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Grassroots Politics in South Carolina: A Comparative Analysis of Democratic and Republican County Chairman *

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INTRODUCTION

The general pattern of party organization in the United States is characterized by noncohesive, decentralized and dispersed power and authority. Samuel Eldersveld has referred to the organization of American political parties as a stratarchy.¹ Stratarchy refers to a diffusion of power within each level of the party structure so that power resides in and is exercised at each level.² Within this arrangement there is no ruling elite; rather, there are several ruling elites, each with some degree of independence from other levels of party organization.

The organizational pattern of the major parties is based on the assumption that a party committee is desirable for each electoral unit. While the dispersal of power varies greatly from state to state, the dominance of the county committee is still the rule in most states.³ Despite the relative importance of the county committee and its executive officer, the county chairman, there have been few studies undertaken by political scientists which examine the county party leader.⁴

* A revision of a paper presented at the 1976 meeting of the South Carolina Political Science Association.

¹ For a detailed description of stratarchy see Samuel J. Eldersveld, *Political Parties: A Behavioral Analysis* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1964), Chapter 5, pp. 98-117.

² Frank Feigert and M. Margaret Conway, *Parties and Politics in America* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1976), p. 69.

³ Frank J. Sorauf, *Party Politics in America*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1972), p. 69.

⁴ Some of the studies which examine county chairmen include the following: Leo Epstein, *Politics in Wisconsin* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1956); William J. Crotty, "The Social Attributes of Party Organizational Activists in a Transitional Party System," *Western Political Quarterly* 20 (1967), pp. 669-681; Thomas A. Flinn and Frederick M. Wirt, "Local Party Leaders: Groups of Like-Minded Men," *Midwestern Journal of Political Science* 9 (1965), pp. 77-98; Philip L. Martin, Thomas H. Roback and Donald P. Lacy, "Republican Grassroots Leadership in Virginia and West Virginia," in *Politics* 74 (Greenville, N. C.: Eastern Carolina University, 1974), pp. 1-26; Ted Baker and Robert Steed, "Southern Political Elites and Social Change: An Exploratory Study," in *Politics* 74, pp. 27-37; and Samuel Patterson, "Characteristics of Party Leaders," *Western Political Quarterly* 16 (June, 1963), pp. 332-352.

A study of county chairmen in a Southern state becomes more significant when one considers the political metamorphosis undergone by the South in recent years. The four institutions which V. O. Key described in 1949 as underpinning the Southern polity. (1) disfranchisement, (2) the one-party Democratic political system, (3) malapportionment, and (4) segregation have either disappeared or have undergone significant change.⁵ In addition, the Southern economy has become more diversified and less dependent on agriculture. Where agriculture remains important, it too has changed and become diversified. Cotton the King (or tyrant) is no more. Such changes in the South led the late Whitney M. Young, Jr., executive director of the National Urban League to state, "If most of the South has a farther way to go than the rest of America, I believe that it is at least going there quicker."⁶

The purpose of this study is two-fold. First, it is designed to analyze the Democratic and Republican county chairmen in South Carolina in order to ascertain how they compare with their counterparts in other states. Second, it examines the ideological outlook of grassroots party officials to see if one can deduce the direction of Southern politics today.

THE METHOD

The data for this study were collected from Democratic and Republican county chairmen in December, 1975 and January, 1976. Mail questionnaires were sent to all county chairmen, 46 Democrats and 45 Republicans. The initial response was approximately 55 percent for both parties. The second letter in January, 1976 increased the response rate to 72 percent (33) for the Democrats and 69 percent (31) for the Republicans.

The use of a mail questionnaire was dictated by time and financial considerations. It was the least time consuming and expensive method available to the researcher. Although the mail questionnaire has difficulties as a research technique (mainly low and biased responses), it can be valuable in a study of elite political activists. The 70 percent (64 chairmen) response rate here indicates that such activists will be more inclined to participate and assist in the research project.⁷

⁵ Numan Bartley and Hugh Graham, *Southern Politics and the Second Reconstruction* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1975), p. 184.

⁶ Neal Pierce, *The Deep South States of America* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1972), p. 26.

⁷ For a discussion of ways to increase the response to mail questionnaires see Arnold S. Linsky, "Stimulating Responses to Mailed Questionnaires," *Public Opinion Quarterly* (Spring, 1975), pp. 82-101.

THE FINDINGS

Socio Economic Characteristics

Various studies of party activists and leaders indicate that they come from a higher socio-economic level than the population as a whole. As Table I indicates, South Carolina county chairmen follow this pattern. In terms of occupational status, a plurality of Democrats are lawyers (24.2 percent or 8). Business executives and self-employed businessmen constitute the second largest group (18.2 percent or 6 for each category). Within the Republican Party self-employed businessmen and professionals constitute the largest categories (19.3 percent or 6 each). The second largest categories were housewives and retired persons (12.9 percent or 4 each). Of particular interest here is the presence of only one lawyer in the Republican Party's county hierarchy and the large percentage of housewives and retired persons. Since the legal profession is a breeding ground for politicians, the 3.2 percent (1) of Republican County Chairmen occupying this position seems somewhat unusual. One possible explanation is the historical political dominance of the Democratic Party. If one possessed political ambition he gravitated to the Democratic Party. While the Republican Party has made tremendous gains in organization and support in the last 12 years, it remains a minority party with little electoral success at the state and local level.⁸ Thus, those working for the Republican Party today must still seek satisfaction through their own commitment and effort and look to the future for viable statewide support. In addition, most of the counties represented in this study are predominately rural where the Republican Party is definitely in an embryonic state. Here it is unlikely that the Party will attract the politically ambitious, hence, the significant number of retired persons and housewives occupying positions as chairmen.

Better indicators of socio-economic status are education and income. County Chairmen in both parties rank high on these indicators. In terms of education, approximately two thirds of the Democrats possess a college education (66.7 or 22). Within the sample, 30.3 percent of the Chairmen (10) possess a post graduate degree. Another 15.2 percent (5) have attended college. Only 18.1 percent (6) have a high school education or less. The findings for the Republican Chairmen are similar. Over 74 percent (74.2 percent or 23) possessed college degrees. Within this sample 38.7 percent (12) possessed a graduate degree.

⁸ For example, the 1975 South Carolina State Senate was composed of 43 Democrats and 3 Republicans (2 after Arnold Goldstein was elected to fill James Edwards' vacant seat). In the state house there were 107 Democrats and 17 Republicans.

TABLE I

*Occupational, Educational and Income Characteristics
of South Carolina County Chairmen*

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Democratic</i>		<i>Republican</i>	
	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>
<i>Occupation</i>				
Lawyer	24.2	8	3.2	1
Business Executive	18.2	6	9.7	3
Self-Employed	18.2	6	19.3	6
Farmer	6.1	2	9.7	3
Sales	3.0	1	9.7	3
Public Official	6.1	2	0.0	0
Other Professional	0.0	0	19.3	6
Full Time Party Worker	3.0	1	3.2	1
Housewife	0.0	0	12.9	4
Retired	9.1	3	12.9	4
Unemployed	6.1	2	0.0	0
D.K. or N.A.	6.1	2	0.0	0
Total	100.1 ^a	33	99.9	31
<i>Educational Attainment</i>				
Grade School	3.0	1	0.0	0
Some High School	3.0	1	3.2	1
High School Diploma ...	12.1	4	9.7	3
Some College	15.2	5	12.9	4
College Degree	36.4	12	35.5	11
Graduate Degree	30.3	10	38.7	12
D.K. or N.A.	0.0	0	0.0	0
Total	100.0	33	100.0	31
<i>Income</i>				
Less than \$6,000	6.1	2	0.0	0
\$6,000 to \$8,999	3.0	1	0.0	0
\$9,000 to \$11,999	6.1	2	9.7	3
\$12,000 to \$14,999	3.0	1	9.7	3
\$15,000 to \$17,999	6.1	2	12.9	4
\$18,000 to \$20,999	9.1	3	9.7	3
\$21,000 to \$23,999	12.1	4	19.3	6
Over \$24,000	51.5	17	35.5	11
D.K. or N.A.	3.0	1	3.2	1
Total	100.0	33	100.0	31

^a—rounding error.

Another 12.9 percent (4) had attended college. Only 12.9 (4) had a high school education or less.

The personal income of our county chairmen is also quite high. Over half of the Democratic Chairmen (51.5 percent or 17) and over one third of the Republican Chairmen (35.5 or 11) fall in the highest income category (over \$24,000). If we use \$15,000 as a dividing figure, 78.8 percent (26) of the Democrats and 77.4 percent (24) of the Republicans have incomes of more than \$15,000 a year while only 18.2 percent (6) of the Democrats and 19.4 percent (6) of the Republicans fall below this figure.

Recruitment Patterns in South Carolina Politics

We have seen that the South Carolina party chairmen exhibit socio-economic characteristics different from the population as a whole. Here we will examine various factors which have led to the chairmen's involvement in the political arena.

Previous studies indicate that political leaders tend to come from families which exhibited high levels of political involvement. To see if this characteristic was present in South Carolina, the party chairmen were asked if one or more members of their immediate families had been involved in political activity. As indicated in Table 2, there is a

TABLE 2

Political Involvement of County Chairmen Families

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Democratic</i>		<i>Republican</i>	
	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>
Family Members Active in Politics	30.3	10	12.9	4
Family Members Not Active in Politics	69.7	23	87.1	27
Totals	100.0	33	100.0	31

significant difference between the Democratic and Republican county chairmen.

Approximately one third (30.3 percent or 10) of the Democrats had parents who were politically active; however, only 12.9 percent (4) of the Republicans had politically active parents. The percentage of Democrats from politically active families is not significantly different from

the findings of Lewis Bowman and G. E. Boynton;⁹ but, the Republican figure needs further analysis. One possible explanation is that due to the relative newness of the Republican Party in South Carolina most Republican Chairmen come from passive Republican families who have been supporters of the Republican Party but who have not been involved in working for a "non-existent party." A second explanation might be that many Republican County Chairmen have changed from the party affiliation of their parents as the Republican Party emerged. These individuals would more likely be drawn from families whose parents had no strong involvement and commitment to the Democratic Party other than voting. Table 3 indicates that both explanations may have some validity.

TABLE 3

Party Identification of Parents of County Chairmen

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Democratic</i>		<i>Republican</i>	
	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>
Same as Chairmen	78.8	26	48.4	15
Different than Chairmen	12.1	4	41.9	13
Parents Independent	6.1	2	3.2	1
Parents Split	3.0	1	3.2	1
D.K. or N.A.	0.0	0	3.2	1
Totals	100.0	33	99.9 ^a	31

^a—rounding error.

While 78.8 percent (26) of the Democrats profess a loyalty to the same party as their parents, only 48.4 percent (15) of the Republicans do. Only 12.1 percent (4) of the Democratic Chairmen stated that their party loyalty was different from that of their parents, while 41.9 percent (13) of the Republicans noted this change.¹⁰ Five Republican Chairmen stated that they had at one time been registered as Democrats and had switched party affiliation for reasons ranging from a desire for a two party system in South Carolina to a desire to fight socialism. Hence,

⁹ See Lewis Bowman and G. R. Boynton, "Recruitment Patterns Among Local Party Officials: A Model and Some Preliminary Findings in Selected Locales," *American Political Science Review* 60 (June, 1966), pp. 667-676. These authors found that 38 percent of the local Republican Party officials in North Carolina and 28 percent of their Massachusetts counterparts came from politically active families. In comparison the respective figures for the Democrats were 49 percent and 39 percent. The officials studied by the authors were precinct leaders as opposed to county chairmen; hence, comparative conclusions are somewhat difficult to draw.

¹⁰ Eldersveld, *Political Parties*, quoted in Gordon G. Henderson, *An Introduction to Political Parties* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), p. 146.

few Republican Chairmen come from politically active family backgrounds and the historical nature of one party politics in the South may provide the key to this phenomenon.

The reasons given for their initial involvement in politics also illustrate a difference between the Democrats and Republicans. As Table 4 illustrates, the Democratic party has benefitted from its status as the dominant party while the Republican Party has attracted a disproportionate percentage of malcontents. A plurality of the Democrats (33.3 percent or 11) cited a general interest in politics as the reason for their initial involvement. Another 18.2 percent (6) stated that they were asked by a friend to participate while 6.1 percent (2) perceived initial involvement as being good for business. In the Republican Party dissatisfaction with events was the most frequently cited reason for initial political involvement. Over half (51.6 percent or 16) of the Republicans cited this as the key to their initial involvement as compared

TABLE 4

Reason for Initial Involvement in Politics

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Democratic</i>		<i>Republican</i>	
	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>
Friends Asked	18.2	6	3.2	1
Dissatisfaction with Events	21.2	7	51.6	16
Interested in Working for specific party	15.2	5	12.9	4
Interested in working in specific election	0.0	0	3.2	1
General Interest in Politics	33.3	11	22.6	7
It Would Help Business .	6.1	2	0.0	0
Admired Specific Candidate	3.0	1	0.0	0
Wanted Competitive Parties	0.0	0	3.2	1
Wanted to Avoid Socialism	0.0	0	3.2	1
D.K. or N.A.	3.0	1	0.0	0
Totals	100.0	33	99.9 ^a	31

^a—rounding error.

to 21.2 percent (7) of the Democrats. Here we can speculate that this dissatisfaction is, in part, related to the dominant party and has led to association with the fairly recent alternative organization.

Political Experience and Role Orientation of County Chairmen

The relative strength of the political party in state and local politics will have an impact on the previous political experience and role orientation of county chairmen. One would expect, for example, that the Democratic Party would have a larger number of older leaders inasmuch as the Democratic Party is the established, dominant party. Table 5 indicates that this is the case in South Carolina.

TABLE 5
Age of South Carolina County Chairmen

Age	Democratic		Republican	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
Under 30	6.1	2	9.7	3
30-39	15.2	5	12.9	4
40-49	18.2	6	35.5	11
50-59	30.3	10	19.3	6
Over 60	24.2	8	22.6	7
D.K. or N.A.	6.1	2	0.0	0
Total	100.1 ^a	33	100.0	31

^a—rounding error.

In general, those active in political parties tend to become leaders during their middle years.¹¹ In this respect, the Republican Party more closely parallels the national pattern than its Democratic counterpart. Almost half (48.4 percent or 15) of the Republicans are between the ages of 30 and 49 while only 33.3 percent (11) of the Democrats fall into these age categories. In contrast, 54.5 percent (18) of the Democrats are over 50 while only 41.9 percent (13) of the Republicans fall into the older category.

In addition to being younger, the Republican County Chairmen show a greater degree of geographical mobility than their older more established Democratic counterparts. County chairmen were asked how long they had lived in the county they were serving as Chairmen. Table 6 reveals that a sizeable majority of Democrats had lived in the one

¹¹ Henderson, *Political Parties*, pp. 136-37.

TABLE 6

*Longevity of County Chairmen
Number of Years Lived in County Where Chairman Served;
Years Served in Party Office and
Years Served as County Chairmen*

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Democratic</i>		<i>Republican</i>	
	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>
<i>Years in County</i>				
Entire Life	63.6	21	29.0	9
At Least 20 Years	21.2	7	22.6	7
At Least 15 Years	3.0	1	12.9	4
At Least 10 Years	12.1	4	9.7	3
At Least 5 Years	0.0	0	9.7	3
Less Than 5 Years	0.0	0	9.8	3
D.K. or N.A.	0.0	0	6.5	2
Total	99.9 ^a	33	100.1 ^a	31
<i>Years in Party Position</i>				
0-3 Years	21.2	7	48.4	15
4-6 Years	27.3	9	25.8	8
7-9 Years	12.1	4	3.2	1
More than 9 Years	36.4	12	12.9	4
D.K. or N.A.	3.0	1	9.7	3
Total	100.0	33	100.0	31
<i>Years as Chairman</i>				
0-3 Years	45.5	15	77.4	24
4-6 Years	18.2	6	22.6	7
7-9 Years	9.1	3	0.0	0
More than 9 Years	24.2	8	0.0	0
D.K. or N.A.	3.0	1	0.0	0
Total	100.0	33	100.0	31

^a—rounding error.

county all their lives.¹² Over 63 percent (63.6 or 21) of the Democratic county chairmen had lived in the county all their lives while another 21.2 percent (7) had lived in the county at least 20 years. Thus, 84.8 percent (28) of the Democratic chairmen had lived in one county at least 20 years. Within the Republican Party only 29 percent (9) of the

¹² Several county chairmen noted that they had lived in one county all of their lives except for time spent in the military or in school. These individuals were classified as life long residents of the county in question.

chairmen had lived in the same county all their lives while another 22.6 percent (7) had lived in the county at least 20 years. Obviously, the Republican Party county leadership is less likely to be indigenous to the immediate locale it serves.

The embryonic nature of the Republican Party in South Carolina is also illustrated by an examination of the length of party service by the county chairmen. As Table 6 shows the Republican county chairmen are relatively new to party involvement. Almost half (48.4 percent or 15) have held a party office for three years or less and no Republican has held a party post more than 12 years.¹³ Similarly, Republican county chairmen are relatively new to their current position with 77.4 percent (24) having served less than three years. None has served more than six years as county chairman.¹⁴

The better established Democratic Party offers an interesting contrast. Only 21.2 percent (7) of the Democrats have held a county office for less than three years and of those responding to the question, 16 had served longer than six years. Twelve of those 16 had occupied party offices for more than nine years. These include two individuals who had served for 14 years, two with 15 years of service, two with 20 years of service, two with 29 years, one with 30 and one who had held party offices for 36 years. Democratic county chairmen are also more experienced in their present position than their Republican counterparts. While a plurality (45.5 percent or 15) has served less than three years as chairman, a full one third (11) of the Democrats had served as county chairman for more than six years. This includes four persons who have served for 10 years, three who had served for 14 years and one individual who had been county chairman for 26 years. Thus, it is obvious that there is a longer apprenticeship within the ranks of the Democratic Party. It is interesting, however, to note that there are signs of new faces becoming more numerous in the party structure as seen by the number of Democratic chairmen who have occupied their current position for less than three years.

The relative newness of the Republican Party in South Carolina also has an impact on the perceived role orientations of the county chairmen. The county chairmen were asked to classify their major duty as organization-oriented or campaign-oriented. The organization-oriented chairman is one who perceives his most important function as that of building and developing the party organization itself while the campaign-

¹³ Two Republican county chairmen had served in party positions for 12 years; one had been in various party offices for 11 years.

¹⁴ The longest a Republican county chairman has served is 5 years.

oriented party leader is primarily concerned with the interparty battle.¹⁵ As indicated by Table 7, both Democratic and Republican chairmen consider both roles important (54.5 percent or 18 of the Democrats and 48.4 percent or 15 of the Republicans). However, of those who indicated one or the other as being most important, 35.5 percent (11) of the Republican chairmen were most concerned with organizing the party while only 9.7 percent (3) were campaign oriented. In contrast, 21.2 percent (7) Democrats picked each of the two categories. This greater organization emphasis given by Republican leaders may be the result of temporary organization demands in a party which is still in a developmental stage. In addition, as noted by Samuel Patterson, the most effective county leader will be both organization and campaign oriented and will effectively attempt to resolve his conflicting role demands.¹⁶ In this regard there is little difference between the Democratic (54.5 percent) and Republican (48.4 percent) chairman.

TABLE 7

Role Orientation of County Chairman

<i>Role Orientation</i>	<i>Democratic</i>		<i>Republican</i>	
	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>
Organization Oriented	21.2	7	35.5	11
Campaign Oriented	21.2	7	9.7	3
Both	54.5	18	48.4	15
D.K. or N.A.	3.0	1	6.5	2
Total	99.9 ^a	33	100.0 ^a	31

^a—rounding error.

Avery Leiserson notes that few elected politicians come from a subordinate position within party organizations and that competent party work does not constitute a qualification for a place on a party's ticket.¹⁷ He states:

Local party workers tend to restrict their sights to the city council or county board, or to other executive boards or offices which constitute an advancement in their local position, rather than to aspire

¹⁵ Samuel C. Patterson, "Characteristics of Party Leaders," *Western Political Quarterly* 16 (June, 1963), pp. 332-352 quoted in David Abbott and Edward Rogowsky (eds.), *Political Parties* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1972), p. 44.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

¹⁷ Avery Leiserson, *Parties and Politics: An Institutional and Behavioral Approach* (New York: Alfred Knopf, Inc., 1958), pp. 200-201 quoted in Patterson "Characteristics," p. 37.

to a role in state or national politics. Perhaps the highest level which the locally oriented party workers normally reach is the state legislature, where they can promote projects of concern to their districts and protect the interests of the local party community.¹⁸

This hypothesis was examined through an analysis of the previous political experience, both party and public, of the county chairmen. As indicated by Table 8, a sizeable percentage of both Democratic and Republican county chairmen have held other party offices. A majority of the Democrats (57.6 percent or 19) and close to a majority of the Republicans (45.2 percent or 14) have held other party positions. But less than half of the Democrats (45.5 percent or 15) and only 12.9 percent (4) of the Republicans have held public positions. Of these who have held such posts, local offices (county and city) have been the rule. The lack of electoral success of the Republican chairmen is obvi-

TABLE 8

Political Experience and Aspirations of South Carolina County Chairmen

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Democratic</i>		<i>Republican</i>	
	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>
Held Other Party Office	57.6	19	45.2	14
Held Public Office	45.5	15	12.9	4
Desire to Run for Office	24.2	8	38.7	12
State Convention				
Delegate	93.9	31	90.3	28
National Convention				
Delegate	24.2	8	9.7	3

ously related to the party's minority status. Where county chairmen has been elected to public office, their experience has been predominately at the local level.

In addition, the political aspirations of South Carolina county chairmen is not especially high. In response to a question asking them if they were interested in seeking a public office, only 24.2 percent (8) of the Democrats said yes while 38.7 percent (12) of the Republicans said yes. Of importance here is the greater interest in public office expressed by the minority party chairmen. Samuel Patterson notes that "candidacy should be a more important factor for minority party members; majority party activists aspiring to unseat party incumbents are

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 201.

not likely to be chosen, or to remain county chairmen."¹⁹ Hence, the ambition and activity of party chairmen in South Carolina tends to be local and party oriented.

The party orientation of county chairmen can be seen through the party chairmen's participation in party conventions, both state and national. Almost all of the county chairmen from both parties have participated in state conventions (93.9 percent or 31 Democrats and 90.3 percent or 28 of the Republicans). In addition, 24.2 percent (8) of the Democrats and 9.7 percent (3) of the Republicans have been delegates to the national party conventions. Here we find the grassroots participation by the Democrats to be somewhat greater than that of the Republicans. In part, this may be related to the relative newness of the Republican Party in South Carolina; however, these findings are somewhat similar to previous studies in Kansas and Oklahoma.²⁰

Ideology and Politics: A Comparison

In his landmark work *Southern Politics*, V. O. Key portrayed the South in 1949 as a poor and politically stagnant region which worked against the region's have-nots, both black and white. In his concluding analysis, however, he asserted that "southern liberalism is not to be underestimated," that "fundamentally within southern politics there is a powerful strain of agrarian liberalism," and that "an underlying liberal drive permeates southern politics."²¹ Key concluded that, "if the Negro is gradually assimilated into political life, the underlying southern liberalism will undoubtedly be mightily strengthened."²² While the four major barriers to change have been removed, a social conservatism as opposed to a liberal populism seems to have emerged as the dominant belief system in the South.²³ The county chairmen in South Carolina illustrate this pattern.

Democratic and Republican chairmen were asked to classify themselves politically. In general county chairmen tend to view themselves as political conservatives. Overall, 50 percent (32) of the county chairmen perceived themselves as conservatives while 42.2 percent (27)

¹⁹ Patterson, "Characteristics," p. 30.

²⁰ Patterson found that in Oklahoma 89.8 percent of the Democratic chairmen and 86.7 percent of the Republicans had been delegates to state conventions while in Kansas the respective figures for the two parties were 71.2 percent and 84.3 percent. Only 23.7 percent of the Democrats and 8.3 percent of the Republicans had been delegates to the national convention. The respective figures for the Kansas chairmen were 21.9 percent and 8.4 percent.

²¹ V. O. Key, *Southern Politics* (New York: Alfred Knopf, Inc., 1949), p. 670 quoted in Bartley and Graham, *Southern Politics*, p. 184.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ See Bartley and Graham, *Southern Politics*, pp. 184-200 for an analysis of this thesis.

TABLE 9

Self-Perception of County Chairman's Ideology

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>All Chairmen</i>		<i>Democratic Chairmen</i>		<i>Republican Chairmen</i>	
	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>
Conservative	50.0	32	27.3	9	74.2	23
Moderate	42.2	27	60.6	20	22.6	7
Liberal	4.7	3	9.1	3	0.0	0
D.K. or N.A.	3.2	2	3.0	1	3.2	1
Total m	100.1 ^a	64	100.0	33	100.0	31

^a—rounding error.

considered themselves moderates. Only 4.7 percent (3) perceived themselves as liberals. The contrast between the parties was significant. As Table 11 indicates, 74.2 percent (23) of the Republican chairmen perceive themselves as conservatives while only 22.6 percent (7) are self-perceived moderates. None is liberal. In contrast, the Democratic chairmen tend to perceive themselves as moderates (60.6 percent or 20). Only 27 percent (27.3 percent or 9) perceive themselves as conservatives and only 9.1 percent (3) consider themselves liberals. This difference was reinforced by the county chairmen's responses to specific questions concerning social, economic and political issues. Republican chairmen collectively were less likely to support increased governmental expenditures, United States financial support for the United Nations, a liberal position on racial integration and were more likely to favor capital punishment. Hence, the social conservatism discussed by Numan Bartley and Hugh Graham is reflected by the responses of party chairmen in South Carolina, especially those within the Republican Party.

CONCLUSION

As we have noted, the county chairmen of the major political parties have not been very visible to the public or to academic researchers. One purpose of this study is to provide additional information about the backgrounds of the persons who occupy this position within the party structure. We have found that, in general, county chairmen in both parties possess a socio-economic status similar to their non Southern counterparts. They are well-educated, have high incomes and relatively high occupational status.

Despite the similarities in socio-economic status there are major differences between the chairmen of the two parties. In general, these differences may be explained by the historical dominance of the Demo-

cratic Party in South Carolina. The Republican Party has only recently developed a viable grassroots organization in the state and still is not a competitive statewide political party. In general the G.O.P.'s support is concentrated in the urbanized areas of the state where one can find a larger percentage of the voters employed in white collar positions. Hence, it is not surprising that the Republican Party chairmen are more likely to be younger, less experienced in party politics, less likely to have held public office, and are more likely to hold a party loyalty different from that of their parents. The same historical factors may be used to explain why lawyers are more prevalent in the Democratic Party than the Republican Party. Involvement in the Republican Party is not perceived as an aid to one's occupation. Those who work for the Republican Party obviously have a commitment to a party or an idea which has a minimum impact on their occupation or professional standing. Republican Chairmen, however, are more likely to possess political ambitions than their Democratic counterparts. A possible explanation here is there are greater opportunities for the Republican chairmen who do not have to be concerned about ousting a fellow party member if they decide to seek public office.

The future direction and goals of the two parties can perhaps be ascertained by the ideological positions of their county chairmen. Historically, the South has been the most conservative region of the country and the belief systems of the county chairmen reflect this. Republican Party chairmen tend to perceive themselves as conservatives while a majority of Democrats see themselves as moderates. Their self-perception is generally reflected in their positions on a variety of issue areas. Republicans tend to adhere to a more conservative position on civil rights, economic issues and foreign affairs than their Democratic counterparts.

In conclusion, there have been significant changes in Southern politics in recent years including an increase in the size of the electorate (both black and white); the emergence of a second party which has achieved some electoral success; and the decrease in the use of racial campaigns. If, however, the party chairmen accurately reflect the belief systems of the two major parties, we might speculate that future party positions on issues will not deviate significantly from the conservative to moderate posture. Thus while the party chairmen in South Carolina have demographic backgrounds similar to their nonSouthern counterparts and while the chairmen of the two parties are different in some respects, the ideological outlook continues to reflect the conservatism of the South.