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The Decline of Agriculture and the Rise of Republican Party Strength in the South

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I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by John Marshall Dickey entitled "The Decline of Agriculture and the Rise of Republican Party Strength in the South." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Political Science.

Anthony J. Nownes, Major Professor

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John M. Scheb, Patricia K. Freeland, Nicholas Nagle

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(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

The Decline of Agriculture and the Rise of Republican Party Strength in the South

A Dissertation Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

John Marshall Dickey

December 2016

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Abstract

In recent decades, there has been an extensive examination of the resurgence of the Republican Party in the American South in the period after World War II. There were many events that occurred during this time period that might have helped the Republican Party achieve increased success at getting Republican candidates elected in the South. One of the relationships that should be explored is the relationship between the decline of agriculture as the primary provider of jobs and economic prosperity, and the increased ability of the Republican Party to win election to public office. The purpose of this project is to determine whether there is a relationship between the decline in agriculture, class changes and the increases in Republican Party strength. Analyses herein tentatively support this interpretation and suggests the need for future research in this area.

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Chapter 1: The Question and the Plan

At the end of World War II, the South was largely an agricultural society. Wealth was primarily determined by property ownership. More land meant the ability to raise more crops and an ability to specialize in raising one or a few cash crops that earned the farmer greater income. Most southern farmers did not have much money or land, however. Approximately 40 percent of Southerners were subsistence farmers. The region was known mostly for its extractive industries such as mining and forestry as well as its Jim Crow laws. The South was seen as backwards and had acquired a bad reputation with the rest of the nation because of its lack of racial tolerance. In politics, the South was synonymous with the Democratic Party. Many southerners said, "I'd rather vote for a yellow dog than a Republican." The primary areas of the South in which a majority of white voters supported the Republican Party were eastern Tennessee and western North Carolina, both of which are located in the heart of the Appalachian Mountains. The vast majority of voters in eastern Tennessee and western North Carolina had supported the Republican Party since the Civil War (Key 1984). The South was a land in which race was the dominant factor in politics and society. Poor whites, when they voted, which was not often (see also Stanley 1987), typically supported the candidates of the landed elite. Poor whites were pushed, using fear, by the political elites to keep black people from gaining political control (Bartley and Graham 1975). At times, there were political factions within the Democratic Party that favored disadvantaged whites over the landed elites, such as the Long faction in Louisiana. This factionalism was largely contained within the Democratic Party until after World War II (Bartley and Graham 1975, Black and Black 1982).

The South tried to industrialize after the Civil War, but ran into many institutional roadblocks (Cobb 1987). Freight from other parts of the nation often had much cheaper

transportation costs than southern goods, even when the shipments originated closer to southern locations. The South did best when recruiting industries such as saw and paper mills that took advantage of existing extractive industries. Those employers would seek to hire people from outside of the local community for factory jobs. Having workers travel over 20 miles to work in a factory meant that local leaders had less influence on operations once they were established. It is also reasonable to believe that people traveling longer distances to work have fewer job options, so are less likely to organize or strike. Still, southern communities sought to get factories. If a community heard that the corporate executives looking for a location to build a new plant had visited a rival town's golf course, they would find the means to have a new golf course so that they could stay competitive in the bidding process (Cobb 1987). Southern states promised potential employers during the 1950s that taxes would stay low and labor would stay cheap (Black 1976). Over the years, this notion of development shifted from a *southern* mindset to a *Republican* one. This shift in the politics of how to attract industry happened first in the Peripheral South and later in the Deep South (Black 1976). Democrats developed a mindset that instead placed an emphasis on education and organizing labor. The Republican Party remained focused primarily on providing the tax incentives and infrastructure they believed was necessary to convince businesses to relocate to their communities (Black 1976).

Today the South is drastically different. Agriculture makes up a much smaller portion of the economy than it did in the past. Moreover, southern states are less reliant on resource extraction from mining, logging, and farming than they used to be, and the extractive industries that remain are more inherently reliant on technology, which requires skilled labor. The aerospace industry provides numerous jobs in places including Cape Canaveral, Florida, Houston, Texas, and Huntsville, Alabama. The ensuing increase in high-wage jobs has also

brought immigrants to the South. The region's newcomers increasingly come from locals friendlier to the Republican Party than the old "Solid South" was (Converse 1966).

As the economy in the South changed, so did the politics. In the 1950s, seventy-seven percent (77%) of upper-income white Southerners called themselves Democrats. This was five percentage points higher than the percentage of low-income white Southerners who claimed the same affiliation (Shafer and Johnston 2006). Shifting now to the 1990s, we find that only thirty-six percent (36%) of upper-income¹ Southerners identified with the Democratic Party, while fifty-six percent (56%) of low-income Southerners did. In short, there was a large class-based difference in partisanship among southern whites (Shafer and Johnston 2006). These differences in partisanship can be seen in the stances of state policy makers in the South. Republicans are known for promising tax breaks to businesses that relocate, while Democrats push for increased education funding so they can sell businesses on the skills of local citizens (Black 1976).

Was There Political Change in the South?

Any work on the nature of southern politics has to mention the importance of the Civil War. Coming out of the Civil War, most southern voters were Republicans. It took years for some former Confederate soldiers to "swallow the dog," a term used for the oath of allegiance to the United States, which was required so a former Confederate soldier's right to vote was allowed to be reinstated. By the mid-1870s, the Reconstruction had ended and this began to affect southern voting results. While most of the South was heavily Democratic after the South was reincorporated into the union, in the 1870s, there were some pockets of Republican strength.

¹ Reference to "high-income," "upper-class," "rich," or "affluent" is intended to designate the same group of upper-income individuals. Reference to "lower-income," "lower-class," or "poor" is intended to designate the same group of individuals with lesser income.

Those areas included most of the Appalachian Mountains, which had voted against secession, and still are heavily Republican to this day.

Figure 1.1 shows the percentage of southern members of Congress who were Republicans from 1868-2008. Republican support during the Reconstruction was driven by the union occupation and a short-lived appearance of a black electorate.² However, Republican candidates did not receive the same monolithic support that the Democratic candidates would later receive. In 1868 and 1872, seventy-two percent (72%) and sixty-six percent (66%), respectively, of the South's Electoral College vote went to the Republican presidential nominee (Figure 1.2). It was during this time that the South elected the first African-American members of Congress. Things changed when Reconstruction ended. In 1876, only twenty percent (20%) of the South's Electoral College votes went to the Republican nominee. From 1880 to 1916, the Republican presidential nominee received *no Electoral College votes from the South*. At the end of the union occupation, the South saw a dramatic decline in Republicans representing the South. The number of southern members of Congress who were Republicans declined by forty percentage (40%) points from 1872 to 1874. Figures 1.1 and 1.2 show that Republicans received little or no support in the South from 1880 to 1928. In 1928, Herbert Hoover, the Republican presidential nominee, won several Peripheral Southern states, receiving forty-nine percent (49%) of the South's electoral votes. There was also a sharp increase in the vote for Republican candidates for the Senate, the House, and governor in 1928.

² While these are the common explanations, I also believe that some of the Republican Party's success in the South, at this time, can be attributed to the reluctance of some southerners, particularly those that had been in the Confederate Army, to recant their alliance to the Confederacy and announce their allegiance to the United States, which former Confederate servicemen were required to do before they could vote.

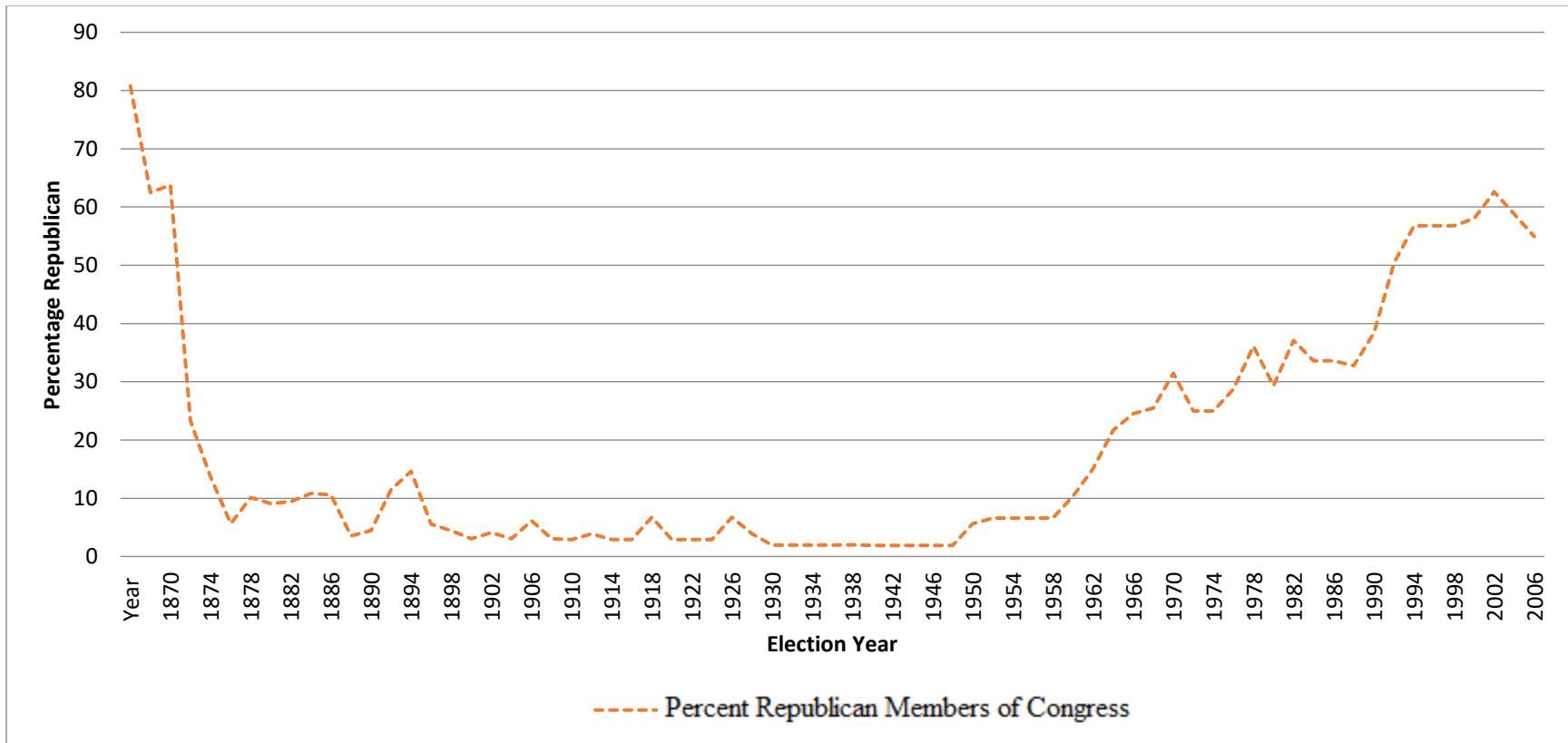


Figure 1.1 Percent of Members of Congress who are Republicans, 1866-2008

Source: Data from America Votes various volumes and A Statistical History of the American Electorate

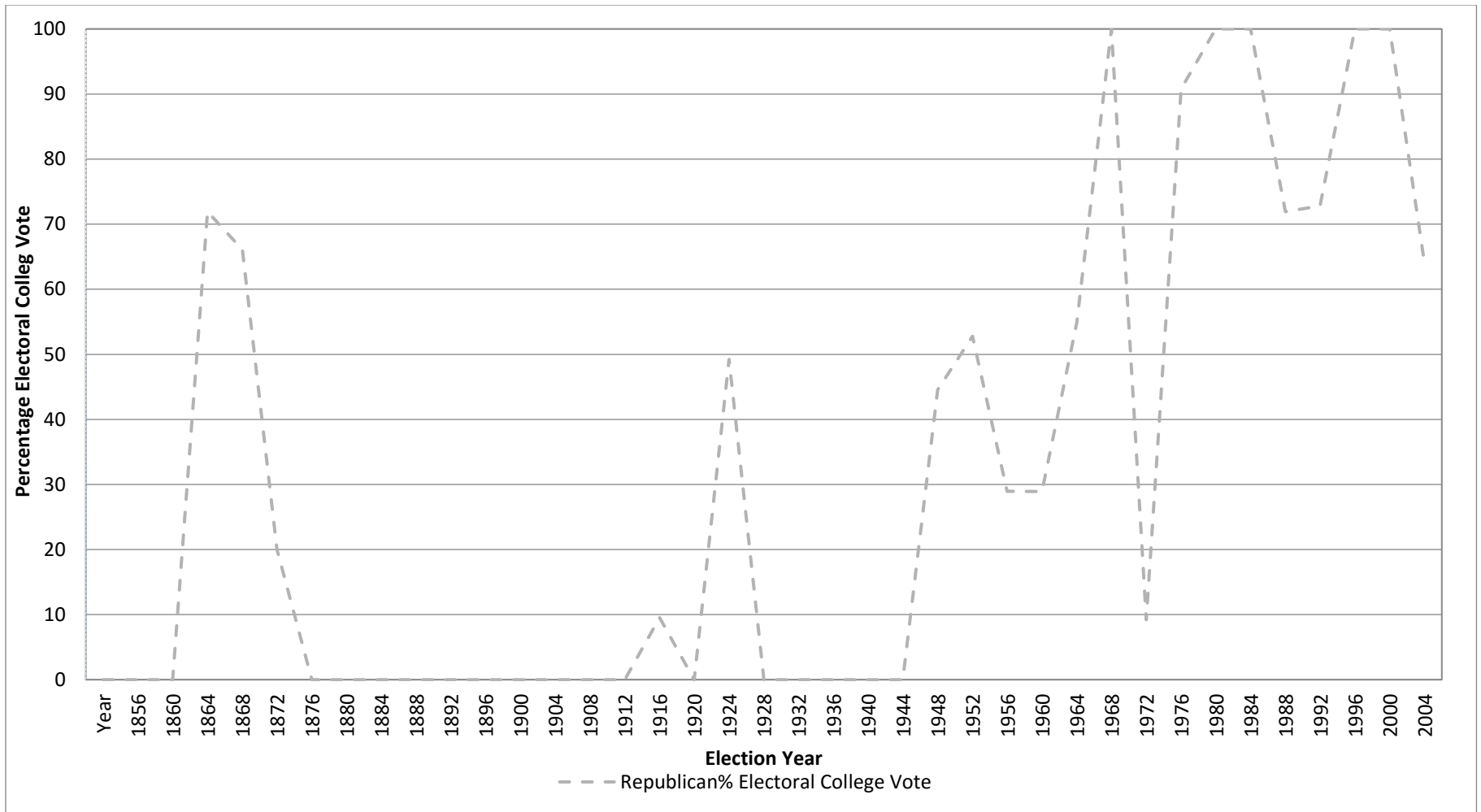


Figure 1.2 Republican Percentage of the Electoral College Vote from States in the South 1852- 2004

Source: Data from America Votes various volumes and A Statistical History of the American Electorate

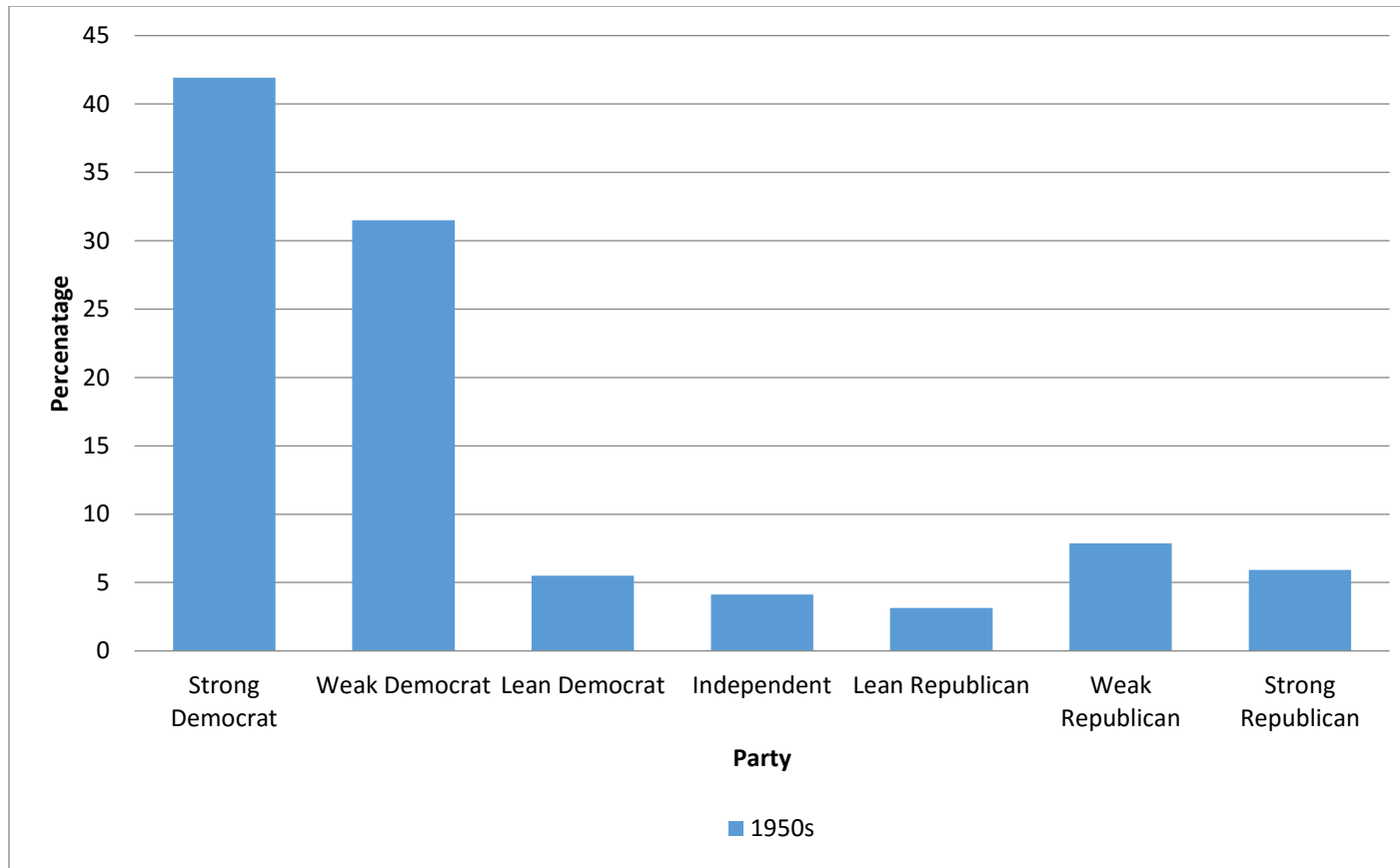


Figure 1.3 1950s Partisanship of Southern Whites on 7-Point Scale

Source: Data aggregated across decades (0-8) from file ANES Time Series Cumulative Data File for partisanship (VCF 0301). Only includes southern white voters.

This Republican success did not last. Not until the Eisenhower administration did the Republican nominee for president win more than twenty percent (20%) of the South's Electoral College vote in two successive elections. Figure 1.3 shows that even in the 1950s, Democratic partisanship was still monolithic in the South. Over seventy percent (70%) of southern white voters were Democrats. At the start of the period of study, the "Solid South" was the key description of the politics of the South.

In the 1960s, it became apparent that the shift in the South toward the Republicans was due to more than just voters liking President Eisenhower's competence and charisma. Southern voters were still voting for Republican candidates, and polls showed that there was a weakening of Democratic partisanship among southern whites. Voting for president was erratic during this decade. In 1964, President Johnson was removed from the ballot in Alabama and replaced with a slate of unpledged Democratic electors. Figures 1.4 and 1.5 show that much of the Deep South supported Goldwater in 1964, but that the Peripheral South was more supportive of Johnson. Between the 1950s and 1960s (as seen in Figure 1.3 and 1.6), a ten percent (10%) decrease in southern voters who were also strong Democrats is noted. In the 1976 election, as one might expect, the presence of a Georgian running for President, Jimmy Carter, depressed southerners' willingness to vote for the Republican Party. The Southern Region's transitional move toward Republican partisanship, however, continued (Figure 1.7). Worthy of mention is that Republican voting for elected officials besides the President did not experience significant change since the 1960s and remained relatively low.

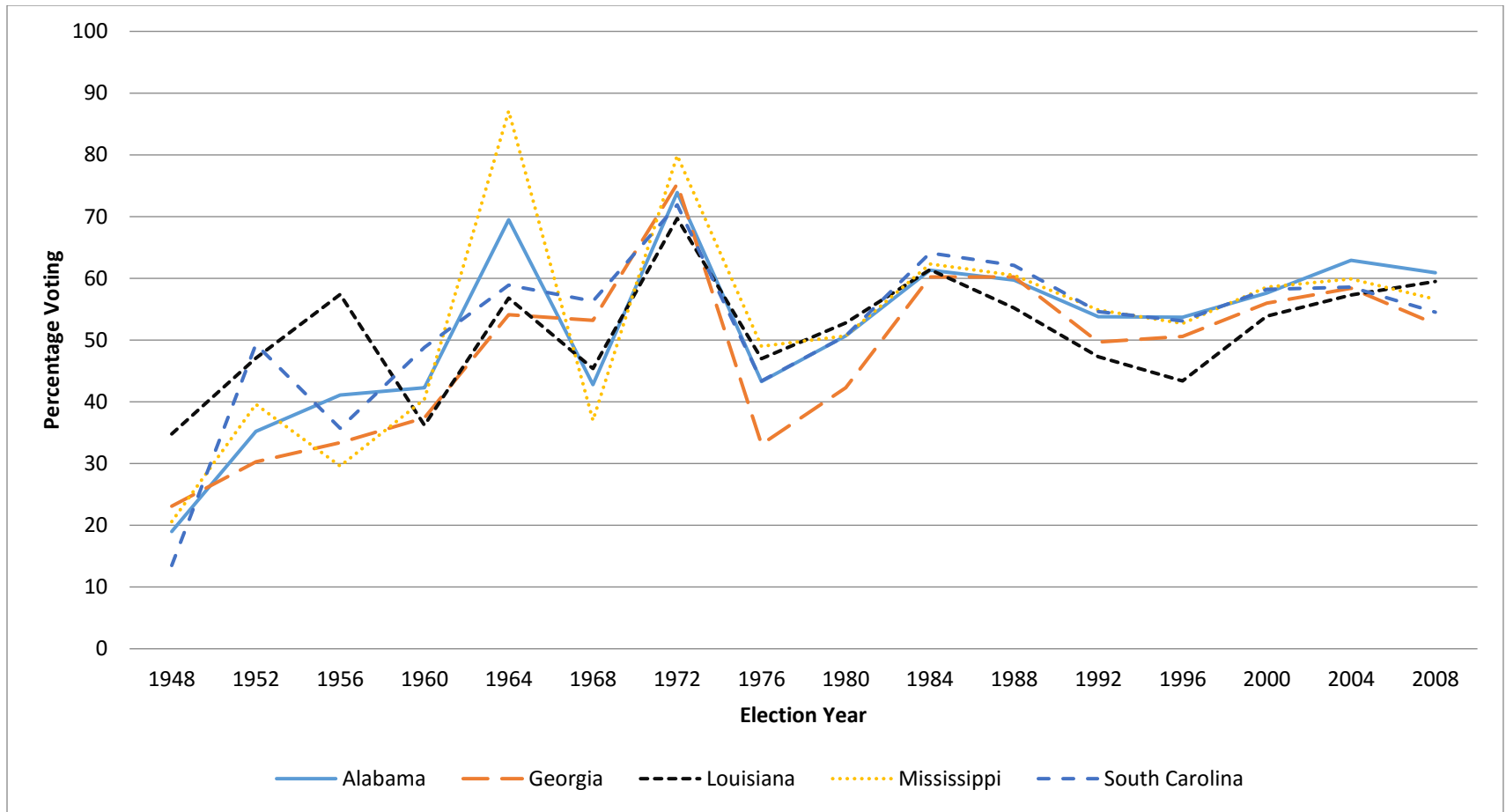


Figure 1.4 Deep South Republican Presidential Vote Percentage

Data from America Votes various volumes and A Statistical History of the American Electorate

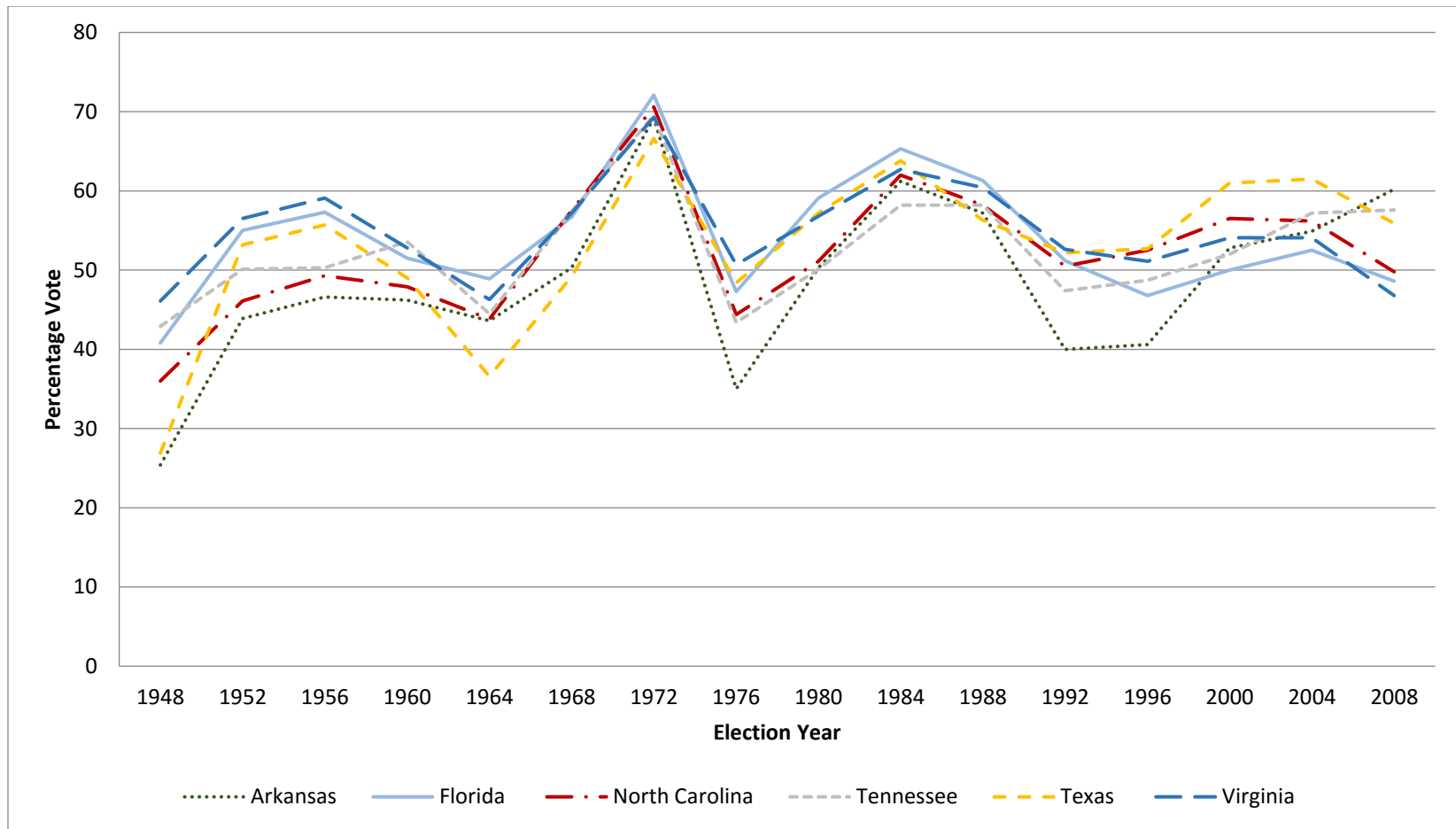


Figure 1.5 Peripheral South Republican Presidential Vote Percentage

Data from America Votes various volumes and A Statistical History of the American Electorate

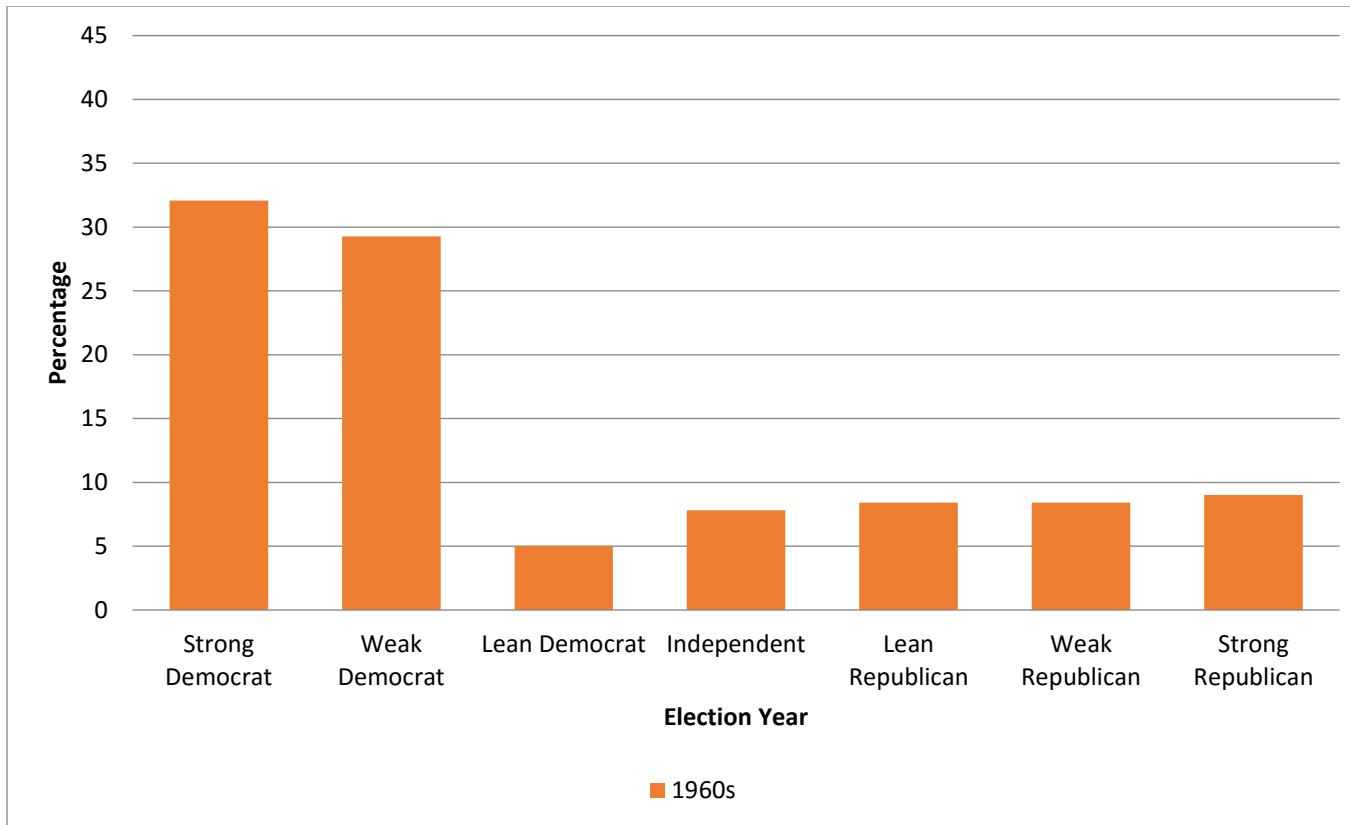


Figure 1.6 1960s Partisanship of Southern Whites on 7-Point Scale

Source: Data aggregated across decades (0-8) from file ANES Time Series Cumulative Data File for partisanship (VCF 0301). Only includes southern white voters.

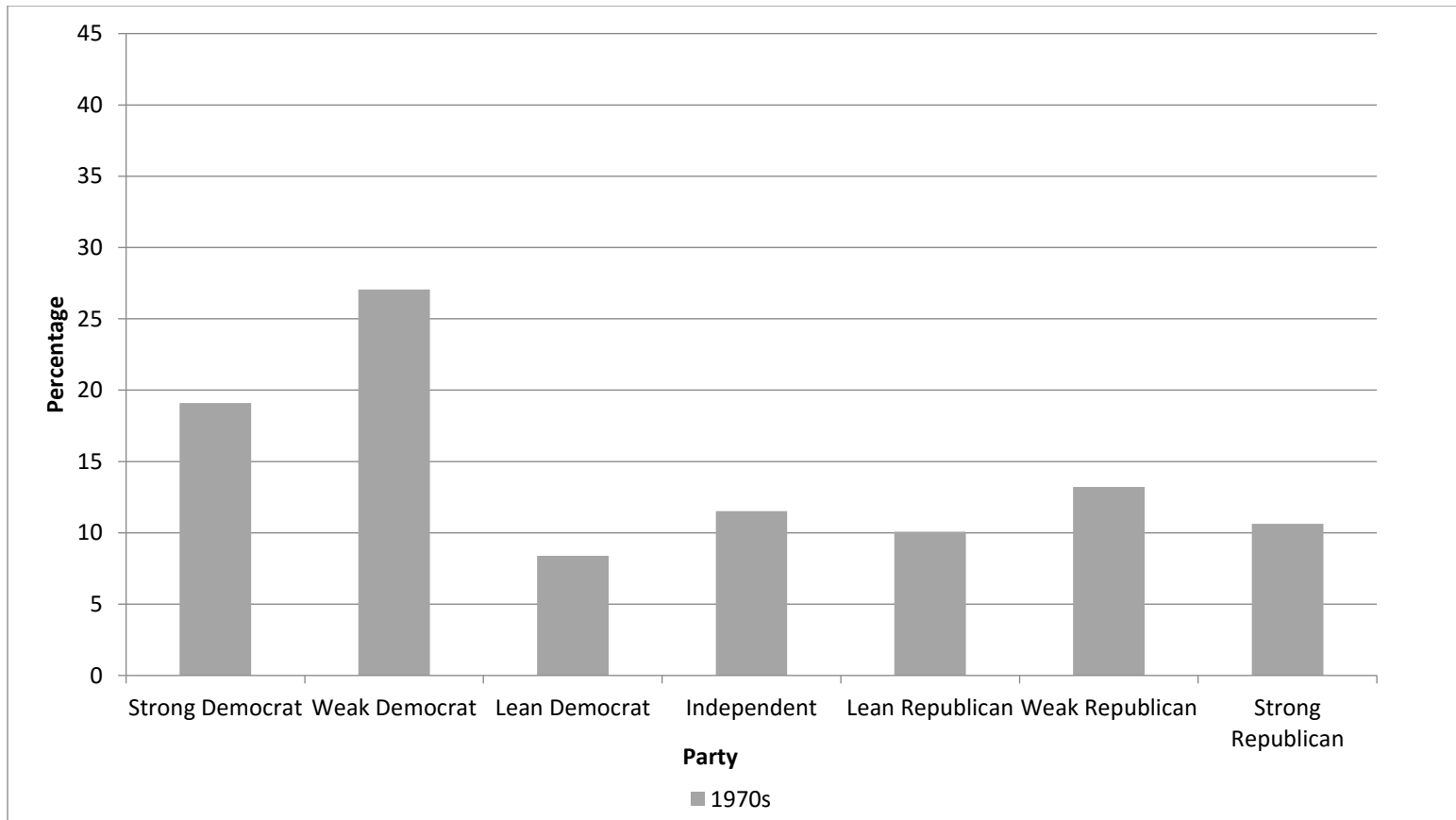


Figure 1.7 1970s Partisanship of Southern Whites on 7-Point Scale

Source: Data aggregated across decades (0-8) from file ANES Time Series Cumulative Data File for partisanship (VCF 0301). Only includes southern white voters.

By the 1980s, a steady increase in Republican voting for state-level offices is apparent. Figures 1.4 and 1.5 show major differences in presidential voting between the states, with the divide between the Deep South and Peripheral South becoming evident. Democratic partisanship weakened in the South during the 1980s, as seen in Figure 1.8. Figure 1.9 shows that in the 1990s, for the first time, Republicans outnumbered Democrats in the South. Republicans enjoyed yet another first since the Reconstruction period when after the 1994 election a majority of the South's members of Congress were Republicans. Republican candidates were receiving a greater percentage of the votes for state-level offices as well. While in some states the Republican Party still did not have a majority of party identifiers, the South experienced a dramatic shift toward Republican voters by the end of the 1990s.

In 2000, George W. Bush swept the South, including the Democratic nominee Albert Gore's home state of Tennessee. Republican candidates in the South, by 2002-2003, received a majority of all votes cast for governor, Senate, and Congress. As illustrated in Figure 1.10, Republican partisanship is now dominant in the South. *In summary, most southern whites now identify with the Republican Party.* The South has again reached the point of one party dominance, at least in state elections (see also Hayes and McKee 2008). This one party dominance, however, is still not as strong as the South experienced before 1950.

The data presented indicates the South has experienced two major changes in its politics since the Civil War. The first is the dramatic decline in Republican Party strength following the end of the federal occupation. The second change is a more gradual decline in Democratic Party strength (with an increase in voter turnout) beginning with the end of World War II until the election of George W. Bush as president in the year 2000.

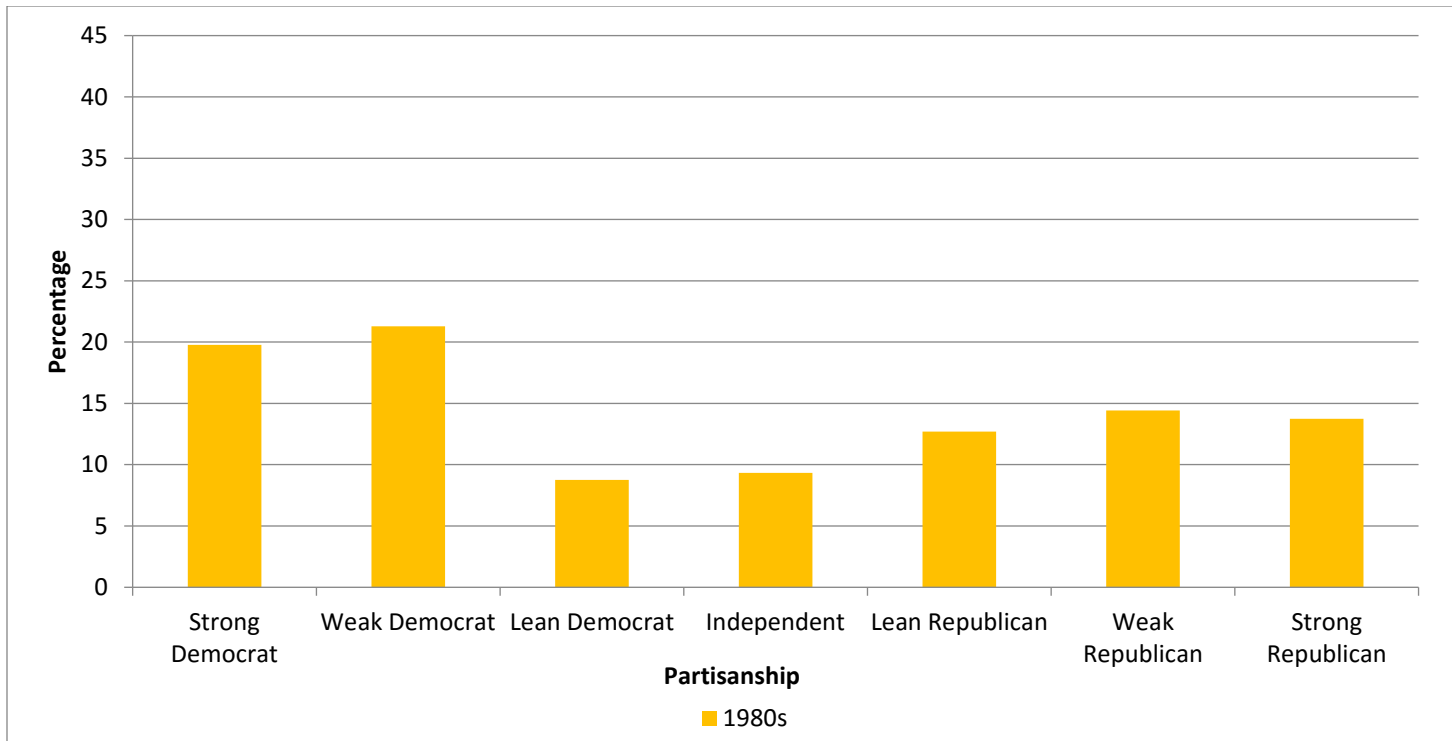


Figure 1.8 1980s Partisanship of Southern Whites on 7-Point Scale

Source: Data aggregated across decades (0-8) from file ANES Time Series Cumulative Data File for partisanship (VCF 0301). Only includes southern white voters.

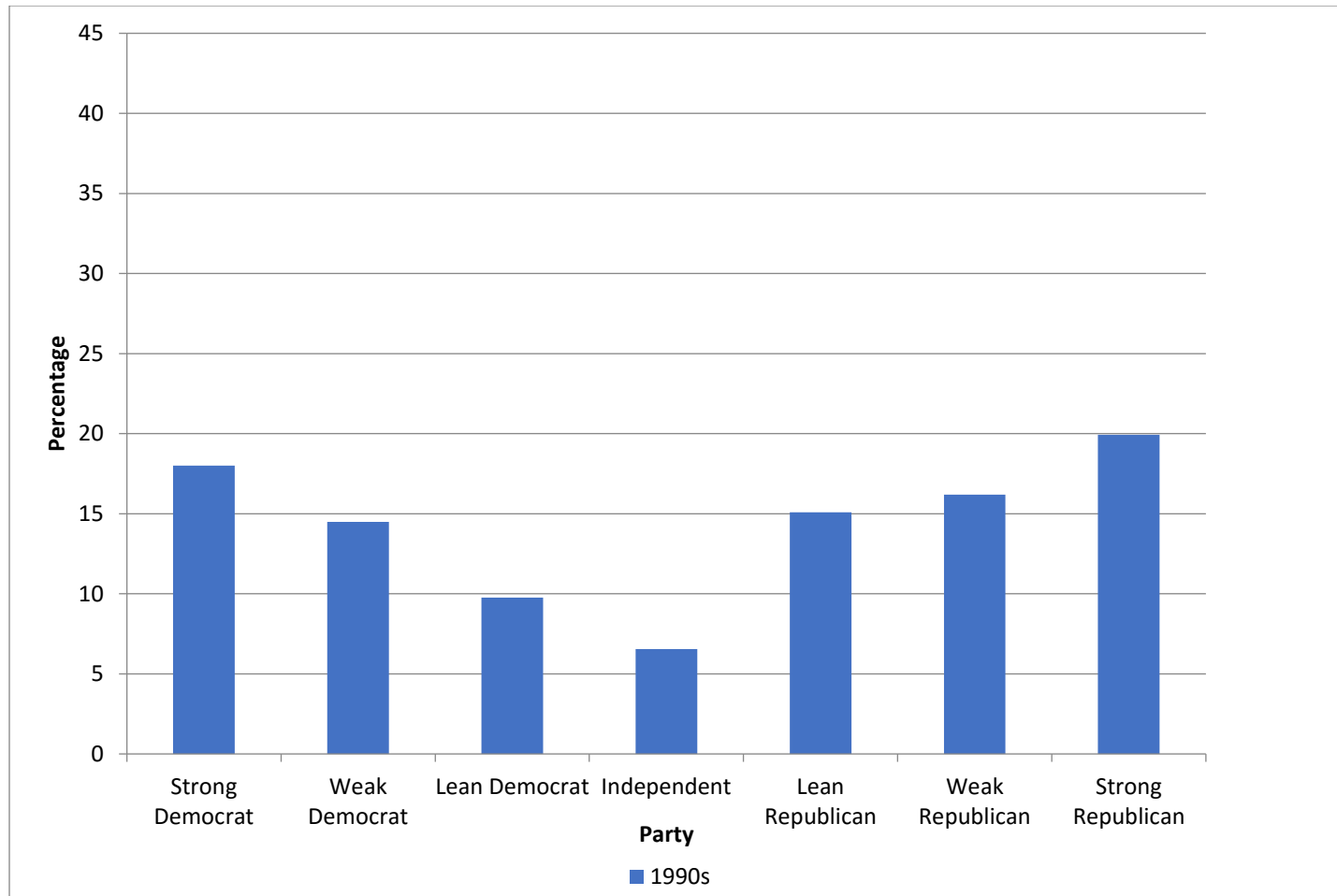


Figure 1.9 1990s Partisanship of Southern Whites on 7-Point Scale

Source: Data aggregated across decades (0-8) from file ANES Time Series Cumulative Data File for partisanship (VCF 0301). Only includes southern white voters.

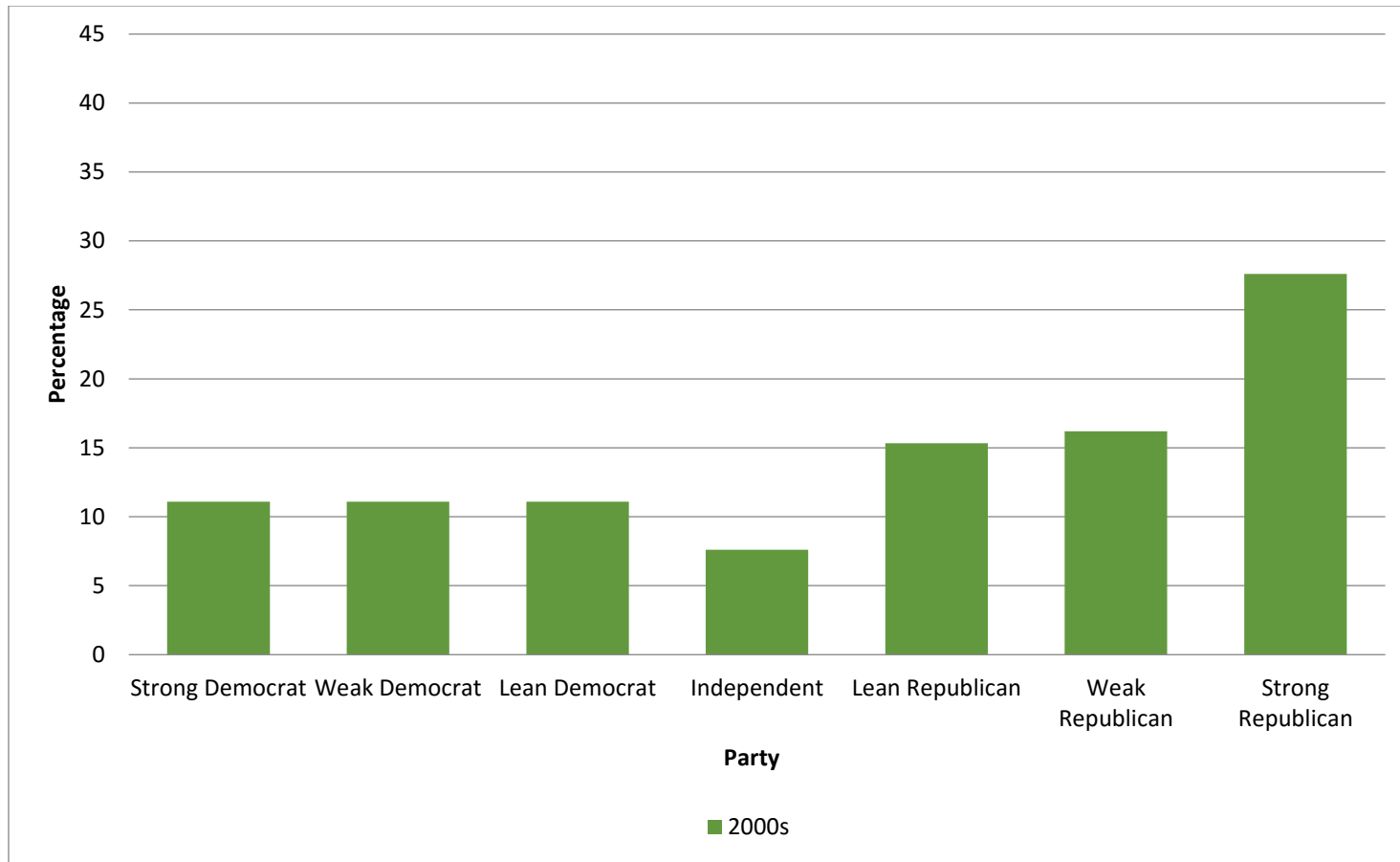


Figure 1.10 2000s Partisanship of Southern Whites on 7-Point Scale

Source: Data aggregated across decades (0-8) from file ANES Time Series Cumulative Data File for partisanship (VCF 0301). Only includes southern white voters.

The literature shows that Democratic presidents during this period sought to use the party's advantage in partisans and focused more on turning out their supporters than on winning over new voters (Galvin 2008). Republican presidents sought to expand the party and more frequently campaigned for members of their party and raised money for the various party campaign committees.

There were multiple changes to the demographics of the electorate, with the current southern electorate being more racially diverse (Bullock and Gaddie 2009) as well as more polarized based upon income than was seen in surveys a half century ago (Shafer and Johnston 2006). Throughout its history, the South has been a region prone to predominate voter support of one party or the other. It is important to understand how one political party can go from almost universal support to being mostly a statistical outlier. The primary purpose of an election is to choose a government, and the primary job of a party is to get its candidates elected to office. Candidates who win can help determine what policy is. In other words, *who wins matters*. This research seeks to address the issue of changes in partisanship in the South—changes that have had serious implications for our politics.

Research Question

In this dissertation, I ask the following question: *What accounts for the rise of Republicanism in the South?* In addressing this question, I will argue that it was economic change in the South that drove political change, specifically the rise of Republicanism. To put it simply, I hypothesize the following:

- There is a direct relationship between the decline of agriculture in the South and the increase in Republican Party Strength.

- There is a joint relationship between the decline of agriculture in the South, which resulted in an increase in per capita income, and the increase in Republican Party strength.

Simply put, these two economic trends led to political changes. I will test these hypotheses by seeking to determine the relationship between the change from the old agrarian economy to the contemporary economy and Republican Party strength in the South.

My emphasis here begs the following question: Why should we, as political scientists, care about this shift in partisanship and party strength? As discussed in my earlier comments, the data, and subsequent findings illustrated that the increase in Republican partisanship was real and substantial. The short answer is that shifts in partisanship inevitably lead to shifts in policy.

Reasoning and data indicate that for much of the time period under study, the electoral shifts in the southern delegation to the House and Senate determined which party was in the majority in each legislative body (Black and Black 2002). Moreover, the South was (and still is) seen as “vital” to winning the presidency (Black and Black 1992). In short, the party that wins in the South wins important offices and uses these offices to produce policies—policies that are much different from those likely to be produced by the other party. Research shows that the two parties produce very different policies when they are in power (Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson 2002). Specifically, as we would expect, Democratic presidents produce substantially more liberal policies than Republican presidents per term (Erikson, MacKuen, and Stimson 2002).

Republican politicians replaced Democrats at all levels in the South during the period under study (Lublin 2006). The resulting shift in policy can be seen both in state lawmaking and the voting records of southerners in Congress.

My Argument

At the turn of the twentieth century, the most successful individual in a southern community was the person operating the largest farm. Having land was a significant determinant of wealth as well as social standing. Since land was typically handed down from one generation to another, one's social status was based primarily on his/her ancestry. Most people were Democrats because of the Civil War and the threat that blacks posed if white southerners did not vote *en mass* for the Democratic Party (Havard 1972). Animosity in the South toward the party of Lincoln and the Reconstruction still existed at the start of World War II. Voting so heavily Democratic, kept black people from gaining concessions from the government that could have improved their lives. With the focus on keeping blacks as a separate class below impoverished whites and the concern with government interventions, class was not a major factor in the voting behavior of southerners during this time period (Havard 1972, Key 1984).

The Great Depression had resulted in a realization among the southern political elites that a wholesale economic reliance on farming and other extractive industries created too much risk to their economies (Cobb 1993). These elites had tried for decades after the Civil War to recruit industry to the South, but the institutional barriers were frequently too high. The few industries that emerged relied heavily on processing the South's natural resources into lumber or refined ore, instead of producing finished products. During the Great Depression, southern political and economic elites realized that economic diversity would lead to more economic stability and could reduce the length of an economic downturn in the South. These states started trying to reach out to businesses to bring into the South. However, during the early 1930s, the finances were all too often not there in southern states to support a modern economic recruitment agency. The entry into World War II also saw the national government provide southern states sufficient

funding for economic planning agencies. The federal funds dried up as the war came to a conclusion (Cobb 1993).

World War II led to major changes in the South. Women went to the factories to build the weapons of war. The South had for almost a century attempted to woo northern businesses (Cobb 1987). These efforts were not very successful, but the few businesses that found their way to the South came because the South was not friendly to unions and had the land and skilled talent they needed. World War II saw industries come to the South that did more than just process raw materials (Cobb 1987). Southerners found after the war that it was possible to be a “success” in the South without having the “proper” ancestry (or land associated with ancestry). The new opportunities for employment and the resulting economic changes were many, and still have regional economic repercussions today. Warner Von Braun settled in the Tennessee Valley, making it one of the key hubs of the aerospace industry with companies including Raytheon, Boeing, and Lockheed-Martin providing thousands of jobs. In addition, country music over time drew a national audience and became a major industry in Nashville. Also, economic strength and job growth are provided by retirees and enormous numbers of tourists visiting the Smoky Mountains and the Gulf Coast. Tourism’s contribution to employment and economic strength in the South is further demonstrated by the fact that the Great Smoky Mountains National Park boasts the highest number of visitors of any park in the National Park System. The Gulf Coast region enjoys growing numbers of tourists engaging in everything from jazz festivals to sport fishing events and sightseeing.

Southern governors went from taking credit for increases in employment in state of the state addresses, to personally meeting with executives looking to expand their businesses, to managing professional agencies focused on industrial recruitment (Cobb 1993). It was touted by

southern politicians as a win for regional and state pride when industries relocated to their states. Southern governors gloated about “bagging” an industry from the North. Industrial recruitment became a larger part of the job of the southern governors, who built professional agencies focused on recruitment of businesses to the South after World War II. There were even comparisons to the Civil War, with each new factory relocation being a win for the South and the great-great-grandchildren of confederate soldiers (1993).

I am going to explain in the remainder of this chapter the role that the decline in agriculture and the new emergence of a class cleavage in the electorate had in creating increased Republican Party strength in the southern states. There are two reasons to believe that declines in agricultural employment directly led to increases in Republican Party strength. These reasons concern the social dislocation of farmers, and the replacement of farm jobs with jobs in industries more associated with the Republican Party.

When a corporation was considering relocating or expanding to a southern state during the start of this period of study, it was an “all hands on deck” affair to ensure that that state was chosen (Cobb 1993). Talks to corporate leaders from the governor, current businessmen, and other local elites of southern states were expected when an industry was considering moving to the region. Laws were changed, often with little discussion or controversy, to provide inducements and resources to encourage industrial development. Tractors quickly became common after the end of World War II reducing some of the need for manual labor while allowing fewer men to work larger farms. World War II had also displaced many of the southern sharecroppers, sending 400,000 men from rural parts of the South to serve in the military or to work in war-time industries (Cobb 2011, 53). This reduced labor supply increased wages, which put financial pressure on farms that had relied on sharecroppers.

All of this leads to one conclusion. People in the South needed jobs. Politicians stated that these new industries were a win for their state and the region (Cobb 1993). If you were a farmer, you were told that you should be exuberant about the new businesses relocating to your region. Your friends and neighbors were bound to have better prospects for employment and economic success with the new industries moving to your area. This exuberance subsided upon the realization that those who left the farm to work in the new industries were making more money than those who stayed on the farm. The increased wealth led to an increase in influence and a change in the social structure of the southern electorate.

It is known from research on economic development in Africa and Asia that new industries can create political instability. At least one study finds a link between development and social dislocation (Obi 2000) or political instability (Olson 1963). This literature argues that improved conditions and increased expectations can create turmoil amongst individuals whose expectations are not met. Political turmoil occurs when “citizens are concerned when the economic or social status they have attained or hope to attain is an elusive goal” (Obi 2000, 3). While this research may look at more violent forms of political instability, it is not necessary for protests against the status quo to be violent. In the South, farmers had another outlet for their anger about their social dislocation, the Republican Party. The status quo was not working for many farmers as their social positions changed, resulting in their social standing falling in communities. It is conceivable that southern farmers reacted adversely against the Democratic political elites that dominated the region and supported Republican candidates when possible. This would concur with previous findings linking economic development with political instability.

There is another explanation for how a decline in agriculture could increase the Republican Party's strength in the South—new industries brought new and more Republican occupations to the South. Factories needed managers. New industries often required financial investments and bankers. This is not a new theory of increased Republican Party strength in the South (Key 1984, 661). Key described this as a route for a more competitive Republican Party in the South. This replacement of agricultural jobs in the South with industrial, service and government jobs took decades. The rise of the middle-class meant that the part of the portion of the electorate predisposed to the Republican Party was growing.

The effects of social dislocation and replacement are not mutually exclusive. There is plenty of reason to believe that both processes occurred in the electorate. These processes by their nature also made class more relevant to how people voted. People's societal status had changed, and how people earned money had changed. It is reasonable to think that a major shift in how millions of people earned a living would push people to reevaluate the policies of the two major parties. Before this shift in economics, class was not relevant to how people voted because politics had little bearing on how much money was in southerners' pockets. Now policies on trade and economic development could have a direct impact on how comfortable people were. Without the social dislocation and replacement of farmers in the wake of the decline in agriculture, class might not have an impact on how southerners voted.

So how did this result in a change in class awareness? After all, one could argue that class had been a major societal divide in the South (even if not a political divide) even before World War II. In the remainder of this section, I argue that changes in society caused by the war effort and the election of Eisenhower led to the existence of a class divide in the South. The electoral map of 1952 looks more like a map of modern elections than the 1964 electoral map does

(Shafer and Johnston 2006). The 1952 and 1956 presidential elections were about likeability and class. The 1964 presidential election was about race and the power of the states. I will attempt to show that it was class that shaped the political map after 1964. In doing so, I will ask if the movement towards voting based upon class was conditional on a changing economy.

Many of the economic changes that I contend led to political changes started due to World War II and the policies used to reward enlistment. Specifically, World War II and its aftermath:

- Exposed large numbers of southern males to communities in other parts of the nation and overseas;
- Provided leadership opportunities in the military based upon education (having some college education was seen as enough to make someone an officer during the war);
- Provided college education for some returning veterans;
- Provided business loans for returning veterans;
- Brought an increased number of southern women into the workforce.

Changes brought about by the war provided new benefits of increased education and expansion of the southern labor supply, and exposed new views to a generation of men. Those with education entered career paths similar to those of doctors, engineers, and analysts. These kinds of jobs provide income security, take a less physical toll on its workers, and offer more stable work hours. These careers were also more affected by policy than previous extractive industry jobs were. In other words, farmers had more to fear from boll weevils than from policy created in Washington, D.C.

It is not just that the economy changed. The economy changed in a way that made the link between economic policy and a person's financial well-being more politically relevant. In

the pre-war economy, there were few subsidies for agriculture and the government had little perceived impact on the southern economy. Did the governor have any impact on how crops grew or whether or not boll weevils decimated crops? No. People recognized this fact (see Ebeid and Rodden 2006). It has been shown that voters do not blame politicians for a bad economy when that economy is based on extractive industries.

All of this changed with the end of the war and the replacement of agriculture as the economic driver of the economy. Now government spending on space exploration and the military, manufacturing, and tourism filled the role of employing the southern populace. These jobs are affected by government policy (albeit, some more directly than others). This changed the perception of the role of politicians in the economy. Southerners supported the Republican Party because of its stances on national defense and lax regulation. Democrats might change policies, raise taxes on your employer, or cut defense spending, which led voters away from the Democratic Party. The changes in the economy led to changes in the earning power of different segments of the population. Factories needed a workforce that was educated in the use of required equipment. Companies including Boeing, Raytheon, and Lockheed Martin located major parts of their businesses in the South to work on government projects related to the space race and the Cold War. They provided stable, high paying jobs that benefited local communities. Not all communities benefited equally. While some communities found themselves the beneficiaries of new high-tech jobs, there were also communities that saw agriculture replaced by low paying service jobs.

In short, I posit that a decline in agriculture in the South led to shifts in income, which in turn changed the role of class in voter choice and affected the ability of candidates from both parties to get elected.

Much of the literature on voting in the South gives credit to changes made by the Johnson administration, such as the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the registration of thousands of black voters for the shift in voting patterns in the South (Hood, Kidd, and Morris 2004, 20012). But I trace the beginning of Republican dominance in the South to Eisenhower. Why? First, partisan voting is typically habitual by nature. While people may “vote for the man,” the men they vote for are often of the same party. Party is a strong heuristic that carries with it information about policy preferences and perceptions of the effectiveness of a candidate when he or she obtains office. It takes an exceptional candidate to move people from their party attachment. Eisenhower was a Republican politician who received a lot of support from white southern Democrats. Affluent southern whites were more likely than other southerners to take a chance on the war hero (Prothro, Campbell and Grigg 1958). But changing party preferences during this time were about removing policy risks. Democratic identifiers in the South, who voted for Eisenhower in 1952, were more likely to be affluent and well educated than other southern Democratic voters. They were also more likely to have a stay-at-home wife fulfilling the traditional role of “housewife.” The Eisenhower campaign created a new Republican coalition in the South that included primarily upper and middle-class whites. Eisenhower proved to some skeptics in the electorate that Republican politicians were not linked to a bad economy. This was a change in the electorate’s perception of the economic effectiveness of Republican Party policies. Eisenhower’s presidency came to be partly due to a new southern middle class, and this new middle class was created by changes in the economy. The relatively affluent southern voters would remain Republican, and then became the backbone of the new southern Republican electorate (Shafer and Johnston 2006). If these notions are correct, then

some of the recent studies on changes in the southern electorate may incorrectly focus on political changes that had already begun before the 1980s.

Second, when Eisenhower was elected, the Republican Party was still seen as the party of the Great Depression and government incompetence (Brewer 2009). Simply put, in the South, the Republican Party was still seen as bad for the economy and bad at governing. Eisenhower, however, was not seen this way. Eisenhower was a war leader who citizens believed was competent. To be sure, people were still a little anxious to see if he could make Republican policies work. But from the very start, Eisenhower was seen as a charismatic and capable leader. As President, Eisenhower proved to be both. The relative prosperity of the 1950s proved that fears that Republican policies were bad for the economy and bad for government were unfounded. Eisenhower's actions and policies during his term of office changed the Republican Party's image. The next decade of southern politics ushered in many changes and eventually civil rights came to the forefront.

Over the years, the 1960s era civil rights policies were a symbol of why southern whites wanted the rest of the nation to leave them alone. These policies were mentioned by southern members of Congress when campaigning (Glaser 1996). Many of these leaders explicitly pointed to these policies as a means of victimizing southern whites by the rest of the nation. These policies made them feel victimized by their own government. The fact that the South had relied on solidly supporting the Democratic Party had failed to prevent these policies over time was seen as a failure of the Democratic Party to deliver on its campaign promises. This failure of the Democratic Party was seen as freeing up southern voters to vote for the Republican Party (Lamis 1990).

Data and Methods

To run the analyses necessary to test my hypotheses, I have gathered state and national data from many sources. My data cover the period 1950-2010 for every even-numbered election year³ (both presidential and midterm). In all, there are 31 time-points in my dataset. The data for most variables is available at the state level. The states included in this study are those that have typically been included in research of southern politics: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. These are the states generally included in studies of southern politics, and they are the states that were formerly part of the Confederate States of America. In addition, these states share many cultural, historic, demographic, and economic characteristics. This is a longer period of study than that analyzed in much of the previous quantitative research on the post-World War II realignment in the South. Observations are at the state-time point. This data will allow me to test my own hypothesis and several others gleaned from previous research. I intend to run several time-series cross-sectional models (explanations of the models are found in Chapter 3).

My hypothesis posits a relationship between party strength and agricultural employment and income. Party strength will be my dependent variable, and it will be measured using three indices found in “A New Measure of Party Strength” (Ceasar and Saldin 2005). My primary independent variables are agricultural employment and income. The data for these independent variables are found in multiple census documents. In addition to those variables, I will also include in the analyses variables that tap into alternative hypotheses that previous research has

³ The states of Mississippi and Louisiana hold elections for governor on odd numbered years. Mississippi and Virginia during this entire period of study held elections on odd numbered years for the state house and state senate. Louisiana’s state legislative elections moved to odd numbered years in 1975. Alabama held the election scheduled for 1982 instead in 1983 because of litigation over reapportionment. These elections were treated like they occurred in the previous midterm, which was a year earlier.

supported. In Chapter 4, I will run a series of eight time-series cross-sectional regressions. These analyses will differ both by testing various alternative theories and by using three different dependent variables that allow the changes in party strength at the state and federal level to be examined separately. The nature of these variables and the analyses is more fully explained in Chapter 3.

The Plan

In Chapter 2, existing literature on southern realignment and national realignment since World War II is examined. The Chapter examines theories that are not exclusive to the South because some of these theories hold that the changes that occurred in the South are no different than changes that occurred nationally.

Chapter 3 focuses primarily on examining changes in party strength (between the Republican and Democratic Parties) over time. Chapter 4 expounds upon the statistical analysis to investigate changes in the role of class and the diminished role of agriculture in society. These analyses will test whether the changes in the role of class and agricultural employment led to the predicted changes in Republican Party strength at the state level. A state-level analysis is conducted to test the role of class and agriculture's diminished role in society. Some analysis will be visual, while most focus on multiple time-series cross-sectional analysis using a lagged-dependent variable model with robust standard errors and state-level fixed effects (Beck and Katz 2011).

Chapter 5 summarizes the findings. Afterwards, possible paths for future research is considered.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

I am not the first person to hypothesize about the causes of partisan realignment in the South. In this chapter, I will examine the extant research on this topic. There are five major groups of theories about the recent party realignment of the South. These theories focus on race, class, ideology, religion and culture, and party development. Studies utilizing all five explanations focus on changes in partisanship or vote choice. Partisanship can be thought of as a voter's political brand preference with voters having a preferred choice between the two major selections. Ultimately, each of these theories seeks to explain why people change from voting for candidates of one party to voting for candidates for the other party. Table 2.1 summarizes the general categories of theories I describe in this chapter, highlighting the variables that each category identifies as important.

Theories that Focus on Race

Many theories of southern political change focus on race. The basic idea of these theories is that as the parties changed on issues related to race, racist and racial conservatives switched from voting for Democratic candidates to voting for Republican candidates. This happened in conjunction with a shift among black voters away from the Republican Party and towards the Democratic Party.

One variation of a race-based theory of political change among whites focuses on "black threat." The theory of "black threat" holds that increased black participation in politics drove many whites out of the Democratic Party. Whites, the theory holds, view increased black participation as diluting their political influence (Black 2004). "Black threat" theory suggests that Republican voting and registration is concentrated among lower-SES (socioeconomic status) whites (Giles and Hertz 1994).

Table 2.1: General Theories about Partisan Change in the South

THEORY	FOCUS	WHAT WE SHOULD SEE
BLACK THREAT	Race	As total black voting percentage increases in a region, so should the proportion of whites within the same region who vote Republican
SYMBOLIC RACISM	Race	Conservative attitudes on racial issues increasingly match up with Republican partisanship
CLASS CLEAVAGES	Class	Over time, Republicans and Democrats are more likely to diverge on SES variables
IDEOLOGICAL REALIGNMENT	Ideology	Over time, conservatives become increasingly likely to shift partisanship toward the Republican party, while liberals become increasingly likely to shift towards the Democratic party
CULTURE WARS	Religion/Morality	Over time, Republicans and Democrats should diverge on the importance of faith
RELATIVE ADVANTAGE	Party Strength	Created when conservative white voters shifting partisanship to Republican party due to greater benefits with the new affiliation

Some empirical research supports this view. For example, using registration data from Louisiana for the period 1975-1990, Giles and Hertz found that lower-class whites increasingly registered as Republicans in areas with higher black voter registration. Further support for this theory is found using data from the 1990 Senate and 1991 Governor’s elections involving David Duke, an outspoken white supremacist and former leader of the Ku Klux Klan and Republican candidate. His campaigns tended to focus on racial messages. Giles and Buckner found that lower SES rural whites were more likely than other white voters to support David Duke (1993). However, this study has been criticized as flawed. Voss found that there were problems with both the data and the methods (1996). He found that urban parishes were grouped together for data analyses

without adequate reason, that necessary variables were omitted from models, and the authors used OLS (ordinary least squares) when GLS (generalized least squares) would have been more appropriate for their data. When the data was analyzed correctly, Giles and Buckner's results did not obtain statistical significance. Further, the data showed that while realignment and redistricting both had strong positive effects toward gains Republicans made in southern legislatures, it was not the case that a white backlash played much of a role in this development (Lublin and Voss 2000).

One version of "black threat" theory holds that whites tend to vote more Republican in areas where blacks made up a larger proportion of the population (Strong 1960). This trend first appeared in 1952 when Eisenhower fared better in counties with black majorities than he did in counties with lower black populations. In the 1956 election, this trend became less evident. In fact, the two states in the South with the highest black populations, Mississippi and South Carolina, saw a decline in support for Eisenhower from the 1952 election of 15.1 percentage points and 24.1 percentage points respectively. In review, while early findings suggested that mobilizing whites in black belt areas benefited Republicans (i.e., there was a white backlash), the extent of that backlash depended greatly on the Republican candidate. Eisenhower, in 1956, mobilized the U.S. Army to aid with the integration of colleges in the South. Certainly, race still had an impact on regional voting patterns, but it began to be eclipsed by class (Strong 1971).

One finding supporting a "black threat" theory, in general, is that many white candidates in the late twentieth century tended to run on racial themes (Glaser 1996). For example, Republican congressional candidates in the South during the 1980s and early 1990s campaigned against extending the Voting Rights Act. In addition, many Republican operatives accused the local Democratic Parties of "buying" the black vote in urban areas like Montgomery, Alabama

and Atlanta, Georgia. While such candidates generally presented policies such as the Voting Rights Act as unfair – that is, antithetical to states’ rights, and needlessly interventionist — some Republican candidates explicitly stated that these efforts to raise blacks up were hurting white voters.

Despite some support for the theory of “black threat,” there are some problems with the idea that race was the primary driver of white political change in the South. First, while racial issues are and always have been important, there are and were other issues as well. This was evident in 1964 when many whites saw Goldwater as right on race, but wrong on many other issues including privatizing the Tennessee Valley Authority and eliminating Social Security (Black and Black 2002, 199-210; Black and Black 1992). While whites preferred Goldwater’s “hands off” stance on race, this stance did not lead to him winning all the electoral votes in the South. Some have even argued that race was not an issue owned by one party or the other, and that it was used by candidates as a wedge issue to target specific parts of the Southern electorate (Hillygus and Shields 2008).

There is an alternative explanation for political change that involves race that some scholars call “symbolic racism” theory. Symbolic racism theory says that “old-fashioned racism” (also called “redneck racism,” “blatant racism,” “classic racism,” and “Jim Crow racism”) disappeared gradually during the late 1960s and early 1970s until such behavior and beliefs were unacceptable to most people (Sears et al. 1997). Symbolic racism, instead of being based on racial superiority and seeking policies that are racist by their very nature, is based on predispositions. These predispositions are abstract and deal with whites’ attitudes about what the moral nature of the nation should be by focusing on black people as a group instead of viewing them as individuals. A theory of this ilk might posit that whites who feel that racism is over and

that hard work would help black people overcome obstacles to advancement think this way because of racial predispositions against people of color. According this theory, someone who is a “symbolic racist” may not know he/she is because he/she is not openly expressing thoughts based upon racial superiority. Symbolic racism also carries the belief that requests for accommodations based on race are “too much” or “unnecessary.” Black people are viewed by a symbolic racist as people who are against the values that whites believe make good Americans: “good work ethic, traditional morality, and respect for traditional authority” (Sears et. al. 1997, 22).

Theories that emphasize symbolic racism aver that policies on issues including taxes and drugs were discussed by Republican politicians in ways designed to stimulate racial impulses among white voters (Sears et. al. 1997). After the 1960s, for example, the Republican Party positioned itself as the party of “traditional values.” According to the theory of symbolic racism, the emphasis on traditional values stimulated racial prejudices. Thus, when a Republican member of Congress criticized fraud and abuse in social welfare programs, white constituents would be inclined to think about undeserving *black* welfare recipients.

Does symbolic racism affect voting behavior? The evidence suggests that the answer is yes. For example, findings show that racial conservatives were more likely to vote for Republican John McCain in the 2008 presidential general election, and for Hillary Clinton in the Democratic primary in 2008 (Tesler and Sears 2010, Kinder and Dale-Riddle 2011) than their opponents. Moreover, studies show that racial conservatives have supported black candidates less than white candidates in elections for lower level offices. There is evidence that the effects of symbolic racism on white southerners have manifested themselves only recently (Knuckey 2005). For example, Knuckey analyzed the effect of racial conservatism on party identification

from 1990-2000 among southern whites (2005). His findings reached statistical significance starting in 1994. Symbolic racism was seen as a factor that reinforced partisan and ideological voting effects. A racially conservative Democrat still had a greater than 50 percent chance of voting for Obama in 2008. This was partly because the parties were polarized based upon racial dispositions. White southern Republicans were overwhelmingly racially conservative and white southern Democrats were overwhelmingly racially liberal. Because of this polarization, even subtle racial appeals would be deemed unnecessary and would be replaced by partisan appeals.

Another well-documented change is the emergence of a sizable black electorate. After the passage of voting rights legislation in 1965, the Lyndon Johnson campaign reached out to the black community (Black and Black 1987). This led to increases in the registration of black voters and the shift from a southern electorate dominated by white elites to one where the Democratic Party sought a biracial coalition (Black and Black 2002). Because of the change in the racial composition of the Southern electorate, Democrats no longer needed a majority of white votes to win (Black 2004). They needed a smaller percentage of the white electorate in the Deep South where there was a higher concentration of blacks.

One piece of information supports a racial theory of realignment; specifically, the widely held view that race today is a major determinant of how people vote in the Deep South (McKee and Springer 2012). For example, in 2008, 95 percent of southern African Americans voted Democratic for president, while over 80 percent of whites voted for the Republican presidential nominee. This racial division in voting behavior is not found in the Peripheral South or elsewhere in the United States. In short, in the Deep South, one major determining factor of voting choice and partisanship is race. The data still show strong class divisions in the vote in the Peripheral South, where race has a more muted effect.

Theories that Focus on Class

The idea of class conflict in southern politics is not new. Decades ago, for example, Key described an informal agreement that the hill people had with the planter class in southern states to support candidates that would prevent black people from being a threat to white dominance (1984). Most of the time, people from areas without a large black population voted for the candidates supported by the “black belt” South, but at times a populist candidate emerged thanks to the support of poor whites in the less black hill areas. This agreement started to disappear as northern Democrats sought to promote a civil rights agenda.

One theory that purports to explain the shift in the votes of southern whites focuses on class cleavages. Here the argument is that people shift their party identification and their votes based on their economic class. “In the analysis of class cleavages, class is treated as a variable of primary interest” (Stonecash et. al. 2000). Generally, researchers use an individual’s income level to operationalize class. According to this theory, rich southern whites became closer to the Republican Party as poorer people became closer to the Democratic Party. The proponents of this explanation argue that during the post-World War II changes in the southern economy, class cleavages developed between the parties.

A great deal of evidence supports this theory. The evidence shows that while southern whites as a whole have less favorable views of the Democratic Party, southerners with higher incomes are less favorable towards the Democratic Party than are the poor (Shafer and Johnston 2006). This was not the case before World War II. Before World War II, in the South the affluent were more likely to be Democrats than were the poor. In all, this suggests that class plays a role in southern partisanship.

Class theorists hold that partisanship is structured by class and is driven by changes in the economy. This argument holds that changes in the party system led to the rich and poor viewing the policy proposals of each party differently. “Democrats have taken policy positions that are more responsive to minority needs and relatively less-affluent people, whereas Republicans have taken conservative positions that are more responsive to the needs and concerns of the more affluent and to business” (Stonecash 2000, 15). This support for the two political parties by competing class interests has led to obvious policy differences. In the decades since World War II, the national party platforms have shown that the parties became more different on “pocketbook” issues (Brewer and Stonecash 2007). For example, “Democrats have been willing to support progressivity in the tax system, more job training programs, and more aid for colleges. Republicans have advocated tax cuts, lower capital gains taxes, and cuts in a broad array of programs designed to benefit the less affluent” (Stonecash 2000, 15). This has resulted in national partisanship breaking down along class lines. This has been most prominent in the South even though the South accounts for most of the decline in lower-class identification with the Democratic Party (Bartels 2008, 75). Outside of the South, there is some evidence that class is declining in its role in determining party identification (see Reiter and Stonecash 2011, Gelman, et al. 2008). This appears to be the result of the South not having as large a welfare apparatus as states in the Northeast (Gelman, Kenworthy, and Su 2010). For this reason, economic issues and economic changes should be expected to drive partisanship in the south, while it may be in decline in other parts of the nation⁴.

⁴ This is possible even in the Deep South because that while race is the primary divide in voting, the issues as portrayed by the politicians are still primarily placed in an economic/class perspective. This may be the result in a differing structure to class in the Deep South (where nonwhites have a separate class) versus the Peripheral South.

One of the reasons it is believed that class started to have some effect on how southerners vote is that southern politicians started to diverge on economic issues (Black 1976). For much of the South's history, politicians espoused policies of keeping taxes low and keeping business regulation to a minimum to attract more businesses. They also discussed the abundance of resources available to companies that wanted to locate in their communities. Many southern governors, for example, made these arguments during the 1950s. During the 1960s, however, the parties split, as Republican candidates for governor still talked about keeping taxes low and limiting regulation, and Democratic candidates in the Peripheral South emphasized increasing the skills of workers by increasing funding for schools. Democratic candidates also advocated more populist economic policies. This division had not yet occurred in the mid-1970s in the Deep South, though some of this may be due to governor's races in that part of the region not being competitive in general elections.

These changes were preceded in the South by changes in the economy (Shafer and Johnston 2006). The changes were precipitated by industrial changes during World War II. This resulted in massive economic development in the post-war South. The Democratic Party was no longer associated with the most affluent members of society, as the Republican Party replaced the Democratic Party as the party of the affluent. With economic development leading to economic growth in the South, the Republican Party became associated with policies that were favorable to a segment of the population that was growing – the middle and upper-class.

Not all studies have been supportive of the idea that class cleavages matter. For example, there is evidence that upper-class voters were less polarized in their partisanship if they started voting after World War I than they were if they started voting before World War II (Sundquist

1983, 348-350). The results for the South itself, however, were ambiguous, with Alabama, Mississippi, and South Carolina having less class polarization than other states (358-362).

It has previously been shown that the people most likely to be Republicans in the South in the 1950s were Northern transplants. In addition, during the 1960s, most partisan change in the South was accounted for by people from outside of the South (Converse 1966). Northern transplants tended to live in urban areas near the growing technological industries, and thus these urban areas were the first areas to shift towards Republicans. In sum, during the 1960s, Northern transplants accounted for almost all change in aggregate partisanship in the South. The shift of northerners to the South was caused by economics (Shafer and Johnston 2006). With new industries moving to the region, those companies often brought with them seasoned management and training staff. The economies of many of the southern states were booming as the southern states provided financial inducements to businesses to relocate (Cobb 1993). This brought people from other regions and provided jobs for white locals. The evidence that partisanship has become more Republican because of immigration from other more Republican parts of the nation, has not been found to be the only driver of partisan change. There was also a class-based shift among natives of the South (Nadeau and Stanley 1993). Native whites would not be expected to show changes in partisanship if change came only from immigration to the South. In fact, data suggest that migrants were *more* likely in the mid-2000s to vote for Democrats than were native southerners. Studies also show that migrants to North Carolina increasingly identify and register as unaffiliated voters rather than as Republicans. In addition, data show that unaffiliated voters were more likely to vote for Barack Obama in 2008 than were natives of North Carolina (Hood and McKee 2010).

Just because the change in Southern politics started with transplanted northerners who had migrated from areas that were more Republican does not mean that native southerners did not change their political leanings (Nadeau and Stanley 1993). Studies show that class did indeed structure the partisanship of native southern whites. This structure experienced a gradual change over time. In the South of the 1950s and 1960s, class had an inverted impact on Republican partisan structure, as white-collar households and college educated people voted more Democratic (Shafer and Johnston 2006). From 1976 on, class had a strong impact on partisanship, as college educated, middle class, and people in working and professional or managerial positions identified themselves more as Republican (Nadeau and Stanley 1993).

Theories that Focus on Ideology

Ideology is generally conceived of as a method of organizing beliefs, usually on a left to right dimension. If ideology becomes more important, this means that issues should play a more important role in how people vote and choose their party identification. Changes in partisanship, according to theories that highlight the role of ideology in partisan change, are based on how people see themselves and the world ideologically. Since the end of World War II, ideology has become a more important determinant of how people vote. Over time, Republican members of Congress have gotten more conservative and Democratic members of Congress have become more liberal. Members of Congress and party activists were much less ideologically polarized at the turn of the twentieth century than they are now. After World War II, two ideologically opposed groups of opinion setters emerged (Noel 2013). They each had their representative media outlets. The conservatives had the *National Review* and liberals had the *New Republic*. Ideology was the most important thing to opinion writers, particularly conservatives such as William F. Buckley. Being a moderate was not tolerated in the group of opinion setters, and

might result in other opinion setters seeking to delegitimize moderates. In order for the opinion setters to have legitimacy, their ideas need to become law or have a serious chance of becoming law. In most cases, this involves a party accepting an issue as its own and taking action on the issue. So opinion leaders seek the acceptance of activists for a party and its politicians. This means that it was in the personal interests of opinion leaders to merge ideology with partisanship. If they could do so with members of Congress, they increased the odds of their ideas becoming policy. This led to issues becoming a stronger predictor of partisanship in the 1960s and 1970s than they had been in the 1950s. Since then there has developed a very strong relationship between issues, ideology, and partisanship. Congress has become more polarized on issues, (McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 1997) and the American people have become more aware of the differences between the Republican and Democratic Parties' positions (Stonecash 2006, Bafumi and Shapiro 2009). As Congress and other political elites have become more polarized, the American public has become more polarized as well. This has resulted in people changing their partisanship, at least according to this theory.

Ideological realignment theory holds that voters in the United States tended toward stronger ideological self-identification after the 1970s. As voters became more ideological, the theory goes, they began to realize that their partisanship did not match their ideology. This led voters to reconsider their partisanship, and it resulted in some voters changing their voting habits and their partisanship. If this process occurred, it should have had more impact on younger voters than older voters. Typically, people with Republican parents become Republicans and people with Democratic parents become Democrats. Abramowitz and Saunders argue that parental influence decreased during this time of ideological polarization (1998). Abramowitz and Saunders found that during the Republican surge of the 1990s, conservatives with liberal and

moderate parents were more likely to identify with the Republican Party. This has resulted in conservatives that were union workers, and residents of the Deep South becoming Republican (Carmines and Stanley 1990). The ideological realignment resulted in partisanship and issue positions falling in line more (Knotts, Abramowitz, Allen, and Saunders 2005), and in greater ideological voting for president (Knuckey 2001). Some scholars have found evidence that the ideological realignment was uneven. Specifically, they argued that white southerners were more likely to realign their partisanship because of differences between their ideology and partisanship (Schreckhise and Shields 2003). Ideology was most influential for white southern males. There is also evidence that the ideological realignment was not spread evenly over time. Data show that Southern whites' movement was steady from 1972-2000. Northern whites became more conservative and Republican during the Reagan administration. There was a decline in conservatism and Republican identification afterwards (Abramowitz and Knotts 2006).

Not all evidence supports the idea of ideological realignment. Putz (2002) found, using data from the American National Election Study 1992-1996 panel study, that there was some movement in partisanship based on issue preferences in 1994, but in 1996 there was an ideological change but not partisan change. This analysis measured ideology using issue positions which are different from most of the studies on ideological realignment. Southerners' issue preferences were becoming more conservative between 1994 and 1996, but this did not account for changes in the partisan composition of the panel. Others argue that voters are not generally changing their partisanship, but they are changing their ideology (Levendusky 2009, Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope 2011). This concept is called sorting. In sorting, people who are members of a party shift their ideology to match their partisanship. This means that a liberal Republican who becomes aware that his/her ideology is not as conservative as his/her party tends

to shift his/her ideology towards conservatism. This results in more conservatives identifying as Republican partisans while more liberals identify as being Democratic partisans, and with little change in actual partisanship.

Sorting may have occurred in the South at some point in time, while ideological realignment may have occurred at other times. Levendusky finds evidence of ideological realignment in the early 1970s, but finds that sorting was far more common in the South in later years (2009, 116-117). Most of the evidence that has shown that persons are sorted within parties includes all citizens. Researchers then narrow the examination to only those people who vote. Findings show that the electorate has become more polarized since the 1970s (Abramowitz 2011).

Theories that Focus on Religion and Culture

There are three general perspectives on the role of religion and culture in the recent political change in the South. First, some argue that religion has had no effect on partisanship (Manza and Brooks 1999). Secondly, some researchers argue that religion has some effect, but is not the only cause of partisan change (Layman 2001). Finally, evidence exists suggesting that religion has been a driver of partisan change since World War II. In the latter two cases, scholars argue that the reason religion became a driver of voting behavior, particularly in the South, is that changes in the moral fabric of the nation occurred. People whose faith was important to their lives saw increased sexualizing of advertising, an explosion of pornography, increasing crime levels, growing numbers of atheists, and the rise of alternative lifestyles. These changes are seen by some voters as “moral decay.” Some Christians and Jews made comparisons to the hedonism in the decline of the Roman Empire. One prominent scholar of the role of religion in society, James Hunter, claimed that the divide over morality was so large in American society that he predicted

a civil war (1994). Indeed, there were incidents of violence, as abortion clinics were bombed in the early 1990s.⁵ Politicians, including Pat Buchanan and Rick Santorum, and pastors such as Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, rose to prominence condemning moral decay. With people willing to kill over moral issues, politicians condemning moral decay, particularly in popular culture and the media inundating the voters with moral questions, it seems clear that a perception of moral decay might affect how people vote.

Those who say that religion is a factor in partisan change usually note that the New Deal realignment of voters had northern Protestants voting Republican and Catholics and Jews voting Democrat. Recent shifts in support for the parties under this argument were the results from changes in our culture. In the 1950s, even our married television characters were shown sleeping in separate beds. Today, with an abundance of pornography and other disturbing images invading people's lives, things have changed. The partisan cleavage is now "traditionalists" versus "tolerants" in what has been termed the "culture war" (Green 2000). This recent change split the New Deal coalition. Today, Republicans receive greater support from evangelicals and fundamentalists, and Democrats receive more support from secularists and Christians from mainline denominations. What is now seen is that white Protestants are divided politically into mainline and evangelical denominations. Mainline religious whites are now more Democratic than fundamentalists. The closeness of mainline denominations makes sense because these denominations have a more liberal interpretation of the Bible. Mainline denominations are more accepting of gay and female pastors, whereas fundamentalist denominations are opposed to such changes. One of the key dividing lines between the mainline and fundamentalist Christian denominations is that fundamentalists believe that the bible is the inerrant word of God, but

⁵ Some of this was caused by "mistakes" where regular medical clinics were bombed as well.

mainline many Christians believe that the bible contains inconsistencies. Examples of mainline denominations are United Methodists, Presbyterian, and Episcopal. Fundamentalist denominations include but are not limited to Southern Baptist, Independent Baptist, Oneness Pentecostal, and Church of Christ. It is important to note that this does not apply to black Protestants and secularists, who tend to be Democrats.

Some argue that the distinction between mainline and fundamentalist does not completely explain voting changes (Layman 2001, Green 2010). Green and others show that attending church or praying daily increase one's likelihood of voting Republican (Green, Kellstedt, Smidt, and Guth 2003). This is a fairly new trend. Fundamentalist Christians and mainline Christians and Jews who attend worship service regularly are more likely to vote Republican than those who do not. It is believed that attending worship service is a measure of religion's importance to a person.

Data show also that regular church attendees have different issue priorities than non-attenders (Kellstedt et. al. 1996). Regular church attendees see family values and abortion as issues that matter the most. Non-attenders still see family values as important but also see crime, taxes, and economic issues as important. This difference in issue importance results in lower income evangelicals voting Republican.

Theories Focusing on Party Development

There have been several attempts to explain the end of the Democratic Party's dominance in the South by referring to the development of a competitive Republican Party there. The idea here is that as the Republican Party expended more effort toward elections in the South, election victories grew. Some of these victories were assisted by opportunist politicians switching parties

and deciding to run as Republicans. Over time, this led to a stronger “bench” of candidates to run for higher office in the South giving the Republican Party a relative advantage over Democrats.

“Relative advantage” theory describes a phenomenon in which “the size of the Republican Party in the South grew over the time...because the benefits of voting and identification with the Republican Party for conservative Whites, compared to the benefits of Democratic affiliation, increased” (Hood, Kidd, and Morris 2004, 72). According to the “relative advantage” theory, the catalyst for change in the partisan makeup of the southern electorate was the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Hood et al. argued that this law made it easier to vote, while also providing for federal election volunteers that registered non-whites to vote and monitored the polls to ensure that the rights of individual voters were protected. This led to a large influx of black voters in the southern states and to the Democratic Party in the South. Why would this affect white voters? The answer is that black voters were seen as having different issues and ideological preferences. In the 1960s, black Democrats were ideologically more liberal than white Democrats. Also, it can easily be seen that a law that targets the status quo of southern states and its white elite would obviously lead to both black voters and the Democratic Party being a threat to southern whites. If they could pass the Voting Rights Act, they could pass other measures such as affirmative action and busing policies that would endanger the position of southern whites. These policies are seen as a threat to the ability of southern whites to get a job. This led to the conservative Republican Party becoming more appealing to conservative white Democrats. These conservative white Democrats, over time, came to change their identification to the Republican Party. By the 2000s, almost all of the conservative whites had left the Democratic Party. So today, black Democrats are more conservative than whites in the Democratic Party in the South.

Lamis argued that two threats to southern culture led to the rise of the Republican Party in the South (1990). First, there was the old view that racial solidarity among whites was needed to prevent southern blacks from becoming the deciding factor in southern elections. Southern whites were concerned that blacks would use this leverage to change their lot in life. Northerners were threatening the southern way of life by changing policies and traditions in the South. This argument diminished in effectiveness by the 1970s as policies like the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 took effect (Lamis 1990). The tactics championed by southern Democratic politicians, such as massive resistance, had failed. Failing to stop meddling by the federal government in the South was also seen by many southerners as failing to accomplish what the elected officials were sent to Washington, D.C. to do. Part of the reason the southern Democratic vote did not experience a dramatic reduction was the presence of a large new heavily Democratic black voting block that emerged in the South by the 1970s. This built upon the new partisans that had gathered for the Republican Party in the 1952, 1956, and 1960 presidential elections. The upper-class voters that had supported Eisenhower share many similarities with the upper-class whites that support Republican candidates today (Shafer and Johnston 2006).

Galvin argues that Republican presidential candidates and Democratic presidential candidates since World War II have used their party structure for different purposes (Galvin 2010). The Democratic presidents knew that their party had a majority of identifiers for most of the period. They used the party apparatus to mobilize Democratic identifiers, but they did not seek to expand the base. The Republican candidates sought to build on the party institutions so they could win reelection or have a successor continue their policies. Clinton and Obama found that their party no longer had a majority of identifiers so they too began building on the party apparatus (Galvin 2008).

Conclusion

Many theories purport to explain the changes in mass partisanship that occurred in the South after World War II. Some theories identify race as the prime mover of partisanship. Other theories identify class as the cause of partisan change. Other studies have shown that there was a realignment based on ideology. Several scholars identify religion and morality as the basis of a post-World War II cleavage in the electorate. Other theories identify strengthening of the party apparatus as the cause of the increased ability of the Republican Party to win in the South. In what follows, I intend to test general theories against the available data, and compare the results to the test of my own primary hypothesis. Many of the theories I discuss here do not preclude the possibility of agricultural decline as a driver of increased Republicanism. Instead, these theories identify something else as important. A full understanding of partisan change means taking many factors into account.

Chapter 3: Plan for Analysis

As the previous chapters indicate, there are numerous extant studies on the post-World War II shift in partisanship in the American South, with several studies on the southern realignment published even before the election of President Kennedy.⁶ As such, it is clear that this will not be the definitive treatment of this subject. And so, I ask this question, in which is embedded a hypothesis: “Did the decline of agriculture in the southern economy contribute to increased Republican Party strength in the American South?” This question, by its very nature, has to account for the economic prosperity brought by such a dramatic economic change. After all, when the Twelve Southerners wrote their defense of the southern way of life, the South was a society of subsistence farmers (Ransom, et al. 1978). They argued that life in the South was simpler and easier to appreciate than life elsewhere and that the people of the region did not need to change. Most southerners were not accustomed to having much money. The money one earned did not seem to be at the whims of public policy, but rather was determined by factors outside of politics, such as the weather and blight. But as the economy changed, so did society; people began to see their wealth in relation to the wealth of others. Subsistence farmers wanted to have food on the table and maybe some extra crops to sell so they could buy shoes once a year for their children from a catalogue.

Today, work for most southerners takes place in an office or factory. Farmers with larger farms still work the land, but they no longer are the linchpin of the economy. If crops fail, southern cities such as Houston and Nashville will not economically suffer to any great extent. The decline of agriculture in the South resulted not in unemployment, but rather in changed types

⁶ Many consider V.O. Key’s “The Future of the Democratic Party” the first work on partisan realignment. It looked at realignment as a way to predict what groups in society, and particularly the South, would change their partisan predispositions.

of employment as many jobs shifted to manufacturing and services. Employment changes resulted in some areas of the South prospering under the new economy and others enduring economic stagnation. My contention here is that the declining role of agriculture in the South led to class replacing other drivers of voter choice. Even as of the late 1930s, the decision to split from the union during the Civil War was the most dominant cleavage in how people voted in the South. My hypothesis is a fairly novel argument despite the large body of research on partisan change in the South.

By its very nature, an examination of party strength is based on geographic units instead of individuals. It is geographic in nature because it uses votes for an area, in this case, the states of the South, to measure change over time. The geographic aspect of this study makes it different from some of the previous research on southern partisan realignment, since most previous research has primarily focused on the mass electorate or changes in various political offices instead of the movement regarding the predisposition within portions of the electorate.

Republican Strength

Figures 3.1 and 3.2 show the comparative difference in Republican Party strength in elections for national office and state offices, respectively. As seen in Figures 3.1 and 3.2, the Republican Party started with less of an ability to get votes for its candidates at the national level than it had at the state level. It is also apparent that the Peripheral South was more competitive than the Deep South in the 1950s. This is not surprising, as the Deep South does not have a large well-defined geographic area of historic Republican Party strength like areas of eastern Tennessee and western North Carolina. The Smoky Mountain area provided a base for the Republican Party to recruit candidates in the Peripheral South.

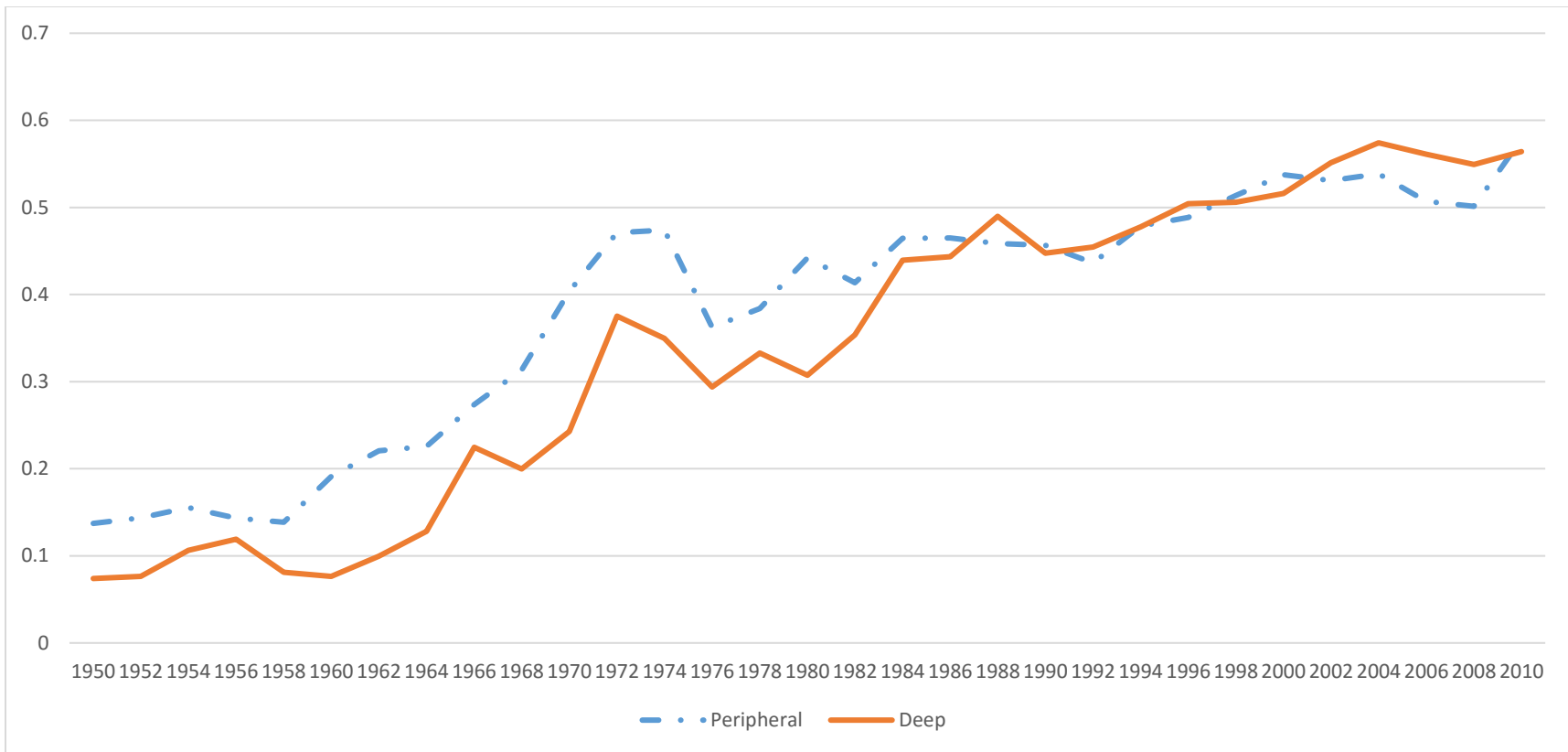


Figure 3.1 State Party Strength Separated in Deep South and Peripheral South Sub-Regions

Source: Data gathered from [America Votes](#) various volumes and [A Statistical History of the American Electorate](#), various volumes [Book of the States](#) and Party Affiliations in the State Legislatures for years compiled by the author. Other years from < <http://scholar.harvard.edu/saldin/data>>.

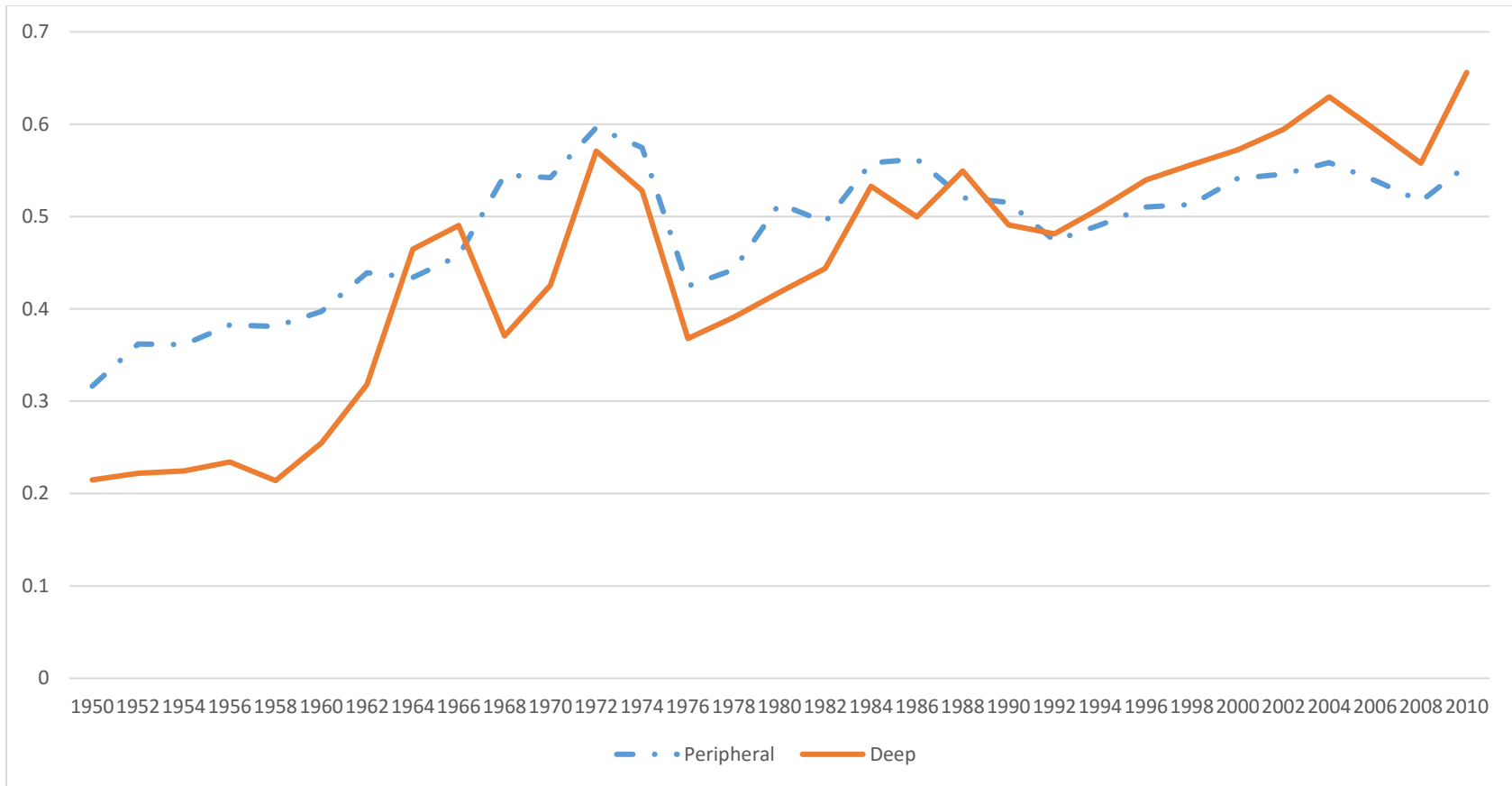


Figure 3.2 National Party Strength Separated in Deep South and Peripheral South Sub-Regions

Source: Data gathered from [America Votes](#) various volumes and [A Statistical History of the American Electorate](#) for years compiled by the author. Other years from < <http://scholar.harvard.edu/saldin/data>>.

Republican candidates at the start of the period under study had a better chance of winning elections in Smoky Mountain areas than they did in much of the South. Over the period of study, the relative strength of the Republican Party in the Peripheral South diminished as the Republican Party became more competitive in the Deep South. Over time, one should see both the national and state indexes increase, with the state party index lagging behind the national party index. While this is far from definitive, it supports the findings of some scholars who say that the increase in Republican Party competitiveness started at the national-level and filtered down to elections for lower-level political offices. A major reason that the state score index lags behind the national index is that the state index includes state legislative offices (and not votes as various archives have for the other offices included in the MPI). State legislative offices took a while to turn over thanks to the advantages of incumbency and a lack of candidates from the Republican Party running for those offices. In order to gain more clarity on the idea that national party strength led to greater success at the state-level for Republicans, these party strength measures will be compared using statistical analysis.

Data, Methods, and Expectations

This data I use here is time-series cross-sectional, which means that for each time point there are multiple observations. For this analysis, there are 31 time points and 11 southern states for a total of 341 observations from the election years from 1950 to 2010. This data is used because I am seeking to analyze data across both different states and across 60 years. Time-series cross-sectional data is known to cause multiple issues in analysis, particularly issues with robustness to alternative specifications. This concern about robustness to alternative specifications is, in part, the reason I ran multiple specifications. A lagged-dependent variable model with robust standard errors is what is recommended by experts on time-series cross-sectional analysis (Beck and Katz

2011). When data is missing on the independent variables, the missing data points are imputed through interpolation. While this is not the preferred form of imputation, because of the nature of the missing data other techniques proved ineffective. Also, interpolation was used in the book, The Rational Southerner: Black Mobilization, Republican Growth, and the Partisan Transformation of the American South, a leading study of southern party strength that was published recently (Hood, Morris and Kidd 2012). All observations are present for the three dependent variables used.

Here are the models I use to test my hypothesis.

1. Major party index = Major party index (t-1) + % Workers Agriculture + % Workers Agriculture * per capita income + % Turnout + Midterm + Midterm*Turnout + % Black Registration + % Non-White population + % Southern Baptist + per capita income + House Party Difference + State level FE
2. Major party index = Major party index (t-1) + % Workers Agriculture + % Workers Agriculture * per capita income + % Turnout + Midterm + Midterm*Turnout + % Black Registration + % Non-White population + % Southern Baptist + per capita income + Senate Party Difference + State level FE
3. Major party index = Major party index (t-1) + % Workers Agriculture + % Workers Agriculture * per capita income + % Turnout + Midterm + Midterm*Turnout + % Black Registration + % Non-White population + % Southern Baptist + per capita income + Southern Dem + State level FE
4. Major party index = Major party index (t-1) + % Workers Agriculture + % Workers Agriculture * relative income + % Turnout + Midterm + Midterm*Turnout + % Black Registration + % Non-White population + % Southern Baptist + relative income + House Party Difference + State level FE
5. Federal Party Strength = Federal Party Strength (t-1) + % Workers Agriculture + % Workers Agriculture * per capita income + % Turnout + Midterm + Midterm*Turnout + % Black Registration + % Non-White population + % Southern Baptist + per capita income + % 2 Party Dem. President + State level FE
6. Federal Party Strength = Federal Party Strength (t-1) + state party strength + % Workers Agriculture + % Workers Agriculture * per capita income + % Turnout + Midterm + Midterm*Turnout +

- $$\% \text{ Black Registration} + \% \text{ Non-White population} + \% \text{ Southern Baptist} + \text{per capita income} + \% \text{ 2 Party Dem. President} + \text{State level FE}$$
7. State Party Strength = State Party Strength (t-1) + % Workers Agriculture + % Workers Agriculture * per capita income + % Turnout + Midterm + Midterm*Turnout + % Black Registration + % Non-White population + % Southern Baptist + per capita income + Republican Pres + State level FE
8. State Party Strength = State Party Strength (t-1) + % Workers Agriculture + % Workers Agriculture * per capita income + % Turnout + Midterm + Midterm*Turnout + % Black Registration + % Non-White population + % Southern Baptist + per capita income + % 2 Party Dem. President + State level FE

Some of these variables presented above are not self-explanatory, and thus the remainder of this chapter provides explanations of the measures and justifies why those variables are included in one or more of the models.

Dependent Variables

Focus here is on three different measures of party strength that will be dependent variables in these analyses. Why focus on party strength? Party strength is a regional⁷ measure of two joint processes: (1) recruiting candidates; and (2) getting candidates elected. Both are important processes in causing an electoral realignment (Burnham 1970). These two processes are closely related. A candidate, particularly a high-quality candidate, is more likely to run for office if he/she believes he/she has a high probability of receiving enough votes needed to win exists. Voters are more likely to vote for a party that they voted for previously. So, as more candidates from a particular party are able to achieve larger voting margins, the victorious party is more likely to have quality candidates run for office in that region in the future and receive a higher vote total.

⁷ By region, I mean a governing area such as counties, states, a collection of states, or precincts.

There is another simple reason to focus on party strength: policy. Not only does shifts in party strength create opportunities for different politicians to go to Washington, D.C. to affect national policy, but party strength also represents politicians with differing issue positions representing their respective constituencies in state legislatures, the governor's mansion, and county buildings. In short, party strength is a measure of the ability of a party to get people to vote for its candidates and the ability of the party to affect policy on national and state levels.

The post-World War II shift in party strength was part of a massive shift in policy over time. Scholars saw Republican politicians increasingly excel at getting elected at the local (Lublin 2006), state (Hayes and McKee 2007), and federal (Black and Black 2002, 1992; Shafer and Johnston 2006) levels. It is difficult to see how the Republican Party would have become the majority in Congress in 1994 without its increased party strength in the South. This majority position affected a dramatic shift in national policy. Increased Republican Party strength in the South more than made up for lost ground in the Northeast over the period of this study. Moreover, my hypothesis states that southern voters changed their voting patterns over time because a major policy area, i.e., economic policy, became more important to the peoples' financial well-being. During the age of agricultural economy dominance in the South, southerners' finances were not linked as tightly to economic policy. As the economy changed, however, voters' financial situations became more closely linked with public policy. Policy affects southern voters' financial positions and so impacted where southerners settled into society. Changes in the economic system made economic policy more relevant to southern voters. Policy change can now be a threat to a southerner's place in society. The Republican Party now is the party of national defense and leaving people alone to make money. The

Democratic Party was wrong on taxes and wrong on welfare, according to many voters in the South.

What does this paper address differently on this front than previous research on changes in party strength in the South? Previous research on changes in the strength of southern political parties has used David scores⁸ (Hayes and McKee 2008, Hood, Kidd, and Morris 2012, Hood, Kidd and Morris 2004, Lamis 1988), aggregations of state legislative offices (Jewett 2001), or Aistrup's measure of county level competition (Aistrup 2004). Numerous scholars have also worked to collect data on local party organizations in the South (Clark and Prysby 2004). While the above studies utilized varied measures of party strength, the measures, while not bad, were less comprehensive than measures used in this study. Data used as measures of party strength in this study include greater accumulation of data collected from a greater number of elections and sources thereby accounting for a greater number of votes cast over the entire period of study (Ceasar and Saldin 2005).

Three party strength measures serve as the dependent variables in this study. First, there is *the Major party index*.⁹ This variable comes from the article "A New Measure of Party Strength" by James W. Ceasar and Robert P. Saldin (2005). This measure is calculated for every two years (the election years) for each state using the current or most recent elections. It was calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{Major Party Index} = ((\text{Most recent 2-Party Republican Presidential Vote}) * 0.25) + ((\text{Average of the Two Most Recent Republican 2-Party Votes for the U.S. Senate}) * 0.125) + ((\text{Republican 2-Party Percent of all U.S. House Votes}) * 0.125) + ((\text{Most Recent 2-Party Republican Vote for Governor}) * 0.25) + ((\text{2-Party$$

⁸ This score comes from David, Paul T. (1972) *Party Strength in the United States: 1872-1970*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press. This measure is the Percentage vote Republican (or Democratic) for Senators, members of Congress and Governor for each state. It does not use two party vote.

⁹ This variable was made available from its author for 1970 to 2006 from Saldin's website, <<http://scholar.harvard.edu/saldin/data>>. All other time points used are calculated by this author.

Republican Percentage of Seats in the State Senate)*0.125) + ((2-Party
Republican Percentage of Seats in the State House)*0.125).

The election data to generate this measure was gathered from America Votes (various volumes), A Statistical History of the American Electorate (various volumes), the Book of the States, and Party Affiliations in the State Legislatures. All observations on this variable are present for each state election year, so no imputation is necessary. Values of *Major party index* range from 0 to 1, with 0 being total Democratic dominance and 1 being total Republican dominance. The mean for this measure is 0.399 with a maximum observation of 0.741 and a minimum observation of 0.001. This variable varies over time and can be bifurcated to measure party strength in elections for national and state offices. This makes my variable superior to previous measures of party strength for purposes of this study. As you can see from the formula, the *Major party index* only counts the percentage of the votes and offices held by the two major parties. This means that converting this measure from a Republican focused measure to a Democratic-focused measure is straightforward. There were times early in the period of study that individuals were able to run under both a minor party and the Democratic Party. There were even a few elected officials that ran as the nominee for both of the major parties. On these occasions, the data for that office seeker was included for the major party that he caucused with once elected. Looking at Figures 3.1 and 3.2, it is noticeable that national party strength starts off higher than the state party strength. This is in part due to the Republican Party always running a presidential nominee, while some southern states during this period did not have a republican candidate for governor. Also, politicians by their nature are typically ambitious so that even with few candidates winning at the state level, those that did often sought the more prestigious offices of congressperson or senator.

The second dependent variable used in this study is *National party strength*. This measure takes the two-party vote for president, senators, and the House and combines them so they are weighted equally.¹⁰ It is available every two years (the election years) for each state using the current or most recent elections. Its values range from 0 to 1, with 0 being all votes for all offices included in the measurement going to candidates of the Democratic Party, and 1 indicating all votes for all offices included in the measurement going to candidates of the Republican Party. This measure derives from the creation of *Major party index*, and is used in the previously cited article, “A New Measure of Party Strength” as a means to look at national election strength, particularly in relation to a party’s strength at state level elections (Ceasar and Saldin 2006). The statistical mean for this measure is 0.477 with a standard deviation of 0.119. The offices included in this measurement are national, and considered to have a higher profile than the offices used to create the state party strength score (which I discuss below). While the greater amount of information available on these elections may lead to more candidate-centered voting, national elections also tend to focus on different issues than state level offices. The properties of a more candidate-centered campaign relating to elections for president, senator, and congressperson means that I expect these elections to express greater details about each party in the short term. Also, because these offices tend to be for larger areas in terms of population and area, few of the voters for these offices are family members or acquaintances.

There are three reasons I run models including this variable instead of relying just on my first dependent variable to test my hypothesis. First, national elections generally attract higher voter turnout, so they should be a better representation of the preferences of each geographical

¹⁰ The formula for this variable is $((\text{Most recent 2-Party Republican Presidential Vote}) * 0.50) + ((\text{Average of the Two Most Recent Republican 2-Party Votes for the U.S. Senate}) * 0.25) + ((\text{Republican 2-Party Percent of all U.S. House Votes}) * 0.25)$.

region of voters. Secondly, models using this dependent variable allow me to check robustness. Considering both national party strength and state party strength variables allows me to better understand the durability of findings from models using *Major party index*. Third, there are questions concerning the nature of partisanship. Is it a basic attachment to a group that by itself is important? Does partisanship naturally include attitudes towards elected officials and issue preferences? If it includes attitudes and issue preferences, then national party strength will tap into those feelings more than other dependent variables. This occurs because the measure used includes more high-profile elections with candidate-centered messages. Voters tend to remember the issue positions of candidates better in these elections. Issue positions become part of a person's partisan identity according to this perspective, and voters become polarized on the issues that were relevant when they first came of age as a voter (Stoker and Jennings 2008).

My third dependent variable is *State party strength*. This measure combines the vote for governor,¹¹ and the number of seats in the state house and state senate¹² controlled by the two parties. This dependent variable, like the previous two, comes from “A New Measure of Party Strength” (Ceasar and Saldin 2006). State party strength data is available every two years (the election years) for each state using the current or most recent elections.¹³ Election returns for state legislative offices do not appear to be available for a large portion of the period under study.¹⁴ This measure, like the previous two, is theoretically limited from 0 to 1, with 1 being

¹¹ This data comes from *A Statistical History of the American Electorate* and the *America Votes* series.

¹² For times that data for the state house and state senate is used by the author, the data comes from Michael J. Dubin's *Party Affiliations in the State Legislatures: A Year by Year Summary, 1796-2006* and the websites of the relevant Secretary of States. This measure does not account for voter shifts between parties during a legislative session, because such shifts do not represent the major party the official was elected to represent.

¹³ This measure is calculated $((\text{Most Recent 2-Party Republican Vote for Governor}) * 0.25) + ((\text{2-Party Republican Percentage of Seats in the State Senate}) * 0.125) + ((\text{2-Party Republican Percentage of Seats in the State House}) * 0.125)$.

¹⁴ The earliest data that I could find was a dataset that started in 1968. Going all the way back to the starting period of this analysis to include state legislative vote totals does not seem possible because of the lack of accurate records for the start of the period of analysis.

completely Republican. The mean of this measure is 0.322 and the standard deviation is 0.182. This measure nicely taps into the ability of candidates from a party to win political offices in a state. State elections are often low information elections, and thus voters in these elections tend to be motivated to participate by friends, family, and partisanship. Relationships with friends and family do not tend to change much, so most changes in these elections tend to be driven by changes in partisanship and the demographics that support partisanship. With relationships playing a larger role in elections to state house and state senate offices, election results for these offices tend to lag partisanship. One of the main reasons to use this variable is that it is less tainted by issue voting than are other measures of party strength. This means that it should be a more pure measure of partisanship than the national party strength variable. I should also note that this variable will be included in Model 6 as an independent variable. The inclusion of *state party strength* in Model 6 as an independent variable is to see if increased competition at the lower levels of political office increased party strength at higher level offices.

Independent Variables

First¹⁵, I include the variable *Percentage workers agriculture* in all my models. This measure is the percentage of a state's workforce that is agricultural. To make the variable more

¹⁵ Additionally, I searched for data on two subjects at the suggestion of my dissertation committee. First, I looked for data on military spending by state during this period. It is well known that military personnel show some of the strongest support for the Republican Party of any government workers. The problem with including this variable was the lack of consistent data on this topic. While it is easy to see how spending is budgeted for the Pentagon, determining how much is spent in individual states is more complicated. Using the amount of spending nationally was something I considered, but I decided this would add additional complications because much of the military spending is for government installations outside of the South, and there is no reason to believe that this spending has remained constant. Given this situation, I would not be assured that additional and unnecessary noise was not being added into the analysis. I also considered adding percentage suburban. After all, many southern cities have seen bursts of people moving to the suburbs, and this has implications for how both the people moving and the people left in the cities see their lives. This has implications for politics because these changes in perceptions of one's social position could affect their desired choice in policies and, it follows, partisanship. The problem with including this variable was the lack of appropriate data for several time points. The census calculates percentage suburban population by subtracting the population that is urban from the population that is "central city." That gives them the number of people that are suburban, which can then be divided into the total population. The problem is that the data

meaningful, in my analysis, this percentage is subtracted from 100 (so that in reality this measure of agricultural workers is a measure of all people who are not in agriculture). I do this so that as this variable rises along with income, it is expected that the dependent variables will rise. Structuring the variable this way means that changes in this variable can be more easily interpreted. “Agricultural” mostly means farming, but it also means logging and aquaculture. This measure is state and time point specific, and comes from data found in the U.S. Census files. This variable is intended to measure my primary interest in this project: the change in the economy and the political response of the populations of the states. This measure will interact with the measures of income (*Per capita income* and *Relative income*) to test my hypothesis, thus it is the most important variable in this analysis. I expect that as this measure increases, so will the major party index.

I also include the variable *Per capita income*.¹⁶ This is a measure of the average income for people in a state. This is intended to measure the general financial well-being of individuals in a state over time. This measure is a state level variable that has observations for each time point for each state. While this measure admittedly is not that strong an indicator of the wealth of the public, other measures of wealth over time are not available for much of this time period. Because of the importance of income in the analysis of how class structures voting decisions, this is an important variable that will allow me to account for some of the variation in party strength based upon changes in class structure. Because I think that as per capita income increases so will the income of more southerners, I predict that increases in per capita income will increase party

pertaining to percentage suburban, population suburban and population central city appear to be missing for several time points. As a result, this variable could not be produced.

¹⁶ The data comes from

<http://bea.gov/iTable/iTable.cfm?reqid=70&step=1&isuri=1&acrdn=4#reqid=70&step=1&isuri=1> and is modified to 2010 dollars found at <http://www.minneapolisfed.org/index.cfm>.

strength. In other words, I expect a positive relationship between this variable and the dependent variable. Previous research suggests that there is a link between income and individual voting behavior. Moreover, as income rises in a community, it should also impact a voter's perception of their opportunities to make more money. Voting for the party that will do the least to regulate that opportunity may make sense for voters experiencing this change.

In most of the models, *Per capita income* will be interacted with *Percentage workers agriculture* to create a variable called *Per capita income x Percentage workers agriculture*. I am trying to determine with this interaction whether or not the decline of agriculture and the replacement in some areas by higher paying industries and employment increased the strength of the Republican Party in the southern states.

I also consider *Relative income*. This measure compares the income of a state to the national average. This is achieved by dividing the income of a state by the national average income. Unlike per capita income, this measure allows one to see the incomes of people in southern states in comparison to the nation. Previous research has shown that voting based upon class involves comparing one's income to that of the average American instead of comparing it to local individuals (Stonecash 2000). I have reservations about this, however. When one looks at the bottom and top of the income spectrum and looks at how people vote, then yes, people do vote based upon relative income. The problem with this finding is that it ignores those in the middle-class who were some of the first to polarize on income. Moreover, if trends from outside the South carry over to the South and polls show Southerners behaving more like their "blue state" counterparts, then I should see the upper third of earners voting as Republican as the lower third of earners (Gelman et.al. 2008). The author of one of the previous studies on class-based voting has also shown that at some point class failed as an issue cleavage in the Northeast (Reiter

and Stonecash 2011). The findings showed that class was replaced by ideology as a voting cleavage and led the Republican Party to fare poorly. This study showed that when voters in the Northeast are broken down into thirds based upon income, the top third of the income bracket votes as Republican as the bottom third of the income bracket. This change clearly benefited the Democratic Party in the Northeast. There is no research available on whether this process is currently occurring in the South. I thought that this comparison of the income of individuals in a state to that of the nation would provide a means of tapping into the relative nature, which research has shown structures voting decisions. I knew that this would be a less than direct measure of the topic because previous findings were based on individual level data, and I was using a state level aggregate. This data is present across time and states. Because of the previous findings and my reservations with those findings, I feel that results in either direction will be important to class-based voting as an area of research.

In Model 4, I interact *Relative income* with *Percentage workers agriculture* to create a variable called *Relative income x Percentage workers agriculture*. The difference between this interaction term and the interaction term found in the other models is that relative income is used instead of per capita income. The purpose of this interaction is to see whether people from states that saw relative improvements in their level of prosperity because of the decline of agriculture led some states to be more likely to elect Republican candidates. There have been several studies that have found that a person's income relative to the nation as a whole is a strong predictor of voting behavior (Stonecash 2000). The modification of Model 4 is to account for these previous findings in the current analysis.

One of the novel aspects of this study is that I explore the impact of a variable that has previously been ignored by many studies: voter turnout. In Burnham's classic book on partisan

realignment, Critical Elections: And the Mainsprings of American Politics, one of the indicators of realignment that was mentioned was the presence of a dramatic change in turnout. There are two basic concepts of partisan realignment. The first is that realignment is a sudden, long-lasting shift of voters based on some event, such as a recession or war. The main example of this from history was the realignment of the northeast in 1896 (Burnham 1970), though there is recent speculation that this occurred over a greater period of time than previously thought (Stonecash and Silina 2005). The other conception of realignment holds that the electorate is relatively stable, and that realignment is a process in which new voters shift the electorate because they vote heavily in one direction. The second notion has significantly stronger support, particularly from research on the realignment of the South. Previous studies show that there was a dramatic increase in voter turnout among white (Stanley 1987) and non-white voters in the South during the period under study (Bullock and Gaddie 2009). Thus, in my models, I examine the effects of voter turnout on party strength.

Percentage turnout in congressional elections (hereafter called *Percentage turnout*) is the variable used to measure turnout. I include this variable to account for changes in the size of the electorate. Previous research shows that increases in voter turnout in the South were not confined to African-Americans. This measure accounts for the percentage of people that voted in congressional elections, which happen every two years. *Percentage turnout* has a mean of 34.59 and a standard deviation of 11.41. This data came from Census sources and Voting in American Elections: The Shaping of the American Political Universe Since 1788 (Burnham, Ferguson and Ferleger 2010). Several scholars saw an increase in white voter turnout from the early 1950s to the 1970s of about 70 percent. Voting was no longer for the population's "better people," but instead became more universal. In Figures 3.3 and 3.4 it is apparent that there is an upward trend

in voter turnout, but that the increase is much larger in the Deep South than in the Peripheral South. The midterm effects are present in the data, with reduced turnout in midterm elections. I define this variable as the percentage of eligible voters from each state that went to the polls in a particular election. This measure is not the percentage of eligible people voting. Percentage turnout may differ from the percentage of people voting for a particular office because people can choose not to vote for a specific office while voting for a candidate for the other elected positions on the ballot. Thus, this measure accounts for “roll-off,” in which the higher profile elections attract more voters than do lower profile races. It also excludes from the population those who are not eligible to vote because of incarceration, mental incapability, and legal restriction. Research has previously shown that new voters have less attachment to a party than do voters who have participated in previous elections. Research has also shown that besides the dramatic increase in black voters since the 1950s, polls have also measured a dramatic increase in white voter turnout in the South. That means that there was possibly a large block of the electorate in the South that was new voters, and their policy preferences may have led them to be Republican voters. I expect the interaction between *Midterm* and *Percentage turnout* will be positive because it is well known that the demographics of the people that vote in midterms are also the demographics that have been representative of the Republican Party. Increasing the turnout during the midterm elections should help the Republican Party during this period. Midterm elections should reduce the Republican Party strength by reducing the number of new voters showing up at the polls without a long-held democratic partisanship.

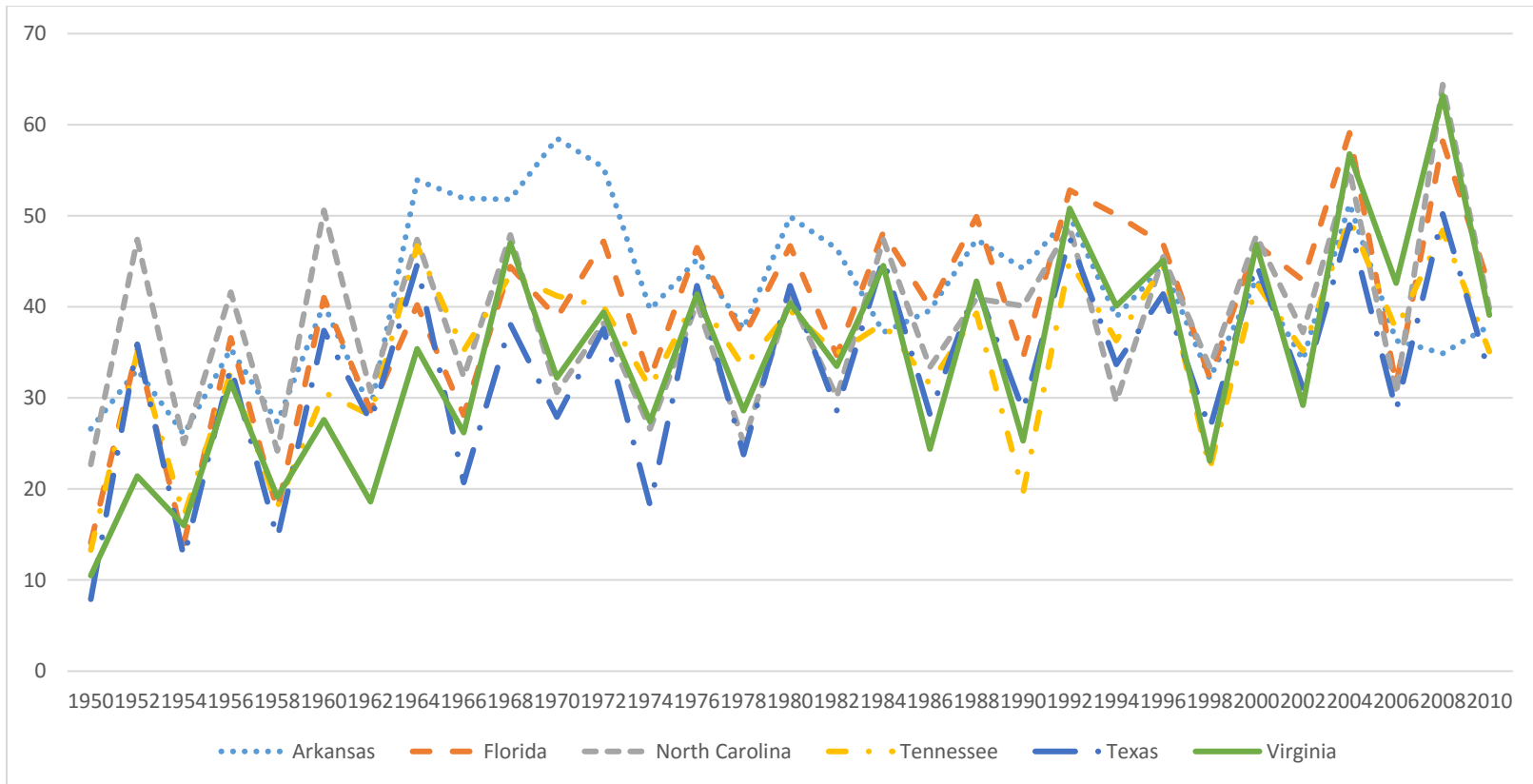


Figure 3.3 Voter Turnout as a Percentage of Eligible Voters for Congressional Elections in the Peripheral South

Source: Census files and Voting in American Elections: The Shaping of the American Political Universe Since 1788

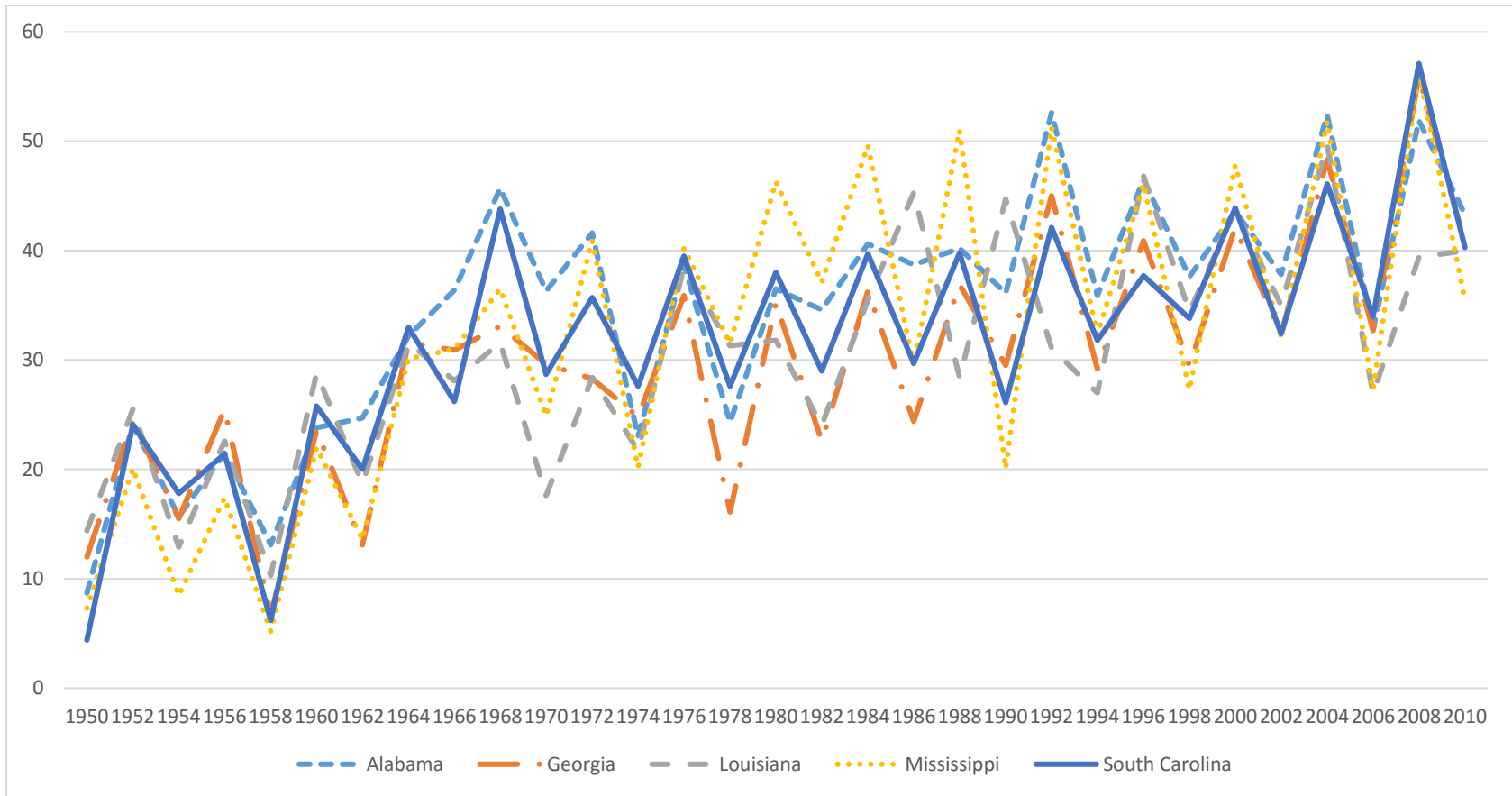


Figure 3.4 Voter Turnout as a Percentage of Eligible Voters for Congressional Elections in the Deep South

Source: Census files and Voting in American Elections: The Shaping of the American Political Universe Since 1788

My second measure of turnout is *Percentage of black voters registered*. This is the percentage of the black population that is registered to vote. This comes from an article by Alt,¹⁷ and from Bullock and Gaddie's *The Triumph of Voting Rights in The South*, and the Census Bureau. For decades, black voter turnout was insignificant in the south. If African-Americans turned out to vote before World War II, they voted for the party of Lincoln. Overall, a minuscule percentage of black people were registered at the start of the period of this study. The percentage of registered voters was selected for inclusion in models for analysis since measures of the turnout of black voters do not start early enough for this study. One's likelihood of voting is strongly correlated with whether or not one is registered to vote. Moreover, the dramatic increase in voter registration among black people appears to follow the same pattern of voting among the black population. The data shows dramatic increases in black voter registration and turnout between the beginning of the period of study and 2000, with 94 percent of black people in Arkansas being registered to vote in 1976 (see also Kirk 2015). The minimum observation is 2.266667 (this number was interpolated¹⁸) percent (in Mississippi in 1950). Recent work has shown that the movement of black voters to the Democratic Party led to white conservatives moving to the Republican Party (Hood, Morris, Kidd 2006). This includes conservatives that may not previously have voted. This variable should have a positive impact on party strength.

I also include the variable *Percentage non-white population* in my models. This is the percentage of the population that is listed as non-white by the Census Bureau. This comes from both the population census and official estimates based upon large-scale surveys.

¹⁷ Data on this variable, before 1974, was from this source. This data was originally gathered at the request of the federal government in the early 1960s, so that data from the earliest parts of this period had the most room for inaccuracies. While this data source provided estimates with known flaws, it is also a source that has been used in multiple publications across multiple disciplines.

¹⁸ This measure does derive from data starting before the period of study, with the first observations in 1947. The lowest number from this data is 0.9 percent for Mississippi in 1947.

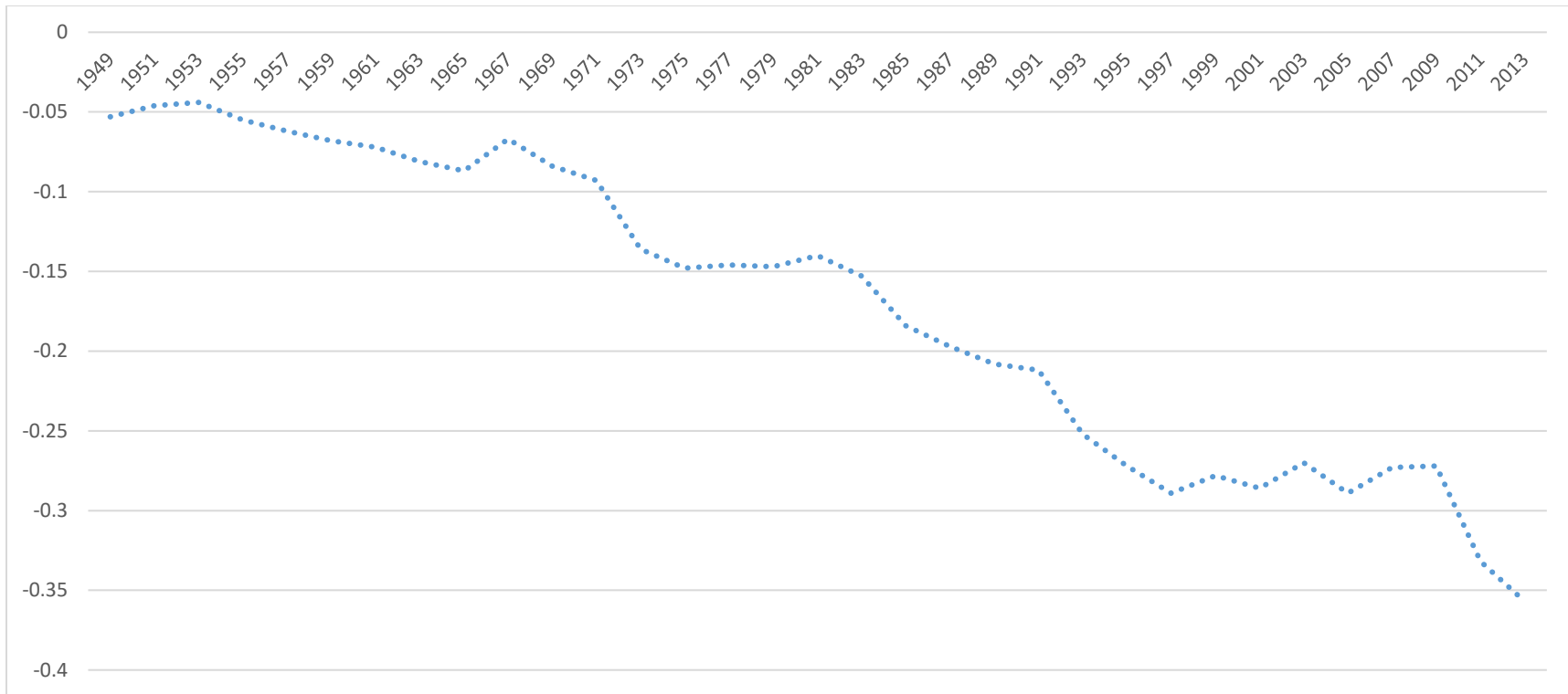


Figure 3.5 Mean DW-Nominate Score of Southern Democratic Members of Congress by Beginning of Term

Source: Voteview.com “The Polarization of the Congressional Parties” Files entitled “House Polarization 46th to 114th Congresses” <http://voteview.com/political_polarization_2015.htm>.

This measure is a state-level variable that has observations for each time point in each state (due to interpolation). This measure accounts for growth and decline of the non-white population. This differs from the measure of percent black voter registration because it concerns the size of the non-white population in comparison to the white population, while registration gets into the minority power at the ballot box. This is available from the Population Census. According to previous research, this variable should increase the percentage of white voters who voted Republican, which I should see as increased *party strength*.

I also consider the effects of polarization. Polarization is, by its nature, the ability of two groups to differ from each other. In this case, I look at the ability of the two major parties to differ from each other over time based upon ideology. For this, I use two measures from Poole and Rosenthal. The first measure, as is seen in Figure 3.5, is *Mean DW-Nominate Score for southern Democratic members of Congress* (Poole and Rosenthal 2015). This measure is included in Model 2 (it is listed as *Southern Democrats* to keep the variable name on one line) because there is some thought that voters may have become polarized ideologically as the local members of Congress became more ideological in their voting. These members of Congress should have the most local media coverage, so their change may have been noticed first by southern voters. This is the mean DW-Nominate first-dimension score for all members of Congress from a southern state. The DW-Nominate score ranges from 1 to -1 meaning the further negative the score the more liberal the southern Democratic congressional delegation votes. This data was found on Poole's webpage, Voteview.com. *Southern Democrats* has a mean of -0.16 and a standard deviation of .087. The movement of about 0.16 on this scale seems pretty small when looking at the demographic changes seen in the southern delegations to Congress. This delegation was all white and fairly conservative at the start of this period. Southern

Democrats in Congress now are more often people of color. The measure is a time-series with data for every election year in this study. It does not differ across states.

The greater the difference in the parties' voting behavior, the easier it was for voters to see a difference in the two parties. It is known that voters take cues on how to vote from political elites. So, in this process, first, one should see policy demanders/opinion leaders push for elected officials, such as members of Congress, to vote along ideological lines. Second, as the members of Congress vote more along ideological lines, members of the electorate can see which party votes for liberal ideas and which party votes for conservative ideas. Then voters evaluate whether the ideas of the party of their choice line up with their issue preferences. If their issue preferences do not line up with their preferred party, then individuals change their party leaning. This change in party leaning should be reflected in party strength, as more people move toward one party, which should shift party strength. If an ideological realignment was the cause of the realignment of the southern electorate, then one should see that as the parties became more polarized, the party strength of the conservative party, the Republican Party, should increase because of the predominance of conservative ideas in the South.

My measure of polarization is *Polarization of House/Senate*. This is the difference between the median Republican member of Congress and the median Democratic member of Congress. There are two versions of this score. One score is for the House of Representatives and the other is for the Senate. The score used for this is the DW-Nominate first-dimension score that allows scoring of votes by members of Congress both within Congresses and across time. Because the DW-Nominate score ranges from 1 to -1, this limits the size of the difference between the two parties to be between 0 and 2, with 0 being the same voting patterns from members of each party and 2 indicating no cross-party voting on any legislative votes. This data

was found on Poole's webpage, Voteview.com. This is bi-yearly time series data, which does not differ across states. This allows for a test of whether the ideology of the national policy elites drove partisan change. Three trends are evident in Figure 3.6. First, since the late 1970s, the Senate has been less polarized than the House of Representatives. Second, polarization does not seem that strong in either house before the 1970s. These two measures of polarization were at a fairly constant level, around 0.5 for the previous decades during the study. Third, the difference between the two measures is about 0.2, which seems pretty large with a theoretical maximum of only 2. There are several reasons that it makes sense that the Senate was less polarized. The districts in the House of Representatives are usually smaller and are drawn in such a way that they include a majority for one party. The area for a Senate race is constant. Also, many senators are former members of the House of Representatives. The movement of the more extreme ideological candidates from the House to the Senate, by its very nature, would lag, if just to account for time served in the House of Representatives. This measure shows how far apart the parties are at the national level on policies. Assuming that most southern voters held more conservative issue preferences during the period of study, it would suggest that as either of these two measures increases (and the differences in the ideological preferences of the two parties elected officials become more distinct) so should the measures of party strength.

All of my models include the variable *Midterm*. This variable is a dichotomous variable which is coded 1 during years that the president is not on the ballot, and 0 otherwise. It is known that turnout is generally depressed in the midterm elections, and that the electorate in the midterm years is older and whiter than it is during presidential election years. Figures 3.3 and 3.4 show strong but not uniform differences between turnout in a presidential year and a midterm election.

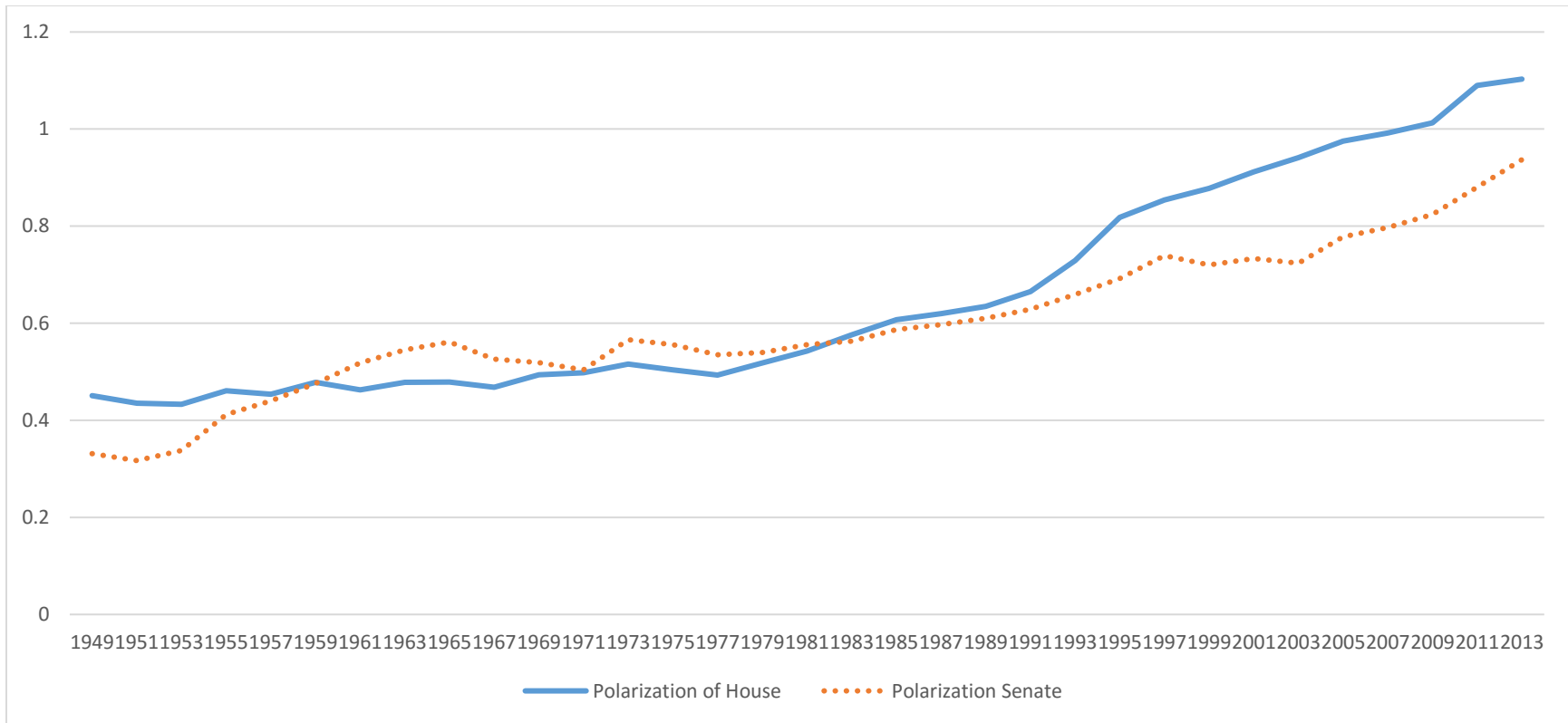


Figure 3.6 Yearly Measure of Polarization of the House of Representatives and the Senate by Congressional Term

Source: Voteview.com “The Polarization of the Congressional Parties” Files entitled “House Polarization 46th to 114th Congresses” and “Senate Polarization 46th to 114th Congresses” < http://voteview.com/political_polarization_2015.htm>.

I expect that *Midterm* will reduce the benefits of turnout to party strength, but I do not have any strong feelings that it will impact party strength directly. For this reason, I believe that the interaction of *Midterm* and *Turnout* will be positive.

I also include the variable *Percentage Southern Baptist*¹⁹ in my models. This variable measures the percentage of the population that belongs to the Southern Baptist Association. This measure is a state level variable that has observations for each time point for each state. This data comes from the Southern Baptist Handbook. This is a proxy measure of conservative Christian denominations. As was explained in Chapter 2, multiple studies show that conservative religious individuals have moved from being solidly Democrats in the 1950s to being heavily Republican in the 1990s (Green 2010, but see Manza and Brooks 1999). This measure allows the author to account for the role of religious conservatism in changes in major party index for the time period examined. The Southern Baptist Church is the largest fundamentalist denomination in both the United States and the South. During the period under study, there has been a national trend with mainline denominations declining as a percentage of the population and fundamentalist denominations growing as a percentage of the population. There is little reason to believe that the growth of fundamentalist denominations would not be seen in the membership of the Southern Baptist Church. Expecting the percentage of southerners who belong to fundamentalist churches to increase over time, this increase is expected to increase the strength of the Republican Party in the South. This expectation relies not just on increasing enrollment, but increasing identification. The South has always been predominately Christian and heavily Southern Baptist, so changes in membership should come from other less conservative denominations.

¹⁹ Data from the 1950s comes from the Southern Baptist Handbook. I would like to thank Trey Hood for sharing data from the same source from 1960-2010. Some percentages were constructed by the author. Population estimates come from various U.S. Census files.

I also include *Percentage of the two-party vote for the Democratic nominee for president*. This score is the Democratic percentage of the two-party vote for president. The mean of this measure is 53.07 and the standard deviation is 10.27. There is some thought that presidential politics made it so that other Republican candidates could find success in southern elections. Eisenhower managed to win five southern states. That meant that if one wanted to hold elective office in the South, they no longer had to run under the Democratic Party to have a chance of winning (Airstrup 1996). Others argued that success came first at lower-level elected offices and success there led to success at higher level offices (Lublin 2006). This is far from a settled question, and this will allow comparison with previous studies that have looked at this question.

I also include *Republican president* in Model 7. This variable is a dichotomous measure. This measure is coded 1 if there is a Republican president and 0 if there is a Democratic president. Galvin's work has shown that during this period, Republican presidents sought to expand the party apparatus to their benefit, while Democratic presidents used the existing party infrastructure to mobilize the Democratic Party's sizable advantage in the mass public (2010). The activities of the Republican presidents included fundraising for the party, campaigning and organizing for the party in midterm elections, and appointing experienced personnel to lead the Republican National Committee. This expansion of the party, by those presidents, should yield positive results for other Republican office seekers, which is expected to increase *state party strength*.

Included in all models are state-level fixed effects. State-level fixed effects are included for both a methodological and theoretical reason. These fixed effects control for differences in the y-intercepts for each state. Also, there is extensive literature that talks about the political differences between the Deep South and Peripheral South states. This literature expresses that the

Deep South States started out more Democratic and stayed so for a longer period of time, but are now more strongly Republican than the Peripheral South. Virginia was chosen as the control, so it is expected that the Deep South states will be significant and negative. I used Virginia as a control because Richmond was the capital of the Confederacy, supporting the argument that Virginia was the most southern of the Peripheral South States.

Why So Many Models?

In all, I estimate eight different models of Republican Party strength. As previously mentioned, I consider multiple models with alternative measures to determine if any positive findings might be the result of incorrectly specifying the model. I also included alternative dependent variables to explore secondary questions of interest (previously explored but unresolved theories). I will now explain the purpose for the inclusion of each model.

Model 1 serves as the basic model against which the other models will be compared. This model measures the role of class, race, turnout, and the role of agriculture in society on the major party index. The primary independent variable of interest, in all of the models, is the interaction between the percentage of workers in agriculture and per capita income. If my hypothesis is correct, then as both measures increase, so should Republican Party strength. *Percentage workers agriculture* will be used in the model to measure agriculture's importance to the society. Because of the structure of the percentage of workers in agriculture variable, increases in this measure equate to decreases in agriculture-related employment. It is expected that increases in agricultural employment will result in increases in party strength because of southern social dislocation and replacement. The per capita income variable measures the relative wealth of the people in each state. As per capita income rises, one should expect the party strength to go up. This increase in income, as well as the awareness of higher wealth, pushed more people towards

the policies of the Republican Party. The first model also includes the measure of congressional election turnout. I expect that if turnout is related to party strength, it would, in this case, do so in a positive direction, because the new voters have less attachment to the Democratic Party than people that have previously voted for democratic candidates. Turnout may have a diminished effect over time as more of the electorate turns out to vote and time moves away from an era of dominance by the Democratic Party. The model will also include a dichotomous variable for midterm elections. It is common knowledge that midterm elections have a whiter, older electorate than do presidential elections. The first model also includes the percentage of black people registered to vote in each state variable. It is expected that as more black people registered, more black people voted, and they voted for Democratic candidates. My measure of the percentage of Southern Baptists in each state is expected to have a positive relationship with Republican Party strength. The first model also includes the polarization of the parties in the House of Representatives. A positive relationship is expected between the polarization of the House of Representatives and party strength.

Model 2 removes *Polarization of Congress* and adds the mean for the southern Democratic members of Congress measure. The third model replaces these measures of ideology with *Polarization of the Senate*. I expect that as Democratic members of Congress get more liberal, (as their score becomes a larger negative number) this will push voters to vote more Republican. I also expect that *Polarization of the Senate*, much like I expect from *Polarization of Congress*, will lead to greater Republican Party strength, as conservative Democrats become disillusioned with their party.

Model 4 is the same as the Model 1 except that it considers relative income instead of per capita income, as well as its interaction with agricultural employment. As I previously

mentioned, research has suggested that voters vote based on class using their perception of relative income instead of their overall income. I have concerns with this finding, however, and so Model 4 represents my attempt at taking a closer look at this relationship. If the results follow previous findings, then findings should show both relative income and the interaction between relative income and agricultural employment produce positive significant findings.

In the next set of models, the dependent variable is *National party strength*. There has long been a disagreement over the manner of the shift in party strength in the South. Some have argued that the realignment of southern politics started at the top. Others argue that the realignment was fueled by the success of down-ballot candidates, which led to ambitious Republican politicians seeking and finding success higher up the ballot. Besides the change in the dependent variable, there is also a change to Models 5 and 6, which include the state party index variable. This will allow a test of the top down/bottom up question on the southern realignment. This will be further assisted by the inclusion of the variable for a percentage of the major-party vote for the Republican candidate for president.

In the last set of models, Model 7 and Model 8, *State party strength* is the dependent variable. Model 7 includes a dichotomous variable for whether the president that won the most recent election is a Republican. *Republican president* is 1 if the president is Republican and 0 if the President is a Democrat. This measure should help examine Galvin's theory that recent Republican presidents have sought to build the strength of their party. Model 8 instead includes the percentage of the two-party vote for president which went to the Republican nominee. Since there has been some question in the southern politics literature as to whether the changes in party strength started at the lower-levels or at the presidential level, so the inclusion of the Republican percentage of the two-party vote in Model 8 will help us see if there was a top-down effect on

party strength. If the results of this measure are positive, those results suggest that the top-down approach of party building is what occurred in the post-World War II South.

Conclusion

The goal in writing this chapter has been to explain what is included in each of the eight models and why specific variables were chosen for each model. The models I use have the dual purpose of examining both my hypothesis and alternatives from previous literature. The use of multiple models is necessary to adequately examine my hypothesis and its relationship with previous findings. Multiple models also were deemed necessary to avoid problems with misspecification. This analysis was not just intended to test my hypothesis, but to compare my hypothesis to previous findings. There are multiple models that have several purposes. The goal of the next chapter is to provide the analysis and an explanation of the results.

Chapter 4: Analysis and Discussion

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the results of the analyses described in Chapter 3. When applicable, comparisons will be made between my findings and those from related literature. These models can be seen in Tables 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3.

Before looking at the theoretical variables, it is necessary to examine the lag of the dependent variable to see if it is significant in all models. This variable serves to remove autocorrelation from the models and as a test to see if there is an error or unforeseen problem with the data and analytical strategy. The lag of the dependent variable is significant in all models and is highly predictive of the dependent variable. This is good news for my subsequent analyses.

I will start with the three primary variables of interest, *Per capita income*, *Percentage workers agriculture*, and *Per capita income* Percentage workers agriculture*. First, the coefficient on *Per capita income* is not significant in any of the models of either *Major party index* or *National party strength*. Model 6 shows a t-score of 1.96, which is typically the cutoff for our 95 percent confidence level, but the output showed a probability level of 0.051. Moreover, the direction of the coefficient on *Per capita income* is negative in Models 5 and 6, which suggests that increased per capita income decreased national party strength. A negative coefficient contradicts previous research on the role of class in voter choice, suggesting that class did not have a direct impact on party strength. Model 4 shows that relative income does not have a significant relationship with *Major party index*.

Table 4.1: Major Party Index (MPI) Models

	(1) mpi	(2) Mpi	(3) mpi	(4) mpi
Lag	0.634*** (10.70)	0.633*** (10.61)	0.628*** (10.57)	0.657*** (11.21)
Turnout	0.00100 (1.42)	0.000986 (1.40)	0.00113 (1.56)	0.000888 (1.26)
Midterm	-0.00830 (-0.33)	-0.00825 (-0.33)	-0.00595 (-0.24)	-0.0118 (-0.48)
Turnout* Midterm	0.000641 (1.11)	0.000590 (1.01)	0.000599 (1.04)	0.000694 (1.21)
Per Capita Income	-7.10e-08 (-0.07)	0.000000178 (0.17)	2.05e-08 (0.01)	
Agricultural Employment	0.00625** (2.71)	0.00526* (2.22)	0.00621** (2.69)	0.00437 (1.17)
Agricultural Employment * Per Capita Income	0.000000508* (2.24)	0.000000495* (2.19)	0.000000511* (2.26)	
Black Registration	0.000510 (1.09)	0.000454 (0.99)	0.000479 (1.00)	0.000478 (1.00)
Nonwhite	0.00108 (0.82)	0.000895 (0.65)	0.00139 (1.04)	0.00108 (0.76)
Southern Baptist	-0.334 (-1.25)	-0.303 (-1.12)	-0.393 (-1.50)	-0.177 (-0.68)
Polarization of House of Representatives	0.0604 (1.67)			0.0686* (2.13)
Alabama	0.0177 (0.42)	0.0142 (0.34)	0.0235 (0.59)	0.00948 (0.22)
Arkansas	-0.0127 (-0.45)	-0.0186 (-0.63)	-0.00804 (-0.29)	0.00422 (0.12)
Florida	-0.00838 (-0.56)	-0.00920 (-0.61)	-0.00905 (-0.60)	0.00457 (0.30)

Table 4.1 Continued

	(1) mpi	(2) mpi	(3) mpi	(4) mpi
Georgia	-0.00462 (-0.15)	-0.00667 (-0.22)	-0.00174 (-0.06)	-0.0110 (-0.36)
Louisiana	0.0258 (0.99)	0.0272 (1.06)	0.0254 (0.98)	0.0316 (1.17)
Mississippi	0.0122 (0.24)	0.00756 (0.15)	0.0150 (0.30)	0.0144 (0.27)
North Carolina	0.0185 (0.72)	0.0156 (0.60)	0.0214 (0.86)	0.0166 (0.61)
South Carolina	0.0262 (0.79)	0.0245 (0.74)	0.0291 (0.90)	0.0191 (0.56)
Tennessee	0.0403 (1.37)	0.0360 (1.19)	0.0486 (1.74)	0.0349 (1.08)
Texas	0.00659 (0.46)	0.00412 (0.28)	0.0102 (0.73)	0.0114 (0.75)
Polarization of Senate		0.110 (1.87)		
Southern Democrats			-0.118 (-0.89)	
Relative Income				0.000537 (0.72)
Agricultural Employment * Relative Income				0.0000395 (0.71)
Constant	-0.571** (-2.65)	-0.502* (-2.31)	-0.552* (-2.54)	-0.439 (-1.20)
<i>N</i>	330	330	330	330

t statistics in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 4.2: National Party Strength Models

	(5) federalmpi	(6) federalmpi
natLag	0.355*** (5.40)	0.353*** (5.36)
Turnout	0.00168* (2.04)	0.00161* (1.97)
Midterm	-0.0156 (-0.48)	-0.0119 (-0.37)
Turnout* Midterm	0.000885 (1.05)	0.000705 (0.85)
Per Capita Income	-0.00000262 (-1.58)	-0.00000322 (-1.96)
Agricultural Employment	0.0119** (2.85)	0.0118** (2.81)
Agricultural Employment*Per Capita Income	0.000000632 (1.83)	0.000000579 (1.67)
Black Registration	0.000361 (0.66)	0.000162 (0.29)
Nonwhite	0.000377 (0.19)	0.0000149 (0.01)
Southern Baptist	-0.577 (-1.66)	-0.590 (-1.70)
Polarization of House of Representatives	0.103* (2.17)	0.0863 (1.77)
Alabama	0.0566 (1.06)	0.0683 (1.27)
Arkansas	-0.00808 (-0.23)	0.00270 (0.08)

Table 4.2 Continued

	(5) federalmpi	(6) federalmpi
Florida	-0.0299 (-1.57)	-0.0322 (-1.69)
Georgia	-0.00170 (-0.04)	0.00544 (0.14)
Louisiana	0.0235 (0.77)	0.0248 (0.81)
Mississippi	0.0761 (1.14)	0.0903 (1.35)
North Carolina	0.0443 (1.42)	0.0477 (1.55)
South Carolina	0.0499 (1.22)	0.0563 (1.37)
Tennessee	0.0664 (1.80)	0.0660 (1.79)
Texas	0.0159 (0.87)	0.0199 (1.08)
Statempi		0.0764 (1.52)
Constant	-0.899* (-2.38)	-0.859* (-2.26)
<i>N</i>	340	340

t statistics in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 4.3: State Party Strength Models

	(7) statempi	(8) statempi
stateLag	0.362*** (6.23)	0.361*** (6.21)
Republican President	-0.000460 (-0.05)	
Turnout	-0.000223 (-0.22)	-0.000225 (-0.22)
Midterm	-0.105** (-2.70)	-0.103** (-2.66)
Turnout* Midterm	0.00340*** (3.54)	0.00335*** (3.47)
Per Capita Income	0.00000387* (2.27)	0.00000386* (2.26)
Agricultural Employment	0.00644* (2.11)	0.00588 (1.73)
Agricultural Employment* Per Capita Income	0.000000581 (1.92)	0.000000554 (1.76)
Black Registration	0.00159* (2.42)	0.00154* (2.40)
Nonwhite	0.00453* (2.16)	0.00434* (2.10)
Southern Baptist	-0.0594 (-0.15)	-0.0184 (-0.05)
Polarization of House of Representatives	0.120* (2.23)	0.126* (2.38)
Alabama	-0.0814 (-1.29)	-0.0860 (-1.36)
Arkansas	-0.0618 (-1.55)	-0.0628 (-1.59)

Table 4.3 Continued

	(7)	(8)
	statempi	statempi
Florida	0.0223 (0.88)	0.0227 (0.91)
Georgia	-0.0556 (-1.15)	-0.0559 (-1.18)
Louisiana	-0.0243 (-0.59)	-0.0220 (-0.54)
Mississippi	-0.104 (-1.33)	-0.111 (-1.42)
North Carolina	-0.0137 (-0.35)	-0.0155 (-0.41)
South Carolina	-0.0511 (-0.98)	-0.0535 (-1.03)
Tennessee	0.0320 (0.75)	0.0277 (0.64)
Texas	-0.0185 (-0.82)	-0.0202 (-0.90)
Percentage Vote Republican President		0.000772 (1.28)
Constant	-0.773** (-2.77)	-0.760* (-2.51)
<i>N</i>	340	340

t statistics in parentheses
 * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

While there were theoretical reasons to include a measure of relative income in Model 4, the use of *Relative income* appears to be less effective at getting at the differences in income and how they affect voting than the use of *Per capita income*.

Previous quantitative studies show no relationship between agricultural employment and party strength (Hood, Morris and Kidd 2004; 2012). These studies contradict literature using historical and qualitative analyses (Cobb 1987). The results of my analysis provide support for the existence of a relationship between agricultural employment and Republican Party strength. In the first three models, *Percentage workers agriculture* is statistically significant and positively correlated with *Major party index*. This means that as the percentage of agricultural employment falls, Republican Party strength rises. The *National party strength* models and Model 7 confirm this finding. Model 8 does not produce statistically significant results at the traditional confidence levels, but the coefficient on *Percentage workers agriculture* does have a t-score of 1.74, which is above the 90 percent confidence interval. In all, these findings, except for those from Model 4, confirm the results of preceding studies that were of a historical and qualitative nature. It appears from these models that social dislocation and replacement had an impact on the electoral viability of the Republican Party during the period under study.

Next, I look at the effects of the interaction between *Percentage workers agriculture* and *Per capita income*. If my hypothesis is correct, then the interaction should be positively related to *Major party index*. In Models 1, 2, and 3, my hypothesis is confirmed. The size of the coefficients in those models is fairly small, but that small size, is in part, due to the size of the interaction terms. That, however, does not explain everything. The standard deviation for the interaction is 45,622.29. If one experiences a move of 50,000 in the interaction term, for Model 1, it would move the major party index 0.025. This change is an effect, but it is not as far-

reaching as was hypothesized. Turning to Model 4, the interaction between *Relative income* and *Percentage workers agriculture* does not produce statistically significant results. Model 4 predicts that a move of one standard deviation of *Percentage workers agriculture*Relative income* would only account for a 0.015 move of *Major party index*. The first thing I notice with these results is that the difference between the insignificant findings in Model 4 for the primary interaction and the significant findings for Model 1 for the primary interaction is not particularly large. The difference between a standard deviation move in Model 1 and Model 4 is 0.008. While this is enough to change outcomes of multiple elections across the South during this period of study, it is not that great of a difference. As for the rest of the models, in each case the coefficient is positive, but it is significant only at the 90 percent confidence level. The fact that the findings here are consistently in the correct direction provides support for my hypothesis.

The lack of significance for the interaction of *Percentage workers agriculture* and *Per capita income* in the *State party strength* and *National party strength* models is worth noting. I consider multiple model specifications to determine if my hypothesis is correct. There is a lack of consistent, significant findings between the three sets of models, though the direction of the findings is consistent. These findings suggest that there may be something wrong with the way some of the models are specified. It is expected that as communities became more aware that the economy was affecting them financially, that those communities that benefited financially from changes in the economic structure would become more strongly economic policy focused and thus more Republican. These findings point to a more complex explanation, than both what I expected, and was presented within the previous literature on the subject. Another explanation may be that the findings are meaningful but they are complicated, not by the relationships being examined, but by the nature of the data. There were several missing observations in a few of my

independent variables. Given how I interpolated the missing data, I may have made the use of regression analysis possible, but substantially muted the effects of the variables used. In “Caveats” in Chapter 5, I will more fully explain how the lack of time points and data for some of those time points may be muting some significant underlying relationships.

Upon further inspection, it is apparent across all the models that there is a lack of significant state-level fixed effects for Deep South states. This is unexpected, especially since previous literature speaks a great deal about the sub-regional divide between the Peripheral South and the Deep South. Previous findings about this division are stated in extremely strong terms, and research universally shows that this division exists in voting and partisanship. For this reason, state-level fixed effects served not just a statistical purpose but also a theoretical purpose. The constant in all models is the state of Virginia. Since I expected a difference between the Peripheral South states and the Deep South states, I anticipated that I would see the state-level fixed effects that would differ the most to be Alabama, Mississippi, South Carolina, or Louisiana. This did not materialize. In all of the models, the t-scores for those variables are not statistically significant. That means that those states do not have statistically different major party index scores than the state of Virginia, a Peripheral South state.

My curiosity was piqued relating to the findings for Tennessee in the party strength and national party strength models. While not viewed as significant at traditional levels, the results from Table 4.2 for Tennessee are significant at the 90 percent confidence level. There have been previous discussions among scholars concerning which states constitute the “South.” While the 11 former Confederate states are typically used, some analysts rely upon the Census Bureau’s “regions” to determine which states are part of “the South.” The Census does not lump Tennessee together with the other southern states. The findings do, however, suggest that

Tennessee has a stronger Republican Party, at least when looking at national elections, than do the remainder of the southern states. This is most probably because Tennessee started with its most populous sub-region, east Tennessee, as extremely Republican. The curious thought is that the *State party strength* models show that Tennessee elections are not much different from elections in the rest of the southern states. The confidence interval for Models 7 and 8 support the null that Tennessee's elections at the state-level do not differ from the election results from Virginia (the constant). Why are these findings interesting? If one is just looking at the political history of Tennessee, one might say it is the least southern of the southern states. Tennessee has long been considered a state of divided political loyalties, with the most populous sub-region, East Tennessee being one of the most Republican areas of the South. Because of this, Tennessee started off more Republican so it had less to move, at least at the national level. Gerrymandering and the lack of candidates for offices explain why Tennessee had a lower value on my state party strength measure than many other states. The primary argument in favor of considering Tennessee a southern state is that those who study southern politics have known that Tennessee is different because of the strong Republican Party in east Tennessee that existed in few other places in the South. Moreover, that strength still stems from the defining point in southern history, the Civil War. Tennesseans, at the start of the period of study, are aligned like the other states of the South with political divisions based on the manner in which one's community viewed the Civil War. If these findings are supported by further analysis, then scholars may need to drop Tennessee from analyses of voting in the South.

Next, I will examine turnout. First, it appears that turnout does not have a significant impact on my measure of overall major party strength. In the *National party strength* models, however, turnout does seem to have a significant and positive impact, with increases in turnout

leading to increases in national party strength. This finding is to be expected because at the start of the period under study, when whether one voted at all was highly dependent upon class. Today this relationship is not as strong. Looking at Figures 3.3 and 3.4, there is an obvious, though uneven upward trend in turnout in Southern elections, and midterm effects are also visible. All of this implies that more new voters were showing up at the polls and voting for at least some Republican candidates in high-profile races. Turnout is not, in and of itself, significant in the state party strength models. This suggests that while candidates such as Senator Lott and President Regan were able to convince new southern voters to show up and vote for them, these new voters still voted for Democratic candidates in state-level races²⁰.

To control for those effects on turnout, I included a variable for midterm elections and I included an interaction between midterm and turnout in all models (listed in the models as *turnout*midterm*). These exercises do not produce any significant results in the national party strength models. Interestingly, coefficients on both variables are significant in the *State party strength* models. The coefficient on *Midterm* is negatively signed and statistically and substantively significant. The coefficient shows that during midterm elections, party strength for elected state officials was depressed 0.103 (On a scale on a scale from 0 to 1, this is a sizable disadvantage to the Republican Party). Running counter to this finding, the coefficients on *Turnout*midterm* for Models 7 and 8 are positive and significant. To put this in perspective, an increase of 20 percentage points in turnout during midterms would have increased state party strength 0.067 out of 1. Increases in midterm turnout during this period were evident in almost all of the southern states. The increase in midterm turnout can be seen in Figures 3.3 and 3.4.

²⁰ One can see how a high-profile Republican candidate attempting to gain the vote of new Democratic voters may have hurt the Republican Party's chances down ballot.

This additional finding, therefore, is interpreted to mean that a conclusion to the effect of increased voter turnout in the South benefitting the Democratic Party is not correct.²¹

I included two different measures of race in each model: *Percentage black registration* and *Percentage nonwhite population*. The coefficients on both these variables are positive and statistically significant for the state party strength models. This supports both the findings of racial threat and relative advantage studies. However, until the most recent decade, the nonwhite population during the time under study was decreasing across the South. In fact, according to other studies (Hood and McKee 2010) during this period, an exodus of the black population from the South to the Northeast and Midwest occurred. Looking at Models 7 and 8, with the percentage of nonwhites in the South falling, these models would predict that the reduced percentage of nonwhites would have reduced state party strength. Neither of these two measures of racial composition is statistically significant in the models predicting party strength and national party strength, which makes the state party strength findings suspect.

I examined next the different measures of polarization in the models. The coefficient on *Polarization of the House of Representatives* in Model 1 does not reach statistical significance. I include *Polarization of the House of Representatives* in Model 4 as well, and in this model, the coefficient does meet statistical significance. Figure 3.6 displays data showing that in the 1950s this measure was below 0.5 and had risen to above 1.0 by 2010. With a technical limit from 0 to 1 for party strength, the 0.5 change in my House polarization measure accounts for an increase of 0.034 of the major party index, which is not large, but does explain a portion of the variation in the major party index. Model 2 includes *Polarization of the Senate*. The coefficient on this variable does not meet traditional levels of significance, but the model does suggest that this

²¹ There are obviously some limits to this benefit based purely on the demographic composition of the people that vote for Republican candidates.

variable has a sizable impact on party strength. While the coefficient for *Polarization of the Senate* in Model 2 is a larger number than *Polarization of the House of Representatives* in Model 1, this difference should be tempered by the smaller increase in *Polarization of the Senate* as seen in Figure 3.6. Model 3 shows that *Major party index* is not substantially affected by the stances of local members of Congress, as the coefficient on *Southern Democrats* is not significant. In the models of *National party strength* and *State party strength*, all of the coefficients on *Polarization of the House of Representatives* are in the anticipated direction. Moreover, in three of the four models, the coefficient on *Polarization of the House of Representatives* is statistically significant.

Turning next to *Percentage Southern Baptist*, it is seen that the coefficient on this variable is not significant in any of the models. Part of the reason for this is that the standard errors of the coefficients are very large—the largest of any variables (though the variables are on differing scales). I hoped to demonstrate that growth of the largest conservative Christian denomination in the region would increase party strength. There is an extensive scholarly literature on the relationship between religion/faith (denominations, strength, and activeness) and partisanship/voting (which is a similar concept to party strength). There is no evidence of that relationship in these models. This does not mean that religion played no role in the movement of southerners to the Republican Party. Most of the previous findings are based upon the importance of religion to a voter. This is a concept that was not readily measured at the state level. In these models, I instead used a measure of whether the person was in the largest conservative denomination, Southern Baptists, during this time period. The intention was to see if the increases in partisanship to the Southern Baptist denomination led to increases in partisanship. The findings for this study instead suggests that movement was not caused by an

increase in Christians in the conservative denominations but from those that were already members of those denominations, finding their faith to be increasingly politically relevant.

Conclusion

The findings of the first three models provide evidence that *southerners adjusted their voting preferences due to changes in the economy, particularly where there were rising incomes*. My analyses shed some light on the idea that voters did, for at least some voting decisions, take into account changes in the structure of the economic system during the recent political realignment of the South. The other models, while not producing statistically significant results, suggest also that changes in the economy led to changes in partisanship. This said, these findings are not supported upon a further look at party strength for elections to state offices and national offices. In summary, there are no statistically significant results. It was not expected that a model of general party strength can produce significant results while models of state and national party strength do not. There are numerous processes being measured in these models; subsequently, this may hinder the strength of any particular independent variable. In the next chapter, I will explain what I believe accounts for my anomalous findings.

Other results deserve mention. First, both voter turnout and the polarization of Congress seem to affect party strength. In addition, there appears to be a substantial midterm effect.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Moving Forward

When I began this research project, I made a personal observation that led me to question some of the literature on the post-WWII realignment in the South. Older southern farmers I had met placed what I had seen as an outsized role on the importance of land as a means of wealth. I was not hearing this same kind of statements from professors, engineers, or teachers. From what I saw, people who valued the land as part of success in life thought that their mindset was predominant. It is reasonable to believe that such a thought was commonplace at a time when farming was still the dominant occupation in the South.

The literature on southern political behavior, which discusses southern realignment and party strength in the South, has only recently begun to look empirically at questions concerning the changing structure of the economy and its effects on politics (Eleid and Rodden 2006). Several studies have examined how changes in income affect voting patterns, but they have mostly ignored the effects of the shift from a southern agrarian society to a manufacturing and service-oriented South (Shafer and Johnston 2006, Stonecash 2000, Brewer and Stonecash 2001). This project was an effort to delve further into the various aspects of these economic changes and their effects on party strength in the South.

Summary of Findings

Results presented in Chapter 4 demonstrate that agricultural decline in the South probably helped make the Republican Party stronger. The interaction between *Percentage workers agriculture* and *Per capita income* has a statistically significant effect on overall Republican Party strength as measured by my variable *Major party index*. The evidence supports my hypothesis that agricultural decline did indeed increase the electoral strength of the Republican Party in the South as income increased. However, there are no statistically significant results in my analyses

of separate models of state party strength and national party strength. Under “Caveats,” I note the several statistical issues that may have resulted in the null results in Tables 4.2 and 4.3. What I had expected to find was clear evidence that southern voters responded to structural changes in the Southern economy. However, while there is some evidence here that southerners responded to changes in the structure of the economy, overall the results are not as strong as I anticipated. My analyses show that the substantive effects of the significant findings from Model 1 were only about a percentage point greater than the insignificant results from Model 4. This means that the difference between the significant findings and the insignificant findings from Model 4 do not account for much of a shift in the *Major party index*, but during the competitive periods of the post-war southern realignment this could have been more than enough to shift the election results towards the Republican Party. The shift from an agricultural economy to a service and manufacturing economy changed the way people viewed their jobs, and also changed how much people earned.

Further, my findings show that the decline in agriculture did have an impact on party strength in the South. Most of my models showed that this variable was significant, and in all models the sign was in the expected direction. This supports the idea that social dislocation and replacement changed the structure of how people voted. It would be expected that social dislocation would lead to unrest. Some examples that come to mind include the violence against civil rights protestors and massive resistance.. Today employees in this region work in engineering and management fields that are friendlier to the Republican Party. These findings suggest that social dislocation and replacement had an important impact on who won elections during this period of study

My models did produce some additional interesting findings. First, for *National party strength*, the data show that turnout is a significant driver. Specifically, I find that as turnout increased over time, so did the Republican national party strength. I also found that as turnout increases during midterm elections, Republican Party strength also increases. It appears from the findings of the previous chapter that the Republican Party was initially at a large disadvantage during midterm elections. As turnout increased during those elections, the Republican Party fared better. Also, my findings suggest that increased turnout, in general, improved the success of the Republican Party at sending elected officials to Washington, DC, but not to state capitals. I speculated that the higher profile nature of national offices such as president and senator made it easier for voters to choose to vote for Republicans, while down the ballot voters still followed their long-held Democratic partisanship. This is not a new idea (see Lublin 2006). Another thing to consider with these findings is that for the first several decades of this study, Republican candidates rarely contested many of the elections to state assemblies. This lack of Republican office seekers means that even if voters wanted to vote for a Republican candidate for the state house, they are not able to do so.

Second, the measures of race only affect Republican state party strength. In the state-level models, but not the other models, both measures of race--*Black registration* and *Nonwhite*—led to increased Republican state party strength. This supports the theories of “black threat” and “relative advantage.” The problem is that those theories only find support in their analyses of lower level offices. All of this suggests that racial effects did not mobilize white voters, but rather that the emergence of a politically active black population in the Democratic Party in southern states pushed conservatives and moderates to vote not just for Republican presidential candidates (which they already were doing), but also to vote for Republican

candidates down the ballot as well. Relative advantage says that these voters were white and conservative and there is no evidence against this theory in these findings.

Third, I failed to find evidence of an impact of religion on Republican Party strength. It should be noted that there were multiple ways that religion may have affected how southern voters voted, and that my measure only taps into a direct relationship between evangelical identification and the strength of the Republican Party. There was some thought that shifts in the number of conservative Christians could have had an impact on Republican party strength, though it is also possible that during the time under study evangelicals' faith became more important in their vote choice. It has also been found by Green that during the same period, while conservative Christians changed their party preference from the Democratic Party to the Republican Party, atheists and the unreligious developed a closer attachment to the Democratic Party (2010). This is shown both by the demographics of the respective party conventions as well as in the public opinion polling.

Caveats

One of the primary caveats of these findings is that time-series cross-sectional regressions are extremely vulnerable to alternative model specification. Usually, this is overcome by placing all possible variables into the model. As such, a model may include variables that have no link to theory, but that someone might believe has an effect on the dependent variable. Often, this means putting in blunt measures for the areas being compared. An example would be the state variables (ie. Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, etc.) in the current study. Including variables, regardless of your theory, is itself a problem that should be avoided when possible. The problem with correctly specifying a model is inherent in using a time-series cross-sectional regression.

Here, I used a lagged dependent variable model. This unquestionably depressed the effects of my independent variables on my dependent variables, though it is better than some of the alternatives (Keele and Kelly 2006). Part of the reason that many of the findings are depressed is that the number of time points and the number of variables are so similar. In Model 1, there are 21 variables and 31 time-points. About half of these are the state-level fixed effects. Because of the need to use interpolation for several of my independent variables, I am already limiting some of my ability to explain party strength. With fewer time points than I would like, the variation just may not exist adequately to explain what is happening using the time-series cross-sectional model. For all years before 1996, *Percentage workers agriculture* is only available for census years. Thus, for all of the years in which it was absent, the data points were interpolated. This obviously can reduce the variation in not just this variable, but also its interaction. Running fixed effects models is the conservative thing to do. The models can be wrong when one runs random effects models and the underlying distribution of the variables analyzed has a variation from the states that make the assumption of random effects that cross-sections (in this case: states) had the same intercept. For instance, running random effects models would be inappropriate if Tennessee was statistically more Republican than the rest of the states, or if Arkansas was statistically less Republican than the rest of the states. Fixed effects models usually are less efficient, sometimes to the point of making the models meaningless (one should not run a fixed effects model with fewer time points than independent variables). However, running a fixed effects model, in this scenario, will not produce results that suffer from errors due to statistical differences in the cross-section. For this reason, I chose, before running the analysis, to only run fixed effects because the literature had suggested that there would be some

differences, particularly Deep South/Peripheral South divisions between the states. The fact that the fixed effects were not significant does not change the earlier research on the subject.

I also used interpolation to impute missing data for many of my independent variables. Interpolation can reduce the ability of an independent variable to explain a dependent variable by reducing the movement of the dependent variable (Allison 2001). Interpolation is comparable to replacing the actual data with a trend. You do not expect the trend to explain short-term movements in the dependent variable as well as the actual data.

Future Research

The findings of this study produce puzzling conclusions. Moving forward, researchers should look at the role of economics in political change in the South at a more local level. A mixed methods approach is most appropriate for this future research because it would allow for interviews with local party leaders to guide the statistical analyses. Also, most people are citizens of a community and less so citizens of a state, so those people should be better able to notice the economic change at the community-level instead of a state-level. One particular problem with doing research at the county level is that often data is not available at this level. Some of these issues are solved using multilevel modeling, but a statistical “fix” does not cure the absence of data.

One of the interesting findings of this project concerned the role of turnout in affecting party strength. There are several ways forward. For example, it is possible that turnout drove changes outside of the South. This seems unlikely because the South had such anemic turnout at the start of the period under study, which was not the case for the rest of the nation. There are other means of looking at this question, including looking at cohorts of first-time voters in the South, and using data from the American National Election Study, General Social Survey,

Cooperative Congressional Election Study and other excellent surveys. This analysis is something as simple as a cohort analysis that incorporates both changes in the partisanship of southern voters and changes in reported turnout. The cohort analysis can also account for the differences between midterm and presidential turnout among different racial, income, and age groups. By using polling data, however, I would not be directly measuring party strength, but would instead be looking at individual factors such as voter choice or partisanship.

One of the questions that I would like to examine in the future is what appears as a growing divide between the southern states that border the Atlantic Ocean and those of the Interior South. This divide is evident when one looks at the election results for the previous five presidential election cycles, though there are also changes occurring at lower political levels. There are a couple of things that theory suggests could be occurring. First, previous research has shown that in states with mature social safety nets, there is not much of a gap between how people vote based upon class (such as is found in the South) (Gelman et. al 2008, Gelman, Kenworthy, and Su 2010). The South has lagged behind on the social safety net from states in New England. I suspect that the social safety net is strongest in southern states in the Atlantic South, in part because of the demands of retirees in these states. Also, previous research has suggested that North Carolina (Hood and McKee 2010) and other Atlantic South states have seen a recent immigration of black people from other regions of the United States. The immigration of black voters back to the South, along with other demographic changes, may have resulted in the dramatic changes in voting patterns, with a recent voting trend that was more Democratic in the Atlantic South. This trend was most evident in the last several presidential elections. Because demographics are an easy explanation, I can chart the changes in the partisanship of upper and lower-income whites in each sub-region. If there are any shifts in the differences in the

partisanship of upper-income and lower-income whites during a particular period, then further examination of changes in a state's social safety net further investigated as causes of the decrease of the class divide. I can then examine the changes in the racial composition of the electorate. This will determine how much of the change appears to be the result of changes in the composition of the electorate. Finally, an analysis should be done by taking data from national polling (probably the American National Election Study and the Cooperative Congressional Election Study) and then using multilevel modeling to predict the differences in class-based voting in each state. This analysis can be done for both presidential elections and elections for Congress and the Senate. Such analysis can also control for demographics.

Another area for future analysis is the role of Independents in the post-World War II shift in partisanship. Researchers have for decades assumed that independents were either closeted partisans or apathetic nonvoters (Dalton 2013). Recent research suggests that there has been a shift in the behavior of independent voters. Some independents are apoliticals who have little knowledge about politics, do not see politics as mattering to them, and are unlikely to participate in politics by voting, giving money, or volunteering with a campaign than other members of the electorate. There has been a steady growth nationally since the 1950s in apartisans. These Independents vote and take part in campaigns at rates comparable to partisans, though they do not identify with a party. In his book, Dalton found evidence that apartisans are different from partisans. This finding runs counter to the prevailing wisdom that Independent leaners and most Independents are actually closeted partisans. First, social science needs research to see if the increase in apartisans also occurred in the South. Additionally, analyses could be done to determine whether or not southern apartisans are more likely to switch their vote between parties in consecutive elections, and to see if they are more likely to split their tickets than other voters.

Researchers should also look at the role of apartisans in fluctuations in party strength. It is easy to see that an increase in apartisans should lead to larger swings in party strength. This would require estimates of the numbers of apartisans by the state, which is possible using hierarchical modeling to derive the estimates.

Future analyses should look at the policy changes regarding agriculture in the South, and the role that agriculture plays in the economy. The areas that particularly interest me are state and federal policies towards non-traditional farming such as aquaculture, organic farming, aquaponics, and hydroponic farming. I am also interested in the role of public opinion in policy changes towards food safety in the United States. While some argue that this is not a relevant point for future inquiry, the size of the market for organic, locally grown or non-traditional agricultural products has increased exponentially. Many of these non-traditional forms of agriculture are far more policy sensitive than traditional agriculture. Whole Foods, Earth Fare, and other organic food markets appear to be increasing market share. How are states and the Food and Drug Administration responding to this increased demand for organically certified food? And does public opinion affect these policies? This area has seen little research, in part, because questions about food safety are uncommon in polls.

Final Thoughts

When you ask many people in the discipline “what caused southerners to switch after World War II to supporting the Republican Party” you will most likely hear race and racism. There has been a growing literature on the southern realignment that says that while race and racism may have been a factor, it was actually class that led southern whites to favor the Republican Party (Shafer and Johnston 2006, Stonecash 2000). My findings support the literature regarding class, by showing a direct link between the decline of the role of agriculture in southern society and

Republican Party strength, as well as a link between changes in income and class and Republican Party strength.

This analysis provides an initial investigation of the link between an economic change, the decline in agricultural employment, and the strengthening of the Republican Party in the South. The findings show a distinct link between the decline of agriculture in the South, increases in per capita income in the South, and the increase in the strength of the Republican Party in the South. There is previous research that supports the idea that a changing economy in the South could have caused increases in the strength of the Republican Party (Key 1984). The analysis discussed in Chapter 4 provides additional support of this theory. Recent literature, however, indicates something different (Hood, Kidd, and Morris 2012). The existence of contrary recent analyses indicates the need for additional research into this topic.

There was also support for the idea that increases in income that accompanied the decline of agriculture were also responsible for some of the increased ability of the Republican Party to get Republican candidates elected in the post-World War II South. The strength of this effect was not large, but over the period of study there were many close elections that this structurally driven change in income may have determined. The role of income on the changes in party strength in the South was mixed, with positive statistical results at the state level, but strangely negative results (that went against previous findings) for the national level models.

This further highlights the role that the decline in agriculture had on class structure. There was also support for the idea that increases in income that accompanied the decline of agriculture were responsible for some of the increased ability of the Republican Party to get Republican candidates elected in the post-World War II South.

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Vita

John Dickey, born in Huntsville, Alabama is the son of Kyle Dickey, Donna Robinson, and the step-son of Jim Robinson. Upon graduating Lincoln County High School, John attended Motlow State Community College-Lynchburg receiving an Associates of Sciences degree. John's next scholastic venture was in attendance at the University of Memphis. While there, John's life within the campus community illustrated academic excellence, and commitment to service completing his term as both senator and clerk with the student government senate and as a justice on the student government court. During his study at Memphis, John also interned in the offices of Congresswoman Marsha Blackburn. Subsequently, John sought and completed his Master's Degree in political science from the University of Tennessee-Knoxville. Currently, Mr. Dickey seeks completion of his Doctorate degree in Political Science at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville.