. The war in Korea had dragged on for two years, McCarthy's search for communist's within American society and its political arena continued, the United States were forced to face the fact that they were no longer the only nuclear power and accusations of corruption within the Democratic administration of President Truman were still front page news. The stalemate in this situation, or at least the fact that Truman had been unable to tackle these issues in terms of what the public expected, had severely damaged his reputation.[207] Early in the primary campaigns, therefore, after having lost the New Hampshire primary to the popular anti-corruption candidate Estes Kefauver, Truman decided to withdraw his candidacy.[208] Kefauver, however, had a bad reputation among political bosses, as he had

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[206] Ryan, "Harry S Truman" 191-193
[207] Dallek, "Harry" 125-130
[208] John Robert Greene, *The crusade: The presidential election of 1952* (Lanham, University Press of America, 1985) 42-61

accused some of them of having ties to organized crime. The convention eventually chose the political moderate Illinois Governor Adlai Stevenson as their candidate.[209]

Stevenson's candidacy in itself was of no great importance to the future of the American political landscape, other than the evident fact that he lost the election. His running mate, however, proved to be of greater importance to the Democratic Party. The political landscape altering elections of 1948 still resonated within the Party. Although the States´ Rights Party had dissolved itself directly after the elections of 1948, the message had been clear; the wishes of the segregationist anti-civil rights southern Democrats could not be ignored, as it may cost the party the solid democratic base of the southern states. The Democrats had listened. They chose Alabama segregationist John Sparkman as Stevenson's running mate.[210] Set against the background of four years of relative tranquillity on the front of Federal Civil Rights proposals, due to Truman's inability to pass them, this secured the Democrats a victory in the southern states. As it would turn out, these would be the only states they would carry.

Former Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe and the first Supreme Commander of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Dwight Eisenhower was immensely popular among both Democrats and Republicans. Both parties had courted him to be their candidate for the election of 1948 and again in 1952.[211] When he eventually decided to run for the Republican party, it came as no great surprise that he did so on a moderate ticket. As Eisenhower had no political experience and no outspoken political views known to the public, the choice for the eastern moderate Republican wing was a logical one.[212] Other than Eisenhower's main Republican opponent, conservative Senator Robert Taft, this eastern wing of the Republican Party was known to support many social reforms passed by Roosevelt and Truman.[213] Eisenhower thus appealed to a much larger part of the electorate than his predecessor-candidates had done. His popularity, combined with this wide appeal and the public demand to end the stalemate in the Cold War, which Eisenhower was believed to be able to do, won him the election with relative ease. winning by a margin of over 10 percent after a campaign based on simple ideas and slogans such as the memorable main Republican

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[209] Greene, "The crusade" 124-148
[210] Ibid, 141-148 and Lawrence, "The Collapse" 103-105
[211] Greene, "The crusade" 21-23
[212] Pach, Chester J. and Elmo Richardson, *The presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower* (Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 1991) 14-29
[213] Ibid

slogan 'I like Ike'.[214] For the first time in twenty years, a Republican held the highest office in American government.

Where his predecessor already had the policies and political background to form his rhetorical concept, even though he chose not to do so, Eisenhower still had a clean sheet in terms of what the public might expect from his policy, and from his concept of 'government'.[215] When examining his first Inaugural Address, one must realize that, since 1948, the United States Presidential Inaugural Address was heard all around the world. Like Truman, Eisenhower focused on the role of America in the rapidly escalating Cold War. Government, as a word but also a concept relevant to American citizens, is not touched upon in his 1953 Inaugural. Other than Truman, who did create the opportunity for himself to expound on the concept of 'government' through juxtaposed us-them examples, Eisenhower avoided this altogether by using his Inaugural to pledge to the world nine principles of American dedication to its international responsibilities.[216]

Shortly after his Inauguration, Eisenhower gave his first State of the Union Address. Although half of this address again focused on international affairs, and the Korean war in particular, Eisenhower did set out the outline of his concept. "In all departments, dedication to these basic precepts of security and efficiency, integrity, and economy can and will produce an administration deserving of the trust the people have placed in it. Our people have demanded nothing less than good, efficient government. They shall get nothing less."[217] When taken into account that Eisenhower campaigned on the issue of eradicating governmental corruption, this is understandable. Nonetheless it is interesting to see which characteristics he gives to good government, as he focuses entirely on operational characteristics, rather than ideological. It should be safe, efficient, integer and economical, not fair, just or frugal. But this description of 'good' government holds another important clue to Eisenhower's concept; his take on the us-them position.

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[214] Greene, "The crusade" 297-321. Eisenhower had promised to end corruption in government and work towards a decisive end to the Korean war. The main theme of the campaign, however, had been the likeability of Eisenhower as a man.
[215] Pach, "The Presidency" 29-48
[216] Martin J. Medhurst, *Eisenhower's War of Words: Rhetoric and Leadership* (East Lansing, Michigan State University Press, 1994) 48-61
[217] The American Presidency Project, "Dwight D. Eisenhower, State of the Union Address, 1953", University of California http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=9829#axzz1P3fuUd6g (accessed May 27, 2011)

Throughout his first term State´s of the Union, Eisenhower frequently speaks of 'our people' when talking about the concept of 'government'.[218] Although the constructions differ, ranging from ´our people need´ to ´demand´ or ´deserve´ something, the idea remains the same: Eisenhower explains government as one side of the reciprocal process of democratic elections. The people choose based on their beliefs, needs and ideas; the chosen government should act upon their choice safely, efficiently, economically and with integrity. That is what makes good government. [219] At first glance, this concept is not so different from Roosevelt's idea of government, which acted in the interest of the people as the ´instrument of their united purpose´. After all, when 'our people' have chosen, the reciprocal process proscribes that government *becomes* the instrument through which their voice – their ideals and beliefs – is heard and acted upon. But there is one very important difference: Roosevelt's concept is not based on this Roosveletian idea of reciprocity. Within the us-them position, Roosevelt took both positions, using his rhetorical mastery to explain government as being both the wish of ´we´ the people – of which he was a part – and the instrument to guide those same wishes – which he also embodied. This may seem reciprocal, but in reality Roosevelt used this as a rhetorical trick to justify the greatly expanded power and responsibilities of government. In essence, government needed to do what was best for the people, even if they did not know it to be so.

Eisenhower, on the other hand, did see this reciprocal process, and explained government as being both defined and limited in its responsibilities by the wishes of ´our people´. He therefore places himself in the position of ´us´, being government, having responsibilities towards and based on the needs and wishes of ´them´, being the people. No rhetorical tricks here, no ideological stance which government wished to enforce upon the people. [220] Government does what the people say it should do, according to Eisenhower.

What, then, should government do when it is forced to make a choice of its own, when arbitration between separate groups of the people is needed? Eisenhower explains what government should do and be in that case in a passage on labor policy, in his 1953 address: "Government can do a great deal to aid the settlement of labor disputes without allowing itself to be employed as an ally of either side. Its proper role in industrial strife is to encourage the processes of mediation and conciliation. These processes can successfully be directed only by

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[218] Medhurst, "Eisenhower's War" 231-253
[219] Ibid, 234
[220] Ibid, 251-253

a government free from the taint of any suspicion that it is partial or punitive."[221] This fits perfectly in his reciprocal explanation of government. When the people, due to internal strife, cannot provide government a clear wish or demand, government should help the people through guidance and arbitration to form such a wish or demand. It is not governments task to decide one way or the other, but rather to try to unify the people behind one common cause.

This concept of a government responsible to the people through the reciprocal process of democracy sometimes seemed to be overshadowed by Eisenhower´s continuance of New Deal social reform policy. "This administration is profoundly aware of two great needs born of our living in a complex industrial economy. First, the individual citizen must have safeguards against personal disaster inflicted by forces beyond his control; second, the welfare of the people demands effective and economical performance by the Government of certain indispensable social services."[222] We see here, again, his focus on 'effective and economical' government. Eisenhower acknowledges that these ´indispensable social services´ are a new responsibility of government: "In [this] area--that of social rights--we see most clearly the new application of old ideas of freedom."[223] This is, however, a historical-rhetorical trick.

'Freedom' is perhaps the most essential concept in American rhetoric.[224] Freedom from the British, from the Federal government, from political bosses, from economic control by other governments, from the pressure of war, from communism. Freedom was understood by the American people throughout its history as the most basic of values.[225] It was undeniable, and either existed matter-of-factly or needed to be pursued vigorously. By claiming the social reforms passed by his two predecessors to be ´a new application of the old ideas of freedom´, he circumscribed the necessity to explain why he, as a Republican President, adhered to these radical changes in governmental responsibility enacted by his Democratic predecessors. By calling it a ´freedom´, it was, rhetorically at least, no longer an ideological point of view.[226] Freedom, when it did not exist, should after all be vigorously pursued. Roosevelt had thus, in Eisenhower´s rhetorical reasoning, merely established through policy what had always been the rightful freedom of the American people. It was

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[221] The American Presidency Project, "Dwight D. Eisenhower, State of the Union Address, 1953"
[222] Ibid
[223] Ibid
[224] Ryan, "Franklin D. Roosevelt's" 72
[225] Ibid
[226] Medhurst, "Eisenhower's War", 152-158

Eisenhower´s duty as bearer of the reciprocal responsibility of government to maintain this freedom, or to pursue it where it was not yet manifest.

It is important to realize at this stage that the concept of 'government' as rhetorically provided by any President is in no way automatically the same as his policy or ideology. Where Roosevelt's concept and ideology were wider than his policy, in the sense that he claimed more power in his concept than he was able to enact through policy, and Truman's conceptual void did not mean that he did not influence the size and form of government itself or have a personal political ideology on what government should be, so also did Eisenhower's rhetorical concept differ from the reality of his administration. His rhetorical 'freedom'-trick, for instance, provided him the opportunity to create and propose policy which was in no way a direct wish of the people.[227] This becomes clear in his second term.

The Second term

In terms of policy, Eisenhower´s Presidency was mainly known for its foreign affairs policy. The war in Korea, the Hungarian Revolution and the Suez crisis, several foreign interventions and the increase in governmental spending on the defense budget dominated his reputation. Through these policies, especially the Hungarian Revolution and the Suez Crisis which coincided with the final weeks of his reelection campaign, Eisenhower could show strong leadership.[228] His reelection had been relatively easy, winning from opponent Adlai Stevenson by a margin of almost ten million votes.[229] Stevenson again carried only southern states, with 41 states going to Eisenhower.[230]

Throughout both his terms, Eisenhower maintained his concept of 'government' as bearer of the responsibility towards the people through the reciprocal process of democracy (examples of his rhetorical concept can be found in Appendix C). But his second term would prove to have an important effect on the Presidential rhetorical explanation of the concept of 'government' of the 1960's and early 1970's, because the rhetorical concept came to differ to too great an extend from the reality of the political landscape.

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[227] Medhurst, "Eisenhower's War", 152-158
[228] Pach, "The Presidency" 75-104
[229] Charles A. H. Thompson and Frances M. Shattuck, *The 1956 Presidential Campaign* (Santa Barbara, Greenwood Press, 1974) 13-21
[230] Ibid, 347-349

As a moderate eastern Republican, Eisenhower believed in the emancipating role of government in undoing civil inequalities.[231] During his first election campaign in 1952, for instance, Eisenhower focused heavily on the women vote by discussing topics favored among American women and using women for targeted grass roots campaign events, something Taft, his conservative opponent during the primaries, would have never considered. It won him the female vote.[232] But most importantly, Eisenhower also believed in the principle of Federal control and regulation if emancipation was not adhered to by state government. During his first term, for instance, he openly supported the ruling of the Supreme Court in Brown vs. the Board of Education, which eventually ended racial segregation in public schools.[233] The important thing was not that he supported the ruling itself, but the fact that he supported the Federal institution of the Supreme Court in ruling over a case which was, to States' Rights Americans, a state affair.[234] This conviction that Federal government should act if states could not or would not do so led to Eisenhower's Civil Rights Bills of 1957 and 1960.

In 1957, shortly after his reelection, Eisenhower sent to Congress a Civil Rights Bill which proscribed certain measures aimed at ensuring all African Americans could and would register to vote in all American states. The Bill itself was eventually rewritten to the point of irrelevance by the judiciary committee of the Senate, to which Democratic Senate leader Lyndon Johnson had given the assignment, and was obstructed by a 24-hour single man filibuster by former States´ Rights Party candidate and now Senator Strom Thurmond, but it passed.[235]

In 1960, Eisenhower again sent to Congress a Civil Rights Bill, this time aimed at correcting the wrongs from the rewriting of the former Bill. It allowed for Federal control over local voter registration, and provided punitive measures in case of non compliance.[236] The Bill passed, despite the efforts of a group of southern Democrats who filibustered the vote for over 43 hours, the longest in American history.[237]

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[231] David A. Nichols, *A matter of justice: Eisenhower and the beginning of the civil rights revolution* (New York, Simon & Schuster, 2007) 23-41
[232] Ibid, 9
[233] Ibid, 51-74
[234] Ibid, 75-91
[235] Ibid, 143-213
[236] Ibid, 235-264
[237] Ibid

These Bills had not been radical proposals, even when seen from within the climate of the day. A majority of Americans approved of the measures proposed.[238] But the effect the Bills would have was not at stake for the filibusterers of 1957 and 1960. It was the fact that Federal law would overpower what southern states had come to see as their most fundamental right compared to the Federal United States, segregation policies. Eisenhower´s Civil Rights Bills were thus a phenomenon which was seldom seen: it was perceived, albeit by a small part of America, as being fundamentally wrong. In the eyes of southern segregationists, this was a Federal government which deliberately acted against the benefit of its people. With such opposition to government, Eisenhower's concept no longer made sense. After all, the democratic process may leave room for strong differences of opinion, the outcome of the process is always just in itself. But when a group comes to view this outcome, being the chosen Federal government, as acting fundamentally unjustly regardless what outcome the process has, it changes balance. And that is precisely what happened during the next decade.

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[238] Nichols, "A matter of justice" 214-221

Chapter Four – The Great Society and the separation of government and the people

"Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans—born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage—and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this Nation has always been committed, and to which we are committed today at home and around the world."[239]

The fifties were over. The age of austerity had passed. The American economy was in recession, but had lead the free Western world into an era of prosperity, not only by ways of trade, but also in terms of military security. The arms race with the Soviet Union was in full swing and had caused a unique atmosphere of tensed peace between East and West, known as the principle of Mutually Assured Destruction, or MAD.[240] Although the Cold War had turned America into a hegemonic power, forcing the office of the President to spend much more of its time on foreign affairs than ever before, the experience of three Presidential terms had provided enough experience to allow for a strong focus on important domestic issues.[241] And the opportunistic climate of the 1960's seemed to beg for this focus.

This was the decade of Vietnam, of anti-war protests, of student protests, of civil rights struggle, of the belief in the end of poverty, of an increasing demand for individual liberties, of hippies and beatniks, of the birth of pop- and counterculture, and of Nixon's silent majority. But perhaps most of all, this was the decade of a widespread belief that America as a nation could do anything, if only it put its mind to it. Lyndon Johnson unknowingly provided this era with a name perhaps unbefitting the outcome of the 1970's and 1980's, but most certainly befitting its spirit: The Great Society.

But before the decade was over, this Great Society spirit would start to turn on itself. The high expectations of the 1960's and early 1970's would make place for a disbelief, not in society itself, but in its government. Aided by a confidence shattering corruption scandal in the highest political office in the Western world, American citizens would come to lose their trust in government. Had Great Society proven to be too much to take in? This chapter examines the evolution of the concept set against the background of these tumultuous times.

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[239] The American Presidency Project, "Robert F. Kennedy, Inaugural Address, 1961", University of California http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=8032#axzz1P3fuUd6g (accessed May 28, 2011)
[240] Lawrence, "The Collapse" 152-155
[241] Sean J. Savage, *JFK, LBJ, and the Democratic Party* (New York, State University of New York Press, 2004) 78-79

In what way does one see the concept of Great Society reflected in the Presidential rhetorical concept of 'government'? Can one establish a turning point in this rhetoric, either caused by occurrences outside of or within the office of the President itself? And finally; what, if any, was the effect of the evolution of the concept during this decade on the political landscape of the 1980's, which was, at least in terms of rhetoric, strongly opposed to government?

4.1 A New Frontier: the political concept of JFK, 1960-1963

Although his presidency would eventually change American politics, John F. Kennedy´s 1960 campaign had been hard fought, winning by a margin of 0,1 percent.[242] His opponent, incumbent Vice-President Richard Nixon, boasted executive experience and could ride the wave of Eisenhower's popularity. His President's approval rating was still above 60 percent in the final year of his administration.[243] Although Eisenhower did not campaign for Nixon until the final ten days of the campaign, even obstructing his efforts by answering to a reporter's question what Nixon's achievements had been with his famous mistaken joke "If you give me a week, maybe I can think of one"[244], Nixon's ties to his President helped him a great deal. Throughout the campaign, up until the first ever televised debates, Nixon was in the lead in the polls.[245] Even the recent economic downfall, leading up to the recession of 1960, did not hurt Nixon to the degree which may be expected from an incumbent executive.[246]

But Kennedy's highly skilled campaign team, led by his brother Robert, successfully altered the course of the campaign. By portraying Kennedy as the young candidate – even though he and Nixon were only four years apart – ready to "get America moving again" the campaign team was almost able to even the polls. [247] Then, for the first time in its history, America got to see their candidates in a face to face debate. Kennedy, appearing much younger and more energetic on camera than his opponent, turned the tide in four Nationally televised debates. Although other factors may have influenced this difference, it is still a clear sign that Presidential campaigns would never be the same.[248]

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[242] David Pietrusza, *1960, LBJ vs. JFK vs. Nixon: The epic campaign that forged three presidencies* (New York, Union Square Press, 2010) 411-412
[243] Pach, "The Presidency" 233-241
[244] Pietrusza, "1960" 241
[245] Ibid, 311
[246] Ibid, 289
[247] Ibid, 326
[248] Ibid, 331-342

Kennedy´s campaign team could not prevent him loosing 15 electoral votes to Democratic Senator Harry Byrd, a southern segregationist, even though Byrd had not been on any ticket and never officially ran. These electors voted for Strom Thurmond as their vice-presidential candidate.[249] One elector even voted for a vice-presidential candidate from a different party, Republican Senator Barry Goldwater, foreshadowing events to come.[250] This vote reflected the disenfranchised sentiments of Southerners towards the established political parties, which would only heighten in strength during the early sixties.

Like his Cold War predecessors, Kennedy's three years in the White House were rife with foreign policy events: the Bay of Pigs, the Cuba missile crisis, escalating conflict in Vietnam, regime change in Iraq, nuclear proliferation issues with Israel. But Kennedy had enough energy to divide his attention between foreign policy issues and a rigorous domestic program.[251] He chose an interesting name for his domestic policy, calling it the 'New Frontier'. Deliberately appealing to the historic sense of adventure to explore new geographical frontiers, so embedded in American culture, Kennedy, through this name, pointed towards an important aspect of both his domestic policy and the way in which he saw government exist within it. [252] By calling it a frontier, he not only appealed to a sense of history, but also to the dedication of the American public. Frontiers are meant to be explored, to be conquered. But geographical frontiers were conquered by individuals, by adventure seekers hoping to find new riches for themselves. This frontier, however, was to be conquered by and through government, for the benefit of the people.

Kennedy's program consisted of ambitious social reforms. In line with the New Deal and Keynesian economics, he wished to curb the recession by government intervention.[253] But he went much further. He proposed a system of medical care for the elderly, he aimed to increase public spending on education and he promised Federal aid to farmers, who bore the greatest burden of the recession.[254] With such a proposed increase in governmental responsibility over its people, the question than arises, was this ambitious new role which Kennedy saw for government reflected in the way he described the concept itself to the public?

[249] Pietrusza, "1960" 386-395
[250] Ibid, 394
[251] James N. Giglio, *The Presidency of John F. Kennedy* (Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 2006) 47-99
[252] Nils Schnelle, *John F. Kennedy and the New Frontier – the rhetoric and the political results* (Nordstedt, Books on Demand GmbH, 2005) 5-10
[253] Savage, "JFK" 161-182
[254] Ibid, 161-231

Like Truman and Eisenhower, Kennedy spoke to the world at large in his Inaugural speech of 1961. With help of his sweeping rhetoric, he singled out the various types of people around the world – old friends, new friends and enemies – and spoke to them directly. Also in line with Cold War Inaugural tradition, which seemed to have established itself by this time, Kennedy avoided complicated mention of domestic affairs, thereby also avoiding the necessity to provide meaning to his concept of 'government'.[255]

Meaning was provided in his first State of the Union Address, in February 1961, in which Kennedy set out his future agenda. Government, as a word, is only mentioned as an institution, and is provided no deeper, direct conceptual meaning. However, Kennedy does use a different word to denote his concept; 'administration'. When Kennedy directly alludes to future proposals or to principles for which he stands, he does so in a construction with `this administration´ (examples can be found in Appendix D). It is important to note here that Kennedy did not simply call 'government' by another name, 'administration'. The point is, that he consequently talks about 'this' administration, rather than 'administration' by its own. When, in his 1963 State of the Union, Kennedy talks about 'this' Government, he could also have said 'this administration'. As a concept in itself and compared to the concept of 'government', 'this administration' is limited both in time and ideological meaning. An administration – when defined by a determinant such as 'this' – cannot exceed its term, which limits its scope of time. But in terms of ideological meaning, there is an even more important difference with the – possibilities of – conceptual meaning of government: as a concept itself, it cannot *alter* the meaning of the concept of 'government', precisely because 'this administration' itself is the manifestation in reality of the concept of 'government', but within a predetermined and fixed timeframe. 'This administration' holds no ideological meaning, but is merely the form in which government exists at a certain time.

This is difficult to grasp, and to make it even more complicated; the fact that Kennedy used this essentially non-ideological concept of administration to define his concept of 'government', is in itself strongly ideological in nature. After all, by stating that government is merely what a certain administration does at a certain time, Kennedy took a clear position in the debate on what government should be. He denied any time-transcending, absolute qualities to the concept of 'government' itself, by explaining his own alterations within its reality through his policy not in terms of an alteration to the time-transcending concept of

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[255] Richard J. Tofel, *Sounding the trumpet: the making of John F. Kennedy's Inaugural Address* (Chicago, Ivan Dee Publisher, 2005) 75-90. Kennedy's famous 'Ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country' was not aimed at domestic policy, but followed out of his appeal to the strength of the American people in seeing through the Cold War.

'government', but through the time-defined concept of 'this administration'. To give some time-transcending quality to his concept, one must say that Kennedy's concept of 'government' was essentially political in nature. It exists, but only through an administration. In essence, this is the same concept Eisenhower used, with the important exception that Kennedy does not arrive at his concept through a reciprocal bond with 'the people', whereas Eisenhower defined his concept through – responsibility towards – the people. But both are essentially political in nature, and provide no time-transcending qualities to the concept of 'government' itself.[256]

This political, non-ideological concept of 'government' did not mean that Kennedy did not believe in permanent values or constructions. On the contrary, the safeguarding of these permanent values and construction were to be a permanent task of 'this' and any 'administration'. This may seem to further complicate his concept of 'government', but in reality, it simplifies it. The main difficulty with Kennedy's political concept of 'government' was that, if taken by its own, it could not account for the necessity to alter society through policy. To put it otherwise, it is impossible to justify the increase of real governmental power, through a conceptual principle of government void of any ideological meaning. However, Kennedy's concept did not stand on its own, but was directly related to another concept, which provided this justification; the related concept of ´society´, or ´the people´.

Whereas Eisenhower had defined his concept of 'government' *through* the people, Kennedy *balanced* his concept through *adding to* the concept of ´the people´ a notion of justice. It was ´the people´ that intrinsically justified his administration, and any other, to take action on certain issues, most notably the economy and civil rights. The main difference with Eisenhower´s concept is that with Kennedy, the necessity for certain administrative actions is explained as lying within ´the people´ itself, and is not necessarily steered by the reciprocal process of democracy. What is important to realize here, is that this *balancing* of the concept of 'government' with the concept of 'the people' provided Kennedy with much the same rhetorical instruments as Roosevelt had. He could talk about "building the American future together"[257], when addressing Congress directly, because the necessity for them to do so existed within 'the people'. The people, thus, took the place of Roosevelt's 'government' in the justification of power. In his own words: "Members of the Congress, the Constitution makes us not rivals for power but partners for progress. We are all trustees for the American

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[256] Eisenhower also uses 'Administration' to denote his concept in his first State of the Union Address. However, the focus lies on the reciprocal bond.
[257] The American Presidency Project, "Robert F. Kennedy, State of the Union Address, 1962", University of California http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=9082#axzz1P3fuUd6g (accessed May 29, 2011)

people, custodians of the American heritage. It is my task to report the State of the Union--to improve it is the task of us all."[258]

Thus, Kennedy had created a definition of government which, in conjunction with the definition of 'the people', justified not only his economic policy, but also his Civil Rights policy. The first was perhaps the subject of political and societal debate, but caused no great societal unrest, whereas the latter put a strain on his concept of 'government' much like it had done with Eisenhower´s concept. As had become visible in the electors vote after the election, Civil Rights caused irreconcilable differences between separate groups of the Democratic Party and within society at large.[259] Unfortunately, Kennedy never got around to dealing with this challenge to his concept. On 22 November 1963, he was assassinated in Dallas, Texas.

After the assassination of President Kennedy, Vice-President Lyndon Johnson took over without any major alterations to the staff.[260] He pledged to fulfill the wishes of his deceased President throughout the remainder of his first and only term.[261] Remarkably enough, Johnson kept his promise not only in terms of sending to Congress Kennedy's Civil Rights Bill, but also in the rhetoric he used to describe his concept of 'government'. Even more remarkable than that; in his own term, he used a different concept of 'government'.

In his first State of the Union Address, Johnson addressed the nation in like manner to Kennedy, at least in terms of his concept of 'government'. Johnson used the 'this administration' concept literally, including the codependent concept of 'the people' (Appendix D). This would point towards a continuation of the concept, were it not that he changed it in his own term. Why Johnson changed the concept is not clear, but most likely he would have wished to create his own rhetoric, which fitted his own policies. But before it could come to that, he first had to be elected on his own accord.

4.2 Johnson´s disenfranchised Great Society

The election of 1964 was overshadowed by the death of President Kennedy. It was not so much his death, as the continuance of his policies by Johnson that made it difficult for

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[258] The American Presidency Project, "Robert F. Kennedy, State of the Union Address, 1962"
[259] Savage, "JFK" 286-291
[260] Paul R. Hengeller, *In his steps: Lyndon Johnson and the Kennedy Mistique* (Chicago, Chicago University Press) 1991, pag 92-109 Hengeller argued that Johnson actively convinced Kennedy's staff to remain, although they were reluctant to do so. Hengeller explains that Johnson sought to replace the staff in due time, but thought he could not do so in the remainder of Kennedy´s Presidency due to the popularity.
[261] Ibid, pag 109-122 Throughout his work, Hengeller argues that Johnson aimed to work with the legacy of Kennedy precisely to the amount necessary for him to be elected himself, but no further.

Republican's to campaign.[262] After all, they were criticizing the opinions of a much loved deceased President. Johnson won the Democratic nomination with relative ease, but endured a very difficult situation during the DNC, which would prove to be indicative of the upcoming party realignment. At the start of the convention, a newly formed pro-civil rights Mississippi Democratic Party, which called itself the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP), accused the existing MDP of being elected on the basis of illegal, segregationist electoral laws.[263] Johnson was faced with the difficult decision which party he would support. He could hardly give his unconditional support to the MFDP, as it would have been an unmistakable sign towards southern segregationist Democrats that they no longer belonged in the Democratic party.[264] On the other hand, supporting the traditional MDP was not an option either, as it would mean directly opposing not only the Civil Rights Act he himself had helped pass, but also those of President Eisenhower before him. It would most certainly have cost him votes, had he done so and should the Republicans have elected a moderate, pro-civil rights candidate.[265] Johnson had to find a middle ground.

The situation was 'resolved' through mediation of Democratic Civil Rights activists, one of whom was Martin Luther King jr., in a compromise. The MFDP would get only two of the Mississippi delegate seats, in return for the promise that this would be the last DNC at which delegates were chosen through Jim Crow electoral laws.[266] Unfortunately for Johnson, this did not work. Both the MFDP and the MDP were disappointed with the compromise. The MDP so much so, that they walked out of the Convention and went back to Mississippi. It would cost Johnson the State of Mississippi, which he lost to his opponent Barry Goldwater with a staggering 87 percent of the vote.[267]

The Republican nomination was hard fought. The longstanding party divide between eastern moderates and Midwestern and southern conservatives, which was largely irrelevant during the 1952 and 1956 campaigns due to Eisenhower's personal popularity and which Nixon had been able to overcome during the 1960 campaign, was now fought out in open battle between the two faction candidates.[268] Conservative Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater initially lost in the polls to moderate Governor of New York Nelson Rockefeller. In a very

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[262]Robert David Johnson, *All the way with LBJ: the 1964 presidential election* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009) 16-19

[263] Ibid, 164-167

[264] Ibid, 171

[265] Ibid, 172

[266] Ibid, 173-176

[267] Savage, "JFK" 311-314

[268] Karl A. Lamb, *Campaign decision-making: the Presidential election of 1964* (Wadsworth, Wadsworth Publisher Co., 1968) 131-153

personal twist of historical fate, however, Rockefeller eventually lost to Goldwater because of widespread news of a moral nature: Rockefeller had recently been divorced and had married a woman much younger than he, who had left her children behind because of her relations with the governor. It cost the moderate Rockefeller enough votes to lose to the controversial conservative candidate.[269] Had Rockefeller been of clean conscious, or had he been able to successfully prove so, the future of the Republican Party might have been very different. However, as it was, Goldwater took the reins, losing the Presidential elections by an unprecedented 22 percent difference in the popular vote to Johnson, but steering his Party towards its conservative future.[270]

Goldwater was the first Republican candidate since the Reconstruction Era to carry all the deep southern states.[271] It was a turning point in American political history. Traditionally the strongest Democratic block in the United States, the southern states voted on the basis of economic and foreign policy, with the notable exception of the 1948 election, in which they had successfully signaled the Democratic party not to meddle in their State affairs by casting their vote for Strom Thurmond´s States´ Rights Party. With the Democratic Party now in a struggle to enforce Civil Rights through Federal laws, the segregationist southern Democrats realigned their Party preference. Economy and foreign affairs no longer prevailed in their considerations. In terms of political policy, Federal involvement would come to prevail.[272] But perhaps even more important, the South increasingly felt disenfranchised from other Americans, who felt it was justified to turn their ways.[273] It was not so much this political consideration which would help form the new Republican majority, as it was this sense of disenfranchisement from what they perceived was the new public morale.[274]

Johnson´s term was riddled with events that only furthered this feeling of disenfranchisement, not only among segregationist former southern Democrats, but among many Americans, from all walks of life. The escalation of the Vietnam war, eventually leading up to an American presence of over 550.000 soldiers in the Southeast-Asian country in 1968, split the nation in two. The media coverage of atrocities committed by the American army and the graphic display of the many American deaths, enraged parts of America, specifically the liberal wing of Democratic party and the student body, which had become

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[269] Lamb, "Campaign decision-making" 152-153
[270] Ibid, 157, 189-192
[271] Ibid, 194
[272] Savage, "JFK" 361-373
[273] Garth E. Pauley, *The modern Presidency and Civil Rights: rhetoric on race from Roosevelt to Nixon* (Program in Presidential Rhetoric, 2001) 164
[274] Phillips, "The emerging Republican majority" 301-367

increasingly active in voicing its opinions during the 1960's.[275] This same group protested against racial segregation in the South, in marches through southern states and on Washington, and for civil and social liberties and emancipation of other groups. On their part, they felt disenfranchised with the part of America that supported American presence in Vietnam, that only half-heartedly supported racial desegregation or did not support it at all and that had a conservative stance on civil and social liberties and emancipatory issues.[276]

The reaction to these protests was equally disruptive to the unity of the American people. First of all, a part of America supported both or either the Vietnam war and/or racial segregation. These Americans strongly opposed the protests and the moral conduct associated with the protesters.[277] Then there were the many Americans who were against the excessive use of force and material in Vietnam and for an end to racism, but had a very different take on how to resolve these issues. Some wanted peace with honor, others the immediate withdrawal of American troops. Some wanted strong federal political and – if need be – military force to end racial segregation, others wanted a gradual end to the practice so as to provide time to get used to a desegregated society. Some wanted an increase in civil and social liberties and empowerment of women, others had a conservative stance on these issues. The strong differences caused a split in American society over many separate divides. On one side stood the pro-action group of Americans that wanted societal change and withdrawal from Vietnam sooner rather than later, on the other side that part of America that was either for or against this societal change and withdrawal, but in mostly wanted things to move gradually. This latter group was shocked by images from racial riots in the New York, Chicago and Los Angeles, from Student protests in Berkeley and all over the country, from immoral conduct in San Francisco, from the increase in anti-American sentiment among their fellow-citizens.[278]

An oft made mistake is to think that in this split lay the direct foundations of the religious conservative revolution of the 1970´s and 1980´s. Johnson had successfully appealed to Christian morale in seeking support for his most controversial programs, the Civil Rights Acts and his socio-economic legistlation, thereby uniting the churches behind his cause. The churches were among the opponents of the moral revolution, but this did not show in a

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[275] Vaughn David Bornet, *The presidency of Lyndon B. Johnson* (Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 1983) 261-264

[276] Phillips, "The emerging Republican majority" 301-367

[277] Ibid, 374-381

[278] Ibid

significant, church-backed and religiously based realignment of their political loyalties until the 1970´s.[279]

It was against this background of strong societal differences that Johnson unfolded his Great Society. A program of Civil Rights Bills and socio-economic legislation which, he hoped, would change society at large.[280] Knowing that his people were split, he had to ´sell´ his government and its policy harder than his predecessors had.[281] The question is, of course, what concept of 'government' he chose to aid this cause. Did he use a concept of 'government' that could satisfy both Civil Rights activists and segregationists, both progressives and conservatives, both North and South?

At the offset of his Presidency, in the opening phrase of his Inaugural Address, Johnson proved his awareness of the difficulties he would face during his term: "My fellow countrymen, on this occasion, the oath I have taken before you and before God is not mine alone, but ours together. We are one nation and one people. Our fate as a nation and our future as a people rest not upon one citizen, but upon all citizens. [...] For every generation, there is a destiny. For some, history decides. For this generation, the choice must be our own."[282] For a man who was said to lack the rhetorical skill of a President, Johnson was acutely aware of the changing times and had a clear idea of how to incorporate this into his rhetoric.[283] He built his Inaugural Address around the theme of the American Covenant, trying to reaffirm and reestablish it.

The three concepts of the Covenant, ´justice´, ´liberty´ and ´union´ were each dealt with specifically in relation to the changing times. Johnson embedded the concepts in his own time, thus both explaining his Great Society and defending it against its opponents within society. "Justice requires us to remember that when any citizen denies his fellow, saying, 'His color is not mine,' or 'His beliefs are strange and different,' in that moment he betrays America, though his forebears created this Nation."[284] Harsh words to those among the people who would seek to destroy unity among the people. Johnson tried to ignite a longing for unity by aiming to show that it would bring prosperous liberty: "How incredible it is that in this

[279] Black "The rise" 81-84

[280] Bornet, "The presidency" 219-252

[281] Theodore O. Windt, *President and Protester: Presidential Rhetoric in the 1960s* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1990) 131-134

[282] The American Presidency Project, "Lyndon B. Johnson, Inaugural Address, 1965", University of California http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=26985#axzz1P3fuUd6g (accessed June 1, 2011)

[283] Moya Ann Ball, "Lyndon B. Johnson: from private deliberations to public declaration – the making of LBJ's renunciation speech" in *Presidential speechwriting: from the New Deal to the Reagan Revolution and beyond* ed. Kurt Ritter and Martin J. Sandhurst (Program in Presidential Rhetoric, 2003) 113

[284] The American Presidency Project, "Lyndon B. Johnson, Inaugural Address, 1965"

fragile existence, we should hate and destroy one another. There are possibilities enough for all who will abandon mastery over others to pursue mastery over nature. There is world enough for all to seek their happiness in their own way."[285] But this unity should be a new kind of unity, which did not yet exist: "So let us reject any among us who seek to reopen old wounds and to rekindle old hatreds. They stand in the way of a seeking nation. Let us now join reason to faith and action to experience, to transform our unity of interest into a unity of purpose. For the hour and the day and the time are here to achieve progress without strife, to achieve change without hatred—not without difference of opinion, but without the deep and abiding divisions which scar the union for generations."[286]

This, then, was the essence of Johnson's Great Society; not the specifics or success of his own political program, but the unity it would create. "If we succeed, it will not be because of what we have, but it will be because of what we are; not because of what we own, but, rather because of what we believe. For we are a nation of believers. Underneath the clamor of building and the rush of our day's pursuits, we are believers in justice and liberty and union, and in our own Union. We believe that every man must someday be free. And we believe in ourselves."[287] Johnson was the first President in four terms to have focused his Inaugural entirely on his own people. His call for unity among his people shows why he felt the urge to do so. America was not just in the brink of redefining its unity, it was on the brink of losing it if this redefinition should fail.

This idea of the Great Society as existing in the unity of the people, but only if that unity were achieved, determined his concept of 'government'. It created the difficult rhetorical situation of having to seek a concept in which the justification of this unity could lie, other than the concept of 'government' or the people. If government in the traditional sense, as it was used by his predecessors, would be the justification, failing to achieve unity would entail losing the justification of the very existence of government itself. After all, government, as the body presiding over the unity of the people, would make no sense if that unity did not exist. If unity of the people would be self-justified in the concept of the people itself, failing to achieve that unity would mean the end of the people. ´The American people´ would no longer exist. Johnson solved this rhetorical dilemma by making unity a concept in itself, thereby freeing it of its role as a determinant of the concepts of government and the people. Unity as a concept, in Johnson's rhetoric, was the goal towards which government and

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[285] The American Presidency Project, "Lyndon B. Johnson, Inaugural Address, 1965"
[286] Ibid
[287] Ibid

the people should strive. It was the ´just´ state of both ´government´ and ´the people´, which needed to be achieved.

As a consequence of explaining unity as a goal, as the ´just´ state which was to be achieved but which did not yet exist, unity could not yet be in complete existence. Johnson had to deliberately break the concept of ´government´ apart from the concept of ´the people´, so as to justify the fact that together, these concepts would seek 'unity'. After all, explaining government as a ´united purpose´ of the people would have made no sense, as it was precisely this unity which was the purpose. Johnson achieved this distance by consistently referring to ´government´ as ´your government´, and to ´the people´ as ´our people´ throughout his four State's of the Union addresses (Appendix E). This solved his rhetorical dilemma. It provided the apparatus to incorporate the responsibility for seeking unity in both the people and government alike, whilst at the same time making these concepts dependent on the success of achieving unity without causing them to destroy themselves if they failed.

Whereas normally Presidential rhetoric tried to tie the concept of ´government´ to ´the people´ by claiming it as a logical exponent of the people, or at least tried to conceal any possible distance between the concepts behind rhetorical smoke screens, Johnson openly created this distance.[288] By referring to government as ´your´ government, he made clear that there are two separate and because of their separateness fundamentally unequal entities; a ´you´ and a 'government'. The same goes the other way around, by referring to 'the people' as 'our' people, he deliberately created a difference between 'our' and 'people', in which ' our' denotes the government and 'people', of course, the people.

Because we know now that the societal divide in Johnson's term would eventually cause electoral movements, away from his own Democratic party, the question arises whether or not Johnson could have used a different conceptual apparatus. Perhaps this could have been one of undoubtedly many instruments which might have prevented this movement from happening. The answer to this question lies in the societal divide itself, which existed in reality throughout his term. Had Johnson used the more traditional conceptual apparatus as used by his predecessors, in which in some form or other 'government' and 'the people' were intrinsically linked, his rhetoric would have had a potentially dangerous lack of relation to reality. To an increasing extend, unity among the American people was lost. Thus, referring to government as being intrinsically linked to the people, which would entail 'the people' having some kind of unity through government, made no sense.

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[288] Moya, "Lyndon B. Johnson" 131-133

Because of the loss of unity among the American people, the concept of 'government' would have to break itself loose from its positive relationship to the people. Although there was still room for the concept of 'government' to claim responsibilities over the people, this was only possible in negative relation to it. Government could, for instance, claim the role of enforcer of unity. It could also claim to work for the benefit of the people. What was impossible though, was to claim that it did so *through and because of* the people, or the other way around, that the people aimed to unify for their benefit *through* government. This rhetorical unity was lost, simply because the reality of union was lost. This, then, was the rhetorical legacy of Lyndon Johnson, with which his successors had to deal, that Lincoln's adage 'Government of, by and for the people', would, for the time being at least, no longer make sense.

4.3 Nixon´s silent majority and the continuance of a divided pair

The First Term

"We cannot learn from one another until we stop shouting at one another—until we speak quietly enough so that our words can be heard as well as our voices. For its part, government will listen. We will strive to listen in new ways—to the voices of quiet anguish, the voices that speak without words, the voices of the heart—to the injured voices, the anxious voices, the voices that have despaired of being heard."[289]

The words of President Richard Nixon in his first Inaugural Address were directed at America at large. The 1968 campaign had been a dividing experience for American society. The Democratic Party had been virtually ripped apart between no less than four factions, each representing a section of the Party which strongly opposed many of the views of the others. Johnson had initially decided to run for re-election, but backed out when he lost in the polls to the anti-war candidate Eugene McCarthy.[290]

McCarthy was backed by a team of tens of thousands of students, who flocked to New Hampshire from all over the country to assist in a door-to-door campaign effort to win the primary. Although McCarthy lost to Johnson, the margin had been successfully brought down to only a few percentage points. The dedication of the students, already visible in their large

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[289] The American Presidency Project, "Richard M. Nixon, Inaugural Address, 1969", University of California http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=1941#axzz1P3fuUd6g (accessed June 3, 2011)
[290] Lewis L. Gould, *1968: the election that changed America* (Chicago, Ivan Dee Publisher, 2010) 31-55

numbers, was underlined by an initiative to shave beards and long hair, known as the 'Clean for Gene' campaign, so as to look smart on the campaign trail.[291] Johnson decided to back down when he learned that he might lose the next primary. Incumbent Vice-President Hubert Humphrey took Johnson´s place as representative of his faction of the Party. Then, another candidate arrived on the scene: Senator Robert Kennedy. Kennedy represented the Catholic´s and African American section of the Party, who were generally opposed to the war but much more concerned about domestic issues.

The fourth and final candidate posed an even bigger problem to the Democratic Party divide. Alabama governor George Wallace ran on the ticket of the American Independent Party, campaigning only in targeted states on States´ Rights and anti-Civil Rights issues.[292] Wallace knew he could never win the election, but aimed to win enough electors to force a second round, putting him in the position to help decide who should be the next President, after bargaining on his own issues.[293] Although Wallace did not succeed in his goal, he did manage to win almost ten million votes, carrying almost all of the deep southern states´ electors.[294] His candidacy not only hurt the Democratic Party, but created problems for the Nixon campaign as well, slowing down the realigning momentum created by the

From the offset of the campaign, Nixon's candidacy had been almost beyond doubt. Although he was challenged by among others California Governor Ronald Reagan, who represented the conservative wing of the Party, he was able to force each challenger to drop out of the race with help of his skilled campaign team.[295] Nixon's decision not to run in 1964 paid off in the 1968 campaign. He had personally campaigned vociferously for the conservative Barry Goldwater in 1964, which had earned him the respect and loyalty of this large faction.[296] Although himself a moderate Republican, Nixon was able to join the two factions, moderates and conservatives, together behind his candidacy.

Nixon campaigned on restoring law and order, which he believed was the most pressing issue with what he called the 'Silent Majority' of the American people, those who did not speak out but wished for American society to return to a moral and peaceful state. The message had a wide appeal throughout the country, which had become increasingly worried about the violent protests and riots that had occurred during the past four years.[297] More

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[291] Gould, "1968" 38
[292] Ibid 59-53
[293] Ibid
[294] Ibid, 152-155
[295] Ibid, 99-101
[296] Ibid, 93-99
[297] Ibid, 126-128

importantly, it was an issue that both moderate and conservative Republicans supported and that appealed to voters in the southern states. Nixon´s campaign would be the first serious Republican effort to win the South. Although he was unable to gain enough support in the deep southern states, because he could not match Wallace´s popular stance on segregation issues, he did win an historically unusual amount of votes in these states. His message of restoring law and order did however earn him the support of the more moderately anti-Civil Rights outer southern states, which made him the first Republican candidate in many decades to do so.[298]

In the final days of the campaign, Nixon was hit by an October surprise.[299] Hubert Humphrey, the Democratic Candidate, announced that he would stop the bombing campaign in Vietnam. Initially, his message did not land. However, when President Johnson called a temporary stop to the bombing campaign in the final days of the election campaign, Humphrey's polling number rose drastically overnight.[300] The comfortable margin Nixon had been able to look forward to dropped to a little over 1 percent.[301] Nixon would become President without the societal approval he had been hoping for. Even at the end of a campaign which had focused on an issue that had been so popular throughout America, the volatility of the divide had become clear. Nixon would have his work cut out for him.

The lack of unity among the American people, which had formed Johnson's concept of 'government', posed the same problems for Nixon's rhetoric. After a campaign which had been dominated by many events that only further underlined this lack of unity – the assassination of Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King and the many violent anti-war protests and riots – Nixon was faced with the difficulty of establishing his own concept of 'government', in line with his promise to restore law and order, but against the background of social unrest. Nixon proved to be acutely aware of the power of words. In his Inaugural Address, he warned against this power: "In these difficult years, America has suffered from a fever of words; from inflated rhetoric that promises more than it can deliver; from angry rhetoric that fans discontents into hatreds; from bombastic rhetoric that postures instead of

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[298] Black, "The rise" 114-118
[299] Gould, "1968" 129. An 'October surprise' constitutes a sudden upraise in the polls of a candidate days prior to the election date, caused by positive news, which may or may not have been held back on purpose to create or maintain necessary momentum in the final days of the campaign.
[300] Ibid, 234-236
[301] Ibid, 237

persuading."[302] The question is, did he heed his own warning? Was Nixon able to curb societal unrest through help of his own rhetoric?

As became clear in the quote at the beginning of this paragraph, Nixon continued the distant government conceptual model used by Johnson. His appeal to his famous 'Silent Majority' is reflected in his promise that "for its part, Government will listen". The distance between 'the people' and 'government' was acknowledged point blank by Nixon in his address: "What has to be done, has to be done by government and people together or it will not be done at all. The lesson of past agony is that without the people we can do nothing; with the people we can do everything."[303] He could not have made it any clearer that his concepts of 'government' and 'the people' were two separate entities, not logically linked to each other as they had been in the decades past. Like Johnson before him, he saw the purpose of both concepts in their working together. Unity of 'government' and 'the people' would prove possible 'what has to be done'. Without unity, 'we can do nothing'.

There was, however, one difference between Nixon's and Johnson's concept. Johnson had focused his concepts on the purpose of unity. In other words, unity itself had been his main goal in bringing the concepts together. This had one important consequence, which Johnson had been unable to avoid: because unity in itself had been the focus of both concepts, that which could be achieved through that unity could not be addressed through mention of the concepts of 'government' or 'the people' alone. After all, only when unity was achieved could its fruits be reaped. Because in reality this unity had only drifted further away during Johnson's Presidency, he could hardly have claimed its existence in his rhetoric. Thus, because Johnson had claimed unity as the ultimate purpose of both ´government´ and ´the people´, he was unable to claim other purposes to both or either concepts until that unity was achieved.

Nixon bypassed this rhetorical problem Johnson had created for himself by not mentioning unity as a purpose, with the notable exception of the abovementioned quote. But even in this quote, Nixon does not speak of unity as a purpose. He merely stated that "what has to be done, has to be done by government and people together", thereby focusing on 'what has to be done' with the marginal note that unity of government and the people was a necessary condition. Why Nixon chose not to address this unity as a purpose, but as a necessary condition is unclear, but it provided him the opportunity to address what needed to

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[302] The American Presidency Project, "Richard M. Nixon, Inaugural Address, 1969"
[303] Ibid

be done through it, rather than to be rhetorically stuck, like Johnson, until unity had manifested itself in reality to the degree that he could claim it in its rhetorical concept.[304]

Nixon had thus created a concept of 'government' which had the same distance to the concept of 'the people' as Johnson's had, but which could use the same rhetorical apparatus as used by President's prior to Johnson. He could, and did, claim responsibilities for government as a concept within the same rhetorical apparatus created by Roosevelt decades earlier; 'government as the instrument of our united purpose' (Appendix F). Because Nixon used this dual model – separating 'government' and 'the people' whilst also claiming a role for 'government' as intrinsically linked to the purpose of 'the people' – his rhetorical apparatus could remain the same when, in the 1972 election, the unity in reality was restored to a great extend.

The Second Term

Nixon´s policies had made him a popular President by the end of his first term. The main dividing issues, the War in Vietnam and civil rights legislation, had been tackled by his administration with great political agility and success. Although Americans still walked on Vietnamese soil, Nixon had been successful in his objective to replace American soldiers with Vietnamese, known as the Nixon doctrine.[305] He had ended the draft, which would officially cease to exist in 1973, but which the military phased out gradually during his first term by attracting voluntary recruits with the promise of higher wages and better conditions.[306] In the Cold War, Nixon and his Foreign Secretary, Henry Kissinger, had booked great successes. Their Chinese diplomatic policy had led to a situation of detente with both China and the Soviet Union.[307] It was an uneasy peace, but peace nonetheless.

In the socially dividing issue of his domestic policy, civil rights, Nixon achieved public approval of most Americans by supporting civil rights outright, but circumscribing direct federal interference in desegregation of society. Instead of using political or physical force, he focused on better housing and education to desegregate America.[308] Strongly opposed to desegregating the American public education system through busing – unpopular in both African American and white communities – he instead created new school districts,

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[304] Craig R. Smith, *Richard M. Nixon and Gerald R. Ford: Lessons on speechwriting* in *Presidential speechwriting: from the New Deal to the Reagan Revolution and beyond* ed. Kurt Ritter and Martin J. Sandhurst (Program in Presidential Rhetoric, 2003) 147-151
[305] Melvin Small, *The Presidency of Richard Nixon* (Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 1999) 91-92
[306] Ibid, 94
[307] Ibid, 97-126
[308] Ibid, 134-137

which were accommodated both African American and white communities.[309] The pro-civil rights Americans could be satisfied with the results booked by Nixon, whereas their anti-civil rights counterparts, perhaps wary of their opposition or accepting a certain degree of measures to desegregate, were at least content with the withdrawal of force from Federal desegregation policies.[310] For this latter group the alternative to Nixon, progressive liberal Democratic candidate George McGovern, would be much worse.

Because of the popularity Nixon had gained through his popular policies, he won in a landslide victory. Second only to Johnson's landslide victory in terms of percentage points, but with a higher margin, Nixon won 60,7 percent of the vote, with a margin 23,2 percent or 18 million votes. He carried all states but one, Massachusetts, and the District of Columbia, which went to McGovern. McGovern failed to win even his home state of South Dakota, for which he had been a Senator for many years. Nixon was supported throughout the country, colouring the map of results by county almost entirely red. Seen in this light, the upcoming Watergate scandal is even more astonishing. Nixon's victory had been imminent throughout the entire campaign, which made the risk taken by the re-election committee in sabotaging the Democratic campaign – despite it being illegal – beyond any logic. However, as it happened, Watergate would prove to be the end Nixon.

Because Nixon's second term only provided research material in the form of his Inaugural Address and his first and only second term State of the Union – the latter already held against the background of Watergate – analyzing his second term rhetoric separate from his first term is difficult. This is unfortunate, as his landslide victory had proved that unity had been restored to some extend at least.

We do, however, see a slight difference in his rhetoric compared to his first term in his Inaugural speech. "That is why today I offer no promise of a purely governmental solution for every problem. We have lived too long with that false promise. In trusting too much in government, we have asked of it more than it can deliver. This leads only to inflated expectations, to reduced individual effort, and to a disappointment and frustration that erode confidence both in what government can do and in what people can do. Government must learn to take less from people so that people can do more for themselves. Let us remember that America was built not by government, but by people—not by welfare, but by work—not

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[309] Small, "The presidency" 134-137
[310] Black, "The rise" 32-34

by shirking responsibility, but by seeking responsibility."[311] In this rather lengthy quote, Nixon seems to steer towards a reunification of 'government' and 'the people'. Whereas in his first term, Nixon ascribed certain qualities and responsibilities to government without explaining why these qualities and responsibilities lay with government, he acknowledged that this had created difficulties.

But Nixon did not let go yet. He seemed to acknowledge that the conceptual model of distance between 'government' and 'the people' was difficult to maintain, but the distance existed nonetheless: "Your National Government has a great and vital role to play. And I pledge to you that where this Government should act, we will act boldly and we will lead boldly. But just as important is the role that each and every one of us must play, as an individual and as a member of his own community."[312] This sheds a different light on the warning Nixon gave of expectations from government. In this quote, Nixon seems to allude to a common goal in 'the people' and 'government'. However, even though that common goal existed, there was still no unification of purpose, in the sense that Nixon did not explain government as taking over certain responsibilities from the people which they could not fulfil themselves unified *through* government. In other words, ´government´ and ´the people´ may have worked towards the same goal, they had very distinct responsibilities in achieving that goal. Nixon still uses the model of distance between both concepts.

This conceptual model of distance between ´government´ and ´the people´ with a common goal but differing purposes only added to Nixon´s fate in the Watergate scandal. Had he used the Roosevelt model of combined purpose in explaining both concepts, he would, strictly rhetorically speaking, been able to explain the faults of government as the faults of the people. Perhaps, and this is admittedly a very bold presumption, Nixon would have been able to maintain that certain actions may be necessary to achieve the common purpose, to create a solid and effective ´instrument of our united purpose´. As it was, however, Nixon´s conceptual model of distance provided the ideal means for the American people to see the blame lie solely with the institution of government, without taking any responsibility for their own actions. It befell on the Presidents to come to solve this rhetorical inheritance of Nixon.

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[311] The American Presidency Project, "Richard M. Nixon, Inaugural Address, 1973", University of California http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=4141#axzz1P3fuUd6g (accessed June 4, 2011)
[312] The American Presidency Project, "Richard M. Nixon, Inaugural Address, 1973"

Chapter Five – The negative concept

"So, as we begin, let us take inventory. We are a nation that has a government – not the other way around. […] Our government has no power accept that granted by the people. It is time to check and reverse the growth of government which shows signs of having grown beyond the consent of the governed."[313]

The societal discontent with Vietnam and the civil rights struggle and the changes in social moral of the 1960´s took their toll in the 1970´s and 1980's. The Great Society, insofar as it had ever existed, had been uprooted by the creation of societal groups which existed in strong opposition to each others views. This process of uprooting was at the very least aided by the political scandal´s of the early seventies.[314] Watergate had left the American people with the ruins of government. The rhetorical road taken by Johnson, emphasizing the distance between government on one side and the people on the other, could only add insult to injury for both sides of the divide. Government had to restore confidence within and against the backdrop of a people which, through its own rhetoric, had been explained the concept not as the united purpose of its own self, but a separate entity perhaps, but not as a consequence, working towards a common goal. It was much easier to lay blame in this Johnson-Nixon concept of 'government' than it had been in the Roosevelt concept.

This inheritance of the Great Society would prove to be a hurdle of incredible proportions for the office of the President. After all, both rhetorically and in terms of policy, it could hardly increase its own responsibilities without first restoring the confidence of the people. But the Presidents of the 1970's were further burdened by unfortunate circumstances surrounding their times in office. Gerald Ford found himself unreasonably weighed down by the confidence-shattering task of pardoning his former President, combined with a very short time span in which to restore the public's trust in (Republican) government. Jimmy Carter was equally burdened by the task of righting the wrongs of his predecessors against the backdrop of inflation and recession, but with an electoral mandate which did not seem to reflect a possible public discontent with the Republican Party. Even though Nixon had resigned and Ford was given the unhappy task of pardoning his Republican peer, Carter's

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[313] The American Presidency Project, "Ronald Reagan, Inaugural Address, 1981", University of California http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=43130#axzz1P3fuUd6g (accessed June 6, 2011)
[314] Watergate proved the demise of President Nixon, but his former Vice-President Spiro Agnew had resigned a year earlier after allegations of multiple accounts of fraud. After his resignation, Gerald Ford took over.

Democratic Party was not able to bank on what could have been a loss in trustworthiness of the Republican Party.

This chapter examines the way both Ford and Carter dealt with this crisis in public opinion, in terms of their rhetorical concepts, before examining the rise of Ronald Reagan to the highest political office and the role of rhetoric after that rise. In what way did the apparent lack of trust in government in the 1970's affect the Presidential rhetorical concept? In their turn, how did their dealing with the concept influence the election and rhetoric of Ronald Reagan? Must one conclude from Reagan's negative rhetorical concept a clear break from former Presidential rhetoric? Or was it perhaps a causal effect of the evolution of the concept over the past twenty years? This chapter aims to answer these questions.

5.1 Ford's White Sheet: the restoration of interdependence in the conceptual pair

"Government exists to create and preserve conditions in which people can translate their ideas into practical reality. In the best of times, much is lost in translation. But we try. Sometimes we have tried and failed. Always we have had the best of intentions."[315]

Gerald Ford was America´s only reluctant President, in the sense the he neither sought nor won any national election before being installed as President of the United States. Prior to October 1973, Ford had been the House minority leader for eight years. He had never sought White House public office. However, fate befell Ford when Vice-President Spiro Agnew resigned in October after a scandal concerning possible tax evasion.[316] For the first time in the history of the United States, Congress would decide who be fill the vacant position.[317] Gerald Ford was nominated and confirmed by a great majority in both houses on 6 December of that same year. It would not be eight months before fate, in the unlucky form of Watergate, would befall Ford yet again, and he would become the first President never to have been elected into either of two White House offices.

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[315] The American Presidency Project, "Gerald R. Ford, State of the Union Address, 1976", University of California http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=5677#axzz1P3fuUd6g (accessed June 6, 2011)

[316] Yanek Mieczkowski, *Gerald Ford and the challenges of the 1970s* (Lexington, University Press of Kentucky, 2005) 1-15

[317] Ibid, 12-13. After the adoption by Congress of the 25th amendment in 1967, the President was obligated to nominate a Vice-Presidential candidate in case this position would become vacant. Prior to this amendment, there was no procedure in case of a vacant Vice-Presidential post. This had led to many administrations having a vacancy for many months or even years. The 25th amendment, which also stipulated the procedures for the succession of the President in case of death, disability or inability to act, was adopted after and because of the assassination of President Kennedy.

Ford was installed as President of the United States on 9 August 1974, just a few short months prior to the mid-term elections. Not one month later, on 8 September, he issued a Presidential Proclamation which pardoned former President Nixon unconditionally from prosecution for his part in the Watergate scandal.[318] It caused a public outrage which would have a devastating effect on the rest of his Presidency. This outrage, combined with the public discontent with the previous years of Republican scandals, was best visible in the mid-term election of November. The Republican party lost 49 House seats to the Democrats, giving them a two-thirds majority. Constitutionally, this meant that the Democrats could ignore a Presidential veto, one of the strongest Presidential prerogatives in the checks and balances system of American politics.[319] It effectively ended any possibilities Ford had to put his own stance on the final two years of his term. Negotiating with Congress, in which the Democrats also had a 61 to 39 majority in the Senate, was a bare necessity throughout his years in office.[320] This, combined with the public sentiment, could not but have an effect on his concept of 'government'.

Whereas Johnson and Nixon tried to tackle the lack of unity in their concepts of 'government' and 'the people' by creating a divide between the concepts, Ford had create a concept which could restore public faith in government itself. A divide between the two concepts would perhaps have been the least favourable in this respect, as it would rhetorically emphasize what existed in reality. This deserves some additional explanation.

Johnson and Nixon used a divide between the concepts of 'government' and 'the people' deliberately, to create a rhetorical apparatus which could justify increased governmental actions in precisely those fields which created the divide between different groups of American people. However, although there was a divide in the reality of government and the people, this divide originated in a rift in the American people itself, over the issues of Vietnam and Civil Rights. The rhetorical apparatus used by Johnson and Nixon was meant to circumvent this societal rift, and to claim for government a decisive role in the conflict which was essentially a societal one. By distancing their concepts of ´government´ from the concept of ´the people´, they justified an role as arbitrator in the societal conflict. This would not have been possible within the Roosevelt concept of ´instrument of our united purpose´, quite simply because there was no united purpose.

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[318] Mieczkowski, "Gerald Ford" 23-25
[319] Ibid, 38-55
[320] Ibid

Ford, however, dealt with a different situation altogether. During his presidency, there was unison among the American people at least to the extent that they had lost faith in government together.[321] His divide was a real one. His purpose, therefore, was no longer to arbitrate in a conflict within society through rhetorically distancing the concepts of ´government´ and ´the people´ , but to find a solution for the real conflict between government and the people through rhetoric. As the conflict had risen from within government itself, his explanation of the concept of ´government´ was logically humble towards ´the people´.

Although Ford provided little material for comparison, this humble concept can clearly be distilled from his three State of the Union Addresses. His first address, held against the background of rising economic tensions and a House and Senate both firmly in Democratic hands, was mainly focused on achieving a workable relation with Congress in combating economic problems.[322] Necessarily – so as not to blame Congress for any wrongdoings in the office of the President – Ford had to distinguish between his Republican administration, the Democratic Congress and the people. "Now, I want to speak very bluntly. I've got bad news, and I don't expect much, if any, applause. The American people want action, and it will take both the Congress and the President to give them what they want. Progress and solutions can be achieved, and they will be achieved. […] The moment has come to move in a new direction. We can do this by fashioning a new partnership between the Congress on the one hand, the White House on the other, and the people we both represent."[323] This quote characterizes Ford's use of the concepts of 'government' and 'the people'. Instead of choosing to return to a concept of 'united purpose', he chose to maintain the divide between both concepts, but to seek a new form of partnership between the two.

In his second State of the Union Address, in 1975, Ford defines government as the creator and preserver of conditions, as seen in the opening quote of this paragraph. But he also states that government makes mistakes in the execution of its task. These mistakes, when made, needed to be restored. Balancing between the necessity to accept responsibility for past mistakes and the need to retain a position in which these could be solved, Ford called for a "new realism".[324] This new realism, to Ford, meant a "new balance" (Appendix G). It is in this 'new balance' that one can find the partnership to which he alluded in his first State of the

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[321]John Robert Greene, *The Presidency of Gerald R. Ford* (Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 1995) 53-67
[322] Mieczkowski, "Gerald Ford" 62-64
[323] The American Presidency Project, "Gerald R. Ford, State of the Union Address, 1975", University of California http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=4938#axzz1P3fuUd6g (accessed June 6, 2011)
[324] Smith, "Richard M. Nixon" 157-159

Union in 1975. A new partnership not in the sense of a new ´contract´, but in the sense of a reaffirmation after redrawing of an old one. Society needed to find a new balance.

In terms of the conceptual pair of ´government´ and ´the people´, it is difficult to derive from this ´new balance´ any real conclusions as to how Ford saw this pair relevant to each other. It is tempting to see in the use of the word ´balance´ an indication that Ford wished to reunite the concepts rhetorically, but this may just be incorrect. The concept of ´balance´ may equally point to an equilibrate state of two fundamentally different concepts. What is clear though, is that Ford was searching for a new conceptual bond between the two, with government as the 'creator and preserver of conditions' for the people. In that sense, it is safe to say that Ford would have seen his concept of 'government' exist within a framework in which 'government' and 'the people' are no longer separate entities, as with Johnson and Nixon, but in which they were literally interdependent. After all, without government, there would likely be no conditions, and of course, without the people there would be no necessity for government providing these conditions.

Ford thus restored interdependence within the conceptual pair. Within this framework of restored interdependence, Ford gracefully accepted responsibility by making government in a humble concept. This is, however, clearly temporary, as can be seen in the opening quote to this paragraph. After all, the interdependence proscribed a certain role for government, but also maintained the possibility for mistakes. Mistakes were made, humility was in place, but eventually, the concept of 'government' should be restored. Unfortunately, the way in which this would be worked out in a new concept of ´government´ itself cannot be found in his State of the Union Addresses without analyses becoming speculation. Perhaps his Presidency was too tainted by the events of years past for him to claim his own concept. Perhaps he felt a sense of duty in creating the right conditions for another President to reestablish a concept of government. Fact is, for his short term, difficult conditions and very limited power, Ford provided the country a great service in not aggressively pursuing his own mark on Presidential history by creating his own concept of 'government'.

5.2 Carter´s Christian pre-Reaganite concept

President Jimmy Carter was aware of the service provided by Gerald Ford. His first words uttered as President of the United States were aimed at thanking his predecessor for his services: "For myself and for our Nation, I want to thank my predecessor for all he has done

to heal our land."[325] But Carter was perhaps too kind. What he inherited was not a healed land at all. The United States experienced one of the longest periods of economic stagnation, a serious energy crisis had emerged, threatening the future energy security of the American economy and the social unrests of the past decade had only been replaced by increasing insecurity about the moral future of America.[326] To top it all, Carter had not won the landslide which may have been expected from the mid-term elections of 1974.

Carter had never been elected to a Washingtonian political office. Instead, he had spent his career split between his now famous peanut farm and state politics, as a senator of his home state of Georgia in the early 1960´s and, finally, in 1970, as governor of the deep southern state.[327] Although at the offset of the campaign for the democratic nomination Carter was given little chance to win by political commentators, he ended up taking the nomination before the DNC.[328] As a consequence of Carter´s all-Georgia career, he was little known throughout the country. This was initially seen as a hurdle, but was successfully turned into an asset by his campaign team.[329] Carter, who campaigned on the issue of governmental reform, would be able to judge Washington with an unbiased and clean sheet. Through a vigorous campaign, stretching over tens of thousands of miles and comprising of hundreds of speeches, Carter tackled the nation with a two-tier strategy: his own South was reeled in with the promise of America´s first Deep southern president in over a century, positioning himself as a moderate candidate, while his northern strategy used his strong Christian credentials to appeal to conservative Christian voters with the promise of returning morals to Washington.[330]

The Presidential race of 1976 would prove to be one of the closest in terms of electoral votes in American history. Although Carter won by a narrow margin of just over 2 percent of the popular vote, or 1,5 million votes, he was able to carry only 297 electoral votes, to 240 for incumbent Ford.[331] Carter´s campaign had tackled precisely the right states needed for him to win, as he took four states less than his opponent, 23 to 27 for Ford, yet did win enough electoral votes.[332] Carter won all southern states but Virginia, being the first since Kennedy to do so and the last Democratic candidate to date. Many states won by Ford were won by a

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[325] The American Presidency Project, "Jimmy Carter, Inaugural Address, 1977", University of California http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=6575#axzz1P3fuUd6g (accessed June 5, 2011)

[326] Erwin C. Hargrove, *Carter as President: Leadership and the Politics of the Public Good* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1988) 103-124

[327] Ibid, 34-61

[328] Anderson, "Election Jimmy Carter" 16-44

[329] Ibid, 72-79

[330] Ibid, 173-183

[331] Ibid, 186

[332] Ibid, 173-183

narrow margin under 5 percent, which meant that the map of the elections showed a lopsided view of the reality. Although Carter had lost most of the northern and all of the western states, the margins were often small.[333] Still, this was not a landslide victory.

Against this background, after a campaign won on the issue of governmental reform in which he positioned himself as a southern moderate politician with strong Christian moral credentials, Carter delivered his Inaugural Address in January 1977. Only touching upon political issues in vague terms, his address read more like a sermon than a political speech.

Carter affirmed his Christian morale beyond any doubt by repeatedly calling on the spirit of the American people.[334] "So, together, in a spirit of individual sacrifice for the common good, we must simply do our best."[335] This Christian spiritual tone was also heard in his explanation of his policy, as for instance his foreign policy: "To be true to ourselves, we must be true to others. We will not behave in foreign places so as to violate our rules and standards here at home, for we know that the trust which our Nation earns is essential to our strength."[336] It is hard not to see in this Christian value of ´do unto others as you would have them do unto you´. His belief in Christian brotherhood and a sense of divine justice is clearly visible in this, rather awkward appeal to the American people: "Let us learn together and laugh together and work together and pray together, confident that in the end we will triumph together in the right."[337]

In itself, this focus on Christian themed rhetoric is neither surprising nor of itself indicative of Carter´s concept of 'government'. However, his Inaugural Address holds another religious reference which clearly limited Carter's possible concept, as he would come to work it out over his State of the Union Addresses , in the form of a bible passage: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."[338] As he mentioned in his opening words, Carter swore his oath of office on this passage. Although it was custom for an American President to swear his oath on a bible, Carter was the first president in over six decades to mention his favourite bible passage in his Inaugural Address.[339] His mention, through the passage, that man existed in obedience and humility to God, limited his own claims of what government should be. Just as the people it was required to govern, government existed in

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[333] Anderson, "Election Jimmy Carter" 187

[334] Richard Hess, "Jimmy Carter: Rhetorical Prophet" in: *Journal of American and comparative culture* (Vol 25, issue 1/2 , (2002): 209-214

[335] The American Presidency Project, "Jimmy Carter, Inaugural Address, 1977"

[336] Ibid

[337] Ibid

[338] Ibid

[339] Hess, "Jimmy Carter" 209-214

obedience and humility to God. In Carter´s concept, government and the people were bound by God. It is important to remind the reader here that this limitation of Carter's possible concept is in itself limited to his rhetorical concept only. All President's to date have claimed at least some degree of Christian conviction, which may or may not have worked through in their policies. The difference is, Carter chose to *explain* his concept of 'government' through his religious conviction.

Carter only gave three State of the Union Addresses, as he did not exercise his right to do so in his first and his final year in office. His three addresses, however, provide a clear idea of what his rhetorical concept of 'government' was. Carter´s strong conviction that each and every man, whether he be in government or not, is first and foremost accountable to God, worked through in the way he explained the governmental reform he had promised in his campaign: "We need patience and good will, but we really need to realize that there is a limit to the role and the function of government. Government cannot solve our problems, it can't set our goals, it cannot define our vision. Government cannot eliminate poverty or provide a bountiful economy or reduce inflation or save our cities or cure illiteracy or provide energy. And government cannot mandate goodness. Only a true partnership between government and the people can ever hope to reach these goals."[340] He restates this in his State of the Union the following year: "But the problems that we face today are different from those that confronted earlier generations of Americans. They are more subtle, more complex, and more interrelated. At home, we are recognizing ever more clearly that government alone cannot solve these problems."[341]

We see here the seeds of rhetoric emerge that Reagan would come to embody just years later, that government is not the solution to all the problems of the people. As shall become clear, Carter had an important commonalities with Reagan. Both explained themselves as first and foremost being part of the people. Both acknowledged that, for better or worse, government embodied an entity essentially separate from the people. Both emphasized the personal responsibility of the American people in working towards a better society.

The main difference between Carter and Reagan was, that Carter derived his position as being first and foremost part of the people, as government as separate entity and his call for

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[340] The American Presidency Project, "Jimmy Carter, State of the Union Address, 1978", University of California http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=30856#axzz1P3fuUd6g (accessed June 5, 2011)
[341] The American Presidency Project, "Jimmy Carter, State of the Union Address, 1979", University of California http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=32657#axzz1P3fuUd6g (accessed June 5, 2011)

personal responsibility from his Christian rhetoric and conviction.[342] He was part of the people precisely because each and every man was the same in that he was first and foremost accountable to God. Government was a separate entity because it did not embody a divine presence, which lay in nature and man, but not in a construction essentially formed by man himself.[343] This concept of human accountability to God caused a strange dualism between Carter's rhetoric and his policy.[344] On the one hand, Carter's view of the ultimate accountability to God influenced his concept of 'government' in the sense that government did not have this accountability of its own, as an institution. To say that government was accountable to the people would hold no absolute meaning, as the people themselves were accountable to God.[345] But, as government was formed by people, to be in government meant to carry the responsibility towards God to do what government should do, which was of course to govern the people.

It was because of this accountability to God that government held a responsibility towards the people potentially far greater than one derived from the Lincoln bond of 'of, by and for the people'. However, rhetorically, Carter was unable to combine these real responsibilities with his rhetorical concept of 'government', as he focused on the personal, and spiritual responsibilities of the people. Rhetorically he could not claim great responsibilities for government over the people, whilst at the same time urging the people to take their own responsibilities and expect less from government. His rhetoric, therefore, differed only slightly from Reagan´s, whereas their policies lay much further apart.

An interesting example of Carter's dualism is an anecdote often repeated about his energy policies. He famously installed solar cells on the roof of the White House, and was often seen walking around in sweaters in wintertime, because he turned down the heating. Carter thus led by example, but not because he thought he *was* an example, but because like any other man he was accountable for his actions.[346] Carter was a firm believer in the need to drastically reform the countries energy policies. "At long last, we must have a clear,

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[342] Hess, "Rhetorical Prophet" and Kenneth E. Morris, *Jimmy Carter: American Moralist* (Athens GA, 1996) 209-224
[343] Hess, "Rhetorical Prophet"
[344] Hargrove, "Carter as President" Hargrove argues that Carter sought policy problems to solve, without considering the political consequences. This too, so Hargrove also concludes, points towards his Christian morale, as it was not his duty to remain in office or practice politics to the best of his ability, but to solve problems. This is a sense of sacrifice which can clearly be found in the Christian religion, in which it is not the rewards of one´s actions that count, but the question whether or not they were good.
[345] Morris, "American Moralist" 209-224
[346] Ibid

comprehensive energy policy for the United States."[347] His energy policies claimed a wide responsibility for government, taking them away from both the public and private enterprise.[348] However, he did not explain it as such to the people, as he could not claim this role within his concept of 'government'. Instead, he took personal responsibility by referring to his policies as if they were his own: "After consultation with the Governors, we will set gasoline conservation goals for each of the 50 states, and I will make them mandatory if these goals are not met. I've established an import ceiling for 1980 of 8.2 million barrels a day—well below the level of foreign oil purchases in 1977. I expect our imports to be much lower than this, but the ceiling will be enforced by an oil import fee if necessary. I'm prepared to lower these imports still further if the other oil-consuming countries will join us in a fair and mutual reduction. If we have a serious shortage, I will not hesitate to impose mandatory gasoline rationing immediately."[349] Also, he urged the people to take theirs: "As individuals and as families, few of us can produce energy by ourselves. But all of us can conserve energy—every one of us, every day of our lives. Tonight' I call on you—in fact, all the people of America—to help our Nation. Conserve energy. Eliminate waste. Make 1980 indeed a year of energy conservation."[350] The interesting thing about this choice of rhetoric is that Carter considered his energy policies as crucial to his Presidency, yet did not claim them to be a part of his concept of 'government'. Instead, he stuck to his concept of personal accountability.

What, then, was Carter´s rhetorical concepts of government? It is difficult to provide a solid answer to this question. Throughout Carter's rhetoric, he used different words to denote government. He used 'we' and ´our´ as meaning both the American people and government intermittently, but without ever clearly hinting towards which one of either he meant to denote. This makes it impossible to conclude how he viewed government within the ´us-them´ framework through analyses of the use of these concepts. Also, his frequent use of 'I' when explaining policy could point towards a very personal concept of 'government', but knowing that Carter used Christian rhetoric this would be the wrong conclusion. After all, his mention of the bible passage in his Inaugural much rather points towards the use of I as denoting personal responsibility than as a hint towards a concept of 'government'. Then there is the problem of the incongruence of his policies, which effectively pointed towards an expanding

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[347] The American Presidency Project, "Jimmy Carter, State of the Union Address, 1980", University of California http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=33079#axzz1P3fuUd6g (accessed June 6, 2011)
[348] Morris, "American Moralist" 254-262
[349] The American Presidency Project, "Jimmy Carter, State of the Union Address, 1980"
[350] Ibid

responsibility for government, with his appeal for greater personal responsibility and fewer expectations of government.

What can be said of his rhetorical concept beyond a necessary degree of doubt is that it was derived from the Christian idea of brotherhood and accountability to God. In essence, it was therefore united to the concept of 'the people', as 'the people' and 'government' were bound by God. Also, one can conclude that, through his many appeals to individual responsibility and his frequent mention of the limitation of what government could do, his concept was essentially one of small, or at least a decreased government. In that sense, Carter's rather undefined concept would prove to be a prelude to Reagan´s much clearer concept of 'government'.

5.3 Government is the problem

Commencing this research with a president who claimed government to be the instrument of the united purpose of the American people, we have arrived at its complete opposite. President Ronald Reagan referred to government in unequivocally negative terms in his first Inaugural Address: "In this present crisis, government is not the solution to our problem, government is the problem."[351] At this stage, it should be possible to analyze his rhetoric against the background of over 38 years of evolution of the Presidential rhetorical concept of 'government'.

Reagan had had a tumultuous career in politics. As a Hollywood screen actor, he had sat on the board of the influential Screen Actor Guild during the Second World War. After the war, in 1946, he was elected president of the Guild, at the start of what would become its most difficult years, the HUAC hearings and the infamous Hollywood blacklist.[352] Reagan actively assisted HUAC in tracking down actors who were suspected of having communist sympathies or who participated in communist actions.[353] It provided him his first ever opportunity to appear before congress, testifying before the House Un-American Activities Committee.[354] During this time, Reagan was still a fervent Democrat.[355] However, in his role as president of SAG, actively working with the FBI in the hunt for communist actors, his already strong anti-communist sentiments grew, along with his disagreement over Democratic Cold War

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[351] The American Presidency Project, "Ronald Reagan, Inaugural Address, 1981"
[352] Peggy Noonan, *When character was king: a story of Ronald Reagan* (New York, Penguin Books, 2002) 31-54
[353] Ibid
[354] Ibid, 41
[355] Ibid, 54-79

policies.[356] Slowly but surely, Reagan turned Republican, thereby symbolically embodying the very concept of realignment.

During the 1950's, his screen acting career slowed down, which forced Reagan to accept a television role in the *General Electric Theater*. As part of his contract, Reagan toured the country to give speeches to GE employees. It provided him with both a thorough experience as a public speaker and an first-hand, in-depth knowledge of the sentiments of both white and blue collar workers throughout the country.[357] Historians agree that his work at GE transformed Reagan into the conservative Republican he would later become most famous for.[358]

Having officially left the Democratic Party in 1962, Reagan endorsed the Goldwater campaign of 1964 in a nationally televised speech, which came to be known as the 'Time for Choosing' speech.[359] Widely viewed as the start of Reagan's political career by historians[360], he explained his views on governmental control: "The Founding Fathers knew a government cannot control the economy without controlling people. And they knew when a government sets out to do that, it must use force and coercion to achieve its purpose."[361] His words were aimed at the Federal programs of the Kennedy/Johnson Presidency, which he strongly opposed.[362]

Although his speech gave a boost to the Goldwater campaign, the Republican candidate lost in a landslide election. But Reagan had put himself on the political map. His home state Republican Party of California asked Reagan to run for Governor in the 1966 election. Reagan accepted the nomination and won the election to two time incumbent Governor Edmund Brown.[363] His policies as governor reflected his ´Time for Choosing´ speech in the sense that he decreased welfare and other state programs.

During both the 1968 and 1976 elections, Reagan attempted to become the Republican candidate for the Presidential race, in opposition to the policies of Nixon and Ford, which he deemed to be too pro-government.[364] Although his 1968 campaign was lost by a wide margin to Nixon, he did manage to put himself in the nationwide political spotlight. Using this

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[356] Noonan, "When character was king" 54-79
[357] Ibid, 79-103
[358] Ibid, and Craig Shirley, *Rendezvous with destiny: Ronald Reagan and the campaign that changed America* (Wilmington, ISI Books, 2009) 1-12
[359] Noonan, "When character was king" 119-134
[360] Ibid
[361] University of Texas, "Time for choosing", University of Texas, http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/reference/timechoosing.html
[362] Noonan, "When character was king" 119-134
[363] Ibid, 135-160
[364] Shirley, "Rendezvous with destiny" 12-29

experience, Reagan again ran for nomination in 1976. Although he eventually lost, he was able to win enough votes and primaries to make it an undecided race up till the ballot at the RNC.[365] A remarkable achievement as the only candidate against an incumbent president, but more importantly this near win proved to be indicative of the conservative sentiment within the Republican Party.

The First Term

With his strong conviction that government could and should not control the economy, his GE and Governor experience in public speaking and first-hand knowledge of white and blue collar sentiments, Reagan fought the Presidential campaign of 1980 against the backdrop of severe economic slowdown and recession. The time for choosing had come. Incumbent President Carter, although his rhetoric may have said otherwise, stood for governmental control of the economy. Conservative Republican Reagan campaigned on the issues already set out in his 1964 speech; a drastic decrease in governmental spending, cutting wasteful programs and returning economic power to the American people.[366] Government was the problem for the American economy.

This aspect of restricted governmental control over the economy was juxtaposed with the traditional conservative concept of tighter control over foreign affairs and domestic security.[367] Aside from the severe economic slowdown, the Reagan campaign was also ´aided´ by the Iran hostage crisis and the Soviet campaign in Afghanistan.[368] Carter had proved to be unable to tackle these issues to the satisfaction of the American public, who demanded action, at the very least in bringing back the American hostages. The promise of Reagan´s tough stance on communism and the protection of American citizens proved popular among the electorate.[369]

Reagan´s conservative promise had landed well with the electorate of 1980. He beat Carter in a three-way race with 50,1 percent of the vote, carrying 44 states. His margin over Carter was almost 10 percent, and eight million votes. In a fortunate twist, Reagan was actually aided by the independent candidate, John Anderson, who decided to run after losing the Republican nomination on a moderate ticket, in opposition to Reagan´s conservative

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[365] Anderson, "Electing Jimmy Carter" 89-98
[366] Shirley, "Rendezvous with destiny" 122-139
[367] Ibid, 455-469
[368] Ibid, 29-42
[369] Ibid, 455-469

policies.[370] Although Anderson carried no states, he did win 6,6 percent of the popular vote, 5,7 million votes in all. Most of these votes, however, came from disgruntled Carter voters of 1976.[371] Against this background, Reagan delivered his first Inaugural Address in 1981.

As we have seen, Reagan unequivocally demarcated his concept within negative boundaries, by calling it the problem of the present crisis. However, at the offset of the analysis of his Presidential rhetoric, one must acknowledge that Reagan did not choose to make this an absolute demarcation. His use of the addition ´in this present crisis´, allows for the possibility that government may be the solution in other crises, or in other times. Furthermore, his temporal rather than absolute demarcation of the concept says nothing of his own position, nor of the us-them aspect of the concept. It could just as easily be possible for a Roosevelt ´instrument of united purpose´ concept to experience a crisis in which government was the problem as it would in any other concept. Thus, this oft repeated quote by Reagan holds no absolute value for his concept.

This absolute concept can be found when Reagan continued his speech: "From time to time, we have been tempted to believe that society has become too complex to be managed by self-rule, that government by an elite group is superior to government for, by, and of the people. But if no one among us is capable of governing himself, then who among us has the capacity to govern someone else? All of us together, in and out of government, must bear the burden."[372] "It is my intention to curb the size and influence of the Federal establishment and to demand recognition of the distinction between the powers granted to the Federal Government and those reserved to the States or to the people. All of us need to be reminded that the Federal Government did not create the States; the States created the Federal Government."[373] "Now, so there will be no misunderstanding, it is not my intention to do away with government. It is, rather, to make it work—work with us, not over us; to stand by our side, not ride on our back. Government can and must provide opportunity, not smother it; foster productivity, not stifle it."[374]

Reagan´s words hold little secrets as to his concept. Government should arise from a people able to govern themselves, who recognize the need for government through the limitations of their self-rule. As a consequence, it was limited to aiding the people in maximising their self-rule. If, and this was the case according to Reagan, government had

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[370] Shirley, "Rendezvous with destiny" 205-218
[371] Ibid, 548-600
[372] The American Presidency Project, "Ronald Reagan, Inaugural Address, 1981"
[373] Ibid
[374] Ibid

overstepped its boundaries, it needed to be brought back under control of the essentially self-ruling people. It needed to work with the people, to enhance their opportunities to put their self-rule to a greater use.

Reagan´s concept was thus conservative.[375] Government is a necessity, because there are limitations to what people can decide for themselves. But as Reagan recognized, once the people had granted power to government, they no longer had the necessary means to control its growth. That control was only possible from within government itself. Throughout his Presidency, Reagan rhetorically personified the entity responsible for controlling government.[376] This caused some strange rhetorical constructions, which came to add an extra dimension to his concept of 'government'.

Reagan consistently talked about government in the third person singular, never using the first person plural ´we´ to denote the concept itself. Of course, Reagan *was* government in every practical sense, but he reserved the first person singular or plural ´I´ or ´we´ to denote a slightly different entity: the controlling and curbing power existing in control over government.[377] It would be a mistake to say that Reagan placed himself, in populist fashion, within the concept of 'the people', existing in opposition to a government grown out of control. Reagan did not deny that he had certain controlling and curbing powers which 'the people' lacked, making him conceptually different from 'the people'. But by consistently referring to government in the third person singular, whilst referring to himself and Congress in the first person singular or plural, he also placed himself and Congress outside of the concept of 'government'. He had thus created a third, unnamed conceptual entity, which should restore 'government' to its original purpose of 'providing opportunity and fostering productivity' within and for the essentially self-ruling people.[378] The question is, what does this say of his concept of 'government'?

In itself, the rhetorical third entity created by Reagan has no absolute, time-transcending value or purpose. He endowed this entity with a temporary quality, namely to right a wrong which exists in government itself. Government had outgrown its purpose and could no longer be controlled by the people. It is this third entity, consisting, judging by the fact that he also used the first person plural 'we' to denote it when addressing Congress, of both the office of the President and Congress, that must take control of government and guide

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[375] Sloan, "FDR and Reagan" 287-320 and Michael Weiler and W. Barnett Pearce, *Reagan and public discourse in America* (Tuscaloosa, University of Alabama Press, 2006) 41-53
[376] Weiler "Reagan" 91-132
[377] Ibid
[378] Ibid

it back to its purpose. During his first term, Reagan did not explicitly elaborate on his concept of 'government' itself, other than to state that it should 'work with us, stand by our side, provide opportunity and foster productivity'. His focus, when the concept is concerned, lay on curbing government back into line. However, one can make a few statements on the time-transcending qualities of Reagan's concept of 'government'.

First, government exists in unity with the people, arising out of the limitations of their self-rule and existing for the purpose of working with the people, standing by their sides, providing opportunity and fostering productivity. But, second, it has a quality of falling *out* of line with its purpose, if left unchecked. Third, this quality is something the people, who bestow power upon government through their own self-rule, have too little control over. Fourth, because the people have too little control, only people who are in government itself can curb government back into line. Fifth, as government itself has the tendency to fall out of line, Reagan appears to say that people who are in government cannot or will not control this process of falling out of line with its purpose. Corruption, meaning that government is not self-limited to its own purpose, is thus intrinsic to government. And finally, sixth, it is only the people that can take back the reins of government by appointing, through the democratic process, someone to bring government back to its purpose.

There is one final statement one can make about his concept, but this cannot be taken as intended by Reagan. It is not a time-transcending quality he wished to endow in the concept. Essentially, Reagan's rhetoric is inconsistent. He deliberately tries to lay the blame of the derailed government in government itself. He bypasses the responsibility of the people in this process by stating that they lose control over government at a certain point, after which only a third entity can bring government back. But it is the people who must elect such a third entity, thus taking control over government. This inconsistency is of course not that, but a rhetorical trick, aimed at clearing the record of the people whilst cleansing government. Everybody wins, so to speak.

To all intends and purposes one can say that Reagan´s is a negative concept of 'government'. It is necessary due to the imperfections of self-rule – thus only arising out of flaws in others, not a need in others – and is itself imperfect because it has a tendency to fall out of line. But this is merely his first term concept. One might expect that any President who claimed that he would bring government back on track, would not be saying such throughout his eight year Presidency. One might expect that after a few years, government ought to be back on track.

The Second Term

For Reagan to claim his own concept of 'government', he could not keep claiming to be the third entity bestowed by the people with the power to bring government back on track. The fundaments of his own concept, laid out in his 1964 ´time for choosing´ speech for the Goldwater-campaign, needed to be encompassed into his Presidential rhetoric.[379] Otherwise, his Presidency, at least in terms of his rhetorical concept of 'government', would be lost to explaining that government should be brought back on track if it had derailed. Reagan needed to lose his ´third entity´ rhetoric and claim a role in government itself, so as to define the concept of 'government' in his own terms. And Reagan had means to claim this role. During his first term, his government had successfully combated the recession of 1981-1982, in part by doing precisely what he had promised to do in his role as third party; pushing back governmental control over the economy.[380] It earned him the goodwill of the electorate and a landslide victory in the 1984 election hardly ever seen before.

Reagan beat his opponent, former Carter Vice-President Walter Mondale in all but one state, Mondale's home state of Minnesota. His margin was over 18 percent, or almost 17 million votes.[381] This was second only to Nixon, who had won his 1972 campaign by a margin of over 23 percent.[382] Truly, this was a Republican majority. And due to the conservative stance of Reagan's government, it was a conservative majority as well.[383] The question is, now that Reagan had the mandate to form his concept of 'government', how did he do so?

Reagan stood for a sizeable problem in ridding himself of his first term 'third entity rhetoric'. By placing himself within his concept of 'government', he could no longer use the six-step rhetorical logic explained above. After all, when reasoned from the viewpoint of government itself, Reagan could not lay blame for its derailment within government. It would weaken his concept to the brink of destruction, as there was nothing to reassure the people that government would not derail again. He needed to place a safeguard for controlling government outside of the concept of 'government', so as to ensure the people that his government would not outgrow its purpose. The only possibility to do so, lay in putting the control over his concept within the people, thus breaking with his six-step logic. "Four years

[379] Weiler, "Reagan" 211-235
[380] William E. Leuchtenberg, *The 1984 election in historical perspective* (Waco, Baylor University Press, 1986) 21-23 and John W. Sloan, *The Reagan effect: economics and Presidential leadership* (Lawrence, University of Kansas Press, 1999) 152-165
[381] Ibid, 13-14
[382] Ibid, 14
[383] Ibid, 41-42

ago, I spoke to you of a new beginning and we have accomplished that. But in another sense, our new beginning is a continuation of that beginning created two centuries ago when, for the first time in history, government, the people said, was not our master, it is our servant; its only power that which we the people allow it to have. That system has never failed us, but, for a time, we failed the system. We asked things of government that government was not equipped to give. We yielded authority to the National Government that properly belonged to States or to local governments or to the people themselves. We allowed taxes and inflation to rob us of our earnings and savings and watched the great industrial machine that had made us the most productive people on Earth slow down and the number of unemployed increase. By 1980, we knew it was time to renew our faith, to strive with all our strength toward the ultimate in individual freedom consistent with an orderly society."[384]

As Reagan saw government arise from a need for an 'orderly society', it is no great surprise what he saw as government's primary responsibility, "the safety and security of the people".[385] But were there other governmental responsibilities, which existed in subjection to the people? The answer to this question is two-fold, one lying in rhetoric and one in reality.

It is difficult to describe Reagan's radical program of supply-side economics in terms of decreasing governmental responsibilities. Many view it as a relocation of old responsibilities, which were ´created´ during the Roosevelt era.[386] Reagan´s administration made the same choice as his predecessors in actively trying to improve the economy. The only difference was, Reagan aimed at doing so by increasing the spending and investment power of the top percentage of the population and the larger corporations.[387] By lowering their taxes, he argued that power to improve the economy would be returned to the people, and they could once more control the economy without government interference.[388] But in essence, this was a fallacy.

Although Reagan was temporarily able to stop the *growth* of governmental programs, he was unable to push them back in any significant way.[389] Because he lay the focus of government, its primary task, in national security, his defense spending went through the roof, effectively increasing governmental spending instead of decreasing it.[390] The lion's share of the revenue needed for this increase in spending had to be drawn from those who did not

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[384] The American Presidency Project, "Ronald Reagan, Inaugural Address, 1985", University of California http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=33079#axzz1P3fuUd6g (accessed June 9, 2011)
[385] Ibid
[386] Sloan, "The Reagan effect" 1-27
[387] Ibid, 225-245
[388] Ibid
[389] Ibid, 246-262
[390] Ibid

benefit directly from the 'supply-side' tax cuts. Because this rendered them more vulnerable to negative economic circumstances, Reagan needed to maintain most of the governmental aid, and even increase some programs. Supply-side economics ended up creating a double vicious cycle: because of the increased investment power in combination with low taxes, the top percentage of the population and corporations saw their investment power increase only further during Reagan´s administration, but as the costs for this system, and for the drastic increase in defense spending, had to be paid by those not benefited by these tax cuts, the need for governmental support programs increased just the same.[391] Thus, effectively, Reagan's policies relocated governmental responsibilities, but did not push them back. It had been these responsibilities over the economy which made his administration decide to push for supply-side economics. He had wanted to put the power over the economy in the hands of the people. But, at least with supply-side economics, this proved to be impossible in reality. Not so in rhetoric.

What Reagan aimed but failed to do with his policies, to return control to the people, he succeeded to in his rhetoric. But, as government without control had no meaning, outside its 'primary responsibility of public and national safety', he could only emphasize throughout his rhetoric that control needed to lay with the people. He did so by endlessly repeating the danger of government and the necessity for taking control away from government and placing it with the people (Appendix H). In his second term rhetoric, Reagan laid the ´blame´ for derailment of government within the people, of which Reagan himself was rhetorically a part through his use of 'we'. But this was not so much aimed at laying past blame, as it was at preventing future blame. He put the controls over government firmly into the hands of the people, by stating that government was its servant, only having power insofar as the people would allow it. He had solved his sizeable problem by endowing the people with the power over government, but at the same time warning them that they had to use this power, lest history repeat itself. 'Government', as a concept, was thus a part of the people, arisen out of their need for an 'orderly society' with 'the ultimate in individual freedom', and subjected to their will.

Although Reagan used negative constructions, such as ´bearing the burden´ to denote the activity of governing, his concepts seems to differ only slightly from Roosevelt´s ´instrument of united purpose´. Both concepts see government as existing through and by the people. Therefore, they both see government as an intricate part of the people.

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[391] Sloan, "The Reagan effect" 246-262

Roosevelt, however, had a fundamentally positive concept of 'government'. He steered his rhetorical logic towards an increased role of government, even going so far as to claim for government a role above the people, in the sense that through its role as instrument of united purpose it could lay bare and solve problems the individual people could not recognize within self-rule. Although his 'government' arose from within the people, it had its own purpose, namely to transcend this necessity for government and aim for higher goals. These goals could only be seen and known by government, as instrument of united purpose. Thus, Roosevelt explained his concept of 'government' as transcending the united purpose, finding his justification for this transcendence precisely within this united purpose itself.

Reagan's concept was a negative one, using negative constructions to explain government as a necessity due to a flaw in self-control, which prevented the individual from establishing an 'orderly society'. He essentially arrived at the same conclusion as Roosevelt, but explains it as governments biggest flaw. Where the latter saw opportunities in government because as 'the instrument of united purpose' it could discover and solve problems the people could not see, Reagan saw a potential threat in government taking too much control out of the hands of the people. In Roosevelt's concept, it was the people that bestowed this power on government, in Reagan's it was the people that lost it to government. Clearly, a lot had happened over the course of 40 years.

Conclusion

Government as a concept is neither self defined nor rigid. It is a fluid concept, which finds its definition outside itself, either in its position towards that which it governs or in its responsibilities, which in itself may be either claimed or be instilled into it by that which it governs. The fluidity of the rhetorical concept of 'government' is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that each and every President scrutinized in this work had chosen to create his own concept. No President accepted the definition of his predecessor at first hand, but chose, either actively or passively, to provide his own meaning.

That said, there is a common denominator in all Presidential concepts. There is always a certain distance between the reality of ´government´ and that of ´the people´. This is because they are dependent on each other and can therefore not be the same thing. Put more simply, government governs the people, in whatever construction conceivable, which means that government cannot be completely the same as the people. Otherwise, it would govern itself. But the world of rhetoric is different from reality. In rhetoric, government and the people can become one and the same thing. As has become clear, however, it is not always beneficial to the goals of government to use a rhetorical technique to make the concepts of ´government´ and ´the people´ one and the same. Sometimes, it furthers these goals to emphasize their interdependence, or even to state clearly that they are separate entities, working towards a common goal.

It is mainly in the establishment of this distance that the concept of ´government´ changed in the fifty years between Roosevelt and Reagan. The question as to what the responsibilities of government are, is answered by all Presidents through this established distance. Roosevelt, for instance, created a rhetorical government as the 'instrument of the united purpose' of the people. Thus, effectively, he had maintained the Lincoln model of government 'of, by and for' the people. The rhetorical distance between government and the people was very small, as the former was a tangible form of the unification of the latter. Government *was* the people. But, as it was the instrument of the people´s unification, it could achieve things the people separate from each other, meaning not unified in government, could never achieve. Roosevelt used this rhetorical trick to justify a drastic increase in the responsibilities of government.

As we have seen, this was a far cry from Reagan, who never let an opportunity go by to express his negative sentiments on government. Like Roosevelt, he created the smallest possible distance between the concept of 'government' and 'the people'. Also like Roosevelt,

he did so by pointing to the people in doing so. Government existed, according to Reagan´s rhetoric, due to a flaw in the self-rule of the individual, which could only be solved through government. Unlike Roosevelt, however, Reagan created his small distance by directly placing government under the control of the people. This was necessary, as government had the tendency to grow out of control if left unchecked.

In itself, these concepts are interesting enough. However, the true value for this thesis, which was meant to be a case study into the possibility of adding value to the theories of realignment through a multidisciplinary approach, can be found in what happened in between the formation of these two radically different concepts. After studying this evolution of the Presidential rhetorical concept of 'government', two important conclusion can be drawn.

First, fhe idea of a substantial dealigning movement in the 1960's and 1970's is clearly supported by the change in rhetoric during this era. The move away from a concept of government which existed in unity, albeit in different types of unity, prior to Johnson, towards a concept which reflected the societal rift is in itself support for this theory. But what is an even stronger sign is that the two consecutive Presidents intentionally created distance between the concepts of 'government' and 'the people' represented both parties, and were both elected in a historic landslide election.

We find an important addition to the theory of realignment here, which the theory itself does not yet take into account. In terms of the electoral outcome, which is the material studied by the theories of realignment, both Johnson and Nixon won in a clear and decisive victory. Within the traditional theory, such a victory could point towards a realignment of the electorate. This especially goes for Nixon´s victory of 1972, which constituted a radical shift from a Democratic majority to a Republican one. But, if we take into account that both, regardless of the size of their victory, felt the need to create a distance between the concepts of ´government´ and ´the people´, due to a lack of unity within reality, the study of rhetoric points towards something the theories of realignment itself cannot discover: that both Johnson and Nixon transformed their rhetoric to fit the increasingly non-partisan sentiments within the electorate.

Second, there is another valuable addition to the theory of realignment, arising from the multidisciplinary approach used in this thesis, which can be derived from the evolution of the rhetorical concepts of ´government´. What the methodological apparatus of the theories of realignment *can* discover, is the substantial and lasting change in voting patterns in southern states from 1948 up to 1972. If viewed in the wider, multidisciplinary approach, one can conclude that the President's, at least in their rhetorical concept of 'government', react to this

change long after it originated. The conceptual change under Johnson and Nixon was too little, too late in terms of containing the southern states electoral changes which helped cause the societal rift of the late 1960's. This both points towards the inherent value of the existing theories of realignment, as it does to the value of widening their scope through a multidisciplinary approach. In terms of their inherent value, it can be said that, although they were unable to predict a lasting and substantial realignment, they did point towards an important and lasting change in voter preference after 1948. Truman, Eisenhower and Kennedy would have done good to react to this change in their rhetoric, which was after all aimed at *all* Americans. In terms of the multidisciplinary approach, it can be said that it was the study of conceptual evolution that pointed towards this lack of presidential reaction to changing voter preferences.

What this multidisciplinary approach has been unable to uncover, is whether or not the periodicity of realignment theories is maintainable in 2011. The study of the concept of 'government' has only shown that there was a substantial change in the concept at the precise moment that dealignment theorists saw the dealigning movement in the electorate. However, no conclusion may be drawn from this as to the validity of the claim of periodicity. Further study into a possible multidisciplinary proof of the periodicity of realignment deserves recommendation.

At the offset of this research, it was clear that this thesis could add little to the mathematical theories of realignment themselves. These mathematical theories have been established, and have been used and criticized at length within the field of political science. However, in trying to uncover the possibility of adding new value to these theories through a multidisciplinary approach, this case study has shown that this might be possible. Of course, this idea of a new value added to the theories of realignment would need to be studied at length before any conclusions can be drawn. But the fact that a case study of material which, to all intends and purposes, can be said to be very narrow in scope uncovered the possible value of a multidisciplinary approach, should be reason enough to commit to further research on the subject.

Appendix A – FDR's "Shall we"

State of the Union Adress – 1936

"Let action be positive and not negative. The way is open in the Congress of the United States for an expression of opinion by yeas and nays. Shall we say that values are restored and that the Congress will, therefore, repeal the laws under which we have been bringing them back? Shall we say that because national income has grown with rising prosperity, we shall repeal existing taxes and thereby put off the day of approaching a balanced budget and of starting to reduce the national debt? Shall we abandon the reasonable support and regulation of banking? Shall we restore the dollar to its former gold content?

Shall we say to the farmer, "The prices for your products are in part restored. Now go and hoe your own row?"

Shall we say to the home owners, "We have reduced your rates of interest. We have no further concern with how you keep your home or what you pay for your money. That is your affair?"

Shall we say to the several millions of unemployed citizens who face the very problem of existence, of getting enough to eat, "We will withdraw from giving you work. We will turn you back to the charity of your communities and those men of selfish power who tell you that perhaps they will employ you if the Government leaves them strictly alone?"

Shall we say to the needy unemployed, "Your problem is a local one except that perhaps the Federal Government, as an act of mere generosity, will be willing to pay to your city or to your county a few grudging dollars to help maintain your soup kitchens?"

Shall we say to the children who have worked all day in the factories, "Child labor is a local issue and so are your starvation wages; something to be solved or left unsolved by the jurisdiction of forty-eight States?"

Shall we say to the laborer, "Your right to organize, your relations with your employer have nothing to do with the public interest; if your employer will not even meet with you to discuss your problems and his, that is none of our affair?"

Shall we say to the unemployed and the aged, "Social security lies not within the province of the Federal Government; you must seek relief elsewhere?"

Shall we say to the men and women who live in conditions of squalor in country and in city, "The health and the happiness of you and your children are no concern of ours?"

Shall we expose our population once more by the repeal of laws which protect them against the loss of their honest investments and against the manipulations of dishonest speculators? Shall we abandon the splendid efforts of the Federal Government to raise the health standards of the Nation and to give youth a decent opportunity through such means as the Civilian Conservation Corps?"

Appendix B – FDR´s two forms of "we"

Inaugural Address – 1937

"When four years ago we met to inaugurate a President, the Republic, single-minded in anxiety, stood in spirit here. We dedicated ourselves to the fulfillment of a vision—to speed the time when there would be for all the people that security and peace essential to the pursuit of happiness. We of the Republic pledged ourselves to drive from the temple of our ancient faith those who had profaned it; to end by action, tireless and unafraid, the stagnation and despair of that day. We did those first things first.

Our covenant with ourselves did not stop there. Instinctively we recognized a deeper need— the need to find through government the instrument of our united purpose to solve for the individual the ever-rising problems of a complex civilization. Repeated attempts at their solution without the aid of government had left us baffled and bewildered. For, without that aid, we had been unable to create those moral controls over the services of science which are necessary to make science a useful servant instead of a ruthless master of mankind. To do this we knew that we must find practical controls over blind economic forces and blindly selfish men.

We of the Republic sensed the truth that democratic government has innate capacity to protect its people against disasters once considered inevitable, to solve problems once considered unsolvable. We would not admit that we could not find a way to master economic epidemics just as, after centuries of fatalistic suffering, we had found a way to master epidemics of disease. We refused to leave the problems of our common welfare to be solved by the winds of chance and the hurricanes of disaster."

Appendix C – Eisenhower's concept

State of the Union Address – 1954

"A government can strive, as ours is striving, to maintain an economic system whose doors are open to enterprise and ambition--those personal qualities on which economic growth largely depends. But enterprise and ambition are qualities which no government can supply. Fortunately no American government need concern itself on this score; our people have these qualities in good measure.

A government can sincerely strive for peace, as ours is striving, and ask its people to make sacrifices for the sake of peace. But no government can place peace in the hearts of foreign rulers. It is our duty then to ourselves and to freedom itself to remain strong in all those ways--spiritual, economic, military--that will give us maximum safety against the possibility of aggressive action by others.

No government can inoculate its people against the fatal materialism that plagues our age. Happily, our people, though blessed with more material goods than any people in history, have always reserved their first allegiance to the kingdom of the spirit, which is the true source of that freedom we value above all material things.

But a government can try, as ours tries, to sense the deepest aspirations of the people, and to express them in political action at home and abroad. So long as action and aspiration humbly and earnestly seek favor in the sight of the Almighty, there is no end to America's forward road; there is no obstacle on it she will not surmount in her march toward a lasting peace in a free and prosperous world."

State of the Union Address – 1955

"The aspirations of most of our people can best be fulfilled through their own enterprise and initiative, without government interference. This Administration, therefore, follows two simple rules: first, the Federal Government should perform an essential task only when it cannot otherwise be adequately performed; and second, in performing that task, our government must not impair the self-respect, freedom and incentive of the individual. So long as these two rules are observed, the government can fully meet its obligation without creating a dependent population or a domineering bureaucracy."

State of the Union Address - 1956

"In the past three years, responding to what our people want their Government to do, the Congress and the Executive have done much in building a stronger, better America. There has been broad progress in fostering the energies of our people, in providing greater opportunity for the satisfaction of their needs, and in fulfilling their demands for the strength and security of the Republic."

"Our farm people expect of us, who have responsibility for their government, understanding of their problems and the will to help solve them. Our objective must be to help bring production into balance with existing and new markets, at prices that yield farmers a return for their work in line with what other Americans get."

State of the Union Address – 1958

"I believe that this Congress possesses and will display the wisdom promptly to do its part in translating into law the actions demanded by our nation's interests. But, to make law effective, our kind of government needs the full voluntary support of millions of Americans for these actions."

Appendix D – Kennedy's and Johnson's first term 'This administration'

State of the Union Address – 1961

"I speak today in an hour of national peril and national opportunity. Before my term has ended, we shall have to test anew whether a nation organized and governed such as ours can endure. The outcome is by no means certain. The answers are by no means clear. All of us together--this Administration, this Congress, this nation-must forge those answers."

"Economic prophecy is at best an uncertain art--as demonstrated by the prediction one year ago from this same podium that 1960 would be, and I quote, "the most prosperous year in our history." Nevertheless, forecasts of continued slack and only slightly reduced unemployment through 1961 and 1962 have been made with alarming unanimity-and this Administration does not intend to stand helplessly by."

"This Administration will not distort the value of the dollar in any fashion. And this is a commitment."

"This Administration is expanding its Food-for-Peace Program in every possible way. The product of our abundance must be used more effectively to relieve hunger and help economic growth in all corners of the globe."

State of the Union Address – 1962

"This administration has helped keep our economy competitive by widening the access of small business to credit and Government contracts, and by stepping up the drive against monopoly, price-fixing, and racketeering."

"This administration has shown as never before how much could be done through the full use of Executive powers--through the enforcement of laws already passed by the Congress-through persuasion, negotiation, and litigation, to secure the constitutional rights of all: the right to vote, the right to travel Without hindrance across State lines, and the right to free public education."

"The dynamic of democracy is the power and the purpose of the individual, and the policy of this administration is to give to the individual the opportunity to realize his own highest possibilities."

State of the Union Address – 1963
"I am proud--and I think most Americans are proud--of a mutual defense and assistance program, evolved with bipartisan support in three administrations, which has, with all its recognized problems, contributed to the fact that not a single one of the nearly fifty U.N."

State of the Union Address – 1964 (Johnson)
"For my part, I pledge a progressive administration which is efficient, and honest and frugal. The budget to be submitted to the Congress shortly is in full accord with this pledge."

"This administration today, here and now, declares unconditional war on poverty in America. I urge this Congress and all Americans to join with me in that effort."

"Let me make one principle of this administration abundantly clear: All of these increased opportunities--in employment, in education, in housing, and in every field-must be open to Americans of every color. "

"This administration must and will preserve the present gold value of the dollar."

Appendix E – Johnson's 'Your Government' vs 'Our People'

State of the Union Address – 1965

"In Eastern Europe restless nations are slowly beginning to assert their identity. Your Government, assisted by the leaders in American labor and business, is now exploring ways to increase peaceful trade with these countries and with the Soviet Union. I will report our conclusions to the Congress."

"And very soon I will report to you on our progress and on new economies that your Government plans to make."

"That struggle has often brought pain and violence. It is not yet over. But we have achieved a unity of interest among our people that is unmatched in the history of freedom."

"We are committed to help those seeking to strengthen their own independence, and to work most closely with those governments dedicated to the welfare of all of their people."

State of the Union Address – 1966

"That is to say, if we include all the money that your Government will take in and all the money that your Government will spend, your Government next year will collect one-half billion dollars more than it will spend in the year 1967."

"This achievement has been made possible by the patriotic voluntary cooperation of businessmen and bankers working with your Government."

"I recommend that you take additional steps to insure equal justice to all of our people by effectively enforcing nondiscrimination in Federal and State jury selection, by making it a serious Federal crime to obstruct public and private efforts to secure civil rights, and by outlawing discrimination in the sale and rental of housing."

"We will continue to meet the needs of our people by continuing to develop the Great Society."

"Working together, private enterprise and government must press forward with the task of providing homes and shops, parks and hospitals, and all the other necessary parts of a flourishing community where our people can come to live the good life."

State of the Union Address – 1968

"So this proposal is that while we have this problem and this emergency in Vietnam, while we are trying to meet the needs of our people at home, your Government asks for slightly more than one-fourth of that tax cut each year in order to try to hold our budget deficit in fiscal 1968 within prudent limits and to give our country and to give our fighting men the help they need in this hour of trial."

"So together we have tried to meet the needs of our people."

"I believe that our people do not want to quit--though the task is great, the work hard, often frustrating, and success is a matter not of days or months, but of years-and sometimes it may be even decades."

"My first responsibility to our people is to assure that no nation can ever find it rational to launch a nuclear attack or to use its nuclear power as a credible threat against us or against our allies."

Appendix F – Nixon's dual concept

State of the Union Address – 1970

Rooseveltian:

"Ours has become--as it continues to be, and should remain--a society of large expectations. Government helped to generate these expectations. It undertook to meet them. Yet, increasingly, it proved unable to do so."

"While it is true that State and local law enforcement agencies are the cutting edge in the effort to eliminate street crime, burglaries, murder, my proposals to you have embodied my belief that the Federal Government should play a greater role in working in partnership with these agencies."

"In the future, government decisions as to where to build highways, locate airports, acquire land, or sell land should be made with a clear objective of aiding a balanced growth for America. In particular, the Federal Government must be in a position to assist in the building of new cities and the rebuilding of old ones."

Distance:

"It is time for a New Federalism, in which, after 190 years of power flowing from the people and local and State governments to Washington, D.C., it will begin to flow from Washington back to the States and to the people of the United States."

"These are not the great questions that concern world leaders at summit conferences. But people do not live at the summit. They live in the foothills of everyday experience, and it is time for all of us to concern ourselves with the way real people live in real life."

State of the Union Address – 1971

Rooseveltian:

"I shall ask to change the framework of government itself---to reform the entire structure of American government so we can make it again fully responsive to the needs and the wishes of the American people."

"The Federal Government will still have a large and vital role to play in achieving our national progress. Established functions that are clearly and essentially Federal in nature will still be performed by the Federal Government. New functions that need to be sponsored or performed by the Federal Government--such as those I have urged tonight in welfare and health--will be added to the Federal agenda."

Distance:

"Let s face it. Most Americans today are simply fed up with government at all levels. They will not--and they should not--continue to tolerate the gap between promise and performance in government."

"The fact is that we have made the Federal Government so strong it grows muscle-bound and the States and localities so weak they approach impotence."

"The further away government is from people, the stronger government becomes and the weaker people become. And a nation with a strong government and a weak people is an empty shell."

Appendix G – Ford's 'New Balance'

State of the Union Address – 1976

"We thought we could transform the country through massive national programs, but often the programs did not work. Too often they only made things worse. In our rush to accomplish great deeds quickly, we trampled on sound principles of restraint and endangered the rights of individuals. We unbalanced our economic system by the huge and unprecedented growth of Federal expenditures and borrowing. And we were not totally honest with ourselves about how much these programs would cost and how we would pay for them. Finally, we shifted our emphasis from defense to domestic problems while our adversaries continued a massive buildup of arms.

The time has now come for a fundamentally different approach for a new realism that is true to the great principles upon which this Nation was founded.

We must introduce a new balance to our economy--a balance that favors not only sound, active government but also a much more vigorous, healthy economy that can create new jobs and hold down prices.

We must introduce a new balance in the relationship between the individual and the government--a balance that favors greater individual freedom and self-reliance.

We must strike a new balance in our system of federalism--a balance that favors greater responsibility and freedom for the leaders of our State and local governments.

We must introduce a new balance between the spending on domestic programs and spending on defense--a balance that ensures we will fully meet our obligation to the needy while also protecting our security in a world that is still hostile to freedom.

And in all that we do, we must be more honest with the American people, promising them no more than we can deliver and delivering all that we promise."

Appendix H – Reagan's negative use of 'government'

State of the Union Address – 1981

"Well, let me point out that Federal aid to education amounts to only 8 percent of the total educational funding, and for this 8 percent, the Federal Government has insisted on tremendously disproportionate share of control over our schools."

"Waste and fraud in the Federal Government is exactly what I've called it before—an unrelenting national scandal, a scandal we're bound and determined to do something about."

"The taxing power of government must be used to provide revenues for legitimate government purposes. It must not be used to regulate the economy or bring about social change. We've tried that, and surely we must be able to see it doesn't work."

State of the Union Address – 1982

"It's my duty to report to you tonight on the progress that we have made in our relations with other nations, on the foundation we've carefully laid for our economic recovery, and finally, on a bold and spirited initiative that I believe can change the face of American government and make it again the servant of the people."

"Together, we have created an effective Federal strike force to combat waste and fraud in government. In just 6 months it has saved the taxpayers more than $2 billion, and it's only getting started."

"Together we've begun to mobilize the private sector, not to duplicate wasteful and discredited government programs, but to bring thousands of Americans into a volunteer effort to help solve many of America's social problems."

"Now that the essentials of that program are in place, our next major undertaking must be a program—just as bold, just as innovative—to make government again accountable to the people, to make our system of federalism work again."

State of the Union Address – 1983

"Projected Federal spending—if government refuses to tighten its own belt-will also be far too high and could weaken and shorten the economic recovery now underway."

"Government has continued to spend more money each year, though not as much more as it did in the past."

"The future belongs not to governments and ideologies which oppress their peoples, but to democratic systems of self-government which encourage individual initiative and guarantee personal freedom."

State of the Union Address – 1985

"To move steadily toward a balanced budget, we must also lighten government's claim on our total economy. We will not do this by raising taxes. We must make sure that our economy grows faster than the growth in spending by the Federal Government."

"We're moving ahead with Grace commission reforms to eliminate waste and improve government's management practices. In the long run, we must protect the taxpayers from government."

"Nearly 50 years of government living beyond its means has brought us to a time of reckoning."

State of the Union Address – 1986

"Government growing beyond our consent had become a lumbering giant, slamming shut the gates of opportunity, threatening to crush the very roots of our freedom. What brought America back? The American people brought us back with quiet courage and common sense, with undying faith that in this nation under God the future will be ours; for the future belongs to the free."

"Members of Congress, passage of Gramm-Rudman-Hollings gives us an historic opportunity to achieve what has eluded our national leadership for decades: forcing the Federal Government to live within its means."

State of the Union Address - 1987

"For years I've asked that we stop pushing onto our children the excesses of our government. And what the Congress finally needs to do is pass a constitutional amendment that mandates a balanced budget and forces government to live within its means."

"They know that we don't have deficits because people are taxed too little. We have deficits because big government spends too much."

"In those other constitutions, the Government tells the people of those countries what they're allowed to do. In our Constitution, we the people tell the Government what it can do, and it can do only those things listed in that document and no others."

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