

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments vii

1	Introduction: Race and Presidential Impeachment	1
2	A New Birth of Freedom: George Washington to Abraham Lincoln	21
3	“The Constitution as It Is”: Andrew Johnson’s Impeachment	50
4	“Patience and Moderation”: Theodore Roosevelt to Lyndon Johnson	75
5	Law and Order: Nixon and Watergate	110
6	“The Content of Their Character”: Ronald Reagan to Barack Obama	140
7	“Hostile Takeover”: The Two Impeachments of Donald Trump	174
8	Conclusion: The Choices We Face: Rethinking Presidential Impeachment	207

Afterword: We Are Going Back 213

Notes 219

Index 259

1

Introduction

RACE AND PRESIDENTIAL IMPEACHMENT

“I’M NOT the president of Black America. I’m the president of the United States of America.”¹ Barack Obama said this directly in an interview published in *Black Enterprise* magazine in April 2012. At other times, this distinction was implied. Obama emphasized tropes about Black fatherhood and hard work, talking on the campaign trail with Black and white communities alike about bigotry. The forty-fourth president knew his racial background was part of the story that made him so appealing. This awareness could also make him especially cautious about what he said and how he said it.

Sometimes Obama talked about life in America as a Black man, or his connection with Black history through his wife and daughters. Sometimes he talked about his own family, from Kansas and Kenya. He attempted to bring both history and complexity to the subject. Despite treading carefully and judiciously with the subject, Obama could not dodge racist attacks from opponents.

A certain strain of commentary on the right suggested that Obama was antagonistic toward white Americans, even that he hated them. “Shock jock” Rush Limbaugh connected the first Black president to a school bus fight, suggesting that “in Obama’s America the white kids now get beat up with the black kids cheering.”² Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich accused the president of “Kenyan, anti-colonial” thinking.³ By

the summer of 2016, one-third of white Americans reported that they thought Obama had “made race relations worse.”⁴

Alongside these accusations were the conspiracy theories surrounding Obama’s birth certificate and eligibility to serve as president. These rumors circulated in right-wing media to the point that, by 2016, a majority of Republican voters doubted or disbelieved that Obama was a natural-born citizen.⁵

This angry response to the Obama presidency culminated in the election of Donald Trump, one of the main purveyors of the “birther” conspiracy, in 2016. Trump clinched the nomination and then an Electoral College victory by talking about “making America great again,” denouncing immigrants and promising a forceful brand of law and order. The latter seemed especially aimed at the recently formed Black Lives Matter movement, which had organized with a particular focus on police violence against Black Americans.

The formation of Black Lives Matter also illustrated the other side of Obama’s cautious racial presidency. Activists voiced frequent frustration with the Obama administration’s lack of attention to issues like violence, especially police violence, and economic inequality across racial lines.⁶ Throughout his time in office, some critics alleged that Obama was doing too much for racial minorities while others said he was doing too little.

Nevertheless, the backlash forces, not those calling for greater change, were the ones that seemed to more immediately influence politics. Shortly after election day, Michael Tesler’s analysis at the political science blog the *Monkey Cage* touted a stunning finding: Racial attitudes had been more important in determining the 2016 vote than they had been in 2008 or 2012, when Obama himself was on the ballot.⁷

Trump’s 2016 bid for the presidency was not just about attacking Obama’s legacy. It was also about pushing the boundaries of what was acceptable in politics. Mocking women, disabled people, and even war hero Senator John McCain and talking about immigrants in derogatory terms, Trump famously maintained that he could shoot someone on Fifth Avenue and not lose support.

In an essay called “The First White President,” journalist Ta-Nehisi Coates explores the connection between Trump’s often brazen violation of the written and unwritten rules and racial politics:

The mind seizes trying to imagine a black man extolling the virtues of sexual assault on tape (“When you’re a star, they let you do it”), fending off multiple accusations of such assaults, immersed in multiple lawsuits for allegedly fraudulent business dealings, exhorting his followers to violence, and then strolling into the White House. But that is the point of white supremacy—to ensure that that which all others achieve with maximal effort, white people (particularly white men) achieve with minimal qualification. Barack Obama delivered to black people the hoary message that if they work twice as hard as white people, anything is possible. But Trump’s counter is persuasive: Work half as hard as black people, and even more is possible.⁸

Despite this description, we might not see the story of Trump’s first term as “even more”—those four years were not entirely filled with political triumph and success (though perhaps Trump’s reelection in 2024 counts as the fulfillment of this possibility). Though not convicted, Trump became the first president to be impeached twice. Both times were for some form of election interference—once for asking the Ukrainian government to investigate the son of his eventual 2020 election rival, Joe Biden. The second time was after Biden won the election and Trump, refusing to accept the results, encouraged an angry mob to march to the Capitol, this time interfering with the peaceful transfer of power.

The president of the United States, Donald J. Trump, delivered a speech that morning encouraging his supporters to march on the Capitol and prevent the certification of what he alleged was a fraudulent election, then watched the violent spectacle unfold on television. A week later, the US House of Representatives approved one article of impeachment against him. Nearly twelve years after the election of the nation’s first Black president, another historic first occurred: A president was impeached a second time after a violent, largely white mob stormed the Capitol in response to his words.⁹

This book explores how the Obama-Trump pairing fits into a larger historical narrative. Obama, as the first African American president, was a racially transformative leader, despite his best efforts to soften the impact of this sharp break with precedent. Trump was a classic backlash president, talking about law and order and promising a return to a mythical American past. This populist rhetoric, with its disregard for norms and institutions, culminated in not one but two impeachments.

Obama and Trump were not the first such pair of presidents. This combination has occurred twice before in American history. The first such instance reaches back into the nineteenth century—Abraham Lincoln was also a racially transformative president. He was neither perfect nor always enthusiastic about the scope and depth of the changes he brought about. Nevertheless, Lincoln stood fast for the Union in the face of the secession of the slave states. He eventually evolved from a cautious Republican who opposed the expansion of slavery to the Great Emancipator who issued the Emancipation Proclamation and championed the Thirteenth Amendment.

Lincoln's successor, Andrew Johnson, came to office after Lincoln's death. Johnson's selection as vice president had been part of an effort to move forward and reunite the nation by persuading Democrats who had stayed in the Union to support Lincoln over his Democratic opponent, General George McClellan. Johnson, like Nixon and Trump, took an expansive view of his own power, especially when it came to using the executive branch to curb the Reconstruction laws passed by Congress in order to limit federal protection of freed people. Johnson's racism and desire to set up a hierarchical social structure in the South made him a backlash president, even if he was not elected in his own right. His presidency became synonymous with restoring white supremacy in the vanquished former Confederacy.¹⁰

And Johnson was the first president to be impeached. His impeachment was a mix of clear legal violations that could be demonstrated, assertions about the limits of executive power, and an accusation of interfering with an election by denouncing members of Congress in advance of the 1866 midterms. Such a mix would also characterize subsequent impeachments.

TABLE 1.1. Overview of Race, the Presidency, and Impeachment

Racial Order	Transformative President	Backlash Successor	Populist Politics	Impeachment Charges
Slavery	Abraham Lincoln	Andrew Johnson	Economic populist; objected to slavery; used rhetoric to delegitimize Congress; undermined executive branch responsibility to enforce laws	Violated the 1867 Tenure of Office Act in making federal appointments; interfered in the midterm elections (“swing around the circle”)
Jim Crow	Lyndon Johnson	Richard Nixon	Used language about law and order and the silent majority	Obstructed justice, abused power, defied congressional subpoena (passed by the House Judiciary Committee)
Colorblindness	Barack Obama	Donald Trump	Used anti-institution rhetoric like “drain the swamp”; spoke of the “forgotten Americans”; used anti-immigrant and anti-Black Lives Matter rhetoric	2020: obstructed Congress and abused power 2021: incited insurrection on January 6, 2021

Lyndon Baines Johnson (LBJ), at the behest of a growing civil rights movement, also falls into this category of a racially transformative president. The laws he signed enhanced the political power of nonwhite Americans (the Voting Rights Act of 1965) and asserted federal power to ensure equal treatment of all, even in the realms of private business and life (the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1968). His successor, Richard Nixon, taking advantage of the charged political environment, ran a law-and-order campaign in 1968. Throughout his presidency, he showed a

shaky commitment to the idea of political opposition, threatening to use the government to pursue his political foes, including anti-Vietnam War and civil rights activists. The House brought charges against him in 1974 for his part in the Watergate scandal—also, in essence, for interfering with the election process—but he resigned before he could be impeached.

The Relationship Between the Presidency and Race Politics

One of the main arguments in this book is that racially transformative presidencies are both rare and highly disruptive to the political system. An important question is why this seems to be the case. We often think of presidents as the movers and shakers of the political system, but that's not always true. Their charge—as formally written in the US Constitution—to “preserve, protect, and defend” has sometimes been translated into very cautious action when the stakes are high. In describing how most presidents have gingerly approached the topic of racial equality, Russell Riley characterizes the president as a “nation-keeper, a protector of the inherited social and political order and a preserver of domestic tranquility.”¹¹ Furthermore, presidents rely on the kinds of compromises that have kept race off the political agenda or accommodated the most racially conservative forces, including compromises over legislation and presidential nominations themselves. Presidents have strong political incentives to avoid explosive issues like race, and most of them do.

Nevertheless, the presidency is also powerful, and when presidents break away from the established racial order, the results for the political system are profound.

Three periods of time define presidential approaches to race. The first runs from the early days of the American republic through the Civil War. These years saw a great deal of change in American politics, economics, and even the territory of the nation. What all presidents of this period shared, across geography and ideology, was a general unwillingness to take a stand against slavery. As the tensions between North and South intensified, presidents became especially invested in pursuing compro-

mise, driven by the political pressures to hold together party coalitions that depended on votes from both slave and free states. Presidents from both the Whig and Democratic Parties kept this up even as those compromises increasingly tended toward accommodating the slaveholding South and, unsuccessfully, avoiding severe crisis. Lincoln's presidency, the Civil War, and the Johnson impeachment punctuated this era.

A new, post-slavery era eventually shared many of the political features of the previous period. The politics of Reconstruction eventually gave way to forces in the South that subjected Black citizens to violence and poverty, claiming that states' rights gave them the authority to do so. The Republican Party had been founded in the 1850s to halt slavery's expansion, but its vision became murky in the postwar years. The Democratic Party of the 1870s and beyond reasserted itself as the party of white supremacy. The Republicans often responded tepidly. Presidential statements on federal protections for civil rights, or even on the general subject of racial inequality, were infrequent and hard-won.¹² Even as much about American politics changed in the twentieth century, African Americans continued to face exclusion from public places, from employment and, eventually, from many federal programs, and the mob violence that terrorized Southern Black citizens remained undisturbed by federal intervention.

It is especially striking that presidents remained cautious, preserving the racial status quo, despite the changes they made in many other areas. Leaders from Theodore Roosevelt to Woodrow Wilson to Franklin Roosevelt expressed few qualms about expanding the presidency and breaking with past practices in other ways. Yet a reluctance to disturb the racial status quo when it came to the Jim Crow South manifested in both parties.

If we assume that presidential action on race is about personal beliefs and character, then it might be somewhat puzzling to consider that Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, and John F. Kennedy each has a complex and ambivalent racial legacy. This is less puzzling if we think about presidential action as a response to the formidable political forces that kept the parties divided over civil rights and to the expectation that presidents would maintain, rather than transform,

the racial status quo. As with slavery, this era of compromises and injustice was not sustainable and eventually ended with the civil rights legislation enacted during Lyndon Johnson's presidency. Pressure to act on civil rights legislation built in the early years of Kennedy's presidency, and after his assassination in 1963, Johnson continued on the same path, eventually signing landmark civil rights bills. The civil rights revolution enhanced the political power of African Americans and portended major shifts in social and economic life. It also began a shift in the party system that gradually sorted civil rights opponents into the Republican coalition and civil rights supporters into the Democratic one, ending over a century of internal party divisions over race.¹³ Because of changing party politics, the imperative to hold together diverse coalitions on race questions had greatly diminished compared to earlier periods. Nixon's rise and fall occurred in the aftermath of these changes.

Yet after Watergate, a similar pattern reestablished itself, with presidents reluctant to rock the boat of the social order too much. This new conservative era established new norms about being "colorblind" and focusing on individual rather than group rights.¹⁴ Unwritten rules circumscribing conversations about race reflected formal standards of nondiscrimination. Violating these norms brought accusations of "bringing race into it" or being "divisive."¹⁵ When Barack Obama's historic status as the first African American president threw these norms and practices into disarray, along came Donald Trump.

The Connection Between Racial Transformation and Impeachment

The second question this book considers is: What explains the connection between backlash politics and presidential impeachment?

When I told people that I was writing about race and presidential impeachment, I often got puzzled looks. Impeachment, after all, is about arcane and legalistic arguments over what the term "high crimes and misdemeanors" means and whether the president committed them.¹⁶ But if we peer beneath the surface—even just a bit—we see that each of the three impeachment crises covered in the book are linked to

race and public anxiety about changes to society and politics as well as to populism and the breach of norms and rules.

Obviously, any account of presidential impeachment has to start with presidential wrongdoing. Importantly, the politics of racial backlash does not exactly cause presidents to behave lawlessly and violate the law, nor does it directly prompt members of Congress to begin contemplating impeachment. But the explosive racial politics of the periods under consideration did create the conditions under which these events could unfold.

Constitutional language about “high crimes and misdemeanors” doesn’t draw a clear road map for what impeachment is supposed to look like. Over time, the process has taken on a more legalistic character.¹⁷ Impeachment uses language taken from the legal world—“trials” and “charges”—even though holding a president to account for things like “abuse of power” is obviously not only different but also political as well as legal.¹⁸

Several factors in the political context of presidential impeachment seem to matter: the level of conflict between the president and Congress, and, relatedly, the level of animosity between the parties. No president has ever been impeached by his own party. Still, divided government and even extreme polarization are not sufficient conditions. George W. Bush and Barack Obama held office during some of the most partisan periods in our country’s history, but despite occasional rumblings, neither was impeached, not even under divided government. Something else, something significant, has to push members of Congress to overcome their misgivings about such a major disruption in the normal practice of government.

No presidential impeachment process has resulted in a conviction and removal from office. When the House Judiciary committee began looking into the process during Watergate, they were relying on century-old precedents to guide them. Bill Clinton’s 1998 impeachment was widely understood as a political liability for the Republicans who pursued it, and it would serve as a cautionary tale for two more decades.¹⁹ Polarization alone, no matter how rancorous, has not been enough on its own to overcome these legacies.

The party question also presents some puzzles. We sense intuitively that presidents would be impeached when the divisions between parties are sharpest and the partisan disagreements between the president and Congress are the clearest. In some ways this is true—there’s no denying the depth of the disagreements between Andrew Johnson and congressional Republicans, especially radicals, or between Richard Nixon and a new contingent of liberals in Congress. As the following chapters will show, these disagreements, as well as the more familiar strife between Donald Trump and congressional Democrats, were specifically tied to race. Impeached presidents have also tended to be political hybrids who built political identities based on their personal appeals rather than party or ideological affiliations.²⁰

Thinking about what propels these figures into office in the first place brings us to the question of “national crisis or social upheaval” as a factor in presidential impeachment.²¹ When a president upends the racial status quo, new questions enter the political arena, and new divisions (as well as new alliances) emerge. Out of these periods of extraordinary politics come figures like Andrew Johnson, Richard Nixon, and Donald Trump.

Populism

The first point of connection is populism, a political approach that attacks institutions and claims victimhood on behalf of the “true people.”²² As such, populism is a logical connective tissue between racial backlash and presidential lawlessness, and it helps explain how these kinds of leaders find themselves in power. It also sheds light on how they use presidential power.

Identifying themselves as the real representatives of the deserving people, populist leaders often connect to racial or anti-immigrant backlash. And once they have identified the problem as laws and institutions, it follows that it is acceptable to break them, in the name of defending the people.²³

Andrew Johnson, Richard Nixon, and Donald Trump all fit this pattern. An early version of populism guided the politics that landed Johnson on the 1864 presidential ticket. His opposition to slavery was rooted

in an opposition to an “economic elite” who owned large numbers of slaves.²⁴ Once Johnson had taken office as president, his decisions reflected this sense of victimhood and oppression not only by elites but also by former slaves. His veto of the civil rights measures passed by the Reconstruction Congress suggested that white Americans were the true victims of the post–Civil War period.

For Nixon, populist appeals were a way of navigating the new political landscape after Lyndon Johnson. To win both the Republican nomination and the general election, Nixon needed to thread the needle of racial backlash response, drawing on voters from the suburban border South and attracting the support of those who saw civil rights progress as potentially disruptive to their lives. At the same time, Nixon needed to distance himself from George Wallace and other louder and more direct opponents of civil rights. Redirecting the focus to the plight of “ordinary” Americans, the so-called silent majority, allowed Nixon to strike this balance, at least temporarily. Nixon’s populism was informed by his dislike for those he perceived as intellectual and economic elites but fell short of outright disdain for political institutions.

Donald Trump’s 2016 statements targeted the established power structures in both parties, as well as the media and others he depicted as part of the Washington elite. While it is important to distinguish between populist claims and outright nationalist or racist statements, part of Trump’s rhetorical strategy was to cast whites as victims of modern politics. As Ashley Jardina demonstrates, “many whites have described themselves as outnumbered, disadvantaged, and even oppressed,” and these perceptions shaped their support for Trump.²⁵ Although Trump turned out not to be much of an economic populist once in office, this language helped him shore up votes among those who preferred more government intervention in the economy. Trump’s perceived populism also fueled a narrative about “economic anxiety” that provided cover for racial backlash in 2016.

After a racially transformative presidency, politicians can cultivate feelings of white victimhood. Presidential populism connects these feelings to broader critiques of institutions, especially those associated with “out-of-touch elites” or moves toward racial progress. It has proven to

be a short leap from those anti-elite, anti-institution ideas to presidential lawlessness and abuse of power. Leaders who have convinced themselves and their supporters that they represent the true people and that the institutions that limit them are illegitimate are less likely to be respectful of the boundaries formally and informally established to limit their power. Abuse of power, in turn, plays a crucial role in the impeachment process, especially for more recent presidents.

Populism, by insisting on the existence of a “true people,” also creates space for politicians to levy critiques against the idea of legitimate opposition, raising the stakes for the political system overall. After raising doubts about the right of their opponents to participate in politics, all three backlash presidents in this account engaged in some form of election interference, undermining the process. Andrew Johnson did this by denouncing his opponents on a speaking tour, flouting the norms of the time. Richard Nixon did this by covering up the Watergate break-in and engaging in various efforts to use state power against activists he deemed threatening. Donald Trump’s efforts to undermine the 2020 election began with weaponization of a foreign power against presumptive opponent Joe Biden and culminated, after its conclusion, in the January 6, 2021, insurrection.

With a president who denies legitimate opposition in word or deed, political opponents become all the more fervent. The words and behavior of backlash presidents are perceived—not without reason—as a threat to the fabric of American democracy. This sense of threat and preservation shapes not only impeachment politics but also the aftermath of these crises.

Norms and Institutions

The Trump years opened up new conversations about the role of norms in a democratic society. Scholars have argued that informal rules are a crucial part of lawful, republican forms of government.²⁶ One of the arguments of this book, however, is that norms can also help to preserve unjust arrangements, such as racial hierarchies.²⁷ The norm by which presidents would not interfere with the politics of slavery in the South

prior to the Civil War and would defer to Southern legislators in the twentieth century powerfully shaped expectations about how parties would work and how presidents would behave. After the civil rights era, a strong norm of colorblind rhetoric emerged, constraining how parties and presidents addressed the topic of race. Racially transformative presidents each transgressed these norms and in turn shifted the entire system into flux, where the informal rules were no longer clear. This lack of clarity not only opened up opportunities for populist backlash presidents but also created the conditions for pushing the boundaries of acceptable rhetoric and behavior in ways that undermined shared understandings of the limits.

Norms also play a role on the congressional side. For House members to consider starting the impeachment process, they have to get past the informal barriers that usually place that process out of reach. When the informal rules no longer apply, new possibilities open up. We have limited clues about how the founders intended impeachment to be used, but norms have evolved to proscribe it in most cases, even when presidents have engaged in corrupt behavior, overstepped boundaries, or made unpopular decisions. As Trump supporters were quick to say in 2020, impeachment removes the chief executive selected by the people, and as Clinton supporters hastened to point out in 1999, removal by impeachment would fundamentally alter the relationship between the executive and legislative branches. The potential for partisan retaliation and electoral fallout is very high. The informal rules of the game have suggested that this tool is mostly off-limits for Congress. The following chapters trace how this norm has been challenged in the Johnson, Nixon, and Trump cases.

Norms help us account for an important outlier in this story: the impeachment of Bill Clinton, which demonstrated that racial transformation is not the only force that can lead to the breakdown of norms. Clinton's impeachment was conducted by a newly elected Republican majority. Given that Republicans had not controlled the House of Representatives since the 1950s, the group that gained control came from a conservative movement that had been pushing back against informal norms and practices for some time by that point. The Clinton impeachment was an

example of this new congressional majority pushing the boundaries of what was possible under the new political circumstances. What is more, the defeat of the Republicans in the 1998 midterms made politicians even more hesitant about impeachment, deepening anti-impeachment norms in Congress and ultimately shaping impeachment politics during the Trump administration.

Shifting Dynamics in Congress

Discussions of presidential impeachment tend to focus on the president, but the House of Representatives plays the most pivotal role in the process. The scanty guidance provided by the Constitution about the conditions under which presidential impeachment should occur has made members of Congress generally cautious about employing the procedure. The political consequences of overreach appear to be severe, while the rewards seem far from guaranteed.

One goal of this book is to look at how the politics of racial transformation and backlash alter the environment for members of Congress. When backlash presidents take office, they tend to face intense opposition from the other party in Congress, with a few members unable to accept the new president. Chapters 3, 5, and 7 trace the racial dimension of this opposition—from radical Republicans opposed to Johnson’s Reconstruction actions to Congressional Black Caucus members suspicious of Nixon’s commitment to civil rights, to Black Democrats and their allies taking immediate issue with Trump’s statements. Members of Congress invested in racial transformation are among the early advocates for impeachment, often dismissed in their initial claims.

The Politics of Racial Transformation and Backlash and the Study of American Political Development

The book’s third area of inquiry is the relationship between the politics of racial transformation and backlash and how we study American political development. The term used here to describe periods marked by transformative leaders is “racial order,” a term that is perhaps most

strongly associated with the work of Desmond King and Rogers Smith. They define racial institutional orders as “ones in which political actors have adopted (and often adapted) racial concepts, commitments, and aims in order to help bind together their coalitions and structure governing institutions that express and serve the interests of their architects.”²⁸ They describe the functions of racial orders insofar as they “seek and exercise governing power in ways that predictably shape people’s statuses, resources, and opportunities.”²⁹ King and Smith’s influential article, as well as some related work, advocates for understanding American political development as the product of two persistent and competing racial orders—one egalitarian and focused on change, and the other steeped in what they call “ascriptive hierarchy,” or different legal and political circumstances for individuals based on traits like race and gender. This book builds on the idea of racial orders but differs from their approach in several key ways. While their analysis covers US institutions in a more comprehensive way, I zero in here on the presidency, where less evidence is found of competing racial orders. Instead, most presidents are influenced most heavily by the political pressures that hold the racial hierarchy in place; in the face of these pressures, a more egalitarian order breaks through and reshapes presidential politics only infrequently.

This analysis adds up to a rethinking of patterns in presidential history. It builds on, and breaks away from, one of the most influential theories in this field of study, Stephen Skowronek’s “political time” formulation.³⁰ This approach, which links presidential legacy and political impact to a leader’s positioning in the dominant “political order,” suggests that presidents’ fates are shaped by what comes before them, especially by their immediate predecessors. Scholars have mainly used this work to apply a four-part typology that assesses the potential for a successful, even transformative, presidency based on whether the leader is “affiliated” with the dominant party in power or “opposed” to it and on the health of that party’s ideas and coalition. But the argument offers much more than that.

A crucial intervention of Skowronek’s pathbreaking book is its attempt to redirect the attention of presidential studies to the impact of a

president's actions on politics and policy and away from endless assessments of legislative success. Most presidents, even those considered failures, come away from their time in office boasting significant accomplishments, legislative and otherwise. What distinguishes a Jimmy Carter or a Herbert Hoover from a Lyndon Johnson, Theodore Roosevelt, or FDR is their place in the larger political context, which in turn shapes what their actions do for their successors and beyond. "Reconstructive" presidents create new coalitions, dominant ideas, and even institutional arrangements that their successors articulate by attempting to "change policy without changing politics"—usually without much success.³¹

The argument in this book rests on this idea that presidents can change politics in powerful ways, and that we can understand a lot more about presidential politics by thinking about how much a given presidency is shaped by its predecessor. However, my analysis departs from the claim that the presidency is necessarily a "battering ram" against existing arrangements. Skowronek argues that "presidents cannot help but be politically catalytic." What we will see in the forthcoming chapters is that they can certainly try, but that in the area of race, they have every incentive to carefully avoid upsetting existing arrangements. I am not the first to raise this caveat: Russell Riley also suggests that when we emphasize the racial dimensions of the presidency, we see a much less disruptive office most of the time. Whereas presidents have been eager to carve out distinct political identities on many issues—foreign policy, westward expansion, tax cuts, social programs—the dominant pattern has been avoidance when it comes to directly facing the nation's challenges on race, especially activist demands. This pattern extends to a particular asymmetry: Presidents whose actions deepened racial hierarchy or enhanced the power of racially conservative forces had a different impact than did those few who pushed the nation in the direction of equality.

Another important contention is that presidents do not make this determination on their own. The story of presidential politics is a story of changing presidential coalitions. In describing the rise and fall of party orders, Skowronek details how Jacksonian Democrats brought

together North and South through party procedures, and then the inadequacy of these procedures in the 1850s to address the nation's moral and political crisis around slavery. A similar coalition came back together with the Democratic resurgence in the New Deal era, only to disintegrate once again around the issue of civil rights. The rise and fall of Lincoln's Republicans is described mostly without respect to the structural dynamics around race after the conclusion of the Civil War, though this order saw the end of Reconstruction and the beginning of a Jim Crow order. It is true that race did not play a central role in cleaving the party coalition the way that it did for Northern and Southern Democrats. However, factional shifts, especially between "black-and-tan" Republicans and proponents of a "lily-white" party, drove developments in Republican politics as well.³²

If we look at race as the central fault line, the cause of the nation's great conflict, and the anchor weighing down our democracy until (at least) 1965, then coalition politics and the pivotal presidencies look different. Importantly, as we shall see in chapter 4, this view highlights the continuities that persisted through the rise of the New Deal order and Franklin Roosevelt's presidency. It also helps to explain why Barack Obama's presidency had such significant and destabilizing effects on politics, despite his careful efforts at what Skowronek describes as "interest management." Obama carefully tended to the different groups within the Democratic Party's governing coalition rather than offer a bold new vision around which to organize a new era of politics.³³

The third relevant piece of the political time formulation is its approach to presidential impeachment by linking it to the "politics of preemption," which places a leader in opposition to the party that controls the main ideas of the era, as well as—usually—Congress. These leaders tend to be vulnerable to character criticisms—up to and including impeachment—because they pursue more individualistic and candidate-centric politics, unmoored from political coalitions. Skowronek uses this insight to describe the fates of Andrew Johnson and Richard Nixon, as well as the impeachment articles drawn up against John Tyler in the 1840s and the political "convulsions" that Woodrow Wilson experienced around the Treaty of Versailles.³⁴ In the 1997 book

The Politics Presidents Make, these concepts also presciently describe the dynamics of Bill Clinton's impeachment. This analysis provides some of the foundation for digging into impeachments in this book. Like Skowronek, I view the tenuous coalitions cobbled together by Andrew Johnson, Nixon, and Trump as central to the dynamics leading to their impeachment. One contribution of this book is to explore the parallels across the politics that drove these presidencies. This further refines the political time approach by narrowing down the broad category of preemptive leadership. The emphasis Skowronek places on the highly personal politics of preemption means that his theory does an excellent job of explaining why popular generals like Zachary Taylor and Dwight Eisenhower succeed at getting elected to the presidency. But while Johnson, Nixon, and Trump may have benefited from broadly similar politics—the ability to exploit weaknesses in the dominant party—they are undoubtedly a distinct political breed. What I aim to add is some deeper scrutiny of how impeachment emerges from unstable politics, particularly destabilization caused by shifts in norms and by the responses of ascendant political forces to backlash figures. By looking at the role of elections, Congress, and political movements, I hope to open up new avenues in the American political development conversation about presidential impeachment.

The Implications for American Democracy

Finally, the book poses the question: What are the implications for American democracy? What does the cycle of racial maintenance and avoidance, transformation, and backlash tell us about the possibilities and flaws of the American experiment? This story offers both hope and caution and highlights the potential for institutions to be both a hindrance and an important tool in the pursuit of a more racially just society.

In addition to the importance of institutions, critiques of contemporary US politics point to partisan polarization as a threat, suggesting that moderation and compromise are inherently laudable goals. This may be the case much of the time, but moderation and compromise also

have important costs. In the story of American politics, one long-term and recurring cost has been racial progress and equality.

The term “backlash” has fallen out of favor with experts on race and American politics, and with good reason. One critique is that the backlash framework treats racism as episodic rather than woven into many aspects of politics and identity.³⁵ In this book, I use “backlash” to denote those periods when race drove politics more overtly. The evidence here presents the case that some periods are different, precisely because racism and racial hierarchy are built, sometimes tacitly, into so many elements of American politics—from political language to assumptions about the roles of the state and federal governments, to the policy questions that are kept off of party and congressional agendas.

Another criticism is that “backlash” is an imprecise term. Political scientist Vesla Weaver writes, “Much like the ambiguity around its origins and motivation, it is equally unclear what the ultimate aim or target of backlash is—repeal of an advance, desert a party who has gone too far to the extreme, revert to some prior status quo condition, or simply to register anger.”³⁶ It’s exactly this ambiguity that creates the conditions for presidents like Andrew Johnson, Richard Nixon, and even Donald Trump. They are elected to turn back the clock, or alter the direction, or . . . something. In 1864, Republicans sought the preservation of the Union and chose a Southern politician and former Democrat as Lincoln’s running mate. After the war, Andrew Johnson devoted his presidency to reestablishing white supremacy in the South.³⁷ In 1968, Nixon won office through a law-and-order campaign that identified the Democrats with social disorder. In 2016, Trump promised to “make America great again.” The pursuit of such vaguely described ends spurs lawless behavior and ensures that the goals of at least some of a president’s support coalition are primarily about destruction and moving backward.

The third problem with backlash is that it can sometimes be taken to imply that racial progress is bad or dangerous. While this is a possible interpretation of the dynamics described in this book, it is hardly my intention to suggest as much. When the dust settles after an impeachment and a backlash presidency, Americans, especially those in power, have

a choice. If this book has a prescription for politics, it is to take seriously the painful lesson of a transformative period. That is, to create political institutions, formal and informal, that break more decisively with the hierarchies of the present and past. Such a move would require facing problems and tough questions directly. Historically, the impulse so far has been to retreat from those difficulties, in both the Reconstruction era and the years following the civil rights movement. But such avoidance is far from inevitable.

The period since Trump's election has brought a great deal of introspection in the United States about the health of democracy here. Much of it has zeroed in on institutions and norms. However, not all norms and institutions are equally just, and we can learn a great deal about our democracy from the periods that followed backlash and impeachment as the country settled into a new routine. The trappings of impeachment have the effect of distracting from the major national issues at hand. And the ideology fueling the backlash has a way of entering the political mainstream. Allowing it to do so is also a choice.

American democracy is a work in progress, and that progress has not always been linear. The chapters to come show that racial hierarchy is built into the political foundations of the American system through compromises and unspoken agreements. They also show that these features of politics are reasserted and rebuilt even after a racially transformative president has altered the status quo. Backlash presidents like Andrew Johnson, Nixon, and Trump eventually prove to be vulnerable and unpopular. Yet some of their ideas outlive their presidencies, taking hold especially at the state level, where they are once again beyond the reach of national—presidential—policy jurisdiction. The cycle repeats. It looks different each time, but after each period of transformation, there have been important political figures who were unable to take the risks necessary to prevent backsliding. There are lessons here for twenty-first-century Americans as this history continues to unfold.

INDEX

- Abernathy, Ralph, 146
- abolitionism/anti-slavery movement:
opposition to, 27–28; pre–Civil War
actions of, 31
- abuses of presidential power: Andrew
Johnson, 64; as basis for impeachment,
9, 12, 64, 126–27, 130, 187, 189, 195–96;
Nixon, 112, 126–27, 129–32, 135; populist
origins of, in attacks on institutions
and norms, 12, 135; Trump, 186–87, 189,
195–96. *See also* lawlessness; presidential
powers
- Adams, Charles Francis, 73
- affirmative action, 122–23, 137–38, 142, 145,
147, 148, 151–52, 159, 169, 177. *See also*
employment discrimination; individual-
ism; meritocracy; quotas; reverse dis-
crimination/racism
- Affordable Care Act, 167–69, 171, 185,
248n134
- African Americans: Andrew Johnson
and, 55, 57–60, 66–67; Bill Clinton and,
154–55, 158; Carter and, 139; citizenship
of, 38–39, 61; and Democratic Party
politics, 77, 118, 181; federal positions for,
80, 82, 84, 88, 91, 99; Franklin Roosevelt
and, 86; George W. Bush and, 159, 162;
Nixon and, 112, 119, 123, 128–30; Northern
resentment of, in Reconstruction era, 74;
Obama and, 1; political power and
influence of, 77, 88; post–Civil War
discrimination against, 7; Reagan and,
146, 149; Republican Party and, 115–16;
rights of, 39, 59, 71–73, 76 (*see also* voting
rights for); stereotypes of, 147, 247n112;
Theodore Roosevelt and, 78–80, 230n15;
Truman and, 90; Trump’s targeting of, 2;
violence against, 54, 57–58, 73–74, 76–77,
89, 95, 101–2, 106, 107, 151–53, 198, 229n89;
voting rights for, 55–56, 65–67, 73–74, 82,
99, 105–8, 124, 148; whites’ sexual fears
regarding, 79, 81, 84–85, 95, 99. *See also*
colorblind ideology/rhetoric; enslaved
persons; Great Migration
- Agnew, Spiro, 116
- Alexander, Michelle, 180
- American Civil Liberties Union, 185
- American political development, 14–18
- Anthony, Susan B., 183
- Anti-Lynching Bill, 82
- anti-slavery movement. *See* abolitionism/
anti-slavery movement
- Ashley, James, 65, 68
- authoritarianism, 179
- backlash, racial. *See* racial backlash
- backlash presidents: Andrew Johnson, 4, 20,
70–71; congressional opposition to, 14;
impact of, 16, 20, 204; Nixon, 5–6, 20;
overview of, 5; populism used by, 4,
10–12, 207; themes of, 4; as threat to
democracy, 12; Trump, 4, 20, 203
- Baio, Scott, 179
- Baker, Howard, 126
- Barr, William, 107
- Belafonte, Harry, Jr., 97
- Belew, Kathleen, 199
- Bell, Griffin, 138

- Bell, John, 43, 45
 Bernstein, Carl, 126
 Biden, Hunter, 3, 195
 Biden, Joe, 3, 12, 163, 188, 195, 199–200, 203–6, 208, 209, 214, 217
 birther movement, 176
Birth of a Nation (film), 84
 black-and-tan Republicans, 17, 78, 82
 Black codes, 57, 70. *See also* Jim Crow era
Black Enterprise (magazine), 1
 Black Lives Matter, 2, 171–72, 177, 179–80, 204
 Black Panthers, 128
 Black Power movement, 128
 block grants, 123
 Blumenthal, Seth, 124
 Bouie, Janelle, 168
 Brazile, Donna, 181
 Breckinridge, John, 43, 45
 Brooke, Edward, 115
 Brooks, Preston, 38
 Brown, Michael, 161
 Brownell, Herbert, 95, 97, 233n84
 Brownsville massacre (1906), 81
Brown v. Board of Education, 94–98
 Bucci, Laura, 184
 Buchanan, James, 36, 38–40
 Buchanan, Pat, 123, 152, 153, 250n11
 Bush, George H. W., 151–54, 243n53, 244n54, 244n55
 Bush, George W., 141, 159–63, 182, 201, 249n135
 Bush, Jeb, 177, 178
 Buttigieg, Pete, 203
 Byrnes, James, 232n58
- Calhoun, John C., 34
 California, 33–34
 campaigns. *See* presidential campaigns
 Carmines, Edward, 113
 Carter, Dan, 118
 Carter, Jimmy, 136–39, 144–46, 205–6
 Cass, Lewis, 31
 Castro, Joaquin, 189
 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 196–97
- Central High School, Little Rock, Arkansas, 96
 Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), 130
 Chappelle, Dave, 175
 Charlottesville, Virginia, “Unite the Right” rally, 187–90, 204
Chicago Daily Defender (newspaper), 119
Chicago Daily News (newspaper), 166
 China, 196–97
 Christian nationalism, 209
 Churchill, John, 65, 66
 CIA. *See* Central Intelligence Agency
 citizenship, for African Americans, 38–39, 61
 Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), 87
 civil rights: of African Americans, 39, 59, 71–73, 76; *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and, 94–98; Democratic Party and, 91–93; Eisenhower and, 93–98, 102; executive actions promoting, 77; federal enforcement of, 89; foreign policy linked to, 100–101; group vs. individual, 148; growing demands for, 77; Kennedy and, 98–102; Lyndon Johnson and, 5, 8, 75–76, 78, 102–9; as moral issue, 78, 85, 88–89, 96–98, 101–3, 106–7; Nixon and, 98, 117–24; Reagan and, 145, 148; Republican Party and, 115; Sanders and, 180; Truman and, 90–93, 102; Vietnam War and, 113–14. *See also* voting rights
 Civil Rights Act (1957), 97, 103
 Civil Rights Act (1964), 5, 75, 76, 78, 101, 103–4, 106, 145, 150, 152
 Civil Rights Act (Fair Housing Act, 1968), 5, 76, 78
 civil service, 80, 82, 84, 91
 civil unrest. *See* riots and unrest
 Civil War: Lincoln and, 40, 42; slavery as cause of, 47–49
The Clansman (film), 84
 Clarke, David, 179
 Clay, Henry, 22, 30, 34
 Clifford, Clark, 91
 Clinton, Bill: and African Americans, 154–55, 158; character/personality of, 158;

- and crime, 155, 180; impeachment of, 9, 13, 18, 156–59, 190; and Obama, 163; as preemptive president, 17, 229n83; and the South, 137; and welfare, 154–56
- Clinton, Hillary, 156, 163–65, 174, 179–83, 204
- Clyburn, James, 181
- Coates, Ta-Nehisi, 180; “The First White President,” 3
- Coe, Alexis, 24
- Coe, Kevin, 76, 235n134
- Cohen, Steve, 189
- Cohn, Nate, 174
- colonization approach to slavery, 23, 41, 225n76
- colorblind ideology/rhetoric: Bill Clinton and, 154; George H. W. Bush and, 151, 153; George W. Bush and, 160–61, 249n135; individualism as component of, 8, 142; meanings of, 142–44; Nikki Haley and, 213; Obama and, 141, 163–69, 172, 249n135; origins of, 137–40; Palin and, 166; precursor of, 60; Reagan and, 145–50, 243n52; societal norm of, 8, 13, 143, 145–46, 162–64, 169, 172, 175
- Comey, James, 186–87
- Communism, 150
- compassionate conservatism, 159
- compromise/moderation: in aftermath of Andrew Johnson presidency, 71–74; in aftermath of Nixon presidency, 137; Bill Clinton and, 155–56; Compromise of 1850, 32–37; in the Constitution, 24–25; Eisenhower and, 94–98; following racial transformations, 208–11; Franklin Roosevelt and, 86–90; George H. W. Bush and, 151–53; Kennedy and, 98–102; Lincoln and, 42, 43, 46–48, 51; Lyndon Johnson and, 78, 105; Missouri Compromise, 25–26, 35, 37, 39; negative aspects of, 19; Nixon and, 117–19; Obama and, 2, 17, 165, 167, 171; political role of, 18–19; on racial issues, 6–8, 19, 20; Reagan and, 150; on slavery, 22–40; Theodore Roosevelt and, 81; Three-Fifths Compromise, 25; Van Buren and, 28–29. *See also* racial backlash; racial transformation
- Compromise of 1850, 32–37
- Confederate statues, removal of, 188
- Congress: Andrew Johnson’s relations with, 10, 58–71; Nixon’s relations with, 10, 111, 133–36; norms of behavior and actions of, 12–14; presidents’ relations with, 9–10, 17–18; and Reconstruction, 58–62, 65; and slavery, 23, 25, 37, 39, 44, 46, 54; Trump’s relations with, 10, 190–92, 194–95. *See also* House of Representatives; Senate
- Congressional Black Caucus, 14, 129, 155, 180, 189
- Connally, John, 239n55
- Conservative Caucus, 150
- conservative movement: 1968 election and, 113, 115–16; and Clinton’s impeachment, 13, 157; and colorblind rhetoric, 8, 140, 142; George W. Bush and, 159; New Deal and civil rights as targets of, 237n6; Nixon and, 120; populism aligned with, 120; Reagan and, 144–50; Republican Party and, 115–16, 120
- Constitution: and impeachment, 14, 64, 133, 207; on presidents’ role, 6, 23, 68; and slavery, 23, 24–25, 44, 46
- Constitutional Convention, 25
- Constitutional Union Party, 43
- context, political. *See* political environment
- convention system, 28
- Coolidge, Calvin, 82–83
- Copperhead Democrats, 52
- Corwin amendment, 46–47
- Costigan, Edward, 87
- COVID-19, 196–97
- Cox, Archibald, 130
- Cox, Jacob Dobson, 72
- Cox, Minnie, 80
- crime: Democratic Party and, 143, 155, 180; Republican Party and, 123, 145, 151; whites’ anxieties about, 107, 114, 123, 143, 145, 151, 154. *See also* law-and-order ideology/rhetoric

- Crittenden, John J., 46
Crowley, James, 168
culture wars, 112, 126, 161
- Dallas Morning News* (newspaper), 166
Dallek, Robert, 99
Dalton, Kathleen, 80
Daniels, Jonathan, 89
Davies, Elizabeth Jordan, 172
Davis, Henry Winter, 53
Davis, Jefferson, 52, 57, 63
Days, Drew, 148
Declaration of Independence, 44, 49, 210–11
Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), 176–77
“defund the police,” 199, 205
democracy: backlash presidents as threat to, 12; civil rights publicity as reflection on, 101; implications of racial order, racial transformation, and racial backlash for, 18–20; post–Civil War, 62, 71; restoration of, after backlash presidencies, 200, 210; white nationalist threats to, 188
Democratic Party: African Americans’ role in, 77, 118, 181; associated with social disorder, 19; and civil rights, 91–93; during Civil War, 52; divisions within, in 1960s and 1970s, 111, 114, 117, 120, 122–23, 125; formation of, 22, 28; Franklin Roosevelt and, 86, 89–90; Nixon’s strategy against, 117, 122–23; Northern and Southern interests in, 16–17, 22, 28, 29, 31, 36–37, 86–87, 89–92, 98–99, 102, 105, 111, 118; and populism in 2016, 179–81; post-Obama, 179–81, 188–96, 199, 202–6; and race in civil rights era, 8; and race in post–civil rights era, 143; and race in post–Civil War era, 7; and slavery, 7, 22, 37–38; Van Buren and, 28; and white supremacy, 7, 52. *See also* Congressional Black Caucus; Jacksonian Democrats; New Deal Democrats; New Democrats
DeSante, Christopher, 142
DeSantis, Ron, 205
DeVos, Betsy, 202
Dirksen, Everett, 104
discrimination. *See* affirmative action; employment discrimination; racial discrimination; reverse discrimination/racism
District of Columbia. *See* Washington, DC
“diversity, equity and inclusion” (DEI), 205, 214
Dole, Bob, 149
Douglas, Stephen, 21, 36–39, 43, 62
Douglass, Frederick, 51, 59, 228n44; “Oration in Memory of Abraham Lincoln,” 21–22
Dred Scott v. Sandford, 38, 43
Du Bois, W.E.B., 84
Dukakis, Michael, 151, 154, 244n55
Duke, David, 152
Dyer, Leonidas, 82
Dyer, Thomas, 230n15
- East St. Louis massacre (1917), 85
economy: African Americans and, 59; Andrew Johnson and, 11, 52–53; Carter and, 139; populism and, 11, 52–53, 85–86; racial inequalities in, 2, 8, 56–58, 76–78, 88–89, 97, 123, 129, 146; Reagan and, 144, 146; Trump and, 11, 184
Eisenhower, Dwight, 7, 18, 77, 93–98, 102, 234n97
election interference: Andrew Johnson and, 4, 12, 208; Nixon and, 6, 12, 135, 208; populism linked to, 12; Trump and, 3, 12, 135, 200–203, 208
Electoral College, 2, 25, 43, 74, 92, 166, 174, 183, 200–201, 208, 215
Electoral Count Act (1887), 200–201
elites: Andrew Johnson and, 11, 62; Democratic Party defections by, 111; Nixon and, 11; as target of populist sentiment, 11–12, 120; Trump and, 11, 178
Emancipation Proclamation, 4, 41, 47–48

- employment discrimination, 87, 89, 91–93, 104, 117, 122–23, 148, 151. *See also* affirmative action
- enslaved persons, Three-Fifths Compromise on, 25
- environment, political. *See* political environment
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 104, 148
- Ervin, Sam, 136
- Esper, Mark, 107
- Evers, Charles, 146
- Evers, Medgar, 146
- Executive Order 8802, 89
- executive powers. *See* presidential powers
- executive privilege, 131
- expansionism, 30–31, 35, 37

- Fair Employment Practices Committee, 89, 91
- Faubus, Orville, 96
- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), 127, 130, 132–33, 150
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), 161
- federalism: Jackson and, 27; and racial hierarchy, 206; and slavery, 23. *See also* states
- Felt, Mark, 132–33
- Fessenden, William Pitt, 58
- Fifteenth Amendment, 73, 76, 230n97
- Fillmore, Millard, 33–35
- Fitzwater, Marlin, 153
- Flake, Jeff, 178
- Floyd, George, 198, 203
- Foner, Eric, 57, 67
- Forbes, Robert Pierce, 26
- Ford, Gerald, 136–37
- “forgotten man/American,” 85–86, 88, 120, 184, 186. *See also* “silent majority;” “true people”
- Fourteenth Amendment, 61, 73, 76, 94, 230n97
- Francis, Megan Ming, 82, 85, 88
- Frantz, Edward, 82, 230n15
- Freedmen’s Bureau, 59
- Freedom Riders, 101
- Freeman, Ruby, 203
- Free Soil movement/Party, 31–32, 35, 36, 224n54
- Frymer, Paul, 118
- Fugitive Slave Law (1850), 34–35, 46

- Gage, Beverly, 132–33
- gag rule, 29
- Galvin, Daniel, 239n55
- Gates, Henry Louis, 168
- gender, and 2016 election, 175, 249n13
- Germond, Jack, 153
- Gettysburg Address (Lincoln), 44, 47–49
- Gingrich, Newt, 1, 157
- Goldwater, Barry, 104–6, 111, 115, 178, 251n17
- Goldzwig, Steven, 108
- Gordon-Reed, Annette, 24, 55, 61, 64–65
- Gore, Al, 201
- Graham, Billy, 95
- Grant, Ulysses S., 67, 72–74, 138, 205–6
- Gray, L. Patrick, 132
- Great Depression, 83, 87
- Great Migration, 77, 90
- Great Society, 78, 103, 123, 153
- Greeley, Horace, 73
- Guinier, Lani, 155
- guns, 145

- habeas corpus, 41, 48
- Haldeman, H. R., 122
- Haley, Nikki, 213
- Hamer, Fannie Lou, 105
- Hancock, Ange-Marie, 147
- Hanna, Mark, 79
- Harding, Warren G., 82
- Harlan, John Marshall, 140, 142
- Harris, Kamala, 199, 205, 209, 214–15
- Harrison, William Henry, 29–30
- Hayes, Rutherford B., 72, 74, 138

- Health, Education, and Welfare Department, 119, 122
- health-care legislation, 167–71. *See also* Affordable Care Act
- Heersink, Boris, 237n13
- Helms, Jesse, 146, 149
- Hemings, Sally, 24
- Hersh, Seymour, 128
- Heyer, Heather, 188
- high crimes and misdemeanors, 8–9, 64, 190
- Hinton, Elizabeth, 123
- Hochschild, Arlie Russell, *Strangers in Their Own Land*, 184
- Holden, William W., 56
- Holt, Michael, 32, 45
- Hoover, Herbert, 82–83
- Hoover, J. Edgar, 132
- Horton, Willie, 151, 244n55
- HoSang, Daniel, 142
- House Judiciary Committee, 9, 65–66, 112, 126, 129–30, 133, 136, 158
- House of Representatives: gag rule on slavery petitions in, 29; presidential elections determined by, 92; role of, in impeachment, 14. *See also* House Judiciary Committee; impeachments
- Howard University, 83
- Humphrey, Hubert, 91, 107, 116, 118, 120
- Hunter, Duncan, 250n11
- Hurricane Katrina, 159, 161–63
- Hurricane Maria, 192
- Huston, Tom, 128
- Huston Plan, 112, 127–28, 132, 134
- Ickes, Harold, 86
- immigrants/immigration, 2, 176–77, 179, 182, 192–93, 205, 210
- impeachments: abuse of power as basis for, 9, 12, 64, 126–27, 130, 187, 189, 195–96; Andrew Johnson, 4, 18, 63–71, 208, 229n83, 256n90; Bill Clinton, 9, 13, 18, 156–59, 190; characteristics of presidents subject to, 10; Constitutional guidance lacking for, 14, 64, 133, 207; fallout for Congress of, 14; House of Representatives' crucial role in, 14; legal context for, 8–9, 64–65, 67–70, 157–58, 187, 190, 196, 208, 220n16; legitimacy as issue in, 69, 134–36; Nixon, 6, 9, 18, 110, 112, 126–36, 208; norms of, 13–14, 157, 187, 191–92, 208; parliamentary processes compared to, 64–65; political (vs. legal) context for, 158, 187, 190, 196, 208; political environments for, 9–14, 18, 64–65, 70–71, 111, 131, 133–36, 141, 157, 191–92, 207–8, 220n16; racial transformation linked to, 8–14, 70–71, 134–36, 207; Trump, 3–4, 18, 186–90, 193–96, 202–3, 208
- individualism, and racial politics, 8, 15, 74, 140, 142, 148, 162. *See also* affirmative action; meritocracy
- Indivisible, 254n58
- infamous bargain, 74
- institutions: FBI norms, 133; Jackson's attitude toward, 26; Nixon's attitude toward, 131–34; political roles of, 18; populist attacks on, 10–12, 121; Trump's attitude toward, 177–78, 187. *See also* norms
- Internal Revenue Service (IRS), 127, 134
- ironclad oath, 53
- IRS. *See* Internal Revenue Service
- Islamophobia, 160–61, 170–71, 182, 185–86, 246n93
- Ismail, Aymann, 160
- Jackson, Andrew, 19, 22, 26–28, 52, 222n20, 222n23, 223n36
- Jackson, Jesse, 154, 163
- Jacksonian Democrats, 16–17
- January 6, 2021, insurrection, 3, 12, 201–3, 208
- Jardina, Ashley, 11
- Jefferson, Thomas, 22, 24, 27

- Jenkins, Jeffery, 237n13
- Jim Crow era: beginning of, 17; ending of, 104; Lyndon Johnson and, 78; racial hierarchy in, 81; status quo in, 7; voting rights in, 203; Wilson and, 84. *See also* Black codes; racial violence
- Johnson, Andrew: and African Americans, 55, 57–60, 66–67; aftermath of the presidency of, 71–74; as backlash president, 4, 20, 70–71; congressional relations with, 10, 58–71; Democratic Party and, 4; election interference by, 4, 12; impact of backlash presidency of, 20; impeachment of, 4, 18, 63–71, 208, 229n83, 256n90; Nixon compared to, 110, 115, 122, 134–35; norms challenged, ignored, and broken by, 63; political background of, 50, 52, 54; political environment for, 23; political isolation of, 50, 62–63, 71, 229n83; and populism, 10–11, 52, 61–63, 121; as preemptive president, 17, 229n83; presidential powers wielded by, 4, 55–58, 64; racial issues exploited by, 11, 19; racism of, 4, 59, 66–67, 228n44; and Reconstruction, 4, 11, 52–53, 55–58, 63, 65–66, 70; and slavery, 52; and the South, 19, 50, 52, 54–58, 70–71; Trump compared to, 71, 187, 189, 192, 195–98, 201–3; and the Union's preservation, 19, 50, 52, 56, 61; vice presidential selection of, 4, 50, 53; and white supremacy, 4, 19, 55, 58–59, 62, 66–67
- Johnson, Kimberley, 76
- Johnson, Lyndon: and civil rights, 5, 8, 75–76, 78, 102–9; and race, 8; and racial transformation, 75–76, 78, 102–9; as transformative president, 5, 76, 78, 211
- Jones, Paula, 156–57
- Jordan, Barbara, 110, 130, 136
- Jordan, Vernon, 146–47
- Journal of Negro Education*, 97
- Judge, Oney, 24
- Junn, Jane, 249n3
- Justice Department, 89, 94, 97, 100, 138, 148, 186
- Kaepernick, Colin, 192
- Kansas, 38–39, 43
- Kansas-Nebraska Act, 37–39
- Kantowicz, Edward, 138
- Karp, Matt, 42
- Kasich, John, 178
- Katznelson, Ira, 87
- Kendall, Amos, 27
- Kennedy, John F., 7, 8, 77, 98–102
- Kennedy, Robert, 98
- King, Desmond, 15, 142, 209
- King, Martin Luther, Jr., 95, 97, 98, 107–8, 113–14, 149–50
- King, Rodney, 151–53
- Klinkner, Phil, 83
- Know-Nothing Party, 38
- Koncewicz, Michael, 131
- Kotlowski, Dean, 123
- Ku Klux Klan, 69, 73, 74, 84, 146–47
- Kutler, Stanley, 131
- Lance, Bert, 138
- law-and-order ideology/rhetoric: 1968 election and, 113; applied to civil rights questions, 85, 97; Democratic Party and, 118; George H. W. Bush and, 152–53; Humphrey and, 118; Nixon and, 5, 19, 114, 119, 123–24, 238n25; Reagan and, 115; Republican Party and, 114–15; Trump and, 2, 4, 198; Willie Horton ad and, 151, 244n55. *See also* crime
- lawlessness: ambiguity and vagueness as invitation to, 19; populism linked to, 10, 12, 130, 207; presidential, 9, 10, 12, 111–12, 130, 183, 196; racial backlash linked to, 9, 112, 117, 183. *See also* abuses of presidential power; norms
- Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, 145
- Lecompton Constitution, 39, 43

- Lee, Robert E., 137, 188
- legitimacy: denied to opponents by
 politicians, 12, 61–62, 112, 121, 134; of
 impeachments, 69, 134–36; as issue in
 impeachments, 134–36; presidents', 30,
 62–63, 117, 134–36, 169, 175, 189, 191, 194
- Levine, Robert, 55, 228n44
- Lewinsky, Monica, 157
- Lewis, John, 180, 181
- lily-white Republicans, 17, 81–83
- Limbaugh, Rush, 1
- Lincoln, Abraham: 1860 election, 42–45;
 1864 election, 50–53; assassination of,
 65; Gettysburg Address, 44, 47–49; and
 Johnson's vice presidency nomination,
 50, 53; and Mexican-American War
 (1846–48), 30; moderation of, 42, 43,
 46–48, 51; political background of, 42;
 political context for, 23, 41–42; presiden-
 tial powers wielded by, 40–41, 47–48;
 Proclamation of Amnesty and Recon-
 struction, 51; and race, 21, 40–41, 49,
 225n76; and racial transformation, 21–22,
 44–45, 47–49; and Reconstruction,
 53–54; and slavery, 4, 21–22, 24, 41, 43,
 48–49, 54, 226n98; as transformative
 president, 4, 21–24, 40, 48–49, 211
- Louis Harris and Associates, 113
- Louisiana Purchase, 36
- Lowndes, Joe, 116, 178, 236n2
- lynching, 76–77, 79, 81–83, 85, 87–89, 91,
 103
- Manchin, Joe, 191
- March on Washington (1963), 102
- Marshall, Thurgood, 151, 153, 244n54
- Martin, Trayvon, 172
- Marxism-Leninism, 128
- masculinity, 178, 188
- Mason, Lilliana, 113
- McCain, John, 2, 165–66, 174
- McCarthy, Eugene, 108
- McClellan, George, 4, 51
- McConnell, Mitch, 202
- McGovern, George, 125
- McGrath, Howard, 91
- McGrory, Mary, 153, 244n62
- McKinley, William, 79, 80
- Meacham, Jonathan, 65, 70
- Mellow, Nicole, 71
- Memphis riot (1866), 58
- Mercieca, Jennifer, 182
- Meredith, James, 100
- meritocracy, 142, 162, 184. *See also*
 affirmative action; individualism
- Mexican Cession, 31
- Mexican War (1846–48), 30–31, 34
- Mfume, Kwesi, 155
- Military Reconstruction Act, 66
- Milkis, Sidney, 90, 105
- Miller, Stephen, 107, 186
- Milley, Mark, 107
- Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party,
 105
- Missouri Compromise, 25–26, 35, 37, 39
- Mitchell, Clarence, 123, 129, 145
- Mitchell, Parren, 129
- moderation. *See* compromise/moderation
- Mondale, Walter, 154
- Monroe, James, 25–26
- morality and moral leadership: Bill Clinton
 and, 158–59; civil rights issues and, 78,
 85, 88–89, 96–98, 101–3, 106–7; Kennedy
 and, 101–2; Lincoln and, 21, 44–45,
 48–49; Lyndon Johnson and, 102–3,
 106–7; moral status of slavery, 17, 25, 27,
 34, 40, 44–45, 47–49; presidents'
 avoidance of, 26, 36, 72, 78, 85, 89, 96–98;
 sexual anxieties linked to, 95; welfare
 linked to, 60
- Morgan, Ruth, 127
- Morrison, Toni, 157–58
- Morrow, E. Frederic, 95
- Moss, Shaye, 203
- Mueller, Robert, and the Mueller report,
 193–94
- Muslims. *See* Islamophobia
- Myers, Mike, 162

- NAACP. *See* National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
- Naftali, Timothy, 130
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), 77, 82–85, 87–88, 90–91, 97, 122, 128–29, 159
- National Football League (NFL), 192
- nationalism, 11, 54, 74, 177, 182, 185, 188, 192, 209
- national security, 130–31, 182, 195
- National Union Party, 50, 53, 60–61, 63, 229n83
- National Youth Administration (NYA), 86
- Native Americans, 26, 222n20
- Nebraska, 36–37
- Nelson, Michael, 237n14
- neo-Nazis, 187–88
- Neustadt, Richard, 234n97
- New College of Florida, 205
- New Deal, 17, 86–89
- New Deal Democrats, 17, 137
- New Democrats, 154–55
- New Left, 128
- New Mexico, 33–34
- New Orleans massacre (1866), 58
- The New Republic* (magazine), 156
- New Yorker* (magazine), 157
- New York Times* (newspaper), 169, 176
- Nixon, Richard: 1968 campaign, 117–21; abuses of power by, 112, 126, 129–32, 135; and African Americans, 112, 119, 123, 128–30; Andrew Johnson compared to, 110, 115, 122, 134–35; as backlash president, 5–6, 20; character/personality of, 127, 135; and civil rights, 98, 117–24; congressional relations with, 10, 111, 133–36; election interference by, 6, 12, 135 (*see also* Watergate scandal); impact of backlash presidency of, 20; impeachment proceedings against, 6, 9, 18, 110, 112, 126–36, 208; law-and-order rhetoric of, 5, 19, 114, 119, 123–24, 238n25; nomination of, 111, 114–17; norms/institutions challenged, ignored, and broken by, 131–34; opponents/“enemies” of, 111, 112, 116–17, 120, 127–30, 132–34; and populism, 10–11, 116, 120–21, 131–32, 135, 184; as preemptive president, 17, 123, 229n83, 236n1; and race, 11, 19, 123–24, 134; racial issues exploited by, 11, 19, 111–12, 116; racism of, 121–22, 129; and the Republican Party, 111–12, 114–17, 125, 237n13, 239n55; and the South, 11, 115–16, 119–21, 136; Trump compared to, 110, 115, 122, 134–35, 187, 192, 195–98. *See also* Watergate scandal
- Noel, Hans, 113
- norms: Andrew Johnson’s challenging, ignoring, and breaking of, 63; challenging of, as invitation to ignoring/breaking of, 13; of congressional behavior and actions, 13, 132–34; decline of, in politics from the 1970s on, 112; FBI’s, 133; Franklin Roosevelt’s challenging, ignoring, and breaking of, 86; of impeachment, 13–14, 157, 187, 191–92, 208; Nixon’s challenging, ignoring, and breaking of, 131–34; populist attacks on, 10, 12, 121; of presidential behavior and actions, 12–13; pros and cons of, 12–13; racial transformation leading to uncertainty about, 13, 132, 136, 141; Republican Party’s challenging, ignoring, and breaking of, 13–14; Trump’s challenging, ignoring, and breaking of, 2–3, 4, 174, 177–78, 184–87, 193, 203. *See also* institutions; lawlessness
- North Carolina, 56
- Obama, Barack: on campaign trail, 163–65; criticisms of, 2, 171, 176–77, 179–80; moderation of, 2, 17, 165, 167, 171; “otherness” of, 169–70, 177; political impact of, 17; and race, 1–2, 140–41, 144, 163–73, 247n112, 249n135; racial backlash against, 176–77; and racial transformation, 163–73; racist attacks on, 1–2, 176; as transformative president, 4, 211; Trump’s reversal of policies and accomplishments of, 185

- O'Malley, Martin, 180
 Omar, Ihlan, 192
 O'Reilly, Kenneth, 232n58
- Palin, Sarah, 165–66
 Panetta, Leon, 122
 Parker, John J., 83
 partisan polarization: 1968 election and, 113;
 2016 election and, 181; compromise vs.,
 18, 33; impeachments in relation to, 9, 141;
 racial factors in, 113, 209
 party system, 22, 27, 28. *See also* partisan
 polarization
 Pelosi, Nancy, 193, 195
 Perkins, Frances, 86
 Perlstein, Rich, 116
 Perot, H. Ross, 153
 Perry, Samuel, 188
 Personal Responsibility and Work
 Opportunity Reconciliation Act
 (PRWORA; 1996), 155–56
 Philadelphia Plan, 117, 122–23
Philadelphia Tribune (newspaper), 146
 Phillips, Kevin, 123
 Phillips, Wendell, 61, 63
 Pierce, Franklin, 36–38
 Pinckney, Clementa, 173
Plessy v. Ferguson, 94, 140
 polarization. *See* partisan polarization
 police violence, 89, 107, 151–53, 198
 political development. *See* American
 political development
 political environment: Andrew Johnson and,
 50, 71; for impeachments, 14, 70, 111, 131,
 133–36, 141, 190–92, 194, 207; Nixon and,
 111, 122, 125, 127, 131, 135; racial factors in, 14,
 144, 191–92, 203, 210–11; in Reagan-
 Clinton years, 156; Trump and, 71, 203
 political parties. *See* Constitutional Union
 Party; Democratic Party; Free Soil
 movement/Party; Know-Nothing Party;
 National Union Party; partisan
 polarization; party system; Republican
 Party; Whig Party
 political polarization. *See* partisan
 polarization
 political time, 15–18
 Polk, James K., 29–31
 popular sovereignty, 37
 populism: Andrew Johnson and, 10–11, 52,
 61–63, 121; backlash presidents and, 4,
 10–12, 207; conservative movement
 aligned with, 120; defined, 10; delegitimi-
 zation of the opposition by forces of,
 12, 61–62, 121; Democratic Party in 2016
 and, 179–81; flexibility of, 121; Franklin
 Roosevelt and, 85–86; institutions and
 norms under attack by, 10–12, 121;
 lawlessness linked to, 10, 12, 130, 207;
 Nixon and, 10–11, 116, 120–21, 131–32, 135,
 184; Palin and, 165–66; Pat Buchanan
 and, 152, 153; Perot and, 154; and racial
 backlash, 207; racial hierarchy reinforced
 by, 120; “true people” as ideological
 foundation of, 10, 12; Trump and, 4, 10–11,
 121, 178, 183–85; victimhood associated
 with, 10–11, 116, 120–21; Wallace and, 120.
 See also “forgotten man/American;”
 “silent majority;” “true people”
 postal service, 27
 postracial rhetoric, 166–68,
 173
 preemption, politics of, 17–18, 123, 229n83,
 236n1
 presidential campaigns: Nixon, 5, 19, 117–21;
 pre–Civil War, 33; Trump, 2, 176–79,
 181–82
 presidential powers: Andrew Johnson's use
 of, 4, 55–58; civil rights advanced
 through, 77; expansion of, 70, 77, 131;
 Jackson and, 26, 222n23; Lincoln's use of,
 40–41, 47–48; Polk and, 31; populist
 support of, 131–32; Trump and, 198;
 Whig Party's position on, 33. *See also*
 abuses of presidential power
 presidential prerogative, 131
 presidents: congressional relations with,
 9–10, 17–18; constitutional framing of

- the role of, 6, 23, 68; evaluation of, 22–23;
historical idealization of, 24; lawless
behavior and rhetoric of, 9, 10, 12, 111–12;
limitations on, 77, 92–93; norms of
behavior and actions of, 12–13; political
and policy impact of, 16; “political time”
theory of, 15–18; and the politics of race,
6–8, 16; preemptive, 17–18, 229n83; as
slave owners, 22, 24, 25, 27, 29, 31–32, 72.
See also abuses of presidential power;
presidential powers
- President’s Committee on Civil Rights,
90–91
- Price, Melanye, 165
- Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruc-
tion (Lincoln), 51
- Progressivism, 84, 86, 87
- Proud Boys, 199–200
- Public Works Administration (PWA),
86–87
- Puerto Rico, 128, 192
- PWA. *See* Public Works Administration
- quotas, 117, 123, 138, 145, 147–48, 150–53
- race: 1968 election and, 113–14, 118; 2016
election and, 174–75, 177, 179, 181–84, 186,
195, 249n1, 249n3; 2020 election and,
199–200; Andrew Johnson and, 11, 19;
Biden and, 204–5, 255n69; Charlottesville,
Virginia, “Unite the Right” rally
and, 187–90, 204; COVID-19 and, 197;
and diversification of political voices,
210; and election fraud allegations,
200–201, 203; Franklin Roosevelt and,
86–90; Kennedy and, 7, 8; Lincoln and,
21, 40–41, 49, 225n76; Lyndon Johnson
and, 8, 235n134; Nixon and, 11, 19, 123–24,
134; Obama and, 1–2, 140–41, 144, 163–73,
247n112, 249n135; polarization based on,
113, 209; in post–civil rights era, 140–41,
144–50; presidents and the politics of,
6–8, 16; Republican Party and, 7, 8, 17, 42,
78–83, 114–17; Trump and, 2–3, 19,
174–75, 177, 179, 181–84, 186, 188–90,
192–93, 199, 202–4; Watergate scandal in
relation to, 110–11, 126, 128–30, 236n2. *See also* African Americans; colorblind
ideology/rhetoric; Jim Crow era; racial
backlash; racial discrimination; racial
hierarchy; racial order; racial transforma-
tion; racism; segregation
- racial backlash: 1992 election and, 153–54;
aims or targets of, 19; American political
development in relation to, 14–18; Andrew
Johnson and, 19, 70–71; criticisms of
the concept, 19–20; defined, 19; early-
twentieth-century presidents subject to,
79–80, 82; Lyndon Johnson and, 102–3,
108–9, 216; Nixon and, 11, 19, 111–12, 116,
128, 216; Obama as victim of, 1–2, 141;
political impact of, 2; politics of, 9;
populism and, 10, 207; presidential
lawlessness linked to, 9, 112, 117, 183;
Republican Party and, 115; Trump and,
19, 176; Wallace and, 118. *See also* compro-
mise/moderation; racial hierarchy; racial
order; racial transformation; racism
- racial discrimination, 89, 91. *See also* Black
codes; civil rights; Jim Crow era; quotas;
segregation
- racial hierarchy: in civil rights era, 76;
colorblind rhetoric and, 140; as founda-
tional to America, 20; in Jim Crow era, 81,
88; populist reinforcement of, 120; in the
South during Reconstruction, 57. *See also*
Jim Crow era; racial backlash; racial order;
racial transformation; racism; white
supremacy
- racial order: defined, 15; following racial
transformations, 208–11; impeachments
as diversion from addressing, 71;
maintenance/avoidance of, 6–8, 15, 16,
20, 81, 86–87, 92, 105, 141, 156, 165, 167;
norms rooted in, 132; tacit character of,
19, 20. *See also* compromise/moderation;
Jim Crow era; racial backlash; racial
hierarchy; racial transformation

- racial transformation: American political development in relation to, 14–18; basic features of, 45; congressional advocates for, 14; impeachment linked to, 8–14, 70–71, 134–36, 207; Lincoln and, 21–22, 44–45, 47–49; Lyndon Johnson and, 75–76, 78, 102–9; norms challenged and overturned in, 13, 132, 136, 141; Obama and, 163–73; populism as response to, 10–11; presidential resistance to (maintenance of status quo), 6–8, 15, 16; racial order following, 208–11. *See also* compromise/moderation; race; racial backlash; racial hierarchy; racial order; transformative presidents
- racial violence: in civil rights era, 95, 100–102, 106; in early twentieth century, 76–77, 87–88; in Reconstruction era, 54, 57–58, 73–74, 229n89; school integration as spark for, 100. *See also* lynching; violence
- racism: alleged demise of, 150; Andrew Johnson's, 4, 59, 66–67, 228n44; Charlottesville, Virginia, "Unite the Right" rally and, 187–90; colorblind rhetoric as denial of, 142; individual vs. systemic conceptions of, 168, 172–73, 180; Islamophobia as form of, 161, 246n93; legacy of, 140, 142; Lyndon Johnson's statements against, 76; Nixon's, 121–22, 129; Obama subjected to, 1–2; of pre-Civil War Republicans, 42; presidents' espousal of, 22; Reagan's, 145, 147; in Reconstruction era, 57; "scientific," 84; sexual anxieties linked to, 79, 81, 84–85, 99; Theodore Roosevelt's, 78; Trump's, 176, 183, 188, 189, 192; underlying slavery, 40; Wilson's, 83–85, 232n39. *See also* colorblind ideology/rhetoric; Jim Crow era; racial backlash; racial discrimination; racial hierarchy; reverse discrimination/racism; segregation; white supremacy
- Rader, Katherine, 90
- radical Republicans, 14, 53, 58, 64
- Raffensperger, Brad, 200
- Rainbow-PUSH, 154
- Ramaswamy, Vivek, 213
- Rangel, Charles, 129
- Raskin, Jamie, 196
- Rauh, Joseph, 105
- Reagan, Ronald, 115, 139, 140, 142, 144–50, 243n52
- Reconstruction: Andrew Johnson and, 4, 11, 52–53, 55–58, 63, 65–66, 70; Black suffrage and, 55–56; Congress and, 58–62, 65; Lincoln and, 53–54; radical Republican vision for, 53; Southern white supremacy during, 54; Wilson on, 84
- Republican Party: 1860 election, 43; and African Americans, 115–16; black-and-tan faction of, 17, 78, 82; and control of Congress from late twentieth century on, 155–57, 171; divisions within, in 2016, 178; divisions within post-Civil War, 73; divisions within pre-Civil War, 35; formation of, 35, 38; and immigration, 177; law-and-order rhetoric of, 114–15; lily-white faction of, 17, 81–83; Lincoln and, 40–42; nativism in, 250n11; Nixon and, 111–12, 114–17, 125, 237n13, 239n55; norms challenged, ignored, and broken by, 13–14; and race in civil rights era, 8, 114–17; and race in early twentieth century, 78–83; and race in post-civil rights era, 143; and race in post-Civil War era, 7, 17; and race in pre-Civil War era, 42; and slavery, 35, 38, 42, 44–45, 51, 54; in the South from mid-twentieth century, 105, 114–16; Theodore Roosevelt and, 78–80; Trump and, 177–78. *See also* radical Republicans
- reverse discrimination/racism, 145, 148, 151, 154, 164, 169
- Reynolds, William Bradford, 148
- Rhodes, Jesse, 106
- Richardson, Elliot, 130
- Richmond, Cedric, 189
- Richmond Times-Dispatch* (newspaper), 166
- rights. *See* civil rights

- Rigueur, Leah Wright, 116
- Riley, Russell, 6, 16
- riots and unrest: in civil rights era, 107–8, 113–14; in post–civil rights era, 152–53, 198; post–Civil War, 58
- Rock, Dave, 175
- Romney, George, 115
- Romney, Mitt, 176, 196, 249n1
- Roof, Dylann, 173
- Roosevelt, Eleanor, 88
- Roosevelt, Franklin, 7, 17, 85–90, 232n58
- Roosevelt, Theodore, 7, 78–79, 230n15
- Ross, Edmund, 70
- Rubio, Marco, 177, 178
- Ruckelshaus, William, 130
- Russian interference in 2016 election, 183, 186–87, 193–94, 196
- Rustin, Bayard, 123
- Sanders, Bernie, 180–81
- Saturday Night Live* (television show), 175
- Saturday Night Massacre, 127, 130, 186
- Schickler, Eric, 113
- Schmidt, Anthony, 76, 235n134
- Schurz, Carl, 73
- Scott, Tim, 213
- secession, of Southern states, 45–47
- sectional crisis, 31–35, 37–40, 45
- segregation: educational, 94–100, 119, 122; residential, 87, 98, 108. *See also* racial discrimination
- Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the United States Capitol, 201, 203
- Senate: filibuster in, 87, 88, 103–4, 149; impeachment proceedings in, 68–70, 159, 195, 196, 202, 208; and Watergate, 126, 128, 131, 136
- September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, 159–61, 164
- Seward, William, 42, 225n81
- Sides, John, 177, 200
- “silent majority,” 11, 124, 131–32, 134, 184. *See also* “forgotten man/American;” “true people”
- Sinclair-Chapman, Valeria, 165
- Skowronek, Stephen, 15–18, 134, 229n83
- slave owners: compensation of, 47; presidents as, 22, 24, 25, 27, 29, 31–32, 72
- slavery: Andrew Johnson and, 10–11, 52; as cause of Civil War, 47–49; colonization approach to, 23, 41, 225n76; compromise/moderation on, 22–40; Congress and, 23, 25, 37, 39, 44, 46, 54; Constitution and, 23, 24–25, 44, 46; Democratic Party and, 7, 22, 37–38; Lincoln and, 4, 21–22, 24, 41, 43, 48–49, 54, 226n98; moral status of, 17, 25, 27, 34, 40, 44–45, 47; norms protecting, 12–13; political context for addressing, 23, 37–38; pre-Lincoln presidents’ handling of, 6–7, 22, 24–40; Republican Party and, 35, 38, 42, 44–45, 51, 54; Thirteenth Amendment abolishing, 4, 47, 49, 54. *See also* abolitionism/anti-slavery movement; enslaved persons; slave owners
- Smith, Candis Watts, 142
- Smith, Howard, 103, 235n137
- Smith, Robert, 204
- Smith, Rogers, 15, 83, 142, 209
- Social Security Act, 87
- social unrest. *See* riots and unrest
- South: accommodations made by politicians to ideology and politics of, 7, 11, 12–13, 19, 22, 25–40, 53–62, 71–74, 80–81, 86–88, 91–93, 97, 99, 137; Andrew Johnson and, 19, 50, 52, 54–58, 70–71; Bill Clinton and, 137; Democratic courting of, in late twentieth century, 137; Franklin Roosevelt and, 86; Nixon and, 11, 115–16, 119–21, 136; political power and influence of, 25, 40, 92, 103–4; Reagan and, 144–45; Republican Party from mid-twentieth century in, 105, 114–16; and school desegregation, 95–98, 100; secession of, 45–47; sectional crisis and, 1–35, 37–40, 45; states’ rights and powers in, 27; Theodore Roosevelt and, 79–81. *See also* Jim Crow era; Reconstruction; white supremacy

- Southern Manifesto, 95, 104
 Southern strategy, 120–21, 145
 the Squad, 191, 192
 Stanbery, Henry, 65
 Stanley, Alessandra, 166
 Stanton, Edwin, 66–68
 State Department, 100, 102
 states: backlash presidents' impact on
 politics of, 20; federal power over, during
 Reconstruction, 55–59, 66, 74; federal
 power over, in civil rights era, 95–96, 100,
 104, 107, 115, 120, 122, 123; federal power
 over, in early twentieth century, 87–88,
 90; federal power over, in post–civil
 rights era, 147; racial backlash policies
 enacted by, 205–6; rights and powers of,
 27, 55–59, 66, 74, 88, 92, 146
 States' Rights Party, 92
 status quo. *See* racial order; racial
 transformation
 Stephens, Alexander, 22, 32, 47, 57
 Stephens-Dougan, LaFleur, 247n112
 Stevens, Thaddeus, 56, 61, 63, 67
 Stewart, David O., 58
 Stewart, Jon, 165
 Stimson, James, 113
 Strong, Cecily, 175
 Stuckey, Mary, 243n53
 Sullivan, Bill, 128
 Sumner, Charles, 38, 56, 61
 Supreme Court, on Fourteenth and
 Fifteenth Amendments, 230n97. *See also*
 individual decisions by name
 Sweet, Lynn, 167
 Taft, Robert, 93
 Taft, William Howard, 81–82
 Taney, Roger, 39
 Tausanovich, Chris, 200
 Taylor, Keeanga-Yamahtta, 171, 249n135
 Taylor, Zachary, 18, 31–35, 42, 224n54
 Tea Party movement, 169, 171, 177
 Ten Percent Plan, 53
 Tenure of Office Act, 66–69, 196
 Tesler, Michael, 2, 170, 177
 Texas, 30
 Thirteenth Amendment, 4, 47, 49, 54
 Thomas, Clarence, 148, 244n54
 Thomas, Helen, 243n52
 Thomas, Lorenzo, 67–68
 Thomas Proviso, 26
 Thompson, Bennie, 203
 Thomson, Meldrim, 150, 243n48
 Three-Fifths Compromise, 25
 Thurmond, Strom, 92, 104, 115, 119, 146
 Tichenor, Dan, 105
 Tien, Charles, 249n3
 Tilden, Samuel, 74
 Till, Emmett, 95
 Tillman, Benjamin, 79, 81
 Tlaib, Rashida, 191
 transformative presidents: grounding of, in
 American history, 210–11; impact of, 6,
 16; Kennedy, 102; Lincoln, 4, 21–24,
 40–41, 48–49, 211; Lyndon Johnson, 5,
 76, 78, 211; Obama, 4, 211; overview of, 5;
 racial order reconfigured by, 6. *See also*
 racial transformation
 Treaty of Versailles, 17
 Trefousse, Hans, 229n83
 “true people,” 10, 12, 131–32, 175, 185–86, 207.
 See also “forgotten man/American;”
 “silent majority”
 Truman, Harry, 7, 77, 90–93, 102, 167
 Trumbull, Lyman, 58, 256n90
 Trump, Donald: 2018 midterm elections
 and, 190–92; 2024 campaign of, 214;
 abuses of power by, 186–87, 189, 195–96;
 Andrew Johnson compared to, 71, 187,
 189, 192, 195–98, 201–3; as backlash
 president, 4, 20, 203; campaign of, 2,
 176–79, 181–82; congressional relations
 with, 10, 190–92, 194–95; and COVID-19,
 196–97; election interference by, 3, 12, 135,
 200–203, 208; Goldwater compared to,
 251n17; and immigration, 2, 177, 182,

- 192–93; impact of backlash presidency of, 20, 204; impeachments of, 3–4, 18, 186–90, 193–96, 202–3, 208; and January 6, 2001, insurrection, 3, 12, 201–3, 208; law-and-order rhetoric of, 2, 4, 198; “make America great again” slogan of, 2, 19; nationalist ideology/rhetoric of, 2, 11, 19, 185, 192, 209; Nixon compared to, 110, 115, 122, 134–35, 187, 192, 195–98; nomination of, 176–79, 250n14; norms/institutions challenged, ignored, and broken by, 2–3, 4, 174, 177–78, 184–87, 193, 203; and populism, 4, 10–11, 121, 178, 183–85; and race, 2–3, 19, 174–75, 177, 179, 181–84, 186, 188–90, 192–93, 199, 202–4; racism of, 176, 183, 188, 189, 192; reelection of, 3; and the Republican Party, 177–78; and white supremacy, 3, 188–89, 195, 199–200, 204
- Tulis, Jeffrey, 71
- Twelfth Amendment, 92
- Twenty-Fifth Amendment, 202
- Twenty-Second Amendment, 108
- Tyler, John, 17, 29–30, 223n36, 229n83
- Ukraine, 3, 194–96, 255n69
- Union/national unity, preservation of:
 Andrew Johnson and, 19, 50, 52, 56–57, 61;
 compromises over slavery aimed at, 27–29, 31; Franklin Roosevelt and, 89; Jackson and, 27–28; Lincoln and, 46, 51, 53; Van Buren and, 29; Wade-Davis Bill and, 53
- University of California Regents v. Bakke case*, 137–38
- University of Mississippi, 100
- Urban League, 146
- Van Buren, Martin, 22, 28–29, 30, 223n29, 223n30
- Vance, J. D., 213–14; *Hillbilly Elegy*, 184, 214
- Vardaman, James, 80–81
- Vavreck, Lynn, 177, 200
- victimhood: Andrew Johnson and, 11, 61;
 populist exploitation of a sense of, 10–11, 116, 120–21; whites’ claims of, 11, 59–60, 153–54, 169. *See also* reverse discrimination/racism
- Vietnam War, 107–9, 113–14, 125
- vigilantism, 27
- Vindman, Alexander, 195
- violence: Charlottesville, Virginia, “Unite the Right” rally and, 187–88; against politicians, 229n89; Trump’s and Republican Party’s advocacy of, 179, 199–200. *See also* lynching; police violence; racial violence
- Virginia, 55–56
- voting rights, for African Americans, 55–56, 65–67, 73–74, 82, 99, 105–8, 124, 148
- Voting Rights Act (1965), 5, 76, 78, 106–8, 124, 145, 148
- Wade, Benjamin, 53, 56
- Wade-Davis Bill, 53
- Wagner, Robert, 87
- Walker, Scott, 178
- Wallace, George, 11, 105, 114, 116, 118–20, 179
- Wards Cove Packing Co. v. Antonio*, 151
- War on Poverty, 103
- War on Terror, 159–61
- Warren, Earl, 94
- Washington, Booker T., 79, 82
- Washington, DC, slavery in, 28–29, 33
- Washington, George, 22, 24, 61
- Washington Post* (newspaper), 119, 126
- Watergate scandal: aftermath of, 136–39;
 cover-up of, 12, 126–27, 130–32, 196;
 impeachment linked to, 6, 9, 110;
 interpretations of, 111, 126–36; race in relation to, 110–11, 126, 128–30, 236n2
- Waters, Maxine, 189
- Weaver, Robert, 99
- Weaver, Vesla, 19
- Weber, Jennifer, 52
- Webster, Daniel, 35, 224n54
- welfare, 145, 147, 154–56

- welfare, opposition to, 60
- West, Cornet, 180
- West, Kanye, 162
- Whig Party: demise of, 43; divisions within, 32–34, 37; Lincoln and, 40, 42; and Mexican-American War (1846–48), 30–31; and slavery, 7, 22, 32–33
- White, Walter, 88
- White Citizens' Councils, 95
- White League, 74
- white nationalism, 188
- whites: and culture wars, 161; discrimination against, 145; Palin and, 166; racial identity of, 177, 184, 203; Trump support from, 174–75, 177, 183–84, 249n1, 249n3; and victimhood, 11, 59–60, 153–54, 169; voter behavior of, 170, 174, 175; working-class, 183–84, 249n1. *See also* colorblind ideology/rhetoric; racism; white supremacy
- white supremacy: Andrew Johnson and, 4, 19, 55, 58–59, 62, 66–67; Democratic Party during Civil War and, 52; Democratic Party in post–Civil War era and, 7; opposition to George H. W. Bush and, 152; political and economic aspects of, 76; in Reconstruction era, 19, 54, 73; Republican Party in pre–Civil war era and, 42, 45; Theodore Roosevelt and, 79, 81; Trump and, 3, 188–89, 195, 199–200, 204; Wilson and, 84. *See also* Jim Crow era; racial backlash; racial hierarchy; racism
- Whittington, Keith, 68, 158
- Wilentz, Sean, 36
- Wilkins, Roy, 97, 119
- Williams, Hosea, 146
- Wilmot, David, and the Wilmot Proviso, 31–35, 44
- Wilson, Joe, 168
- Wilson, Woodrow, 7, 17, 83–85, 232n39
- Witcover, Jules, 153
- Women's March (2017), 175
- Woodward, Bob, 126
- World War I, 83
- Wright, Fielding, 92
- Wright, Jeremiah, 164
- Xi Jinping, 197
- Young, Andrew, 129, 146
- Zelensky, Volodymyr, 194, 255n69
- Zelizer, Julian, 103