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Regional voting patterns in contemporary presidential elections: The effect of race, income and abortion viewpoint

John W.T. Megson

Eastern Illinois University

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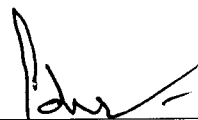
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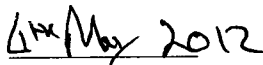
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REGIONAL VOTING PATTERNS IN CONTEMPORARY PRESIDENTIAL
ELECTIONS: THE EFFECT OF RACE, INCOME AND ABORTION
VIEWPOINT.

By

John W. T. Megson

Thesis

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
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2012

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Abstract

This study examines regional differences in the effect a voter's race, viewpoint on abortion and income have upon his or her vote in presidential elections. Using binary logistic regression and log odds, the results show that regional differences do exist. Whilst race still has the largest effect in the South, the effect in what scholars have termed the Non-South varies with the North Central region differing noticeably from the North East and the West. With regard to abortion attitudes the lowest observed effect was in the South, with attitudes playing a greater effect in the North Central and West regions.

Dedicated to JKB

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Introduction

This thesis examines three cleavages among voters in the United States in presidential elections: race, abortion attitudes and class. Race in the United States has played a significant role in the party system, with African Americans identifying themselves with the party of Lincoln in the seventy years after the Civil War, and then with the Democrats during and beyond FDR's New Deal. Another cleavage is that of religion. Although, traditionally, religious cleavages in the United States have not played as large a role in political life as they have in other parts of the world, e.g. India, the Balkans and Northern Ireland, the emergence of the Christian Right suggests that religion has, to a certain extent, become a relevant political force in the country. Many voters study a candidate's position on moral issues (especially abortion) before making their electoral choices (Hilygus & Shine, 2005; Adams, 1997). The final cleavage is economics, which is an important factor in most countries, although class voting in the United States has traditionally been lower than in most western democracies.

The thesis will assess which of these cleavages is most important in the voting decisions during presidential

elections. It will also seek to discover whether a difference in the relative importance of each of these cleavages exists between the various regions of the United States.

In terms of the literature, all U.S. regions are not created equal. Studies of the South dominate the field. The rest of the nation is typically placed in one region known as the "North" (Bullock, 1988) or the "Non-South" (Aistrup, 2010). However, this approach is problematic in assessing trends in voting behavior, as differences undoubtedly do exist between states outside of the South. Eight States (Alaska, Idaho, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming) have voted for the Republican candidate in every election since 1968, whilst, as noted by Bullock, Hoffman, and Gaddie (2006) and Knuckey (2009), the Northeast and Pacific West regions have trended towards the Democratic Party in the years since World War II.

This is an important area of study for a number of reasons. Firstly, the Electoral College system for selecting the presidents means that candidates are not tasked with winning the popular vote, but gaining the most votes in the Electoral College. Rutherford B. Hayes in 1876, Benjamin Harrison in 1888 and George W. Bush in 2000 all became president despite losing the popular vote. As a

result, candidates seek to develop positions and strategies that will lead to success in key states and regions. If fundamental differences in the voter cleavages exist between the regions of the United States, it becomes more difficult for a candidate to have nationwide appeal. Consequently, not since 1984 (and to a lesser extent 1988) has a presidential candidate won all the regions of the vast country. This can lead to questions about how a first term president governs, i.e. whether he owes his election to the highest office to certain economic, racial and religious groups concentrated in key states, and, with an eye on reelection, whether he will pursue policies that benefit certain regions over others.

The study is also important as it will help to explain why differences exist between states in the way they vote in presidential elections. The differing degrees of importance of the economic, racial and religious cleavages found in each of the regions might explain the differences in the way regions vote.

Finally, the study will be of interest in assessing the relative merits of explanations put forward to explain the realignment of the South in presidential politics and the domination of the GOP in the race for the White House since 1968. For eighty years following the end of

Reconstruction, the Republican Party was virtually a non-factor in presidential elections in the South. No Republican candidate won a state in the old South until Warren Harding carried Tennessee in 1920, and, although Herbert Hoover did win six southern states (Florida, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas) in defeating Catholic Al Smith in 1928, the South became a key component of FDR's New Deal coalition, which resulted in Democratic victories in the race for the White House in seven of the nine elections from 1932 to 1964. Indeed, the only successful candidate from the GOP in this period was universally popular General Eisenhower, and even he could not break the Democratic Party's lock on Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Mississippi and the Carolinas. However, this run of Democratic success ended when all of the five states that Barry Goldwater won in 1964, outside his home state, were in the Deep South. The Democratic candidate for president has only swept the South once since 1960, when Southern Democrat Jimmy Carter was elected in 1976. The last presidential election of the twentieth century saw the Republican candidate, George W. Bush, win all the Southern states, a feat he repeated four years later. The demise of the Democratic Party in the South has contributed to its

inability to win the White House in seven of the last eleven elections.

Literature Review

Many scholars, among them Webster (1992) and Shelley and Archer (1995), now see the South as firmly in the hands of the Republican Party. This is a remarkable turnaround for the party that was once seen as the "political instrument of the mysterious and hated North" (Black & Black, 2002, p. 41). Of the various explanations of this phenomenon, perhaps the one that has attracted most scholarly attention is the role of race. In his seminal work, V.O. Key wrote about race in the South: "whatever phase of the southern political process one seeks to understand, sooner or later the trail of inquiry leads to the Negro" (Key, 1949, p. 5).

One of the vital concepts Key studied was the notion of Black Threat. Key found that more racially conservative Democrats received greater electoral support among whites in those counties with greater concentrations of blacks. The basic notion is one of majority insecurity; the dominant social group feels more frightened in diverse settings. This fright turns to intolerance, as majorities will feel the "threat" in locations where there are more

minorities. Southern whites, living in areas of higher concentration of blacks, will feel that their status is threatened, and as a result are more likely to support a racially conservative candidate who offers to protect the status of whites.

The black threat hypothesis has been supported by the work of, among others, Wright (1977) who examined the presidential candidacy of George Wallace; Giles and Buckner (1995) who examined the Louisiana gubernatorial campaign of former KKK leader David Duke; and Giles and Hertz (1994) who showed that white GOP registration was greatest among Louisiana parishes with the highest concentration of African Americans.

However, Voss (1996) directly contradicts the work of Giles and Buckner by showing that white support for Duke fell in counties with high black populations. Carsey (1995), looking at mayoral elections in New York, also rejects the black threat hypothesis, noting that increased black population density had a positive effect on the likelihood that a white would vote for a black candidate. Liu (2001) found no evidence to support the black threat hypothesis in a study of mayoral and council elections over a twenty year period in New Orleans. Babeck (2006), in his study of Indianapolis and St. Louis, whilst finding that

the presence of blacks has a negative effect on white attitudes, argues that racial threat is conditioned by a number of factors other than the sheer size of the black population living in a location, and what is important to the notion of black threat is the context in which interaction between white and black takes place. A more recent study, Chamberlain (2011) examining the 1840's North, added to this mix of evidence and found that racial threat occurred in high manufacturing counties but not in more agricultural counties.

More than sixty years after Key's work, many scholars still see race in the South as a vital determinant of voting behavior. In another important work, Carmines and Stanley (1990) still see that race is a key in forming an individual's party identification. Their work supports the similar finding by Black and Black (1987). Glaser (1994) found that racial environment had a strong impact on racial attitudes, particularly among southern whites. Kuklinski, Cobb and Gilens (1997) found levels of prejudice were still high in the South and considerably higher than in the Non-South.

Scholars have argued that race became a detriment to the Democratic Party in the South during the 1960's when national party elites took clearly different positions on

the issue of race (Layman & Carsey, 2002). The national Democratic Party, led by a southern president, Lyndon Johnson, fully embraced civil rights, and passed landmark legislation such as The Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act in 1964 and 1965. Meanwhile, Richard Nixon was developing his "southern strategy" which propelled him to the White House after the close election of 1968. Gatlin (1975) found that Democratic Party identification declined among non-manual southern whites from 55 to 41 percent in the decade of Nixon's reelection. The percentage among manual labor southern whites fell from 60 to 52 percent. Knucky (2005) and others bring this work up to-date and find that the GOP has, since the early 1990's, enjoyed an advantage of party identification among southern whites. Others, among them, Black and Black (1992) and Carmines and Stimson (1989), argue that support for civil rights by the Democratic Party cost them support in the South and ultimately the White House, as Democrats switched voting allegiances to Nixon and Wallace. However, Shelley, Zerr and Proffer (2007) offer a more nuanced analysis and argue that the Democratic Party only faced a civil rights backlash in the Deep South, not the South in totality.

Valentino and Sears (2005) go further and argue that race plays a larger part in the politics of the old

Confederacy than the rest of the nation and this difference cannot be explained by anything other than different racial attitudes. However, other scholars such as Schuman, Steer, and Lawrence (1985), Schuman and Bobo (1988), and Tuch (1987) suggest that racial attitudes in the South are very similar to the rest of the country. Tsui, Egan, and O'Reilly (1992) found that whites across the nation were less committed to their place of employment the more diverse the firm became. This is supported by scholars, such as DiTomaso, Parks-Yancy, and Post (2011), Bergmann (1996), Reskin (1998), and Skrentny (1996).

These attitudes whites have towards blacks are not the outright prejudices observed by Sheatsley (1966) who found widespread support for the segregation of Jim Crow among all whites, not just those in the South. Out-and-out prejudice is no longer the norm. Sinderman and Carmines (1997, p. 73) note "prejudice is very far from a domineering factor in the contemporary politics of race." Outright bigotry has been replaced by symbolic racism (Sears & Kinder, 1971; Schuman, Steer, & Lawrence, 1985; Sears, Van Larr, Carrillo, & Kosterman, 1997; Sears & Henry, 2003) or racial resentment (Kinder & Sanders, 1996; Mendelberg, 2001). Both phrases have the same basic meaning, that of a fusion of some anti-black feeling and

those of traditional American values, most notably individualism. This resentment is linked to opposition to certain public policies such as desegregated housing, school bussing and crime (Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000; Peffley & Hurwitz, 2007). Others argue that it is policies aimed at reducing racial inequality that have attracted most opposition from the Republican Party and conservatives (Sears, Van Larr, Carrillo, & Kosterman, 1997). Whilst Kinder and Sanders (1996) and DiTomaso, Parks-Yancy, and Post (2011) find that the strongest predictor of an individual's opposition to such policies is the degree of racial resentment they feel.

Crime is also a salient issue in the politics of race in contemporary America. Some argue that whites' opinions about crime equates to their opinions about race (Hurwitz & Peffley, 1997). As such, candidates are now able to "play the race card" without having to mention blacks (Mendelberg, 2001; Valentino, Hutchings, & White, 2002). Perhaps the most obvious example would be the Willie Horton advertisement run by the George Herbert Walker Bush campaign in the 1988 presidential election. The logic of this analysis is that whites fear crime, and they maintain that the majority of crime is committed by blacks; therefore, they have turned away from the party most

sympathetic to the plight of blacks and switched their allegiances to the GOP. This view is supported by Ford, Maxwell, and Shields (2010) in a study of Arkansas and Georgia in the 2008 presidential election where they observed voting to be significantly influenced by symbolic racism. However, in a study of direct democracy in California, Bowler, Nicholson, and Segura (2006) found that racially charged ballot proposals, sponsored by the Republican Party, resulted in a reversal in a trend of individuals identifying themselves as Republican and shifted party attachments back towards the Democrats. Consequently the first hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 1 Regional differences in the effect that race has on voting have narrowed since 1972.

Other scholars argue that the political change the South has undergone is not a result of racial effects, but more due to cultural and religious factors, in particular the two major parties' positions on abortion. Many scholars, such as Putz (2002) and Abramowitz and Saunders (1998) argue that increasingly individuals are changing their party identification to bring it in line with their own ideology. Thus, many scholars, such as Jelen and Chandler (2000), Hunter (1991,) and White (2002), see lifestyle or values issues as a key cleavage in modern

American politics. Sabato (2002, p. 100) writes: "the traditional versus tolerant breakdown is becoming as important as race, gender, educational level and income in explaining U.S. elections." Knuckey (2006) argues that, whilst economic-based voting models predicted that Al Gore should have received up to three-fifths of the two-party vote, these conservative morality issues cost Gore several states (all of which proved decisive) such as West Virginia, Arkansas and Tennessee.

These cultural issues are said to have more resonance in the South, as the South is the most conservative region of the Union on a whole range of cultural and lifestyle issues (Black & Black, 2002). Also, the values agenda was and remains central to the rise of the "Christian Right," which, during the Clinton years, became the core base of the GOP at state and local level (Green, Rozell, & Wilcock, 2003; Smith, 1997).

Although early work on the subject, most notably Ingelhart (1971), concentrated on the issue of materialists against post-materialists, more recent studies, e.g. Carmines and Layman (1997) have found that the division may have less to do with lifestyle and cultural issues and more directly linked to variables closely associated with religious and moral values. Many, such as Adams (1997) and

Abramowitz (1995), have noted the issue of abortion as being particularly important. It is an issue that divides the two main national parties and, due to the prominence of the Christian Right in the South, has played a pivotal role in the realignment of the South. The issue does appear to be one of the most divisive in the United States and has turned ordinary Americans into political activists (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). The issue affects voter choice at all electoral levels (Cook, Jelen, & Wilcock, 1992). It is an issue that can outweigh economic considerations (Abramowitz, 1995). Adams (1997) suggests that it was pro-choice and pro-life activists that used the nomination process to replace moderates on both sides with individuals who hold more extreme positions on the issue; as a result, members of Congress started to differ on the issue of abortion along party lines. Fiorina (2004) sees the abortion issue as the one issue in contemporary American society where opinions remain polarized. Carsey and Layman (2006) note that individuals started to change their partisanship based on the issue in the middle of the Clinton years. In a more detailed study, Killian and Wilcock (2008) found that pro-life Democrats were significantly more likely to become Republicans than other Democrats, whilst in the short term pro-choice Republicans

were not likely to become Democrats. This leads to the second hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2 The effect that attitudes towards abortion have on voter choice is greatest in the South.

The final explanation put forward by scholars to explain the realignment of the South is that of economic and social class changes that occurred in the South after the end of World War II. Although social class in the United States has not been seen as an accurate indicator of voter choice, it has been in other Western democracies (Alford, 1963; Clark, Lipset, & Rempel, 1993). Scholars have argued that it traditionally played an even more diminished role in the South. Using simple measure of class voting, Alford (1963) placed the South (along with the mid-Atlantic) bottom in his ranking of the regions in terms of class-based voting in the period 1944 to 1960. However, more recent work claims that the South is becoming more like the rest of the country with regard to the effect class has on voter choice. Many argue that the high rates of economic growth experienced by the South has changed and continues to change the region into a more suburban and more middle class area than it had been traditionally (Converse, 1966; Black & Black, 1987; Petrocik, 1987). This increased wealth enjoyed by the South, and has led many

southern whites to see their economic interests being served by the Republican Party rather than the party of the New Deal. So, a relationship between social class and party identification developed which, according to some, has existed since the 1970's (Nadeau & Stanley, 1993). Beck (1977) attributed much of this class change in the South to the migration into the South of middle-class, white Republicans, who brought their party identification with them when they left the North. However, although accepting migration may have helped the GOP to a certain extent, many scholars do not see it as a dominant factor (Petrocik, 1987; Stanley, 1988; Carmines & Stanley, 1990; Black & Black, 1992; Miller & Shanks, 1996). The result is that, according to Brewer and Stonecash (2001) and Stonecash and Mariani (2000), social class variables such as income have become better indicators of voting intentions than had previously been the case. Consequently, the final hypothesis of the study is:

Hypothesis 3 Regional differences with regard to the effect income plays in voter choice have decreased since 1972.

Methodology

The data used for the study come from American National Election Survey (ANES) for the years 1972 to 2008.

The year 1972 was taken as the start point, as it was in this survey that questions regarding attitudes towards abortion were first posed.

The regions studied were the four "census regions" that ANES has used since the survey of 2000. For years prior to 2000, recoding was performed on a state by state basis to maintain uniformity. The regions are as follows:

North East consisting of CT, ME, MA, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT

North Central consisting of IL, IN, IA, KS, MI, MN, MO, NE, ND, OH, SD, WI

South consisting of AL, AR, DE, DC, FL, GA, KY, LA, MD, MS, NC, OK, SC, TN, TX, VA, WV

West consisting of AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NM, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY

The dependent variable for the study was vote for the two major parties candidates in presidential elections. As the dependent variable is dichotomous, binary logistic regression was used. Separate runs were performed for the GOP and Democratic candidates for each election; a respondent who voted for the candidate in question was coded (1), whilst respondents who voted for another candidate or failed to vote are coded (0).

The effects of three independent variables, which have been associated with major party cleavages in the country, were tested. The three variables were as follows:

- 1) Race. White respondents were coded (1), while all other respondents (0). It is believed that white respondents are more likely to vote for the GOP candidate than non-whites.
- 2) Household Income. Those respondents living in households with incomes greater than the national median were coded (1), while those from households below the median level were coded (0). The information with regard to the median level of income in the election year was obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau. It is believed that those from higher income groups will be more likely to support the GOP candidate than lower income groups.
- 3) Views on Abortion. Those respondents who felt that abortion should never be permitted, or allowed only in cases of rape and incest, were coded (0), while those who believe that abortion should be permitted in cases other than rape or incest, and those who believed a woman should be able to obtain an abortion as a right were coded (1). It is believed that respondents who have the more pro-life beliefs

will be more likely to support GOP candidates than those with a pro-choice viewpoint.

The logged odds of voting for a candidate for the two main parties were obtained in the form:

$$\text{Logged Odds Voting GOP/DEM} = K + \beta_r (\text{race}) + \beta_y (\text{income}) + \beta_{ab} (\text{abortion})$$

Results were obtained for each election year for both parties, and for the four regions.

The probability of voting for the candidates was calculated using the equation:

$$\text{Probability} = \frac{\text{Exp} (K + \beta_r (\text{race}) + \beta_y (\text{income}) + \beta_{ab} (\text{abortion}))}{(1 + \text{Exp} (K + \beta_r (\text{race}) + \beta_y (\text{income}) + \beta_{ab} (\text{abortion})))}$$

The overall effect of race and views on abortion was calculated by substituting mean values of the other variables into the equation and by comparing the means, with the independent being race/abortion opinion and the dependent being the probability of voting for the GOP or Democratic nominee.

The effect of race and opinion on abortion in one region relative to another was obtained by subtracting the probability of changing vote based on race/abortion views of one region from another.

Results

Table 1: 1972 election

GOP (Nixon)

Area	% Correct	Nagelkerke R Square	Variable	B	Significance	N
Whole	62.0	.10	Race	2.10	.00	2619
			Income	.54	.00	
			Abortion	-.10	.26	
North East	63.5	.11	Race	2.52	.00	603
			Income	.52	.01	
			Abortion	-.40	.02	
North Central	59.8	.10	Race	3.45	.00	746
			Income	.53	.00	
			Abortion	.12	.44	
South	65.6	.12	Race	1.91	.00	872
			Income	.42	.01	
			Abortion	-.12	.47	
West	62.1	.10	Race	1.42	.01	398
			Income	.91	.00	
			Abortion	.02	.92	

DEM (McGovern)

Area	% Correct	Nagelkerke R Square	Variable	B	Significance	N
Whole	79.2	.07	Race	-1.34	.00	2619
			Income	.14	.16	
			Abortion	.49	.00	
North East	75.3	.05	Race	-.89	.00	603
			Income	.22	.29	
			Abortion	.48	.01	
North Central	79.0	.08	Race	-1.87	.00	746
			Income	.11	.55	
			Abortion	.43	.02	
South	82.7	.15	Race	-1.81	.00	872
			Income	.07	.73	
			Abortion	.58	.00	
West	79.1	.02	Race	-.50	.21	398
			Income	-.13	.62	
			Abortion	.31	.21	

Table 2: 1976 election

GOP (Ford)

Area	% Correct	Nagelkerke R Square	Variable	B	Significance	N
Whole	65.6	.11	Race	2.02	.00	1822
			Income	.74	.00	
			Abortion	-.09	.38	
North East	68.5	.07	Race	2.49	.01	391
			Income	.66	.01	
			Abortion	.11	.63	
North Central	60.4	.11	Race	3.15	.00	533
			Income	.79	.00	
			Abortion	.20	.29	
South	71.4	.13	Race	2.02	.00	591
			Income	.61	.00	
			Abortion	-.20	.31	
West	67.1	.10	Race	1.22	.02	307
			Income	.90	.00	
			Abortion	-.58	.02	

DEM (Carter)

Area	% Correct	Nagelkerke R Square	Variable	B	Significance	N
Whole	65.9	.03	Race	-.95	.00	1822
			Income	-.08	.43	
			Abortion	.16	.12	
North East	62.7	.03	Race	-1.10	.01	391
			Income	-.10	.64	
			Abortion	.24	.26	
North Central	66.6	.04	Race	-1.38	.00	533
			Income	-.19	.31	
			Abortion	-.03	.87	
South	66.7	.05	Race	-.99	.00	591
			Income	.04	.84	
			Abortion	.10	.58	
West	67.2	.04	Race	-.84	.03	307
			Income	-.21	.42	
			Abortion	.45	.07	

Table 3: 1980 election

GOP (Reagan)

Area	% Correct	Nagelkerke R Square	Variable	B	Significance	N
Whole	69.4	.10	Race	2.10	.00	1547
			Income	.60	.00	
			Abortion	-.16	.16	
North East	72.0	.07	Race	1.93	.01	353
			Income	.47	.05	
			Abortion	-.16	.52	
North Central	69.1	.07	Race	2.89	.00	411
			Income	.20	.41	
			Abortion	-.23	.29	
South	70.3	.17	Race	2.44	.00	518
			Income	.99	.00	
			Abortion	.07	.75	
West	64.9	.07	Race	1.17	.04	265
			Income	.72	.02	
			Abortion	-.39	.16	

DEM (Carter)

Area	% Correct	Nagelkerke R Square	Variable	B	Significance	N
Whole	76.8	.07	Race	-1.30	.00	1547
			Income	-.31	.01	
			Abortion	-.11	.36	
North East	77.6	.07	Race	-1.33	.00	353
			Income	-.22	.41	
			Abortion	-.28	.28	
North Central	76.6	.05	Race	-1.24	.00	411
			Income	.33	.20	
			Abortion	.34	.16	
South	74.9	.14	Race	-1.38	.00	518
			Income	-.69	.00	
			Abortion	-.41	.05	
West	79.2	.06	Race	-.93	.03	265
			Income	-.65	.04	
			Abortion	-.01	.97	

Table 4: 1984 election

GOP (Reagan)

Area	% Correct	Nagelkerke R Square	Variable	B	Significance	N
Whole	65.2	.12	Race	1.78	.00	2171
			Income	.84	.00	
			Abortion	-.23	.01	
North East	61.9	.13	Race	2.52	.00	452
			Income	.59	.01	
			Abortion	-.18	.39	
North Central	62.2	.13	Race	2.34	.00	603
			Income	.91	.00	
			Abortion	-.39	.03	
South	70.2	.18	Race	1.98	.00	665
			Income	.97	.00	
			Abortion	.09	.64	
West	65.6	.04	Race	.35	.36	451
			Income	.79	.00	
			Abortion	-.33	.15	

DEM (Mondale)

Area	% Correct	Nagelkerke R Square	Variable	B	Significance	N
Whole	74.1	.05	Race	-.96	.00	2171
			Income	-.12	.26	
			Abortion	.56	.00	
North East	74.8	.08	Race	-1.29	.00	452
			Income	-.01	.95	
			Abortion	.58	.01	
North Central	75.3	.05	Race	-.98	.00	603
			Income	.01	.98	
			Abortion	.63	.00	
South	74.7	.08	Race	-1.20	.00	665
			Income	-.19	.32	
			Abortion	.19	.31	
West	71.2	.04	Race	.10	.80	451
			Income	-.28	.22	
			Abortion	.91	.00	

Table 5: 1988 election

GOP (Bush)

Area	% Correct	Nagelkerke R Square	Variable	B	Significance	N
Whole	68.6	.14	Race	2.20	.00	1996
			Income	.69	.00	
			Abortion	-.34	.00	
North East	66.5	.07	Race	2.11	.00	423
			Income	.17	.44	
			Abortion	-.17	.45	
North Central	63.1	.12	Race	2.12	.00	564
			Income	.67	.00	
			Abortion	-.53	.00	
South	76.1	.11	Race	1.94	.00	663
			Income	.88	.00	
			Abortion	-.15	.05	
West	63.2	.08	Race	1.59	.00	348
			Income	.94	.00	
			Abortion	-.45	.05	

Dem (Dukakis)

Area	% Correct	Nagelkerke R Square	Variable	B	Significance	N
Whole	72.2	.04	Race	-.79	.00	1996
			Income	.18	.08	
			Abortion	.47	.00	
North East	73.7	.02	Race	-.51	.09	423
			Income	.30	.20	
			Abortion	.21	.37	
North Central	72.5	.09	Race	-1.45	.00	564
			Income	.00	.99	
			Abortion	.58	.00	
South	75.3	.04	Race	-.73	.00	663
			Income	.24	.21	
			Abortion	.43	.02	
West	69.0	.05	Race	-1.10	.00	348
			Income	-.07	.77	
			Abortion	.42	.09	

Table 6: 1992 election

GOP (Bush)

Area	% Correct	Nagelkerke R Square	Variable	B	Significance	N
Whole	78.5	.12	Race	2.06	.00	1349
			Income	.81	.00	
			Abortion	-.74	.00	
North East	80.5	.10	Race	1.54	.04	299
			Income	.27	.38	
			Abortion	-1.01	.00	
North Central	71.9	.13	Race	2.67	.00	374
			Income	.81	.00	
			Abortion	-.81	.00	
South	83.8	.18	Race	2.38	.00	430
			Income	1.04	.00	
			Abortion	-.80	.00	
West	77.1	.06	Race	1.23	.05	256
			Income	.85	.01	
			Abortion	-.23	.49	

Dem (Clinton)

Area	% Correct	Nagelkerke R Square	Variable	B	Significance	N
Whole	68.3	.06	Race	-.92	.00	1349
			Income	-.18	.14	
			Abortion	.66	.00	
North East	65.8	.04	Race	-.90	.01	299
			Income	.15	.55	
			Abortion	.33	.20	
North Central	69.1	.12	Race	-1.81	.00	374
			Income	-.36	.13	
			Abortion	.82	.00	
South	68.6	.06	Race	-.91	.00	430
			Income	-.09	.72	
			Abortion	.64	.00	
West	66.8	.06	Race	-.48	.35	256
			Income	-.61	.03	
			Abortion	.83	.01	

Table 7: 1996 election

GOP (Dole)

Area	% Correct	Nagelkerke R Square	Variable	B	Significance	N
Whole	74.9	.17	Race	1.82	.00	1714
			Income	1.00	.00	
			Abortion	-1.00	.00	
North East	80.2	.15	Race	1.98	.00	304
			Income	.57	.07	
			Abortion	-.98	.00	
North Central	70.5	.12	Race	1.20	.05	458
			Income	.88	.00	
			Abortion	-.93	.00	
South	76.8	.24	Race	2.26	.00	598
			Income	1.45	.00	
			Abortion	-.82	.00	
West	75.3	.15	Race	.86	.13	354
			Income	.75	.01	
			Abortion	-1.43	.00	

DEM (Clinton)

Area	% Correct	Nagelkerke R Square	Variable	B	Significance	N
Whole	65.0	.05	Race	-.59	.00	1714
			Income	-.07	.51	
			Abortion	.71	.00	
North East	58.1	.03	Race	-.55	.05	304
			Income	-.22	.36	
			Abortion	.36	.16	
North Central	67.8	.05	Race	-.18	.66	458
			Income	-.04	.85	
			Abortion	.85	.00	
South	68.3	.06	Race	-.92	.00	598
			Income	-.01	.94	
			Abortion	.64	.00	
West	64.7	.06	Race	.30	.48	354
			Income	-.04	.85	
			Abortion	.98	.00	

Table 8: 2000 election

GOP (Bush)

Area	% Correct	Nagelkerke R Square	Variable	B	Significance	N
Whole	70.6	.04	Race	.20	.05	1807
			Income	.44	.00	
			Abortion	-.65	.00	
North East	72.1	.05	Race	.02	.95	316
			Income	.22	.50	
			Abortion	-.86	.00	
North Central	67.7	.06	Race	-.30	.16	450
			Income	.77	.00	
			Abortion	-.51	.01	
South	68.4	.04	Race	.64	.00	657
			Income	.42	.03	
			Abortion	-.32	.07	
West	76.7	.10	Race	.29	.25	384
			Income	.40	.17	
			Abortion	-1.28	.00	

DEM (Gore)

Area	% Correct	Nagelkerke R Square	Variable	B	Significance	N
Whole	67.2	.05	Race	-.20	.05	1807
			Income	.16	.16	
			Abortion	.76	.00	
North East	64.3	.05	Race	.09	.71	316
			Income	-.29	.33	
			Abortion	.84	.00	
North Central	63.6	.05	Race	.22	.27	450
			Income	.37	.09	
			Abortion	.67	.00	
South	72.0	.06	Race	-.66	.00	657
			Income	.19	.33	
			Abortion	.71	.00	
West	65.8	.09	Race	-.49	.03	384
			Income	.04	.88	
			Abortion	-1.23	.00	

Table 9: 2004 election

GOP (Bush)

Area	% Correct	Nagelkerke R Square	Variable	B	Significance	N
Whole	68.3	.18	Race	1.49	.00	1212
			Income	.78	.00	
			Abortion	-.81	.00	
North East	65.6	.11	Race	1.12	.01	218
			Income	.30	.36	
			Abortion	-.84	.02	
North Central	64.4	.12	Race	1.19	.00	314
			Income	.79	.00	
			Abortion	-.65	.01	
South	72.1	.28	Race	1.84	.00	417
			Income	1.21	.00	
			Abortion	-.72	.00	
West	68.9	.20	Race	1.45	.00	263
			Income	.55	.07	
			Abortion	-.97	.00	

DEM (Kerry)

Area	% Correct	Nagelkerke R Square	Variable	B	Significance	N
Whole	64.8	.10	Race	-.84	.00	1212
			Income	-.08	.53	
			Abortion	.96	.00	
North East	63.9	.11	Race	-.73	.04	218
			Income	.37	.27	
			Abortion	1.20	.00	
North Central	65.8	.10	Race	-.93	.01	314
			Income	-.37	.15	
			Abortion	.83	.00	
South	64.5	.10	Race	-1.01	.00	417
			Income	-.31	.19	
			Abortion	0.65	.01	
West	65.4	.20	Race	-.87	.01	263
			Income	.28	.36	
			Abortion	1.91	.00	

Table 10: 2008 election

GOP (McCain)

Area	% Correct	Nagelkerke R Square	Variable	B	Significance	N
Whole	77.4	.31	Race	2.94	.00	2323
			Income	.81	.00	
			Abortion	-.62	.00	
North East	83.9	.18	Race	2.54	.02	254
			Income	.38	.49	
			Abortion	-.2	.73	
North Central	77.7	.31	Race	2.99	.00	397
			Income	.7	.07	
			Abortion	-.92	.02	
South	77.1	.36	Race	3.08	.00	1099
			Income	.98	.00	
			Abortion	-.49	.04	
West	76.5	.27	Race	2.82	.00	573
			Income	.71	.04	
			Abortion	-.62	.08	

DEM (Obama)

Area	% Correct	Nagelkerke R Square	Variable	B	Significance	N
Whole	69.4	.24	Race	-1.77	.00	2323
			Income	-.06	.67	
			Abortion	.50	.00	
North East	65.2	.20	Race	-1.53	.00	254
			Income	.255	.58	
			Abortion	.96	.25	
North Central	71.7	.30	Race	-2.10	.00	397
			Income	-.31	.40	
			Abortion	1.08	.00	
South	73.0	.29	Race	-2.02	.00	1099
			Income	-.28	.33	
			Abortion	.84	.00	
West	62.2	.16	Race	-1.30	.00	573
			Income	.33	.25	
			Abortion	1.01	.00	

Table 1 shows the logistic regression results for the 1972 election, which saw Richard Nixon overwhelmingly defeat George McGovern. Nixon won with over sixty percent of the vote,ⁱ and dominated the Electoral College by a greater degree, with only Massachusetts among the states joining Washington D.C. in casting its vote for the Democratic nominee. Nixon was able to capture the four states of the Deep South that had voted for George Wallace four years earlier, winning each with at least sixty-five percent of the vote. Texas, the only state of the South to vote for Hubert Humphrey, fell to the GOP nominee by a similar wide margin. It appears that the "southern strategy" was a complete success.

With regard to the model, the variable for abortion fails to meet the standard of statistical significance for the Nixon vote, perhaps due to the fact that *Roe v. Wade* was yet to be decided. Income failed to meet the level of statistical significance for the Democratic presidential vote. Race was significant to greater than .000 for both parties.

Table 2 shows the results for the 1976 election in which former Governor of Georgia Jimmy Carter defeated President Gerald Ford fifty to forty-eight percent in the popular vote and 297 to 240 in the Electoral College.

Carter won the South with the exception of Virginia and Oklahoma, whilst Ford took the entire West region, with the exception of Hawaii. In the North East region, Ford won more states (five to four), but Carter did the best in the Electoral College by a margin of eighty-six to thirty-six. In the North Central region, Ford won both the state count (eight to four) and the Electoral College count (eighty-seven to fifty-eight).

Again, the race variable was highly significant, although the B value fell, especially in the South, for the Democrats, suggesting the nomination of a southerner was able to mitigate the effect of race. The variable views on abortion again failed to meet the standard of statistical significance, coupled with the fact that the income variable for the Democrats was also considerably short of statistical significance, resulted in the lowest pseudo R square value of the study.

Table 3 shows the findings for the 1980 election won by Ronald Reagan over President Jimmy Carter by fifty-one to forty-one percent. Reagan was successful in every region, taking the whole of the West, with the exception of Hawaii; the North Central region, with the exception of Minnesota, went for Reagan. Rhode Island became the one island of blue in a sea of Reagan red, in the North East.

In the South, Carter did slightly better, winning in Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia and his home state of Georgia. Carter's forty-nine Electoral College votes were the lowest cast for a sitting president seeking reelection since Howard Taft came in third behind Woodrow Wilson and Teddy Roosevelt sixty-eight years previously.

President Carter was in office at the time of a general downturn in the U.S. economy. "Recession is when you neighbor loses his job. A depression is when you lose your job. And recovery is when Jimmy Carter loses his"ⁱⁱ was one of Reagan's more memorable quotes of the election. The general economic malaise may have resulted in the income variable gaining statistical significance for both candidates' votes. Views on abortion, again, failed to reach the required level of statistical significance, whilst race remained the most significant of the three variables. Pseudo R squared values improved in most of the fields of study, the values for the South region having the greatest improvement.

The 1984 election findings are shown in Table 4. President Reagan was comfortably reelected, improving his winning margins in both the popular vote, winning fifty-eight percent to former Vice President Walter Mondale's forty percent and in the Electoral College, where all but

Minnesota and Washington D.C. cast their ballots for the sitting president.

For the first time, the variable of attitude towards abortion became statistically significant. Abortions reached their highest rate (in terms of abortions per 1,000 women aged 15-44) in the early years of the Reagan administrationⁱⁱⁱ. As President, Reagan was vocal in his pro-life views; for instance, he wrote *Abortion and the Conscience of the Nation* in 1983. It seems likely that the greater prominence given to the issue of abortion by a sitting President resulted in this improved level of statistical significance of the variable, which remains at levels of better than .01 for the subsequent elections in the study. Overall, the race variable maintains high levels of statistical significance; however, in the West, the level falls below the standard. The income variable was statistically significant for the sitting President, but not the former Vice President.

Table 5 shows the findings for the 1988 election when George Herbert Walker Bush became the first sitting vice president since Martin Van Buren in 1836 to be elected to the presidency. Bush beat Massachusetts governor Michal Dukakis in the popular vote fifty-three to forty-six percent and by 426 to 111 in the Electoral College. Dukakis

was able to win Washington, Oregon and Hawaii in the West region. In the North Central region, the governor won Minnesota, Iowa and Wisconsin, whilst in the North East, the Democrats' only victories came in New York, Rhode Island and the nominee's home state. West Virginia was the only state in the South that did not vote for the sitting vice president.

All of the units of analysis, with the exception of income and abortion views in the North East, are statistically significant, whilst the income figures for the Democrats continue to disappoint; there was no relationship whatsoever found between a vote for Dukakis and whether a respondent earns more or less than the median income in the North Central region.

The year 1988 was the last election in which a winning candidate would be able to claim that he won every region in the union. Table 6 shows the findings from 1992, the first of three successive elections in which the winning candidate failed to achieve a fifty percent share of the votes cast. Arkansas governor Bill Clinton took forty-three percent of the votes cast and 370 Electoral College votes, to George Bush's thirty-seven percent and 168 Electoral College votes. Independent Ross Perot polled nineteen percent of the votes, yet failed to win a single Electoral

College vote. Clinton was able to sweep the North East region. In the North Central region, Clinton won seven of the twelve states, but 100 out of 129 Electoral College votes; out West Clinton gained five states for Democrats, including the prize jewel, California, which voted for the Democratic Party nominee for the first time since the Johnson landslide of 1964. California was able to give Clinton a healthy ninety-six to twenty-three edge in the West regions' Electoral College vote tally. In the South, Clinton was able to win several states, including Tennessee, Kentucky, Louisiana and his home state, but the sitting president still held a 116 to 68 margin in the Electoral College votes from the region.

The state of the U.S. economy was, again, at least partly responsible for the defeat of a sitting president; "it's the economy stupid" became the anthem of the Clinton campaign. Unlike the results for the 1980 election, however, the income variable for the Democratic vote failed to meet the required level of statistical significance. The West region appeared to throw up two anomalies, with the race variable for Clinton and the abortion variable for Bush failing to reach the required levels of significance, despite both variables, for both candidates, reaching levels of better than .01 over the nation as a whole.

Improvements in the pseudo R square values were observed in the North Central and South regions.

Clinton, again, failed to obtain fifty percent of the vote in 1996. He defeated Robert Dole forty-nine to forty-one percent, with Ross Perot obtaining an eight percent share. In the Electoral College, Clinton picked up an extra nine delegates to win by 379 to 159. The breakdown of states was remarkably similar to four years previously, with Clinton losing Georgia whilst gaining Florida in the South region and swapping Arizona for Colorado in the West.

Table 7 shows dramatic improvements in the pseudo R square values for the Republican model, with a flattening off of the values for the Democratic Party model. The problem with statistical significance of the income variable of the Democratic model persists, which overall is the only variable not to reach statistical significance; however, the race variable in the West region does not meet the statistical requirement for both candidates.

Table 8 shows the findings for the controversial election of 2000 where George Walker Bush became president despite losing the popular vote to Vice President Al Gore. Every state mattered, as Bush won the Electoral College 271 to 266. Gore took the North East region with the exception of New Hampshire; the South apart from Washington D.C.,

Delaware and Maryland went for Bush, including the state of the retiring President Clinton and Gore's home state. In the North Central region, Gore won five states and sixty-eight Electoral College votes, to seven states and sixty-one Electoral College votes for Bush. The prize of California, along with Washington, Oregon, New Mexico and Hawaii, went for the vice president in the West with eighty-one Electoral College votes, as opposed to seven states (up two from four years previously) and thirty-five Electoral College votes for then Governor Bush.

The closeness of the race appears to have had a detrimental effect on the pseudo R square values which fell to their lowest point of the study. The B value of race is also its lowest of the study with the value for Bush and Gore mirroring each other, although the variable still attains the standard of statistical significance. It is interesting to note that the .05 value is the lowest of the study. Overall, both the other variables were statistically significant for Bush, whilst the abortion variable, but not the income variable, did so for Gore.

Table 9 shows the results for the 2004 election in which President Bush was reelected with fifty-one percent of the vote to United States Senator John Kerry's forty-eight. Bush increased his majority in the Electoral College

to 286-251, as he picked up New Mexico and Iowa, whilst Kerry was able to paint the whole North East region blue by winning in New Hampshire.

The B values for race increase across the board, and the figure for abortion was also up in most regions. The model was also able to explain a greater degree of the variance in voting as illustrated by much higher pseudo R square values. Overall, all variables were significant to better than .01 for Bush, with only the income variable in the North East and South regions failing to meet the standard. For Kerry, the race and abortion variables were significant in every region, but again the income variable yielded disappointing results in the four regions studied.

Table 10 shows the findings from the 2008 election, the first not to feature a sitting president or vice president since 1952. Senator Barack Obama claimed fifty-three percent of the popular vote to Senator John McCain's forty-six percent. The Electoral College vote was 365-173. The Democratic stranglehold in the North East region was maintained, whilst in the South, Obama was able to gain Virginia, North Carolina and Florida. In the North Central region, there were Democratic Party gains in Iowa, Indiana and Ohio. In the West region, the GOP lost Nevada, New Mexico and Colorado.

This election saw the highest values of pseudo R square and the B score for the race variable of the study, and this is probably due to the fact that an African American was appearing on the ballot. Again, the income variable for the Democratic candidate failed to reach the levels of statistical significance. Whilst generally, the abortion variable was significant for both candidates, in the North East region it fell below the significance threshold. The North East region also saw the income variable for the GOP candidate join the Democrats in falling below the required level of statistical significance, although in the nation as a whole, income remained statistically significant for the GOP, as it has throughout the course of the study.

Table 11: Change in probability of GOP vote, based on race.

Year	USA	North East	North Central	South	West
1972	33.25	34.58	38.82	30.65	27.76
1976	29.93	28.77	40.31	27.15	22.62
1980	27.67	23.95	30.85	30.95	21.48
1984	29.37	37.41	36.59	28.08	7.44
1988	29.84	30.92	39.99	22.87	27.97
1992	20.40	14.98	26.53	16.84	15.76
1996	21.04	24.28	17.91	22.72	12.39
2000	4.54	.40	6.44	14.06	4.90
2004	29.85	22.21	25.16	35.71	31.96
2008	34.24	19.63	34.02	38.64	31.86

Change in probability of voting for the GOP presidential nominee between a White and Non-White, with identical views on abortion and income.

Table 12 : Change in probability of Dem vote, based on race.

Year	USA	North East	North Central	South	West
1972	27.16	18.77	41.14	33.04	9.15
1976	22.99	26.82	33.20	23.48	19.92
1980	28.01	27.94	17.05	29.97	18.90
1984	20.70	28.43	21.19	25.10	1.98
1988	17.23	10.60	33.97	14.37	25.77
1992	21.49	20.60	42.29	20.48	11.07
1996	14.00	13.51	3.34	21.35	6.50
2000	4.34	2.06	5.07	12.44	4.10
2004	20.09	17.63	20.77	23.16	20.93
2008	41.44	34.82	45.79	46.59	31.39

Change in probability of voting for the Democratic presidential nominee between a White and Non-White, with identical views on abortion and income.

Table 13. Change in probability of GOP vote, based on respondents view of abortion.

Year	USA	North East	North Central	South	West
1972	2.27	8.87	2.85	2.61	.44
1976	1.92	2.22	4.96	3.67	13.30
1980	3.21	3.06	4.65	.74	8.91
1984	5.14	5.13	9.25	1.71	7.55
1988	6.81	3.67	13.11	2.30	10.31
1992	11.59	15.37	15.15	8.06	4.20
1996	17.74	14.66	18.33	12.67	28.22
2000	15.14	17.41	10.45	7.39	25.08
2004	18.63	19.44	15.41	15.40	23.78
2008	8.68	1.92	12.68	6.86	7.58

Change in probability of voting for GOP candidate in presidential elections, between Pro-life and Pro-choice individuals, of identical race and income.

Table 14. Change in probability of Dem vote, based on respondents views of abortion.

Year	USA	North East	North Central	South	West
1972	7.98	7.71	8.77	8.13	5.02
1976	3.68	5.75	.63	2.26	9.72
1980	1.97	1.94	4.71	7.45	.18
1984	10.35	10.49	11.48	3.50	14.99
1988	9.20	4.01	11.78	7.93	8.70
1992	13.97	6.54	16.87	13.64	12.64
1996	15.67	8.69	18.12	13.71	20.62
2000	15.61	18.34	15.67	12.23	10.91
2004	23.21	25.67	18.49	14.67	37.48
2008	12.05	23.42	26.10	20.46	23.81

Change in probability of voting for Democratic candidate in presidential elections, between Pro-life and Pro-choice individuals, of identical race and income.

Table 15. Change in probability of GOP vote, based on median income.

Year	USA	North East	North Central	South	West
1972	1.94	1.21	1.68	1.41	4.63
1976	2.82	2.08	2.89	2.07	2.97
1980	1.63	1.14	0.11	3.88	2.12
1984	3.72	2.02	4.40	4.71	2.55
1988	2.57	0.27	2.56	3.63	4.01
1992	2.19	0.14	2.35	3.09	2.45
1996	3.78	1.00	3.71	7.28	1.93
2000	0.72	0.13	2.37	0.76	0.31
2004	2.75	0.12	2.72	7.00	1.35
2008	2.72	0.54	2.38	4.13	1.97

Change in probability of GOP vote, between individuals either side of the median income level, of identical race and abortion viewpoint.

Table 16. Change in probability of Dem vote, based on median income.

Year	USA	North East	North Central	South	West
1972	0.26	0.25	0.50	0.68	0.07
1976	0.05	0.02	0.15	0.03	0.26
1980	0.56	0.31	0.41	2.79	1.69
1984	0.07	0.00	0.00	0.26	0.21
1988	0.13	0.34	0.00	0.21	0.01
1992	0.15	0.23	0.54	0.05	1.65
1996	0.03	0.33	0.02	0.00	0.01
2000	0.13	0.29	0.61	0.17	0.01
2004	0.54	0.26	0.89	0.45	0.62
2008	0.60	0.29	0.80	0.59	0.35

Change in probability of Dem vote, between individuals either side of the median income level, of identical race and abortion viewpoint.

Discussion

Tables 11 and 12, and figures 1 and 2 show the racial effect of both parties over the course of the study. The figures indicate that race remains an important factor in an individual's choice at the polls. Indeed, the election of 2008 with the first African American nominated by a major party saw the race effect reach its highest point of the period of the study, supporting the work of Block (2011); the racial effect is higher across the board (with the exception of North East Democrats) from the 2004 election, when John Kerry, holding a similar ideological viewpoint as Barack Obama, was defeated by George Bush. The effect in 2008 of race compared to the dead-heat election, between two southern whites, of 2000 illustrates the fact most dramatically that race still matters in the United States.

The racial effect was greatest in the South and North Central regions, which between them accounted for the highest ranking in nine out of the ten elections studied (the exception was the 1984 election, when the North East placed first).

Race in the South continues to have an influence that is not as evident in other regions (especially the West and

North East), and this contradicts the work of Aistrup (2010) who claims that, since the Reagan era, the South is converging with the Non-South with regard to the influence of race. Figures 3 and 4 show that the racial effect in the South has been larger than all the other regions studied in each election since 1996. The findings support the main thrust of Valentino and Sears (2005) work, in that race has a greater impact in the South than elsewhere. The effect of race in the North Central region is interesting. The region ranks third in terms of black population per capita^{iv}, with a black population of about ten percent, comparable to that of the North East of twelve percent; so one would anticipate the effect of race to be similar to that of the North East region. However, figures 5 and 6 show the racial effect in the North Central region was greater than the North East in seven of the ten elections studied. A possible explanation is the nature of the White population of the North Central region. Whereas those identifying themselves as "non-Hispanic whites" make up sixty-five percent of the population as a whole, in the North Central region, they make up seventy-nine percent^v the highest group concentration in the country. As such, the racial divide in the North Central region is more one of White/Black than in the North East region.

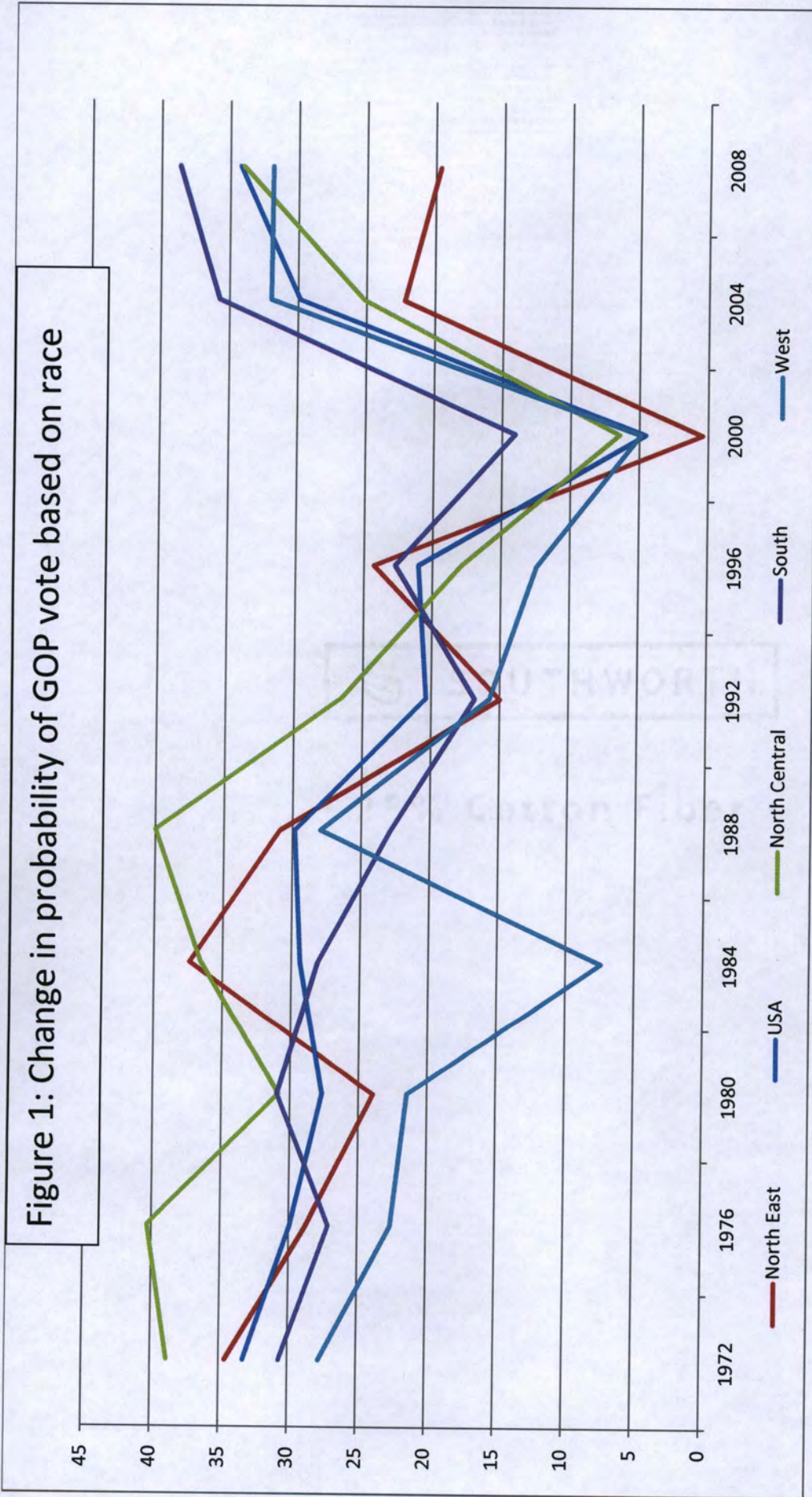
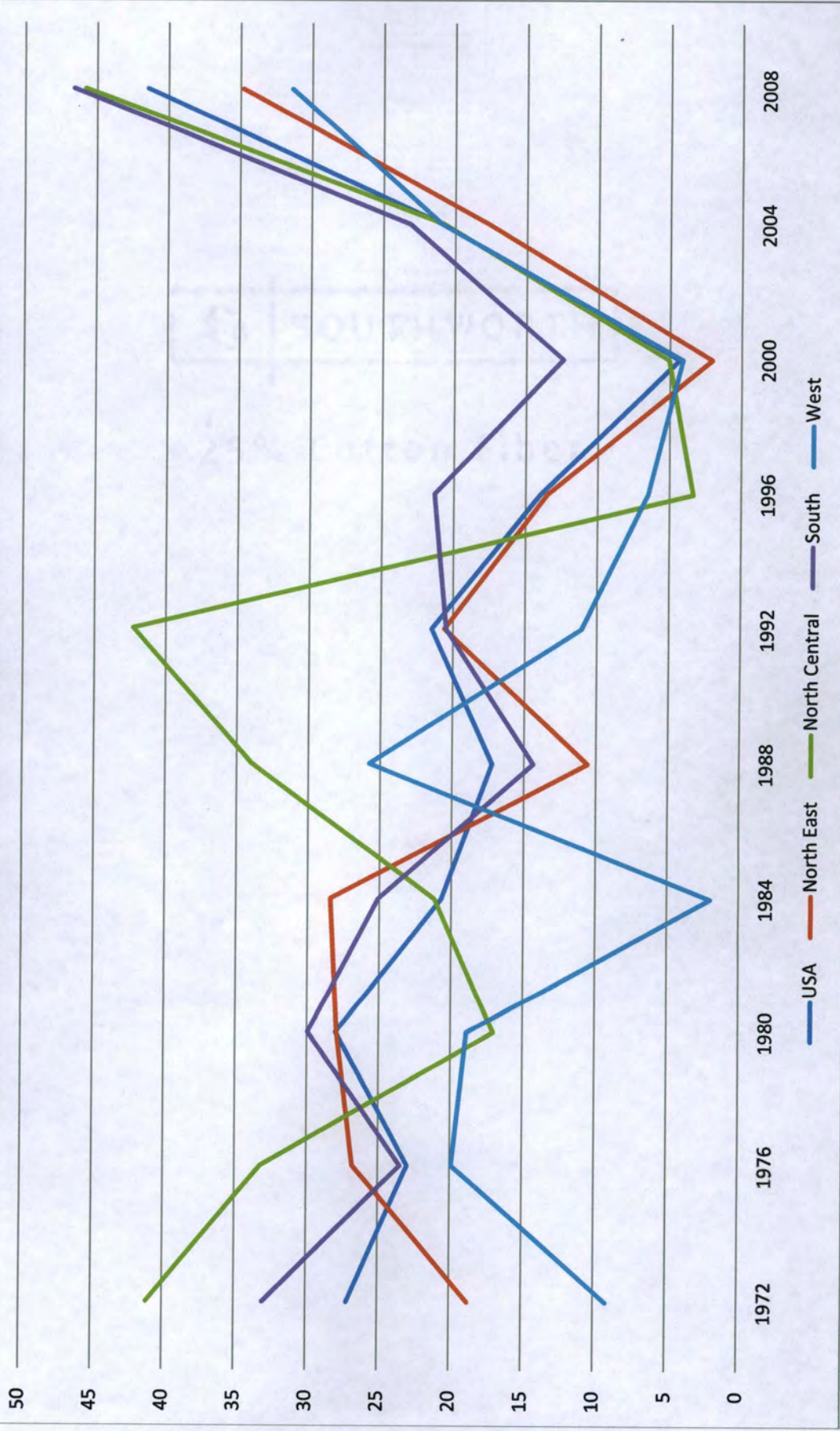
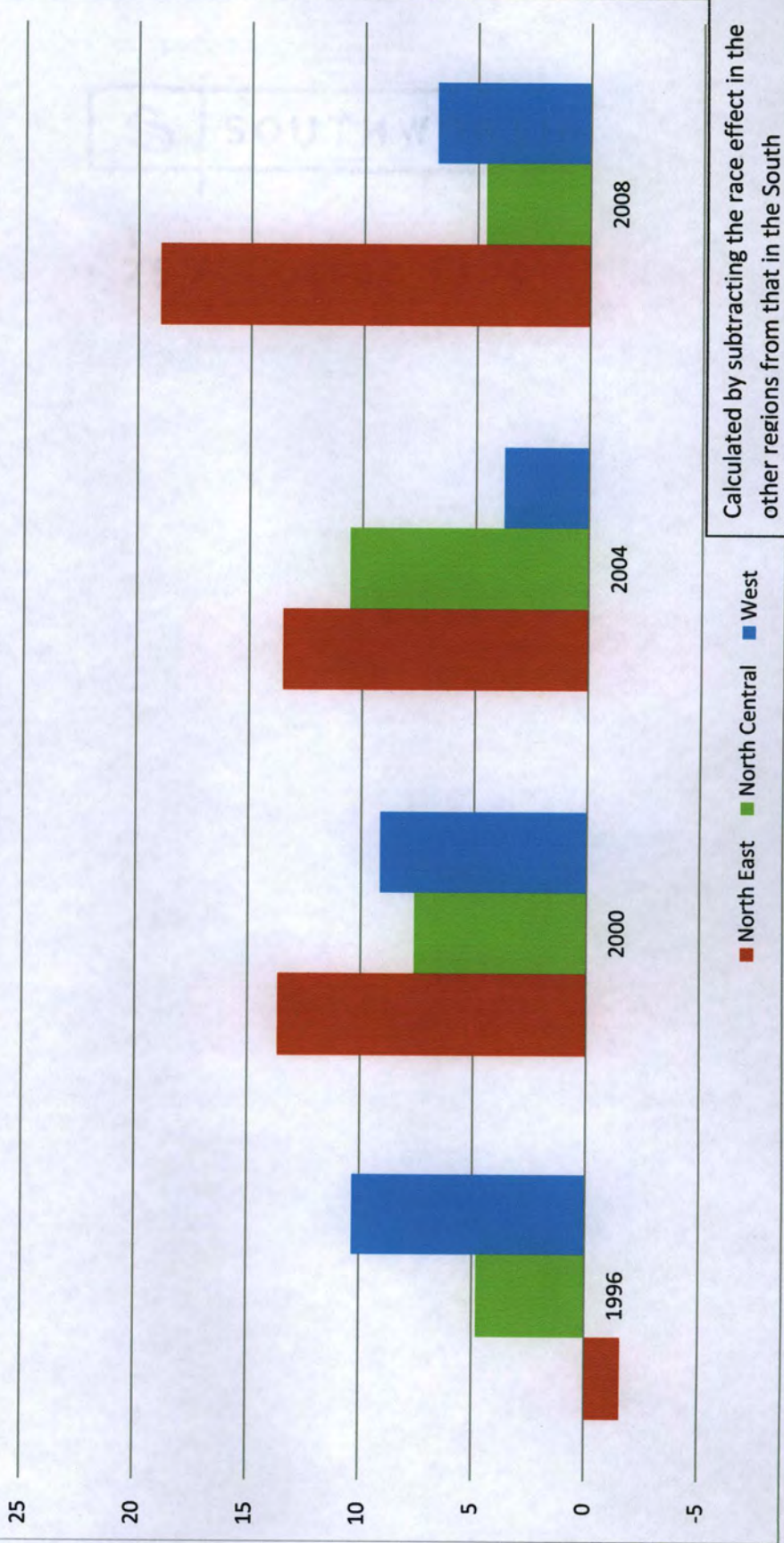


Figure 2: Change in probability of Democratic Party vote based on race.

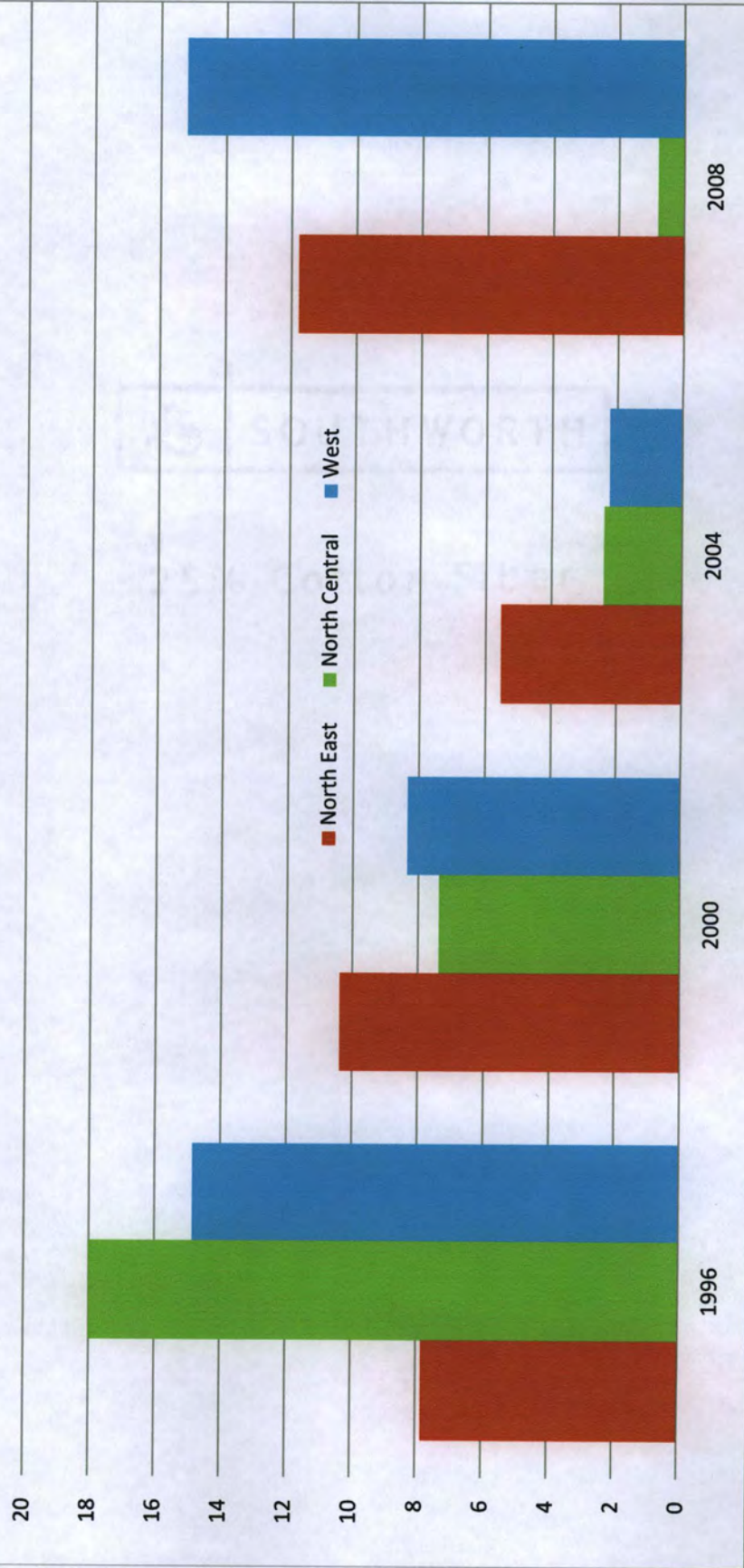


**Figure 3: The South relative to other regions GOP race probability
1996-2008**



Calculated by subtracting the race effect in the other regions from that in the South

**Figure 4: The South relative to other regions DEM race probability
1996-2008**



Calculated by subtracting the race effect in each of the regions from the effect in the South

Figure 5: North East Region set against North Central Region GOP

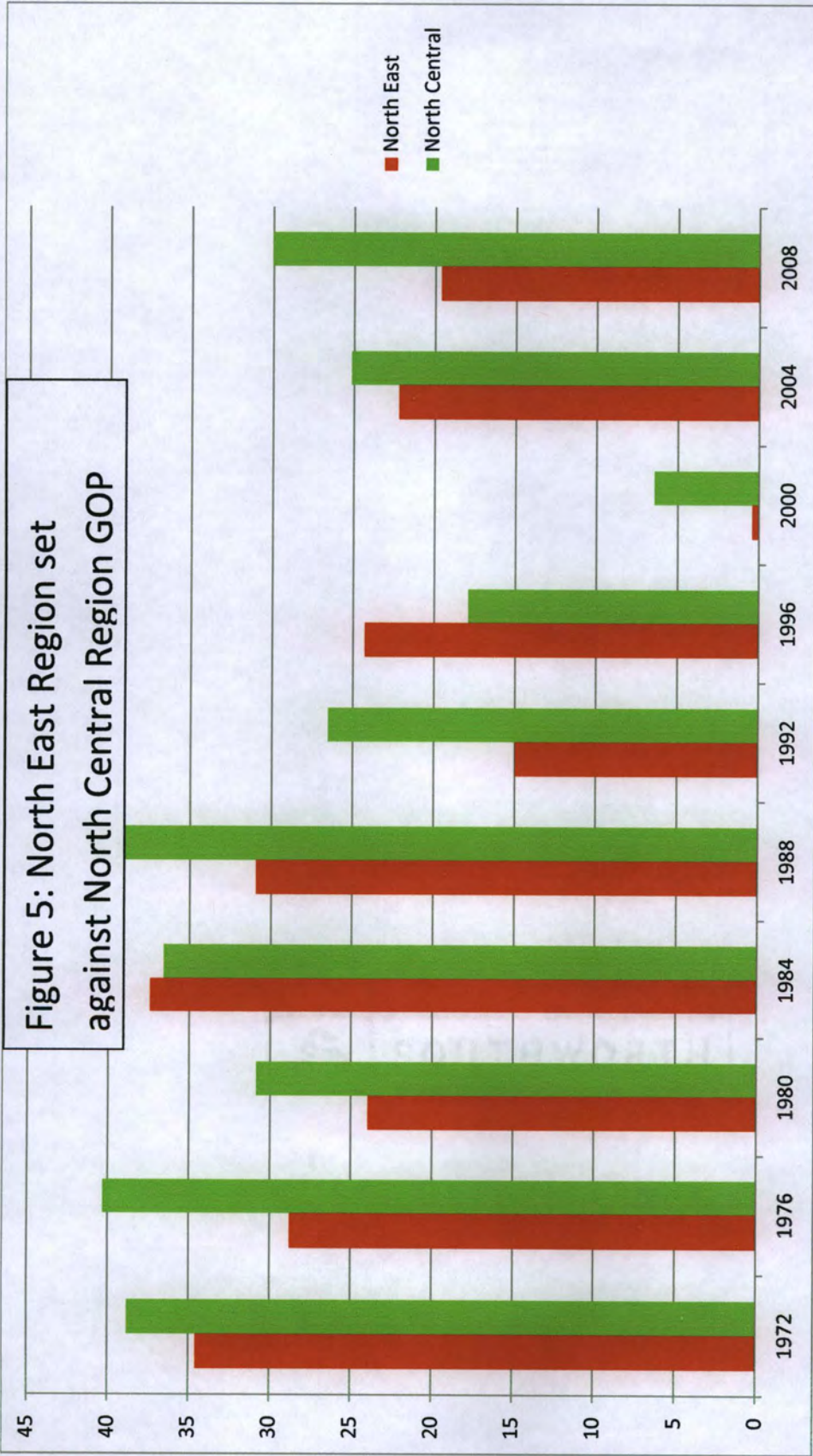
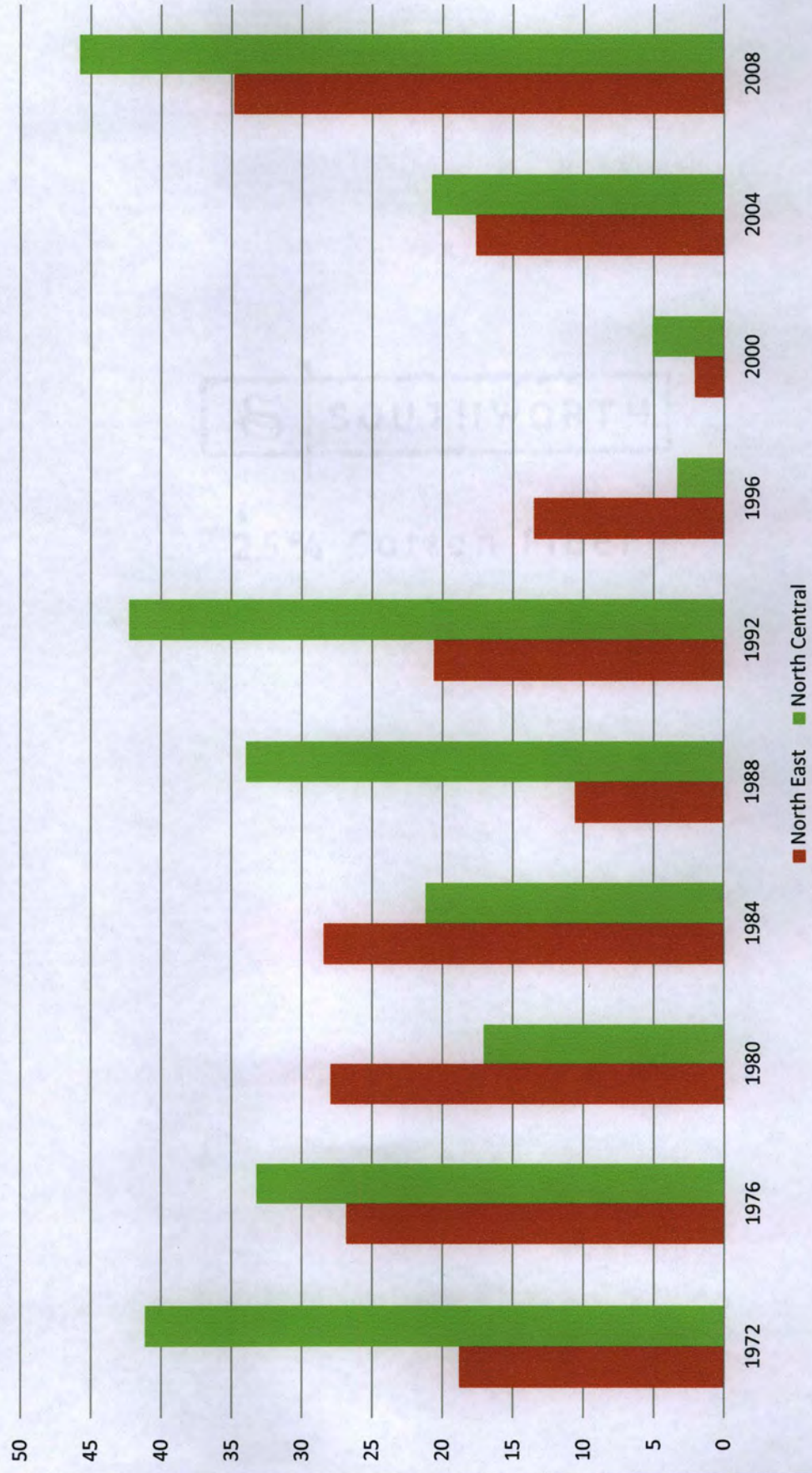


Figure 6: North East Region against North Central Region, Dem race effect



The smallest effect is often seen in the West region, which ranked lowest in half the election studied, although the North East has placed fourth in the last three election cycles. The relatively small racial effect observed in the West region is probably in a large part due to the demographics of the region. The racial divide in the West region is a more complex one than the White/Black divide observed in much of the rest of the Union, especially the North Central region. US Census Bureau data show the West has a Hispanic population of twenty-eight percent, compared to the country as a whole where Hispanics make up sixteen percent^{vi} of the population. Also, the West region has a substantial Asian population of over eight percent compared to the national average of less than four percent.^{vii} The census data also show that these percentages are increasing year to year at a greater rate in the West than the rest of the country. These "new" immigrant groups do not appear, as yet, to have formed the same attachments to a particular political party, as African Americans have to the Democratic Party; consequently, race is unlikely to play as large a role in the electoral behavior of these racial groups as it does with African Americans and increasingly White Americans. This reduction in the

relative importance of race (compared to the South and North Central) is one possible explanation for the loss of Republican hegemony in the Pacific West, as asserted by Bullock, Hoffman and Gaddie (2006). The fact that the racial effect differs across the regions also challenges, to an extent, the work of DiTomaso, Parks-Yancy and Post (2011) who found no difference in the racial attitudes of whites in different regions.

With regard to Hypothesis 1, the study has not shown that regional differences across the whole nation are narrowing. However, there does appear to be a narrowing of differences between the South and the North Central regions. These findings do have political implications, if, as suggested by the figures, race has a different effect in different regions. It is increasingly unlikely that a candidate will be able to win all the regions in a Presidential election. The South and North Central regions continue to be influenced by race in a manner not observed in the West and North East. The North East has, in recent Presidential elections, become a Democratic Party stronghold; this has coincided with race having a relatively reduced effect in the North East. Can a Republican candidate now hope to perform well in the North East region? In order to secure the GOP nomination, a

candidate well may be tempted to play the race card, as illustrated by former speaker Gingrich's use of the term "food stamp President" in the South Carolina primary. Whilst language such as this may be helpful in securing votes in both the primaries and general election in the South and North Central regions, it is unlikely (according to this research) to have the same effect in other regions of the country.

Tables 13 and 14, and figures 7 and 8 show the effect on voting probability of changing views on abortion, from a broadly pro-life position to a broadly pro-choice one (and vice versa). The results show that a respondent's viewpoint on abortion appears to be exerting a greater influence on electoral choices than it did in the past. The rise in influence of abortion views coincides with the publication of President Reagan's *Abortion and the Conscience of the Nation* (1983). Since that time there has been a steady rise in the effect a respondent's views on abortion has on his or her party choice for president. Prior to the publication of the Reagan book, the average effect of a change in abortion viewpoint on vote was less than four percent; from 1992 to 2004, that figure had risen to approximately fifteen percent. This time frame supports the findings of Knuckey (2006) who notes that party identification started

to be effected by abortion attitudes in the 1990's, and those of Carsey and Layman (2006) who argue that the middle "Clinton years" were a pivotal point for party identification to change based on the issue. A reduction in the apparent influence of the abortion viewpoint variable was observed in the 2008 election; this could be because of the increased racial element of that election, or because Obama was able to cut across social cleavages that had developed; but the trend line of figures 7 and 8 is clearly in an upward direction. In general, the effect appears to have a greater impact on the vote for the Democratic nominee than for the chosen Republican, supporting the work of Killian and Wilcock (2008) with the overall Democratic effect being higher than the GOP in every election except 1980 and 1996.

Although it appears to be an increasingly important cleavage in American politics, supporting the work of Fiorina (2004), the variable typically lags behind race as an influence; only in the 2000 election does the abortion viewpoint probability value exceed race for both parties. This fact lends support to Knuckey's (2006) argument that conservative morality issues cost Al Gore the election of 2000.

The effect of abortion, like that of race, is not constant across the regions. Figures 9 and 10 show that voting in the South, surprisingly appears to be influenced less by abortion viewpoint than other regions. Columns above zero indicate the effect of abortion was greater in the South than the region in question; columns below zero show the effect in that region was greater than the South. The South has only ranked in the top two of either party once, when in 1992, for the Democrats it ranked second behind the North Central region. As a result, hypothesis 2 is not supported. It was expected that the influence of the Christian Right, with its strong anti-abortion message, would be greatest in the South. As noted, scholars such as Abramowitz (1995) and Adams (1997) argue that attitudes towards abortion (influenced by the Christian Right) were in a large part responsible for the realignment of the South. However, this study did not support this. It is possible the influence of the Christian Right in the South has been overstated. The South is the only region of the study where the probability change for the abortion viewpoint has never been greater than that for the race variable. This implies that racial attitudes played a larger part in the realignment of the South than

conservative morality concerns (or at least the abortion controversy).

The effect of abortion viewpoint appears to be greatest in the West and North Central regions, which between them had the greatest abortion effect in eight of ten elections studied. A possible explanation of this could be the rate of abortions in the respective regions. Data from the Guttmacher Institute show that the national rate of (legal) abortions is 19.6 per 1,000 women aged 15-44^{viii}. Jones and Kooistra (2011) show the rate in the North Central region was 14.0 per 1,000 women 15-44, with the rate being lower in each state of the region than the national average, with the exception of Illinois whose rate was slightly higher at 20.5 per 1,000 women^{ix}. If one assumes that a region's overall moral stance regarding abortion is correlated with the abortion rate in a region, one can reach the conclusion that, in the North Central region, abortion does not have widespread support. A culture of opposition to abortion may well exist within the region, leading inhabitants of the region to have an increased propensity to switch party based upon their viewpoint on abortion.

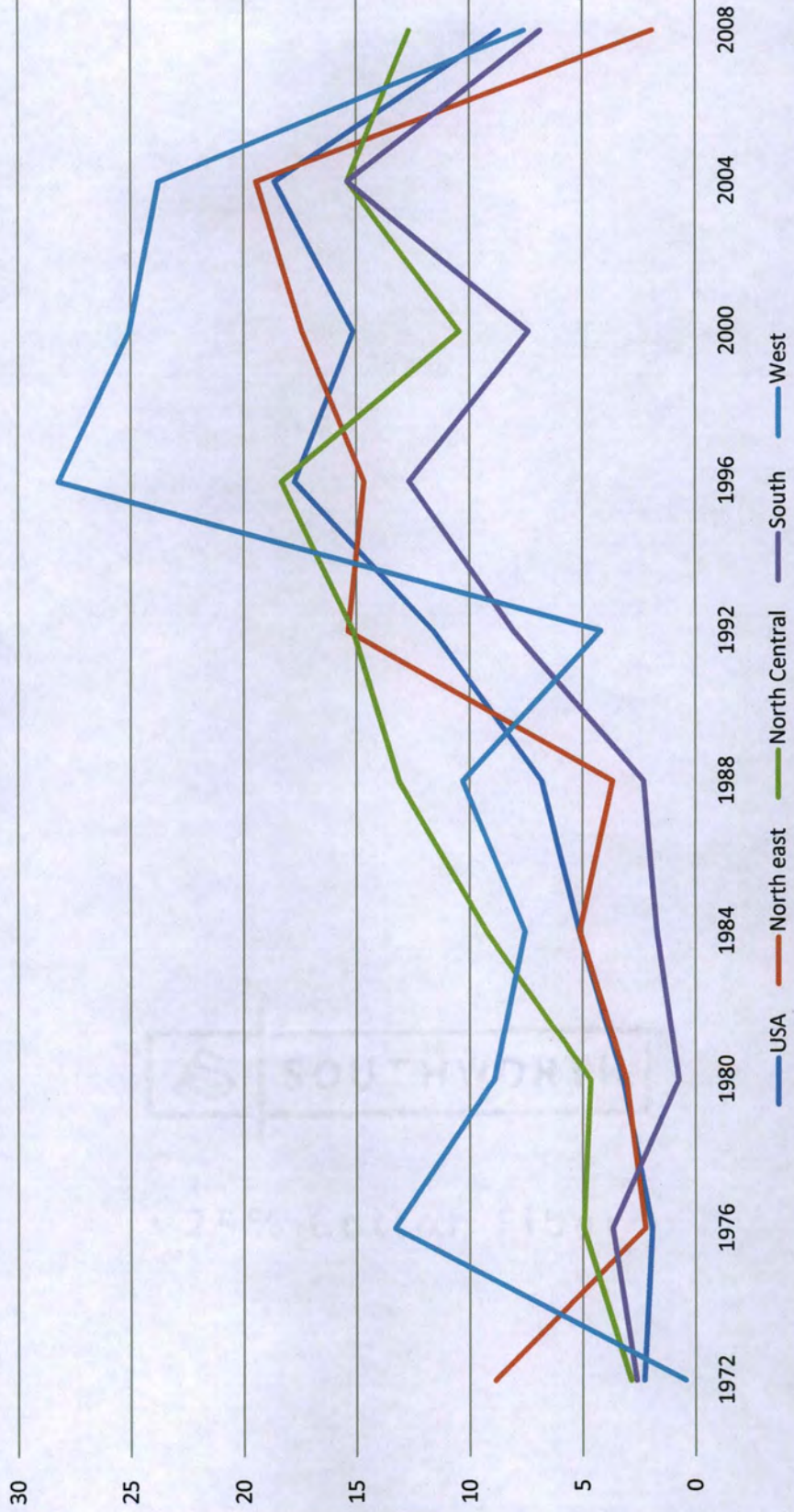
Conversely, the West region has a higher rate of abortions at 22.0 abortions for every 1,000 women, with

nearly eighteen percent of all abortions in the United States taking place in California.^x This could reflect a greater acceptance of abortion in the region, resulting in a greater level of abortion-based voting than is observed in the South, where the rate is closer to the national average at 17.6 per 1,000 women. However, this does not explain why there is typically a higher change in vote based on abortion viewpoint in the West than the North East, which has the highest abortion rate of the regions studied, at 27.2 per 1,000 women aged 15-44. The abortion rate in the largest state of the North East region, New York, is comfortably higher at 37 per 1000 women aged 15-44 than that of California at 27 per 1000 women. The answer to that question may well lie in the fact that the West, in particular California, has a longer tradition of direct democracy than the rest of the country. This has resulted in several abortion initiatives being submitted to the electorate in a manner not seen in the North East region. For instance, voters in California have voted three times since 2005 on the issue of parental notification if a minor wishes to undergo an abortion,^{xi} and the initiative also seems likely to appear on the ballot in 2012. Elsewhere around the region, voters in Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, Oregon, Washington and Wyoming have all held

ballots on the issue of abortion. Montana voters will be facing three abortion questions in the fall of 2012. This compares to the North East region, where only the people of Maine (1999) and Massachusetts (1942, 1986) have expressed their views on abortion, specifically, at the ballot box. Ballot initiatives raise awareness of an issue, pressure groups emerge, and money is spent in efforts to influence the voters. This increased knowledge of and exposure to the abortion issue in the West may well have polarized opinion of the issue not seen in the North East, resulting in an increased chance of a voter deciding which party to vote for in presidential elections based upon their viewpoint on abortion.

Another possible explanation of the variation could well be linked to race. Henshaw and Kost (2008) note that abortion rates differ greatly between races, with the rate for white women being 13.8 per 1000 women and 41.3 for non-white women.^{xii} An explanation as to why the abortion rate is relatively low in the North Central region can possibly be found in the racial make-up of the region. As discussed earlier, the North Central region is the most racially homogenous of the country. As whites in general have a lower rate of abortion, it is inevitable that the North Central region would have the lowest abortion rate in the

Figure 7: Change in probability of GOP vote based on Abortion viewpoint



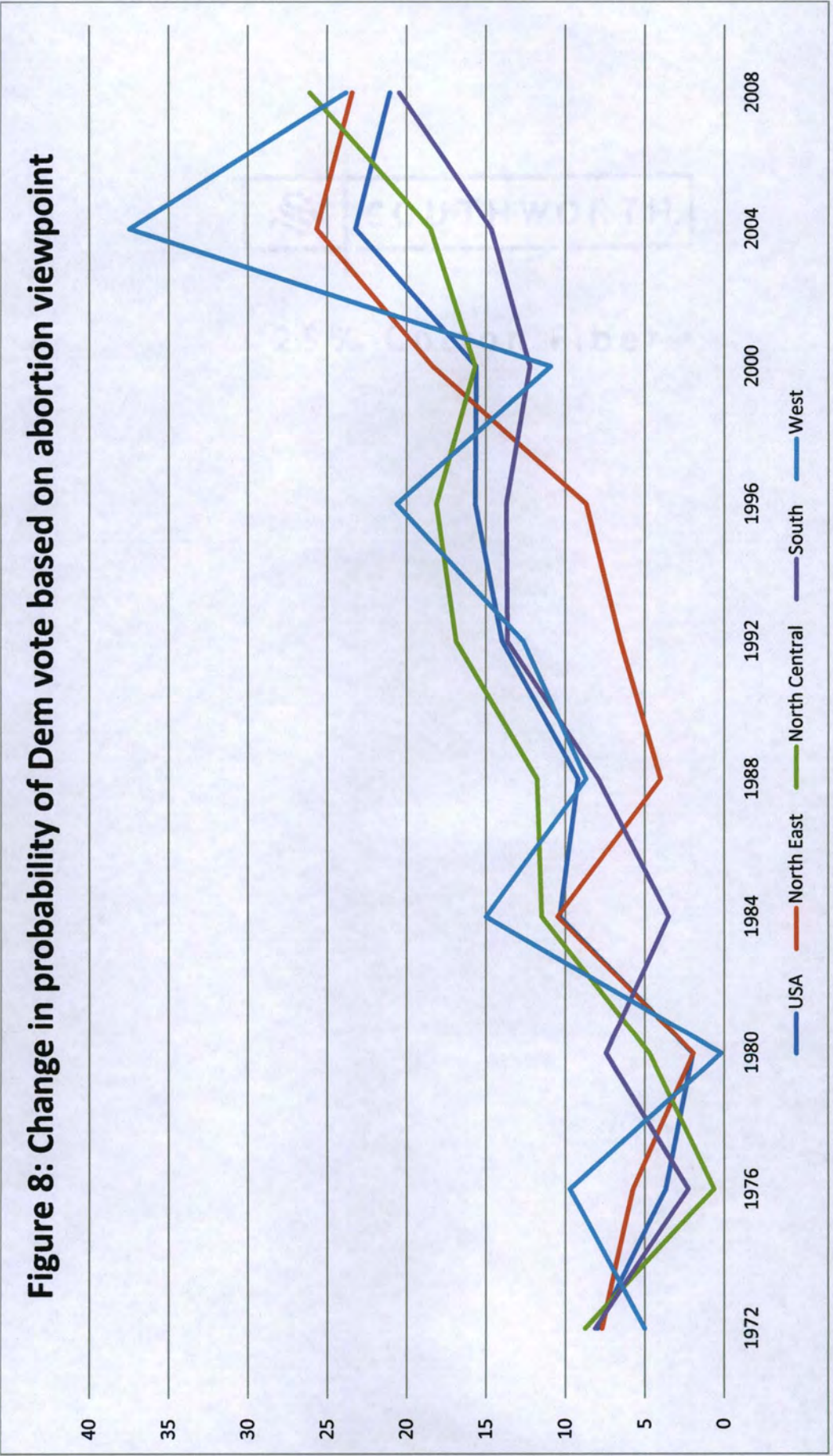


Figure 9: The South relative to other regions GOP abortion probability

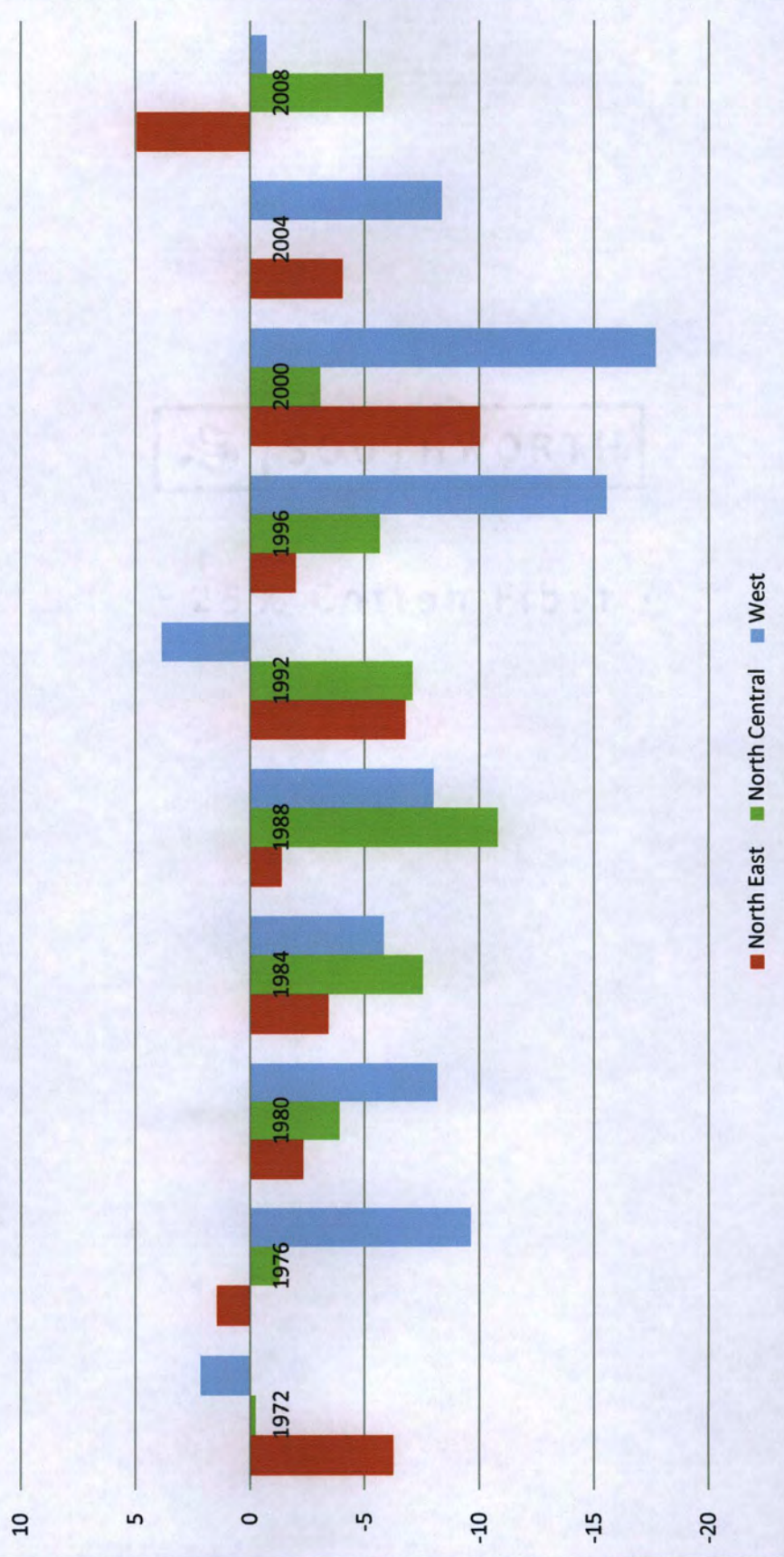
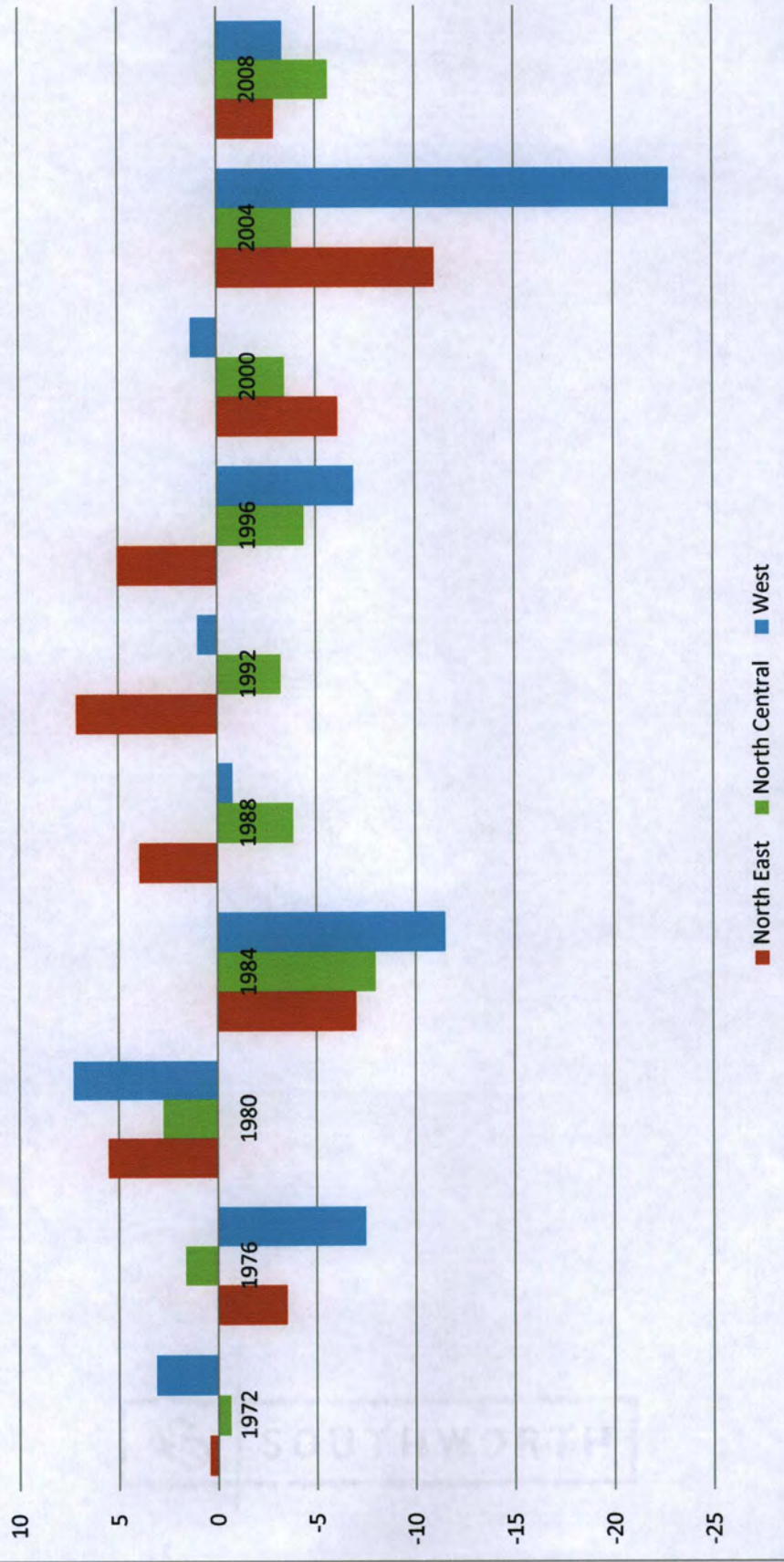


Figure 10: The South relative to other regions DEM abortion probability



country. So, the abortion effect in the North Central region may also be a reflection of racial attitudes of people from the North Central region. It is possible that, in more conservative areas of the nation, anti-black feeling may reflect itself as anti-abortion feeling. Black women account for thirty-seven percent of abortions in the United States, black women have an abortion rate of 50 per 1000 women, compared to non-Hispanic whites whose rate is 11 per 1000, so, just as with crime in the later part of the twentieth century, this controversial subject potentially gives politicians, who wish to do so, another chance to play the "race card" without having to mention race. Individuals may justify their viewpoint (to themselves) by stating "I'm not anti-black, I'm anti-abortion." However, their attitude towards abortion may well be clouded by their racial standpoint.

The findings with regard to the final hypothesis are shown in tables 15 and 16. There appears to be no relationship between the median income variable and vote, with the effect for the GOP averaging out at just over two percent, whilst the effect for the Democrats never reaches the level of three-quarters of one percent. There also appears to be no correlation between the effect and the economic state of the country and which party is in control

of the White House. However, the figures do give a limited indication that the South has changed relative to the other regions in the effect that income plays in voting. Whereas Alford (1963) ranked the South at the bottom of the regions in class-based voting, the study shows that the income effect in the South, for the statistically significant GOP model, was the highest of all the regions in six out of the ten elections studied, and has not ranked lower than second since 1976.

Conclusion

The study has shown that differences do exist between the regions in the effect that race and abortion viewpoint have on voter choice in Presidential elections. Race continues to play a large part in election choices. The South does not appear to be converging with the rest of the country with regard to race, as some have claimed. However, not all the Non-South is the same. Whilst the North Central region of the study does appear to be behaving increasingly like the South, with respect to the influence of race, the effect of race in the North East is seemingly diminishing. If scholars are to fully understand the effect that race plays in elections, the country should be studied in a more

nuanced way than the South/Non-South split that has dominated much of the literature.

The issue of abortion has emerged in recent years as a key cleavage in modern American politics. The study has identified that regional differences exist in the effect this emotive subject has in presidential elections. However, many questions have been raised which merit future study, namely, the relationship between abortion rates in an area and attitudes towards abortion, the spillover effect of ballot initiatives into presidential elections, and, finally, an examination of the potential link between racial attitudes and attitudes towards abortion.

As has been previously stated, the income variable failed to yield significant results. This may indicate that the class-based voting pattern of the New Deal era has come to an end; although, a stronger relationship may well have been found if the study had looked at the bottom and top quartile of household incomes, as opposed to basing the study around the median income level. One should not be shocked at this lack of a relationship; candidates of both parties typically stress that their policies are aimed at helping "Middle America". Not since LBJ's "Great Society" has a president committed himself openly to helping the economically less well-off. If candidates no longer put

forward policies aimed at helping those on the economic fringes of society, it seems unlikely that we shall observe differences in voting behavior of those on either side of the median income demarcation line. However, it is possible that class-based voting is not dead. If the recession continues and the "have-nots" population of the United States increases, another coalition based on economic interests may emerge in the United States as it did seventy years ago.

The United States is a vast country; it should, therefore, be no great surprise that attitudes vary across the continental nation. The South, with its unique history, is the obvious example; however, other regions, too, have their own history, identity and racial mix, which inevitably have an impact on attitudes in those regions. As the nation continues to diversify and heads towards becoming a majority-minority country, it will be fascinating to observe the effect this has on regional differences in attitudes towards race and abortion.

ⁱ All election statistics are taken from "CQ Press Guide to U.S. Elections" Sixth Edition (2009) Washington D.C.

ⁱⁱhttp://www.searchquotes.com/quotation/Recession_is_when_your_neighbor_loses_his_job._Depression_is_when_you_lose_yours._And_recovery_is_wh/3285/ Accessed 12/3/2011

ⁱⁱⁱ http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb_induced_abortion.html Accessed 12/3/2011

^{iv} Calculated from "The book of the States, South region 19.8%, North East 12.2%, North Central 10.2%, West 4.8%

^v <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-05.pdf> Accessed 2/22/2012

^{vi} <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-04.pdf> Accessed 2/17/2012

^{vii} <http://www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/c2kbr01-16.pdf> Accessed 2/17/2012

^{viii} http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/2008/09/18/Report_Trends_Women_Obtaining_Abortions.pdf Accessed 2/27/2012

^{ix} <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/sfaa/pdf/illinois.pdf> Accessed 2/27/2012

^x <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/sfaa/pdf/california.pdf> Accessed 2/29/2012

^{xi} California proposition 73 Parental notification of Minors Abortion (2005), California proposition 85 Parental notification of Minors Abortion (2006), California proposition 4 Parental notification of Minors Abortion (2008)

^{xii} Henshaw and Kost (2008) S12

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