

Platforms and Partners: the Civil Rights Realignment Reconsidered

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1. Introduction

The Democratic Party's embrace of racial liberalism and the Republicans' move toward racial conservatism in the mid-twentieth century represent a momentous transformation in American politics. Sometime between Reconstruction and the passage of the major civil rights acts of the 1960s, the two major parties essentially switched positions on civil rights issues. While there is a scholarly consensus on this very general statement, once one moves to more specific claims concerning the causes, timing and sequence of this shift, the consensus quickly erodes.

Understanding the transformation in the parties' stance toward civil rights is critically important for both substantive and theoretical reasons. From a substantive standpoint, the mid-twentieth century struggle for civil rights is a major chapter in what is a central story in American history, race relations between African Americans and white Americans. The implications for theories of political change are equally striking. Are changes in party alignments driven by the choices of national party elites or are they rooted in deeper coalitional and ideological dynamics? What is the role of "critical moments" in which small, potentially random perturbations can set events on a dramatically different course? Was the break-up of the New Deal coalition of southern white Democrats and northern liberals inevitable once grassroots activists forced the civil rights issue onto the national political agenda or was it the product of strategic choices by such national elites as Lyndon Johnson and Barry Goldwater? The answers reached in the civil rights case have important implications for more recent cases in which the parties' positions have shifted, such as the GOP's embrace of social conservatism in the 1970s-90s (see, e.g., Adams, 1997; Wolbrecht, 2002; Sanbonmatsu, 2002; Layman 2001).¹ The

theoretical stakes here are too large not to have an accurate and detailed understanding of the sequence and timing of the civil rights realignment.²

In this paper, we hope to shed new light on some of the theoretical issues that surround the civil rights realignment. We will do so by examining a new data source: state political party platforms. As we will demonstrate, these data indicate that outside of the South, the Democratic Party's civil rights advocacy surpassed that of the GOP far earlier than conventional wisdom suggests. Furthermore, rather than acting exclusively as an intermediary between national party elites and masses, party activists (i.e., state party convention attendees) played an important, early role in shaping their parties' positions on civil rights issues.

More generally, we argue that northern Democrats' ideological commitments and coalitional partners generated a strong incentive to adopt the more pro-civil rights position as grassroots activists – both within and outside the party -- forced the issue to the top of the national agenda. In contrast, northern Republicans by the 1940s had much less intraparty pressure to embrace liberal civil rights policies. While national Democrats often sought to tamp down and straddle the civil rights issue in order to placate the southern wing of the party, this was not a viable strategy in the long-term because key elements of the northern majority of the party had powerful incentives to stake out a clear position on civil rights. By contrast, Republicans' core constituencies in the north were less committed to civil rights liberalism and were unlikely to punish moves by the party to join with southern whites in staking out a more conservative position. Rather than a story of choice by relatively autonomous national party elites, the civil rights realignment is best viewed as rooted in forces unleashed in the New Deal, when the Democratic Party

became the ideological home of liberal, governmental activism and universalistic, rights-based arguments, and the coalitional home of progressives, CIO labor activists, northern African Americans, and ethnic and immigrant groups (e.g., Jews) predisposed to civil rights liberalism. By contrast, the New Deal era solidified the GOP's ideological shift away from progressivism and towards anti-statism, and the party's coalitional alignment with small and big business and with suburban and rural voters – none of which predisposed the party to be aggressive in support of civil rights.

After reviewing Carmines and Stimson's issue evolution model, section 3 describe our primary data source: state party platforms from 1920-1968. Section 4 discusses our approach to coding the platforms to identify each state party's position on civil rights issues and section 5 describes our main results. In section 6, we consider how our evidence from state party platforms fits in with other evidence on the timing of the civil rights realignment. Section 7 concludes.

2. Issue Evolution and the Civil Rights Realignment Reconsidered

Among political scientists, the prevailing explanation for this reversal is Carmines and Stimson's (1986, 1989) issue evolution model. This model makes four major theoretical claims: the partisan evolution on civil rights issues followed an elites-to-activists-to-masses channel; elites had a significant amount of discretion in their actions; the eventual outcome was not inevitable, but rather contained a strong element of randomness; and the process followed a dynamic growth model, with the lion's share of the change occurring during a relatively brief window, followed by a longer period of gradual, somewhat path dependent change.

First, Carmines and Stimson's model places elite actors at the start of the issue evolution process. This is perhaps the central component of these authors' theory. They view politics as a Darwinian competition in which elites frequently introduce new issues with the hope that these new entrants will strike a chord, consequently advantaging those elites. On rare occasion, a new issue evokes a large mass response, becoming important enough to create a sea change in the composition and orientation of the two parties. According to the authors, this process occurs along a prescribed path from elite introduction to mass acceptance. National party elites first take clear and differing positions on the issue. Activists then transmit these new elite positions to the mass electorate. Finally, ordinary voters perceive this difference – and see it as important enough to merit a change in their long-term orientation towards the parties.³ This elites-activists-masses sequence is fundamental to the theory. In a review essay on issue evolution, Carmines and Wagner (2006) emphasize that “temporal ordering is critical to issue evolution; elite reorientation on the issue precedes change in the ‘cognitive and affective images of the parties,’ which comes before mass partisan response.”⁴

Second, Carmines and Stimson further claim that elites have relatively wide discretion in setting their parties' positions. Elites are more than simply the first mover in a sequence. Rather, elites act as strategic entrepreneurs, crafting and re-crafting issue positions in order to compete. While Carmines and Stimson acknowledge that elites do not “control” the process, in the sense that elites cannot reliably predict which messages will resonate with voters or what the later-order consequences of their actions may be,⁵ they argue that elites have a considerable amount of discretion regarding what policy positions they introduce. Barry Goldwater, in particular, is repeatedly mentioned as a

crucial player in the Republican Party's evolution. "It is difficult to overestimate the significance of Barry Goldwater in this partisan transformation," they write.⁶ In this telling, activists, partisan identifiers in the mass electorate, or their party's history are not decisive constraints on politicians' positions when an issue evolution occurs. Rather, they are mostly free to introduce new issue positions that they believe would be electorally beneficial.

Third, policy entrepreneurs' wide latitude means that issue evolution is open-ended and to an important degree random during its early stages. Since individual policy entrepreneurs, with incomplete information about the effects of their actions, are at the helm, the decisions they make, particularly at the start of the process, may resemble a random walk, the results of which appear logical or even inevitable only in hindsight.⁷ Carmines and Stimson claim that "chance is the fundamental driving force in producing change"⁸ and that there are "no situations in the political evolution of race where ... it could only have happened as it did." Thus, if it were possible to "re-run" the civil rights era, it is likely that we would observe a nontrivially different result.⁹ Only later in the process, after the critical moment, does this element of randomness decline, replaced by path dependent, self-reinforcing processes.

Fourth, Carmines and Stimson offer a specific model of partisan change, which they label the dynamic growth model. In this model, the bulk of the change occurs during a relatively brief critical moment. This critical moment is followed by a longer period of path dependent dynamic growth, during which the political system continues to realign, slowly and asymptotically. Drawing on Eldridge and Gould's (1972) evolutionary concept of punctuated equilibrium, their model posits virtually no change before the

critical moment, a brief “burst of rapid change”¹⁰ at the critical moment, and a subsequent secular realignment, or lengthy period of slow change to complete the transition to a new equilibrium. Applying their dynamic growth model to the civil rights period, they identify a critical moment centered at 1963-64. In this account, the pre-realignment equilibrium was in place during the 1950s and early 60s, when both parties took moderate positions on civil rights issues¹¹ and the Republicans arguably were more supportive of civil rights legislation for much of that period.¹² By the 1964 “flashpoint,”¹³ however, Johnson’s record of civil rights accomplishments and Goldwater’s expressed racial conservatism, coupled with the heightened salience of civil rights issues, placed the parties firmly in the midst of a critical moment. The period after the mid-1960s, through the Carter and Reagan administrations, is identified as a long period of secular realignment following the critical moment.

While *Issue Evolution* is widely regarded as a landmark study and set much of the agenda for studying partisan change on major issues over time (Pierson, 2004; Box-Steffensmeier and Smith, 1996; Cobb and Kuklinski, 1997; Nardulli, 1995; Edsall and Edsall, 1991), several studies have challenged elements of its account of the civil rights realignment. Chen (2007) argues that Republican opposition to strong fair employment protections took root in the mid-1940s. Chen shows that GOP control of key legislative institutions in northern states is associated with a reduced likelihood of passage of fair employment practices legislation in those states during the 1945-1964 period. Extending his analysis, Chen (2006) examines the debate over fair employment practices in New York State during the 1940s, finding that conservative Republicans were among the bill’s most vocal opponents. Based on this empirical record, Chen argues that subsequent GOP

attacks on affirmative action had deep roots in the party's history and were not a simple backlash against the alleged excesses of the civil rights movement. The GOP's alliance with big business and its free-market, anti-regulatory ideology predisposed it to oppose even *color-blind* civil rights policies, such as a strong fair employment practices commission, well before the 1960s.¹⁴

David Karol offers a broader challenge to the issue evolution model. Karol (1999, 2001, 2005) argues that northern Democrats began to embrace civil rights in the 1940s as a way to expand their party's coalition, by appealing to the growing population of northern African Americans. Karol's primary data source is congressional roll calls. He shows that northern Democrats become slightly more liberal than northern Republicans in floor voting during the 1940s, though the differences only become dramatic in the 1960s. More generally, in examining a range of post-war issues, such as defense policy, taxes, and trade, Karol argues that changes in partisan alignments typically do not follow the punctuated equilibrium model posited by Carmines and Stimson. Instead, Karol identifies coalition group incorporation, coalition maintenance, and coalition expansion as the three basic types of partisan change. He argues that the civil rights case represents a combination of coalition incorporation (as northern Democrats offered civil rights policies as a way to cement the support of northern African Americans and later to attract southern African Americans) and coalition group maintenance as Republicans resisted those civil rights initiatives that were met with hostility from their traditional allies in the business community.

Where Chen and Karol challenge Carmines and Stimson's depiction of party elites' positioning, Taeku Lee (2002) takes issue with the notion that elites drive the issue

evolution process. In contrast to Carmines and Stimson's elites-to-activists-to-masses chain, Lee shows how broadly-based social movements mobilized mass opinion on civil rights issues. The mass public does not simply take cues from elite political actors. Instead, Lee argues that in the critical period of 1956-65, an "insurgent, oppositional" sector took the initiative, challenged elites over the staging and interpretation of events, and helped reshape public opinion. Lee also provides suggestive survey evidence that the linkage between social welfare liberalism, Democratic partisanship, and racial liberalism was already present in the late 1950s.

We build upon and extend these reconsiderations of the dynamics of the civil rights realignment. While Chen, Karol, and Lee each provide important challenges to the conventional political science understanding of the civil rights realignment, turning to state party platforms allows for a more refined analysis of the evolution of the two parties' stances on a range of civil rights issues over a long span of time. Whereas Chen focuses exclusively on state legislators and governors and Lee emphasizes mass subgroups, we concentrate on the "meso" level of the parties – the state and local party officials and activists who shape state party platforms, provide the shock troops for each party, and have been the neglected third group in this story. In this way, we hope to complement Chen's elite-level and Lee's mass-level studies with an examination of the parties-as-organizations.

Our focus on the two parties' meso-level to explain the parties' transformations on civil rights issues also joins a growing literature on the role of party activists in shifting their parties' issue positions. Freeman (1999) and Wolbrecht (2000), in separate analyses of partisan attitudes towards abortion, find that party activists drove the

Republican Party's pro-life shift and the Democrats' concurrent pro-choice move in the 1970s (see also Carsey and Layman 1999).¹⁵

We believe that two primary mechanisms predisposed state party activists in the northern Democratic Party to be more supportive of civil rights than their Republican counterparts. First, the constituency basis of the Democratic Party included groups that were more supportive of the civil rights cause and cared more intensely about the issue than did the post-1930s Republican Party. African Americans voted decisively for Roosevelt in 1936 and increasingly identified as Democrats in the late 1930s and 1940s. The rise of the CIO as the leading force in the labor movement also likely played an important role: the CIO was far more liberal on civil rights than the AFL and it arguably became the single most important source of activist energy for the Democrats by the late 1930s and early 1940s (Foster 1975).¹⁶ In addition, other new Democratic constituencies – such as Jews – were heavily involved in the civil rights coalition while providing key resources to the Democratic Party (Aronson and Spiegler 1949; Kesselman 1948; Anderson 1964). From the other side, it was more difficult for post-1930s Republicans to see a payoff in terms of group support from civil rights liberalism: with Democrats now clearly identified as the party favoring a strong welfare state and African Americans largely concentrated at the lower end of the socioeconomic spectrum, it was hard to envision a long-term, sustainable coalition joining the GOP's base of small and big business and farmers with poor and working class African Americans.¹⁷

A second force potentially predisposing Democrats to be the party of racial liberalism is the ideological logic of the New Deal itself. As John Gerring (1998) has argued, the rendition of New Deal liberalism that took hold in the 1940s transformed the

party's ideology from populism to rights-based universalism.¹⁸ Once the Democratic Party became associated with such rights-based, egalitarian arguments, it became difficult to resist calls for full incorporation of African Americans into the political system. While ideas can be packaged together in a variety of different ways (see Karol 2005; Skowronek 2006), it may be that some ideas are more easily packaged together than others. In the New Deal, the GOP embraced the cause of limited national government and states' rights – precisely the pillars that southern Democrats appealed to when defending their system of racial apartheid. By contrast, liberal Democrats' arguments in favor of an expansive national welfare state with strong unions were easier to reconcile with the arguments in favor of vigorous state and federal action on behalf of civil rights enforcement. The “ideological” interpretation can also be linked back to particular groups: union leaders, Jews, and African American leaders worked with a new generation of activists to *define* liberalism to include civil rights as a core element. Starting in the late 1940s, Americans for Democratic Action worked energetically on behalf of the twin causes of labor rights and civil rights, helping to shape the meaning of Cold War liberalism (Brock 1962). While we do not undertake a full exploration of these two mechanisms in this paper, section 6 offers a preliminary examination.

3. State Party Platforms as Data

3.1 Platforms as a Measure of “Activist Opinion”

To assess the dynamics of the civil rights realignment, we turn to a new data source that we believe offers several important advantages. We have attempted to compile a comprehensive database of state party platforms covering 1920 to 1968, coding

each platform for the state party's position on a range of civil rights issues, as well as the prominence given to civil rights in the platform text. Finding platforms proved to be a difficult challenge. However, we have collected and coded 1021 platforms. As discussed in greater detail below, we have good coverage of 22 non-southern states (in addition two states in the south: Texas and North Carolina).

By allowing us to locate the position of each state party across a long period of time, the platforms give us a more fine-grained ability to detect when (and where) Democrats become the party of civil rights liberalism. The ability to compare the position of Democrats and Republicans from the same state is particularly useful, since it holds geographic constituencies constant. Furthermore, by examining how the timing of the Democratic shift varies across states, we gain leverage for understanding the sources of the realignment.¹⁹

To preview our results, we find that the vast majority of northern Democratic parties were clearly to the left of their GOP counterparts on civil rights policy by the mid-1940s-early 1950s. This finding undercuts the claim that the national realignment on civil rights was highly contingent on such unpredictable events as the Goldwater nomination in 1964. Instead, it suggests that the bottom-up pressure for national Democrats to embrace civil rights liberalism was much greater than the corresponding pressure for Republicans. This pressure had been building for decades, and became impossible to suppress any longer once grassroots civil rights activists forced the issue to the top of the nation's political agenda.

State platforms are also particularly useful because they were typically neither written by masses nor by national elites. Rather, platform writers tend to come from that

in-between group whom Carmines and Stimson term “activists.” By their definition, activists include delegates to the national conventions, minor officeholders and party officials, and those who donate significant amounts of money or sizable amounts of time to campaigns.²⁰ While state parties varied considerably in organization, the majority of delegates to state party conventions would fit into this broad definition of activists.²¹ We examined the backgrounds of a random sample of 110 state party executive committee members from 1950.²² The most common occupation of Republican members was business, while the modal occupation for Democrats was lawyer. Only two, a county sheriff and a state university trustee, were public officials. (See Appendix C for a summary of our study of the backgrounds of these 110 state party executive committee members.) We thus find that the majority of delegates to state party conventions in 1950 meet Carmines and Stimson’s definition of party activists. The fact that this sample was comprised primarily of political amateurs leads us to the conclusion that the platform writers are a good indicator for what the “meso”-level within each party was thinking about civil rights during this period.

In addition to being written by activists, we believe that state platforms were intended to be read by other grassroots activists, not the mass public. Of the hundreds of daily newspapers available on three major online databases (LexisNexis State Capital, LexisNexis Academic, and newspaperarchive.com), we identified only six that have ever published a platform excerpt longer than one sentence during the period under study.²³ In addition, the sheer difficulty of obtaining platforms for this project is, arguably, indicative of their lack of mass dissemination. For these reasons, we believe that state party platforms capture the sincere political views of party activists.

Not only do platforms provide a window into the views of party activists, they also give some sense of the policy priorities of candidates for office, who may find themselves somewhat beholden to the party leaders and activists who helped them get elected. Explaining her use of national platforms to study party views on abortion, Sanbonmatsu (2002) notes, “to some extent they are a guide to how ... candidates will behave if elected.”²⁴ Therefore, the fact that these platforms were not widely disseminated among voters does not suggest that they were politically inconsequential. Instead, the platforms provide the best available measure of how each state party sought to position itself on the civil rights issue.

3.2 How Representative Are these Paired Platforms?

In order to evaluate differences between the parties within a given state over time, one must possess a sufficient number of platforms from both parties from many different years. Unfortunately, although we have collected over one thousand platforms, we were unable to obtain platforms from both parties within some states for a sufficient number of years to make such in-state comparisons possible. Nonetheless, we believe that we have sufficiently complete coverage to make valid inferences for 22 of the 39 non-southern states in each year.²⁵

Figure 1 illustrates the number of platforms obtained for each year in the period under study, while Figure 2 displays the coverage by state. Since a complete collection of platforms from one state party is not useful without the other party’s platforms in that state, the figures show only the number of “paired” Democratic and Republican

platforms, with a pair defined as same-state Democratic and Republican platforms in the same year.

Figure 1: Paired Platform Coverage, by Year

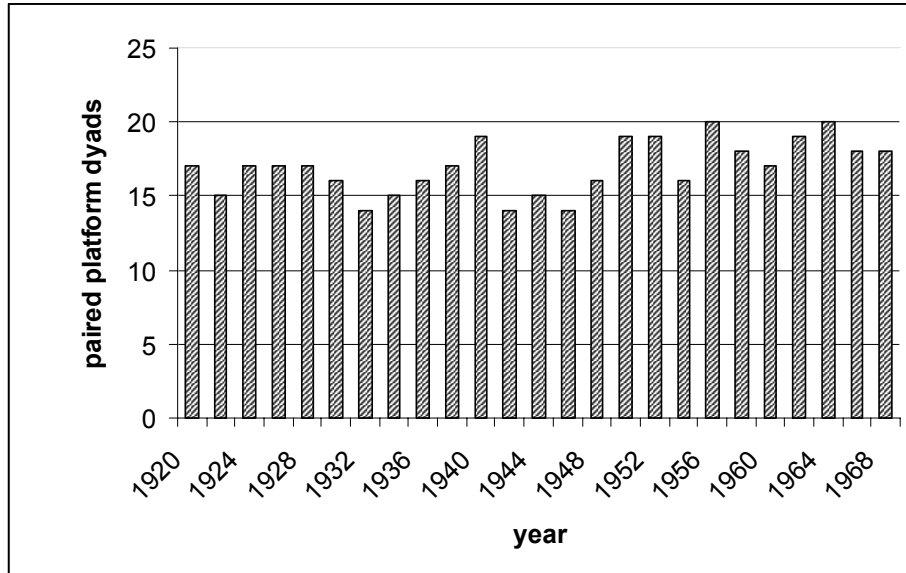
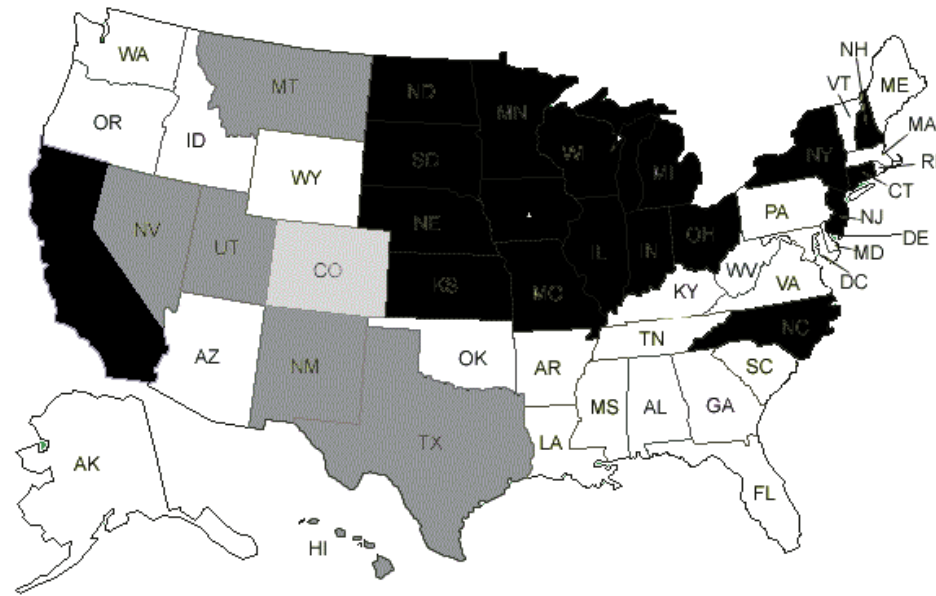


Figure 2: Paired Platform Coverage, by State



Legend

Color	Number of Dem.- GOP paired platforms
	0-4
	5-9
	10-14
	15+

As the above map illustrates, during this 48 year period we have excellent coverage for the Upper Midwest, acceptable coverage in New England, the Mid-Atlantic and Mountain West and poor coverage in the Northwest, South (as expected) and Border South.

This lack of platforms from the southern states during the 1920-1968 period is unsurprising. As Key (1950) observed, an active Republican Party did not exist in most southern states during this period. With the real political battles being waged in the Democratic primaries, and, consequently, without conventions in many states, perhaps Democrats in the southern states did not bother to issue platforms. Or perhaps, as Key's observation that "[southern] party platform[s] customarily receive only pro forma attention" suggests, platforms were in fact published, but were lost to history.²⁶ In either

case, we were unable to obtain platforms from most southern parties, Democratic or Republican.

The dearth of southern platforms does not limit our ability to test our hypothesis in a meaningful way, however. Southern Democrats were profoundly racist on virtually every political, economic and social question.²⁷ Southern Republicans were virtually non-existent in most states, meaning that one cannot readily compare the two parties there in any case. Keeping southern Democrats' racism and southern Republicans' absence in mind, the motivating question of this research is whether the national Democratic Party felt intense pressure from its non-southern state party affiliates to take strong pro-civil rights positions, and whether the Republican Party lacked such pressure. Fortunately, one does not need a measure of southern state parties' issue positions to evaluate this hypothesis. In other words, our focus on states outside of the South will allow us to determine whether northern Democrats and Republicans adopted similar positions on civil rights prior to the 1960s – so that, as Carmines and Stimson argue, their subsequent polarization on the issue was inherently unpredictable and driven by national elites. Or, alternatively, whether northern Democrats embraced racial liberalism much earlier, making their political marriage with southern Democrats inherently unstable once civil rights policy eventually reached the top of the national agenda.

4. Data & Methods

We collected 1021 platforms published between 1920 and 1968. For some states, platforms were published in state government registers, newspapers, or in pamphlets published by the state parties themselves. For many other states, however, party

platforms proved to be more elusive, and we hired on-site researchers to comb through libraries and state archives. Despite this exhaustive search, we were unable to obtain platforms for some states. Although it is not possible to know what proportion of the platforms issued during this period we have obtained, since we do not know the total number of platforms written by state parties, we estimate that we have obtained approximately 57 percent of all platforms written by non-southern state parties.²⁸

To determine the extent to which these platforms favor or oppose civil rights measures, we conducted three distinct content analyses. First, we tallied the number of paragraphs devoted to civil rights in each platform. Carmines and Stimson (1989) conduct a similar analysis of the prominence and relevant amount of space devoted to civil rights issues in national party platforms, noting that it constitutes a “simple measure of the importance of a topic.”²⁹ By conducting a parallel analysis of state party platforms, we may directly compare our observations with Carmines and Stimson’s, using a shared method.³⁰

Second, we devised a ten point (-4 to 5) ordinal scale to measure each platform’s general outlook on civil rights. A platform that makes no mention of civil rights policy receives a 0. The highest value on this summary score signals that a platform advocates government policies to outlaw discrimination broadly across at least two different issue dimensions in what appears to be an enforceable manner. For example, a platform that supports both a state fair employment practices commission with enforcement powers and a fair housing practices law would be coded as a 5. A platform that endorses the concept of equal treatment, but does not include any call for concrete governmental action receives a score of +1. Platforms that advocate discriminatory policies receive the

lowest scores. For example, the 1964 Wyoming Republican platform, which expressed support for “the right to rent or sell property, [or] employ whomsoever [business owners] see fit” would qualify for a -3, because it explicitly opposes fair housing and fair employment legislation, two key civil rights proposals. A score of -4 is reserved for those platforms that most strenuously oppose civil rights legislation; many of these platforms predict “chaos” or a “breakdown in civic society” if civil rights proposals become law. Appendix Table A1 provides a summary of our coding criteria.

Third, we examined platforms’ attention to five specific civil rights issue areas: fair employment practices, fair housing practices, desegregation of public accommodations, desegregation of educational institutions, and voting rights. The scale for these measures ranges from -1 (“condemns past or proposed government action on this issue, or views the issue as best left to the private sphere”) to +3 (“claims credit for new law or commission, or proposes new law or commission that aims to protect minorities from discrimination in this area”). In the 1920s and 1930s, most platforms did not mention any of these issues and thus received a score of 0 for each. Starting in the 1940s, however, it became more common for platforms to refer to one or more specific civil rights issues (see Appendix Table A2 on the coding).

Platform coding was conducted exclusively by the authors. In an effort to assess intercoder reliability and resolve potential differences in each coder’s interpretation of the ratings system, both authors coded a subset of 16 platforms. With one exception (one author assigned a summary score of 2 to a particular platform, while the other author gave that platform a 1), there was complete agreement between the two authors on every variable for every platform.

5. Findings

5.1 Attention to Civil Rights Issues

Perhaps the most basic indicator of a party organization's attention to civil rights issues is the amount of space that it devotes in its platforms to these issues. For this reason, Carmines and Stimson examine the number of paragraphs that the national parties devote to civil rights issues during the 1932-1980 period. If a party deems civil rights issues important, it will devote more platform space to that issue. While there may be some construct validity problems with using civil rights plank length to measure a party's attention to civil rights issues (e.g., one sentence calling for anti-lynching legislation in 1922 seems like a stronger stance than five paragraphs of vague platitudes), in general we see the value in Carmines and Stimson's measure, and conduct a similar analysis with our state platforms collection.³¹

Carmines and Stimson find that, at the national level, civil rights was not a prominent issue for either party until the 1960s. To the extent that differences between the parties existed before the 1960s, in most presidential election years the Republicans devoted slightly more space in their platforms to the issue. While exceptions exist (e.g., the 1948 Democratic platform edges out that year's GOP platform; in 1960 the Republicans' civil rights plank is considerably lengthier than the Democrats'), in general this tendency holds until 1964, when the Democrats suddenly overtake the Republicans in attention paid to civil rights. After examining their national party platform data, Carmines and Stimson observe:

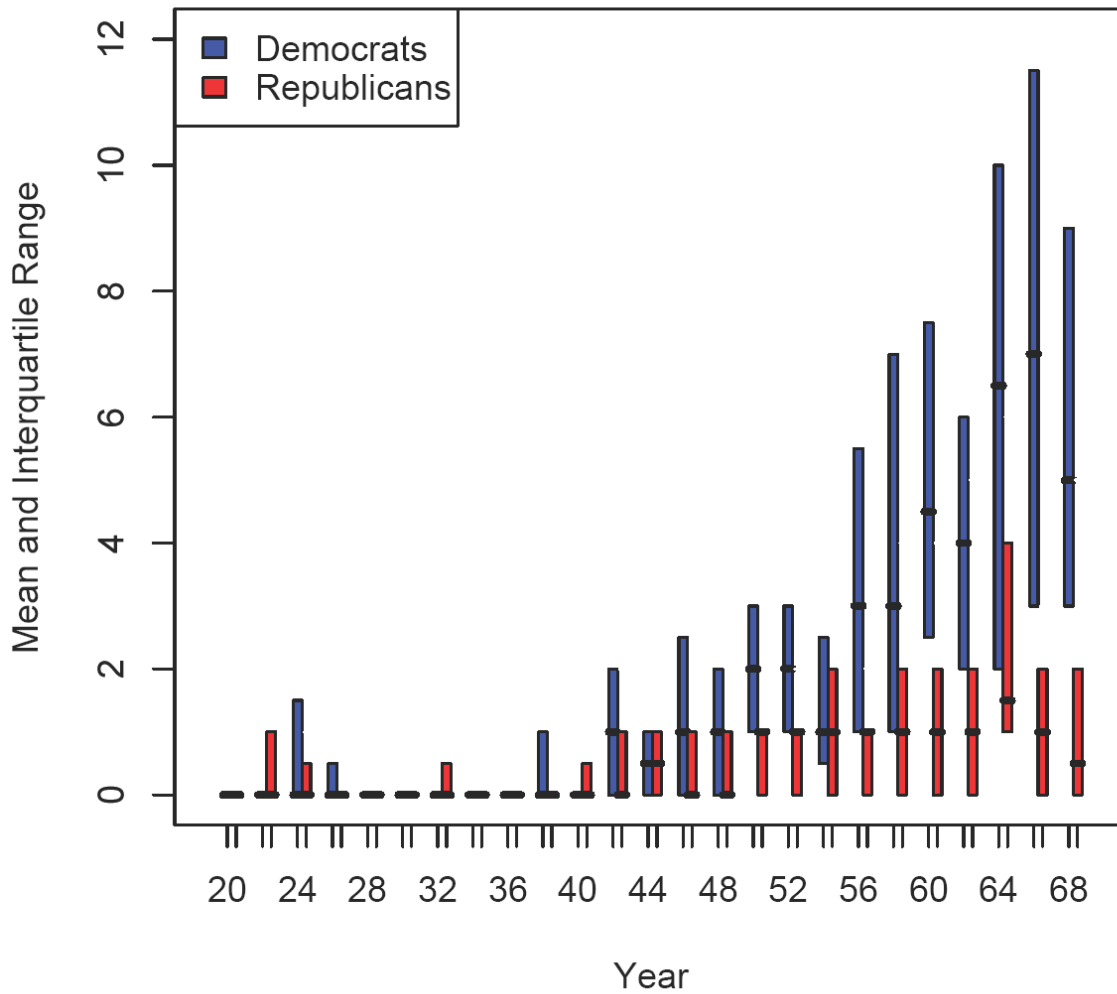
Before 1960, with the notable exception of 1948, Republican platforms always gave at least as much, and usually considerably more, attention to

racial concerns than Democratic platforms. This pattern changed abruptly and permanently in 1964; after that Democratic platforms uniformly accorded more importance to racial issues than their Republican counterparts.³²

Thus, Carmines and Stimson use the national platforms as evidence for the dramatic and sharp turnaround in the early 1960s.

Since our parallel analysis involved multiple state platforms for each year, Figure 3 (below) contains somewhat different information. The dark notches in the following figure show the mean number of paragraphs on civil rights issues, while the associated blue and red bars (dark and light, in a black and white print-out) show the interquartile range for the sets of non-southern Democratic and Republican platforms, respectively. We only include platforms in which we have both state parties in the same year, though the results look much the same if we include all of the platforms we have collected.

Figure 3: Mean Number of Paragraphs on Civil Rights



Examining our figure, which shows the average number of paragraphs devoted to civil rights in state party platforms, one reaches a different conclusion than Carmines and Stimson. Rather than civil rights being a Republican issue before 1960, we see the opposite. It is the Democrats that devote more attention to civil rights issues from at least the mid-1940s. In addition, there is no abrupt and permanent change in 1964. Concerning

differences between the two party's platforms on civil rights, 1964 appears to be "business as usual," as does, arguably, every other year in the 1950s and 1960s.

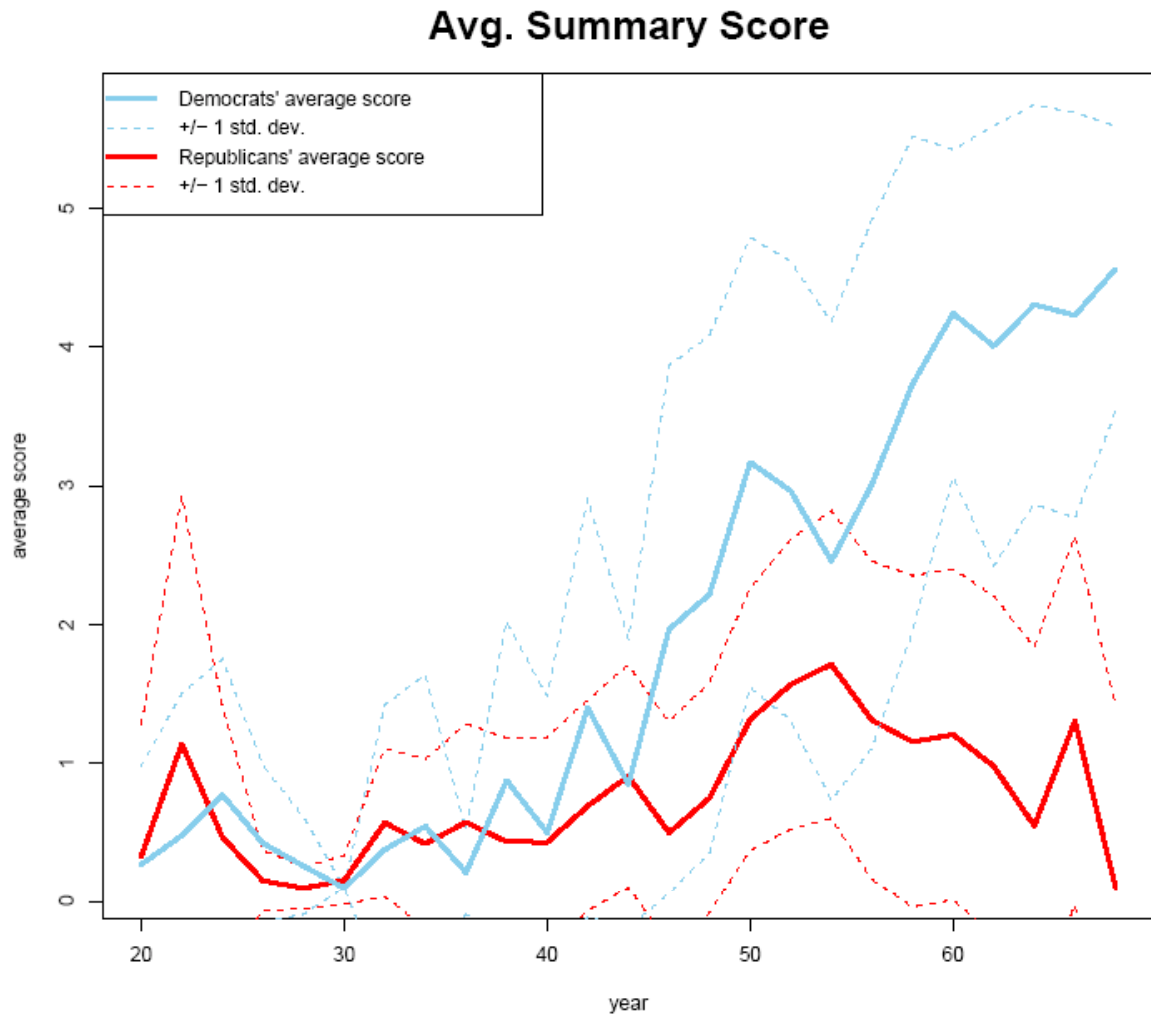
5.2 State Party Civil Rights Positions

5.2.1 Summary Measure

We began by examining the 423 sets of "paired platforms" – Democratic and Republican platforms from the same state and same year (a total of 846) – in our dataset. To determine when the Democrats emerge as the party of civil rights, we first calculate the average summary score (-4 to 5) for each (non-southern) party during the period under study. As the following figure shows, both parties took nearly identical civil rights stances until approximately 1946, when the Democrats' average summary score began a steep ascent. In fact, in every year after 1946, the Democratic Party took a more favorable stance on civil rights issues than the Republicans – with the Democrats' position becoming increasingly liberal throughout the 1940s and 1950s (excepting a minor downtick in the mid-1950s). For northern Democrats, the critical period evidently begins with the onset of World War II and accelerates in the mid-to-late-1940s. The Republicans, by contrast, took their most progressive stance on civil rights – which was still clearly to the right of their non-southern Democratic counterparts – during the mid-1950s, and gradually became more racially conservative thereafter. In addition, 1964 does not appear to be a "flashpoint," "critical moment" or "burst of rapid change," as Carmines and Stimson label that year.³³ Instead, that year saw the continuation of trends that began many years before: decreases in the Republicans' summary score and modest increases in the Democrats' score. Thus, outside the south, the realignment of the parties

on civil rights had already essentially been completed before the 1963-1964 “critical” period.

Figure 4

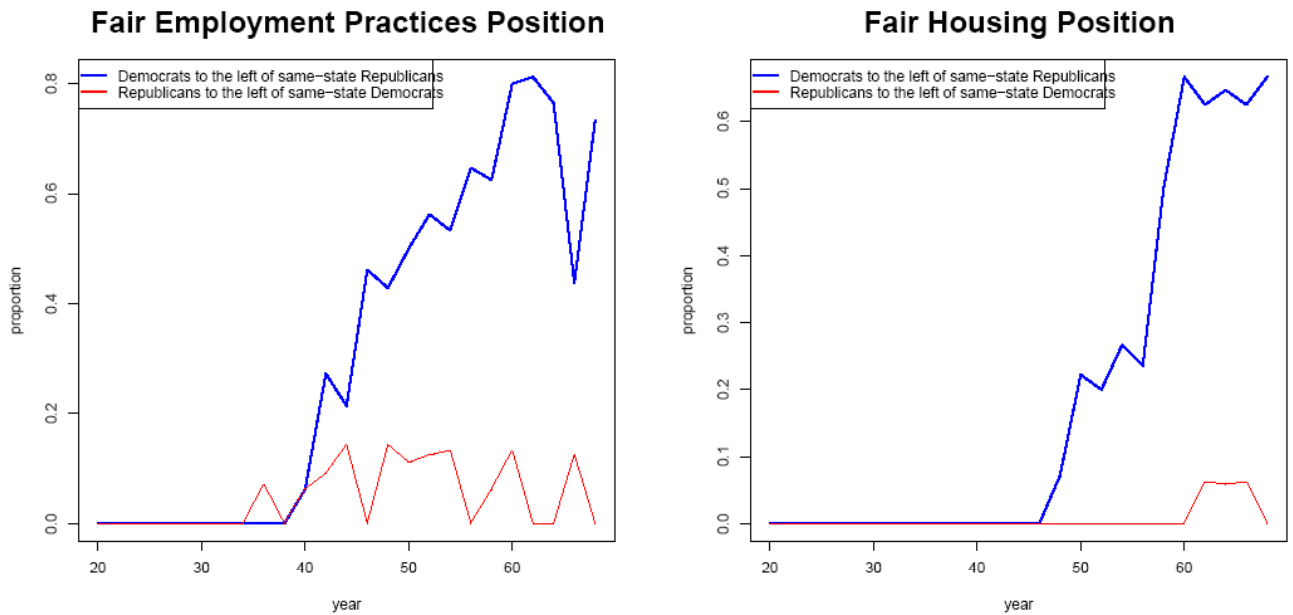


5.2.2 Five Specific Issue Areas

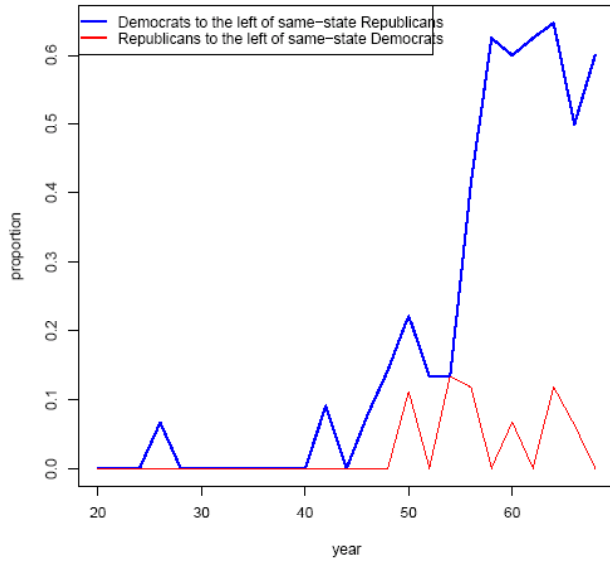
The following five figures, below, illustrate the differential attention paid by the parties to five issue areas, each of which was the subject of major legislative and legal

battles: fair employment practices, fair housing, desegregated public accommodations, desegregated educational institutions, and voting rights. The figures display the percentage of states in which the Democratic platform was to the left of the GOP platform on each issue, as compared to the percentage of times that the state Republican Party took the more liberal position on the issue.³⁴ For fair employment, fair housing, desegregated public accommodations and desegregated schools, the Democrats clearly emerge as the more liberal party in the 1940s, with the gap increasing in the 1950s and 1960s.

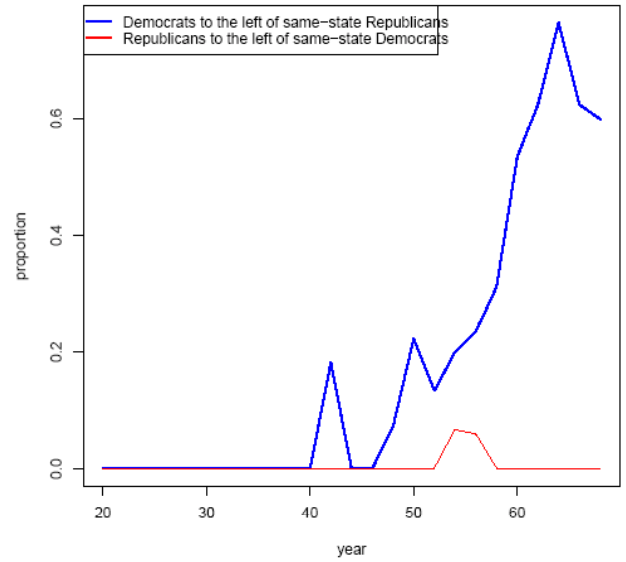
Figures 5-9



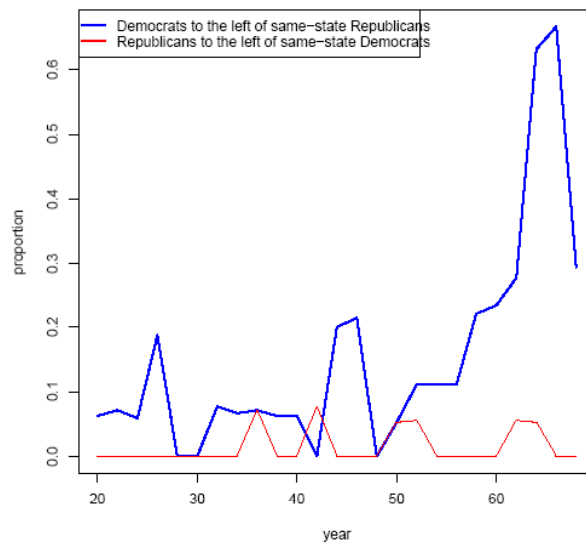
Public Education Position



Public Accommodation Position



Voting Rights Position



The results from the first four of these issue measures reinforce the message from the average summary scores presented above: the Democrats had become the more pro-civil rights party markedly earlier than the mid-1960s, which Carmines and Stimson identified as the “critical moment” – the supposed “burst of rapid change” followed by a

long secular realignment.³⁵ Instead, the key transformation in northern Democrats' civil rights position occurred in the 1940s – which is also the period in which northern African Americans became solidified as a Democratic constituency and the CIO and other liberal groups allied with the Democrats joined the fight for civil rights.³⁶

On voting rights issues, however, the story is somewhat more complicated; tentative Democratic steps during the 1930s and 40s are evident, with substantial differences emerging only in the 1950s. This distinction between the parties' positions on voting rights and their stances on the other four issues can be tied to the different coalitional and ideological forces at work in the voting rights case. In contrast to other civil rights issues, it may have been relatively costless for a state Republican Party to take a liberal position on voting rights. After all, poll taxes, white primaries, and other restrictions on voting were rare outside of the South, so a liberal position meant telling other states to change their practices but did not impact the state's policies. Furthermore, business groups – core Republican coalitional partners – were not threatened by voting rights proposals, giving them little reason to oppose a hypothetical GOP progressive stance on voting rights. Finally, claims that the Democrats' strong civil rights position was a natural outgrowth of their New Deal ideology was matched, in the case of voting rights, by the GOP's Reconstruction-era commitment to voting rights. Both parties' ideological legacies could have encouraged voting rights advocacy at mid-century.

For these three reasons, voting rights is a challenging test case for our view. Phrased another way, voting rights is arguably the policy area for which one would most expect indistinguishable parties until the 1963-4 critical moment. Figure 9, however, shows that the parties' changing positions on voting rights more closely resembles the

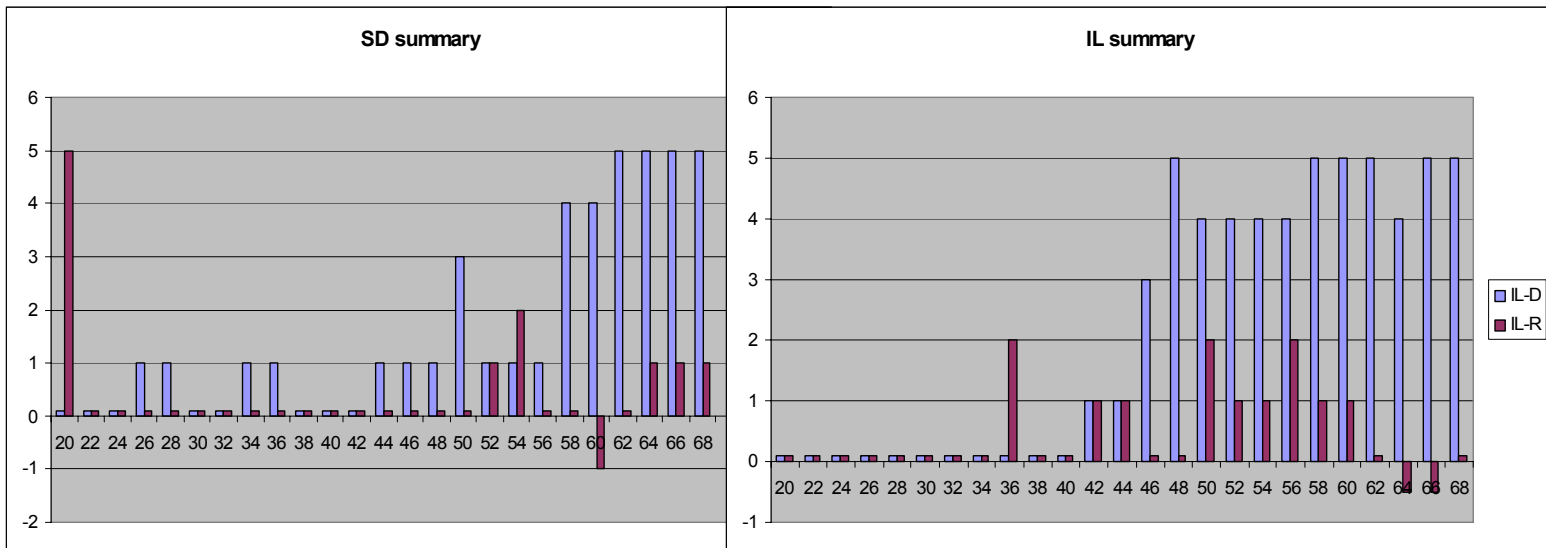
pattern evident in the other four issues than it does issue evolution's dynamic growth model. Instead of divergent positions in the mid-1940s, the Democrats tended to take slightly more progressive stances on voting rights in the 1930s and 40s, with more substantial differences emerging in the 1950s. The timing of the partisan shift on voting rights – a hard test case for our view – is more similar to the patterns we found in the other issue areas than to a dynamic growth model.

5.3 State-by-State Comparison

The above measures have important limitations. By pooling all of the paired platforms in non-southern states, the analyst cannot make inferences concerning particular states. Furthermore, by restricting the analysis to the 423 sets of paired platforms (846 platforms total), we are omitting some of our 1021 platforms from analysis. Specifically, “orphan platforms,” or instances when we have one party's platform but not the other for a particular state and year, are excluded. These orphan platforms could be useful, though. For example, if a given state's Democratic Party published its platforms in 1952 and 1956, while the state Republicans published their platforms in 1954 and 1958, some informative comparisons could be made, even though we do not know each party's position in the same year.

Therefore, we now turn to presenting summary score measures for a variety of individual states.³⁷ Figures 10 and 11 show Democratic and Republican summary scores in two states, South Dakota and Illinois, respectively. As these figures show, in both states the Democrats consistently took the more progressive position in almost every year during the 1940s, 50s and 60s.

Figures 10 & 11



Appendix B contains similar graphs for the 20 other non-southern states for which we have a reasonable number of platforms.³⁸ As a whole, these 22 states are remarkably diverse. Some (like Illinois) have significant black populations, while others (like South Dakota) do not. All regions (except the Deep South) are represented, as are states with a wide variety of types of party organizations.³⁹ Remarkably, while these states vary considerably in potentially relevant demographic and political characteristics, the Democrats take the more pro-civil rights position in the vast majority of cases starting in the 1940s.

A few additional patterns are suggested in this preliminary examination of the data.⁴⁰ As one might expect, states with small African American populations appear more likely to ignore the civil rights issue -- though when such states' parties do talk about civil rights, Democrats tend to embrace the more liberal position than Republicans (see, e.g., Montana, North Dakota, and Utah). The most striking northern exception to Democrats' relative liberalism is New Hampshire. While civil rights were by no means prominent for either party in the 1940s-50s -- perhaps due to the state's lack of racial diversity and conservatism -- Republicans are a bit more likely to take the liberal position until 1960, when New Hampshire Democrats finally embrace racial liberalism. The border state of Missouri is also an interesting partial exception: the state GOP appears as liberal or more liberal than the Democrats up until 1956, when Democrats embrace an aggressive civil rights platform and the GOP counters by distancing itself from its earlier pro-civil rights pronouncements.⁴¹ But the more general pattern is for Democrats to embrace civil rights liberalism sometime in the 1940s or early 1950s. Interestingly, the same story of relative Democratic liberalism on civil rights appears to hold in states with strong traditional party organizations, such as New Jersey and New York, and in states with much weaker parties, such as California (see Mayhew 1986). In addition, states in the farm belt -- such as Kansas and Nebraska -- tell the same basic story when it comes to the parties' relative position -- as do states in the upper Midwest (Minnesota, Michigan) and on the coasts. In sum, the commonalities across states are more striking than the differences, hinting that broad ideological developments may have played a key role in redefining the parties' position on civil rights policy.

The consistent story across states is also noteworthy given the potential concern that the precise dynamics of platform-writing likely vary considerably, depending on the relative strength of party machines, political amateurs, and allied interest groups. This again suggests that broad currents within the non-southern Democratic and Republican parties drove their transformation on civil rights, rather than the particular choices of a handful of well-placed elites. The meso-level of the parties – a diverse set of state, county, and local politicians, traditional activists, and new, issue-oriented amateurs – evidently responded in a similar way to contestation over civil rights policy in the 1940s-50s. That is, non-southern Democrats moved to embrace civil rights liberalism while Republicans, for the most part, distanced themselves from the cause.

6. Discussion

6.1 The Relationship between State and National Parties

A key question raised by our findings is how to think about the relationship between the position taken by state parties and the stance adopted in national party platforms. While non-southern state Democratic platforms provided much stronger support for civil rights measures than did their Republican counterparts, the national Democratic Party provided only weak support for civil rights measures in its pre-1960 platforms.⁴²

There are at least two distinct processes that could explain the tepid support for civil rights found in both Democratic and GOP national platforms prior to 1960. First, both parties' national activist classes could hold similar views on civil rights, with both supporting limited civil rights measures, and thus each party's platform accurately

reflects its writers' views. Thus, the parties are virtually indistinguishable on civil rights issues, with both sets of activists holding moderate views (and Republicans perhaps slightly to the left of Democrats, on balance). This is the explanation that Carmines and Stimson adopt.

Second, the Republican platforms' moderate civil rights positions could accurately reflect the views of Republican activists and leaders, while the Democrats' moderate position could be the result of a compromise between that party's southern and non-southern wings. In this telling, Democratic civil rights planks are straddling an issue that deeply divides the party, with few Democratic activists actually holding the position expressed in their platform. Specifically, the true preferences of southern Democrats are far more conservative on civil rights issues, while non-southern Democrats are markedly more progressive than their national party platforms suggest.

Based on our analysis of state platforms, we believe this second explanation is correct.⁴³ Our analysis indicates that non-southern state Democratic parties were significantly more racially liberal not only than their same-state Republican counterparts, but also than the national Democratic Party. When these non-southern Democrats joined with their fellow party members at their national convention, however, both sides moderated their civil rights views to produce a platform plank that neither side truly supported. Since the Republican Party, by contrast, did not have a viable southern component during this period, the GOP's national platforms could reflect its members' actual civil rights position, while the Democrats' platforms could not.

The first major Democratic intraparty battle over the party's national civil rights position occurred during the 1948 convention. With civil rights activists' growing

demands on Democratic administrations during and immediately after World War II, and with a renewed focus on domestic issues during the postwar period, national Democrats' earlier strategy of staying silent on racial issues became untenable. At the 1948 Democratic convention, a diverse coalition of Democratic-allied groups, most notably the CIO-PAC, Americans for Democratic Action, the Southern Regional Council, and the NAACP, pressured the party to adopt a strong civil rights plank, while racially conservative southern Democrats worked with national party leaders to block the plank.⁴⁴ In the end, rank-and-file delegate sentiment in favor of civil rights overwhelmed the maneuvering of southerners and congressional leaders to straddle the issue. The pro-civil rights camp thus prevailed, with the Democrats adopting what Gerring (1998) calls "the party's first strong statement of support for civil rights."⁴⁵ While racially liberal Democrats may have won the platform battle, on the eve of the 1948 general election it seemed probable that their triumph at the convention would be a pyrrhic victory, costing their party the election. Southern Democrats created the States' Rights Democratic Party in response to the Democrats' strong civil rights position. With Dewey seen as the frontrunner throughout the fall campaign, the Dixiecrats' potential to siphon off votes from the Democrats could have been the final nail in Truman's coffin. In the end, of course, Strom Thurmond did not serve as a spoiler, carrying only four southern states, and Dewey did not defeat Truman, but the close call may have convinced party leaders not to concede as much ground to civil rights proponents at future conventions. Instead, Democratic civil rights statements in the national platforms throughout the 1950s were careful attempts at compromise, not angering either side enough to cause a walkout, but not at all reflective of party activist sentiment on civil rights either.

Berman (1970) details the moves by Democratic leaders at the 1952 convention to prevent a floor fight among delegates over the wording of their party's civil rights plank. On one side, Senators Warren Magnuson, Herbert Lehman and T.F. Green, among other liberal leaders pushed for the party to approve a civil rights plank that went beyond its watershed 1948 position. Americans for Democratic Action Chairman Francis Biddle threatened a floor fight – with, he claimed, 654 delegates supporting him – if the party's 1952 civil rights plank regressed from 1948. When told that a strong civil rights plank might lead to a southern walkout from the convention, Walter Reuther, UAW president and a leader in Democratic politics, responded that he did not expect the southern delegation to act on this threat, “but if it so chooses, let this happen; let the realignment of the parties proceed.”⁴⁶ On the other side, southern delegates opposed virtually any supportive statement on civil rights. Their opposition was not to be taken lightly – party leaders were undoubtedly mindful that in 1948 ten out of the 11 southern state delegations unanimously opposed Harry S Truman's nomination because of his civil rights stance,⁴⁷ and that the walkout of 35 southern delegates from the 1948 convention led to the creation of the States' Rights Democratic (Dixiecrat) Party that year.⁴⁸ John Sparkman, a moderate senator from Alabama (and the party's vice-presidential nominee) and African American Congressman William Dawson worked together to write a compromise draft of the civil rights plank. Their draft was presented to the convention on voice vote, thereby eliminating the need for delegates to take a recorded, public position. Although the compromise language passed, few seemed satisfied with it. The Mississippi and Georgia delegations formally opposed the plank as going too far, while many

liberals, including the 60 black delegates whom Adam Clayton Powell led off the convention floor in protest, did not think it went far enough.⁴⁹

The story of the 1956 Democratic platform's civil rights plank followed a similar narrative arc. Discontented with their party's moderate stance four years earlier, Senator Lehman, NAACP Executive Secretary Roy Wilkins and UAW President Walter Reuther led 300 delegates in planning a floor challenge to the 1956 platform committee's proposed civil rights plank. Only when liberal icon Eleanor Roosevelt arrived at the convention to support the compromise language for the sake of party unity did these delegates abandon their proposed challenge.⁵⁰ In both 1952 and 1956, the key was national party elites' ability to tamp down the pressure emanating from non-southern delegates for a bold civil rights platform plank that would have driven off the southerners.

The moderate civil rights planks in national Democratic platforms during the 1950s were the result of intense backroom negotiations and sometimes dramatic acts on the floor. The process by which similarly mild GOP planks were adopted during this period was a comparatively staid affair. Berman (1970) states that civil rights simply was not a contentious issue at the 1952 Republican national convention. The platform included modest language on ending segregation in DC, passing employment anti-discrimination measures that would not "set up another huge bureaucracy," vague "federal action toward the elimination" of various racist practices, and other moderate positions. At the same time, according to Berman (1970) the platform contained a "renewed emphasis on state initiative, a shift designed to help Republican efforts in the South."⁵¹ Only a small minority of liberal and African American delegates cared to

oppose the platform; a group of African American delegates was persuaded not to introduce potentially divisive amendments on the floor; and ultimately the plank was adopted with little struggle.⁵²

Neither did southern Republicans, a small minority of southern voters but a sizeable proportion of convention delegates,⁵³ disrupt their party's moderate consensus on civil rights. Contrary to popular perceptions of southern Republicans as being comprised largely of racially liberal African American voters, Republican organizations in many southern states appear to have been as conservative on civil rights issues as their same-state Democratic counterparts.⁵⁴ According to Heard (1952), by 1928 every southern state Republican Party had a "lily-white" organization that rivaled the black-dominated "regular" or "the black and tan" faction. During the 1928 campaign, Herbert Hoover showed open hostility to these black-dominated southern Republican organizations and supported the white alternatives in several southern states. Hoover and other Republican leaders' decisions to support the lily whites led some black leaders to endorse Al Smith in the 1928 election. When the conflict ended, whites controlled the state Republican parties in most southern states. By 1948 whites completely controlled the Republican apparatus in Alabama, North Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia, and were dominant in Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana and Texas and Virginia.⁵⁵

Therefore, while moderate Democratic planks were the result of a careful compromise between northern and southern wings, and thus were not really an accurate gauge of party opinion, moderate Republican planks accurately reflected the GOP's modest support for civil rights.⁵⁶ Examining state party platforms as a measure of party opinion highlights the size of the gap between the parties' positions outside of the South.

This observation, when coupled with the understanding that both parties in the South were generally racially conservative, points to a large variance in the civil rights positions taken by southern and non-southern Democrats, and the relative lack of variation among Republicans. Whereas both national parties adopt similar, moderate civil rights stances throughout the mid-century period, as Carmines and Stimson observe, these similar national averages do not tell the whole story. The Democratic platform represented an effort to straddle an issue that deeply divided the party's two main wings, while the GOP was relatively unified in advocating modest civil rights advances. The political imperative for Democrats from all regions to craft compromise language for a national platform plank contributes to the false sense that northern Democrats and northern Republicans were indistinguishable on civil rights issues before the 1963-4 "critical moment."

6.2 The Role of Interest Groups in Shaping the Parties' Civil Rights Positions

Having demonstrated that Democratic activists outside of the South pushed their party towards a pro-civil rights orientation beginning in the mid-1940s, while Republican activists did not exert comparable pressure on their party, we turn to the task of explanation. Why were the Democrats more supportive of civil rights than the GOP, outside of the South? Although our platforms data standing alone cannot provide an explanation, political historians offer a persuasive account: that northern Democrats' New Deal ideological outlook and coalitional partners gradually steered the party towards civil rights advocacy. The GOP party-as-organization, which included a very different set

of coalitional members and a contrasting New Deal-era ideology, did not experience the same pressure to take pro-civil rights positions.

6.2.1 Democratic Coalition Partners

At mid-century, a striking number of organizations could claim both strong ties to the Democratic Party and a deep commitment to civil rights. The groups under this Democratic umbrella included not only narrowly-defined civil rights organizations, but also labor unions (e.g., the CIO, UAW), ethnic and immigrant groups (such as the American Jewish Congress), and progressive policy-oriented groups (most notably Americans for Democratic Action). The rich web of organizational ties among these groups and with the Democratic Party, coupled with their strong civil rights advocacy, helped move the Democratic Party towards more forceful support of civil rights than the Republicans.

Among labor unions, key CIO officials were tireless advocates of civil rights policies, contributing to the “braiding of labor and race politics,” according to Katznelson and Farhang (2005). The CIO leadership was committed to passing fair employment practices legislation during the early 1940s. In fact, pressure from CIO officials also contributed to the traditionally more conservative AFL’s backing of fair employment practices legislation in 1945.⁵⁷ Furthermore, labor leaders, including the UAW’s Reuther, played key “power broker” roles at Democratic conventions, as previously mentioned. Other powerful unions that were closely allied with the Democratic Party, including the International Ladies Garment Workers and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, also played vocal roles in pushing for anti-discrimination legislation.⁵⁸

In addition, religious groups closely linked to the Democratic Party also participated forcefully in the push for civil rights. The Anti-Defamation League, American Jewish Committee, American Jewish Congress, and the Catholic Church were all important members of both the Democratic and civil rights coalitions.⁵⁹

Leading progressive policy groups also pushed the Democratic Party towards greater civil rights advocacy. Most notably, Americans for Democratic Action placed civil rights at the top of its agenda from the group's inception in 1947, and organized a series of rallies and high profile events to publicly lobby the Democrats to take a strong civil rights stance in the 1948 campaign.⁶⁰ At that year's Democratic convention, 110 of the 1234 delegates were ADA members, giving ADA considerable influence within the party.⁶¹

When leaders from these various Democratic-allied groups joined together to support civil rights legislation – as occurred when various church and Jewish groups, unions, ADA, the ACLU, and the NAACP formed the National Council for a Permanent Fair Employment Practices Commission in 1943 – it was difficult for the Democratic Party, which “shared” its activist class with these groups, to ignore their views.⁶² The one Democratic leader who best exemplifies the Democratic Party-labor union-progressive policy group-civil rights advocacy linkages is Joseph Rauh. Rauh headed the Civil Rights Coalition, a diverse collection of political groups that lobbied Congress for the passage of the 1957 Civil Rights Act.⁶³ He also served as ADA chairman between 1955 and 1957;⁶⁴ served on numerous Democratic national platform committees;⁶⁵ sat on the NAACP board of directors; and worked as UAW general counsel.⁶⁶

Furthermore, the role that these labor, religious and ethnic and ideological activists played within the Democratic Party may have been amplified by the fact that the party was transitioning from a patronage-focused to a policy-oriented body during this period in many states. According to Gerring (1998):

Organizational changes within the [Democratic] Party ... affected the course of liberalism in the postwar period. During this period, a new brand of party activist joined the party in large numbers. These citizen-activists were middle-class, issue-oriented, hostile to machine-politics, and interested in a broad range of non-economic policies, from foreign policy to civil rights ... One must credit the efforts of these reformers for the party's first strong statement of support for civil rights in 1948.⁶⁷

Thus, the fact that so many party-affiliated interest groups emphatically supported civil rights legislation undoubtedly encouraged the Democrats to take more progressive positions on civil rights. Interest groups in the Republican camp, by contrast, did not hold as strong attachments to the cause, and as we will explain, in some cases were openly hostile to civil rights measures.

6.2.2 Republican Coalition Partners

With far fewer coalitional ties to the labor unions and ethnic/religious organizations that were key actors in the push for civil rights, Republicans had less of an incentive to support civil rights measures. Instead, the Republican Party's ties with business interests encouraged the party to oppose or remain silent on a key early civil rights issue: the establishment of fair employment practices commissions (FEPCs) to enforce racially blind hiring policies among private businesses (Chen 2006, 2007; Karol 2005). According to Kesselman (1948), the Council of American Small Business

Organizations, the National Association of State Chambers of Commerce, and various individual state chambers of commerce led the fight against a national FEPC. In nearly every state, the pattern was the same. For instance, in New York the major opposition came from local chambers of commerce, boards of trade and real estate boards.⁶⁸

Speaking to a group of black GOP leaders in 1947, Republican Speaker of the U.S. House – and former RNC Chairman – Joe Martin of Massachusetts conceded:

The FEPC plank in the 1944 Republican platform was a bid for the Negro vote, and they did not accept the bid ... I'll be frank with you: we are not going to pass a FEPC bill, but it has nothing to do with the Negro vote. We are supported by New England and Middle Western industrialists who would stop their contributions if we passed a law that would compel them to stop religious as well as racial discrimination in employment.⁶⁹

Martin's extraordinarily frank comments show the tension between civil rights advocacy and business interests. In three major areas of early civil rights – fair employment, fair housing and equal access to public accommodations – the enforcement of any law would require additional government regulatory oversight of private businesses, with penalties doled out to non-complying firms. With business owners already bristling under the expanded regulatory capacity of the New Deal state, additional government oversight was anathema to the business community.

With the Democrats committed to expanding New Deal programs and regulatory agencies, many business groups were firmly allied with the Republican Party at mid-century. The GOP's ties with chambers of commerce, manufacturers' associations, real estate groups and other organizations opposed to the increased government oversight of private enterprise that would come with fair employment and other civil rights legislation led the GOP towards racial conservatism. As with the Democrats and their affiliated

groups, the relationship between the Republican Party and its key coalition members would shape the party's stance on civil rights issues, well before the 1963-4 "critical moment."

6.3 Parties-Masses Connection

It was not only the ties between the parties and their respective interest group allies that led to the Democratic Party's embrace of racial liberalism and the Republicans' association with racial conservatism. Rather, with the New Deal, the Democrats' economic liberalism made the party increasingly attractive to rank-and-file black voters. At the same time, Republican appeals to southern voters became more common, as the GOP envisioned a future with dissatisfied southern Democrats in its fold. In both cases, the process was gradual, beginning in the mid-1930s.

6.3.1 African Americans and the Democratic Party

Although black voters' partisan loyalties had been firmly with the Republican Party since Reconstruction, cracks in the GOP-African American alliance began to appear in the 1920s and 1930s.⁷⁰ In 1928, Democratic presidential candidate Al Smith received an unprecedented number of black votes, due to the Republicans' avoidance of black voters' concerns during the 1920s and the Smith campaign's emphasis on appealing to working class voters.⁷¹ Black voters returned to the Republican camp in 1932, with a majority of African Americans evidently backing Herbert Hoover. In 1936, however, African American voters abandoned the GOP en masse, contributing to Roosevelt's landslide victory. Continued African American support for Roosevelt in 1940

demonstrated that black voters had become a part of the Democratic political coalition. Perhaps as a response, in the 1948 race Republican candidate Thomas Dewey deflected attention from his strong civil rights record as governor of New York, choosing instead to ignore black voters in favor of actively soliciting southerners.⁷²

As the Democrats emerged during the New Deal as advocates of the working class and the poor, the party became more attractive to African American voters, many of whom occupied low rungs on the economic ladder.⁷³ Lubell (1956), for instance, asserts that black voters, like other citizens with low economic status, were drawn to the Democratic Party as much because of economic status as race.⁷⁴ As a result, he argues, popular perceptions during the 1950s were that the Democrats were the party of minority groups and that the GOP was the party of the Protestant bulwark.⁷⁵

Heard (1952) observes this reorientation of the parties along economic lines, with African Americans sharing the Democratic umbrella with low-income whites, during the early 1950s. “Party realignments that have been taking place with in the two major parties since 1933 more and more make the Democratic Party a labor-liberal party,” he writes. Reasonable expectations, he predicts, seem “to destine the bulk of southern Negro voters for the Democratic Party.”⁷⁶ Myrdal (1944) agrees, predicting in *An American Dilemma* that, with the coming reorientation of the two parties along ideological lines, “it seems fairly certain that the great majority of Negroes are going to adhere to the liberal party, provided it be consistently liberal with respect to the Negro problem.”⁷⁷ One result of this eventual restructuring of the Democrats into a broadly-defined liberal party, Heard and Myrdal envision, is the movement of African American voters – both in the South and across the nation – into the Democratic Party.⁷⁸

6.3.2 Southern Conservatives and the Republican Party

Complementing this movement of African Americans into the Democratic Party was a parallel gradual reshuffling of racially conservative voters into the Republican camp. Political observers began forecasting conservative white southerners' movement into the Republican Party starting in the late 1930s amid the fights over court-packing and Roosevelt's failed purge campaign (see, e.g., Holcombe 1946-47). Virginia conservative Democratic Senator Carter Glass complained in 1937 that "it is perfectly obvious that the so-called Democratic Party at the North is now the negro party, advocating actual social equality for the races; but most of our Southern leaders seem to disregard this socialistic threat."⁷⁹ Glass told another correspondent in 1938 that "I have come to the conclusion that many of the northern Democrats have less use for the white people of the South than have northern Republicans."⁸⁰ Meanwhile, Josiah Bailey (D-NC) sought support for a conservative manifesto uniting Republican and conservative Democratic senators. At the same time, FDR's 1938 purge campaign sparked public discussion of realignment.⁸¹ Historic southern hostility to the Republican brand dating from the Civil War and Reconstruction prevented a total schism, but as the Democratic Party's identification with the causes of labor and civil rights grew, it became increasingly evident that the Democratic coalition was a marriage that could not last.

In Texas beginning in 1936, in South Carolina and Mississippi in 1944, and across the South in 1948, southern Democratic parties revolted against FDR's leadership. While southern Democrats had long roots hating the GOP, these insurgent actions "assumed enormous significance as the first step in a break that, if carried to its logical

conclusion, would land them in the Republican Party,” Heard (1952) predicts.⁸² Republican Party officials, keenly aware of the growing incongruity between southern conservatives and the post-New Deal Democratic Party, moved to court racially conservative southern Democrats at least as early as 1948.⁸³ At that year’s Republican convention, RNC Chair Guy Gabrielson made a strong bid to win over the Dixiecrats to the GOP, intimating in a speech that only semantics separates Dixiecrats and Republicans. “The Dixiecrat party believes in states’ rights,” he argued. “That’s what the Republican Party believes in.”⁸⁴ Furthermore, during the 1948 campaign Dewey did not exploit his excellent civil rights record as governor, in contrast to Truman, who highlighted his civil rights proposals along the campaign trail.⁸⁵ Instead, Dewey, Senator Robert Taft and Minnesota Governor Harold Stassen stumped throughout the South,⁸⁶ and their party platform’s civil rights plank in 1948 was a marked retreat from the party’s 1944 stance. The GOP essentially wrote off the black vote in 1948 as well, preferring to attempt to break the Democrats’ hold on the racially conservative “Solid South.” Taft, for instance, predicted that Dewey could carry Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia by siphoning off conservative voters from the Democrats.⁸⁷

Ties between the Republican Party and conservative Democrats strengthened in the early 1950s. In 1950, Gabrielson embarked on a speaking tour of the South in an effort to drum up support for a proposed “unity ticket” of Republicans and Southern Democrats in the next presidential election.⁸⁸ Senator Richard Russell (D-GA) agreed, stating that he would like to see “a very strong Republican Party in the South” and predicting that “conservatives ... [of both parties] will eventually get together.”⁸⁹ One year later, Gabrielson publicly called for a formalized grouping of Republicans and southern

Democrats into a single party prior to the 1952 election. This unity party would then nominate a Republican-Southern Democrat “balanced ticket” of either Robert Taft and Harry Byrd, Sr. or Dwight Eisenhower and Richard Russell.⁹⁰

Along with Gabrielson, Senator Karl Mundt, a prominent Republican from South Dakota,⁹¹ also pushed for an alliance between Republicans and southern Democrats. In his speeches from 1949 on, Mundt argued that both groups have similar philosophies.⁹² He proposed, therefore, that the GOP delay its 1952 convention until after the Democrats had nominated their candidate. If the Democrats chose Truman (which Mundt expected), presumably they also would write a pro-civil rights platform. Then, the GOP would agree not to mention civil rights issues in its platform, nominate someone agreeable to the South, and convince the Dixiecrats to allow this Republican nominee to also occupy the States’ Rights Democratic line on the ballot (so that southerners would not have to vote for someone with the Republican label on their ballots).⁹³ By the fall of 1951, Mundt and his plan had gotten enormous publicity, including the cover of *U.S. News and World Report*, interviews on every important syndicated talk show, and a debate segment on the popular CBS People’s Platform.⁹⁴

Although this proposed marriage of Republicans and southern Democrats was not realized at the time, the Republican Party made significant inroads in the South during the 1952 campaign. The Democratic governors of Louisiana and South Carolina publicly supported Eisenhower over their party’s nominee. As southern support for Adlai Stevenson continued to wane in September 1952, a *New York Times* survey of likely voters in the South found that civil rights was the dominant issue in the region.⁹⁵ On election day, Eisenhower won approximately 50 percent of the white vote in the

supposedly solid South.⁹⁶ By the time Goldwater traveled to the South to stump for Nixon in 1960, he could conclude that “there’s hardly enough difference between Republican conservatives and the southern Democrats to put a piece of paper between.”⁹⁷

6.4 The Parties-in-Government

The Democrats’ early transition towards a racially liberal stance and the Republicans’ move towards a racially conservative position in the electoral arena also had significant consequences for governance. Motivated by the New Deal, a new generation of liberal, reform-minded politicians entered the Democratic Party. As these programmatic liberals gradually replaced more patronage-oriented partisans in elected office, the Democratic Party-in-office became known for its support of progressive policy proposals.⁹⁸

While Carmines and Stimson demonstrate that there were few discernable differences between the congressional Democrats and Republicans’ voting records, these roll call votes reveal little concerning which members of Congress were instrumental in crafting the bill, shepherding it through committee (or gathering signatures on a discharge petition), and lobbying their colleagues on the floor. On all of these necessary actions for any bill to become law, the roll call record is silent.

One notable case in which behind-the-scenes maneuvers clearly showed a wide gap in support for civil rights from non-southern Democrats and Republicans (a gap that a glance at the roll call record would miss) is the 1945 battle over a federal fair employment practices commission. Maslow (1946) observed that Republican members of the Rules Committee often joined with southern Democrats to miss committee meetings

related to FEPC, in an effort to ensure that the committee lacked a quorum, thereby preventing a floor vote on the measure.⁹⁹ Months later, when a quorum of Rules Committee members finally met to (anticlimactically) deny a rule for the bill on June 12, 1945, an intense lobbying effort began among the bill's supporters to discharge it from committee. On December 10, Representative Albert Gore, Sr. (D-TN) reported to the House that only 50 of the 157 signers of discharge petition were Republicans.¹⁰⁰ This Republican indifference to and – among some Republicans on the Rules Committee – obstruction of FEPC legislation paints a very different picture of House Republicans' commitment to civil rights than their more public actions suggest.¹⁰¹

Fifteen years later, in 1960, the fight to discharge a civil rights bill languishing in the Rules Committee played out in a similar fashion. Shortly after the session began in January, 175 MCs had signed the petition, falling short of the 218 signatures necessary for a floor vote. To reach this threshold, national organizations in the civil rights coalition, including the NAACP, American Jewish Congress, AFL-CIO and UAW, embarked on a major lobbying effort. Democratic Study Group members spoke on the floor for a full day, with many of the speakers referring to allegations that House Minority Leader Charles Halleck (R-IN) pressured Republicans not to sign, in an effort to keep the GOP's conservative alliance with the South intact. When the discharge petition was leaked to the *New York Times*, it was revealed that, of the 175 signers, 145 were Democrats. According to Berman (1962), this Republican inaction in 1960 – as in 1945 – exemplified the conservative alliance in Congress at work, with Republicans cooperating with southern Democrats to kill civil rights measures, and southern Democrats, in turn, assisting Republicans to prevent new social welfare bills from passing.¹⁰²

Similar situations played out in the Senate as early as the mid-1940s. For instance, the year 1946 began with a confrontation between “Mr. Republican” Robert Taft (R-OH) and proponents of a strong FEPC. Aside from a poll tax ban and anti-lynching legislation, Taft believed that the federal government’s role in securing civil rights ought to be limited, arguing that “it is just about as difficult to prevent discrimination against negroes as it is to prevent discrimination against Republicans ... We know the latter is impossible.”¹⁰³ Therefore, he vehemently opposed the Truman administration’s goal of a permanent FEPC. While he did vote for cloture on the bill – believing that it should get a vote – he then offered an alternative, significantly weaker FEPC bill, which would establish a commission without any powers to enforce fair employment law.¹⁰⁴

Taft’s opposition to strong civil rights measures extended to his 1951-52 campaign for his party’s presidential nomination. During his push for the nomination, he repeatedly denounced a strong FEPC; vowed to campaign vigorously throughout the South if nominated; and spoke out against federal action to eliminate racial segregation in primary schools. Taft’s positions are significant, because he – not Eisenhower – was the sentimental choice of most rank-and-file Republicans in 1952. His positions, therefore, provide a window into the views of a major strand of mainstream Republicanism.¹⁰⁵

To supplement these historical accounts, we briefly examine speeches on the floor as an indicator of preference intensity. We assume that MCs will take to the House or Senate floor regarding those issues that are most salient to them, either to persuade colleagues of the rightness of their views, or simply as a means of position-taking, to signal their most important stances to constituents. Speechmaking on the floor is a nontrivially costly action (both in terms of opportunity costs that busy MCs face, and

because one's fellow MCs probably would not take kindly to a colleague who requested recognition on every issue that comes before Congress). Therefore, we believe that an MC's decision to speak on a given issue indicates that the MC views this issue as particularly important, and desires to take action on it beyond casting a roll call vote.

We examine speeches on the floor regarding civil rights issues in 1945, tallying the number of unique speakers¹⁰⁶ by party affiliation (southern Democrat, non-southern Democrat, and Republicans). We chose to focus on 1945 because that is the year in which Carmines and Stimson (1989) begin their analysis of civil rights issues in Congress.¹⁰⁷ Carmines and Stimson view 1945 almost as a “year zero,” when both parties are essentially equally indifferent to civil rights. Thus, they consider 1945 to be well before the drastic changes in the parties' civil rights positions that they later identify. “Although obviously not the beginning of our story, 1945 does mark a good point to begin systematic analysis of congressional response to race,” they write. “The politics of race differed at the end of WWII from that at the end of Reconstruction, but not by much.” According to Carmines and Stimson, Republicans saw civil rights as a southern issue, which they could advocate with few direct costs borne by their non-southern constituents. Democrats were divided into the anti-civil rights southern wing and the indifferent, urban machine-dominated non-southern wing.¹⁰⁸ Our analysis of congressional rhetoric, however, suggests that the non-southern Democrats' greater emphasis on civil rights than the Republicans' was already evident in 1945.

The following figure show the proportion of southern Democrats, northern Democrats, and Republicans (of the total number of the each of the three respective

groups) that spoke out on civil rights issues in 1945. Figure 12 focuses on the House, while Figure 13 focuses on the Senate.¹⁰⁹

Figure 12

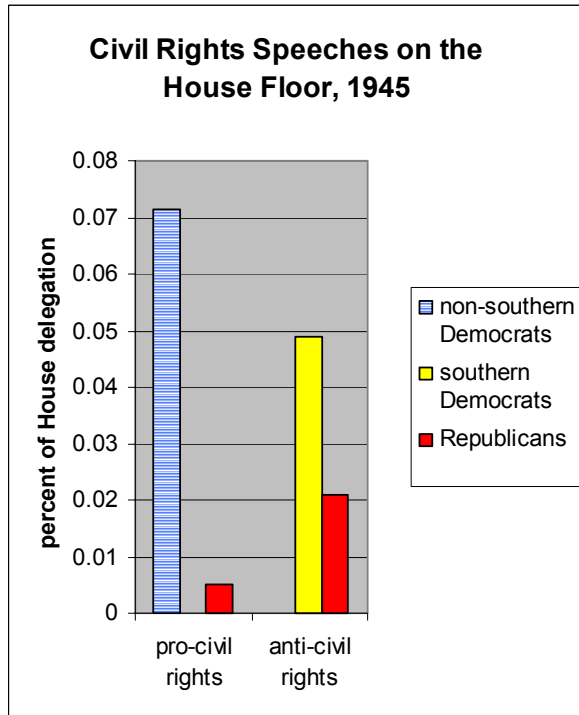


Figure 13

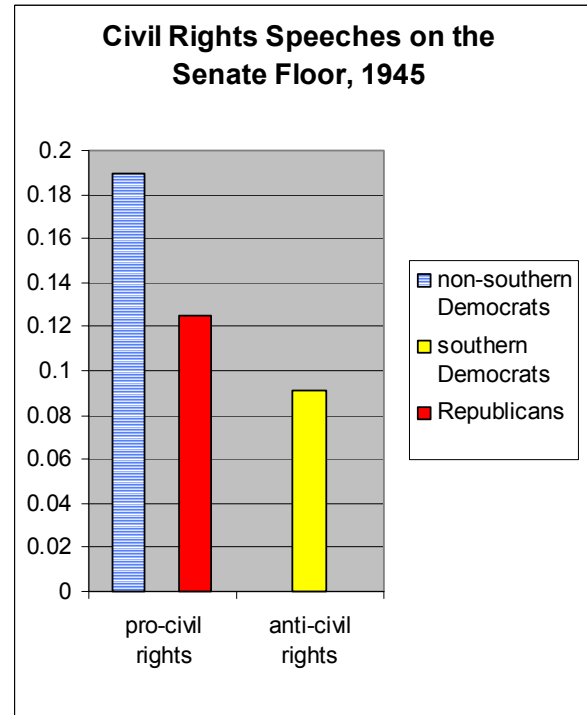


Figure 13 shows that non-southern Democrats tended to speak out in favor of civil rights issues in 1945, with 10 Democratic MCs taking to the floor (7.1 percent of all non-southern Democratic MCs). By contrast, at best the Republicans could be considered indifferent to civil rights, with only one Republican MC making a pro-civil rights speech on the floor and four making anti-civil rights speeches. While the figures in the Senate are somewhat more balanced – 7 non-southern Democrats and 5 Republicans spoke in support of civil rights – taken together it is evident that the Democrats were more vocal on civil rights issues in 1945. While non-southern Democrats’ and Republicans’ roll call records may have appeared similar in 1945, the non-southern Democrats exhibited a

greater willingness to push their colleagues, forego other action to devote time to speechmaking, and engage in active position-taking on civil rights issues.

Based on these historical accounts and our (preliminary) analysis of congressional rhetoric, there is reason to believe that the non-southern Democrats were more supportive of civil rights measures than Republicans in Congress by the mid-1940s, at least concerning non-roll call voting behavior.

7. Conclusion

This paper uses a new data source – state party platforms – to challenge a prevailing view concerning the parties’ civil rights positions at mid-century. The 423 sets of “paired platforms” that we have collected indicate that, in a given year and state, the Democrats were likely to have taken a stronger civil rights position than their GOP counterparts, beginning around 1946. This conclusion finds support in multiple measures, including the average number of paragraphs devoted to civil rights, average summary score, and average score on five specific issue measures. These findings call into question core elements of the issue evolution thesis: national elites are at the start of the issue evolution process; the elites have wide discretion in positioning and re-positioning their parties’ stances; the civil rights realignment was open-ended in its early years; and it followed a dynamic growth model, with a “burst of rapid change” centered around the 1963-4 critical moment and a subsequent, lengthy secular realignment.¹¹⁰

Instead, we find state party activists that had staked out positions on civil rights well before many national elites had fully weighed in on the subject; elite actors as significantly constrained second-movers; conditions that are suggestive of significant

path dependent lock-in far earlier than Carmines and Stimson propose; and a gradual reorientation of the parties, evident as early as the mid-1940s.

We supplement our analysis of the state parties with evidence that the Democrats and Republicans were drifting apart on civil rights during the 1940s and 50s. Each party's key coalitional partners in the 1940s, for instance, had clear positions on early civil rights legislation, and pushed the parties towards their partner groups' favored stances. In the mass electorate, we see Democratic courtship of African Americans outside of the South, coupled with Republican indifference to those voters. In the former Confederate states, we observe growing dissatisfaction with the Democratic Party and a concerted effort by Republicans to court these discontented, racially conservative elites and voters. On Capitol Hill, a variety of sources suggest that intensity of support for civil rights measures was greater among non-southern Democrats than Republicans, despite a more mixed roll call voting record. Collectively, we believe that this body of evidence, from multiple sources and concerning multiple political actors, strongly suggests that the reorientation of the parties' civil rights positions occurred during a long secular realignment, with many changes evident as early as 1946.

One interpretation of our results is that the ultimate outcome of the civil rights realignment was far less contingent than suggested by Carmines and Stimson and other leading interpretations. Once Democrats become the party of the welfare state, governmental activism, and labor rights, the pressure on the party to embrace civil rights liberalism became intense. Even FDR, who has often been appropriately criticized for his refusal to put his political muscle behind the civil rights cause, made a series of appointments at the Justice Department and to the Supreme Court that helped spark early

court victories on major issues, most notably the landmark *Smith v. Allwright* (1944) white primary decision (see McMahon 2004). As southerners such as Carter Glass recognized, many of the same liberal policy entrepreneurs and legal professionals who formed the intellectual backbone of the New Deal also were ardent supporters of civil rights. The same groups that became important Democratic constituencies in the New Deal era – CIO unions, Jews, liberal academics, and northern African Americans – were the most vigorous advocates of civil rights. By contrast, Republicans had little to lose and much potentially to gain from embracing the more conservative position on civil rights.

A defender of the issue evolution / contingency perspective might counter that this amounts to Whiggish history, in which the ultimate outcome is viewed as inevitable, when in fact reasonable counterfactuals might have led to alternative paths. Perhaps the most plausible counterfactual is that Richard Nixon would have won the White House in 1960 and pushed liberal civil rights policies.¹¹¹ But there are strong grounds to doubt that Nixon's election would have led to a substantially different path. While it is true that Nixon and Kennedy took similar positions on civil rights during the 1960 campaign, Black and Black (1992) highlight the ways in which Nixon sought to reassure southern whites that the GOP would take a more moderate course than would Democrats.¹¹² Furthermore, with state-level Republicans having already moved to the right on civil rights issues, even if he were inclined to do so, Nixon would have had a difficult time holding his party together behind the sorts of strong federal action required to satisfy civil rights activists. Moreover, the roadblocks to pursuing civil rights that Nixon would have encountered had he won the 1960 election would have been heightened by the fact that his main intraparty grassroots challenge would have come from the right, with the rise of

Barry Goldwater in the late 1950s and the nascent *National Review*'s proposed strategy of connecting southern segregationists, social traditionalists and economic conservatives in order to expand the conservative movement.¹¹³ By contrast, Kennedy and Johnson faced intense demands from within their core constituencies to back civil rights.

We believe that the more plausible conclusion is that the repeated efforts to create a Republican-Southern Democratic coalition starting in the late 1930s were important harbingers. The key missing ingredient that blocked the consummation of these efforts was that civil rights had not yet reached the top of the national political agenda. As a result, national Democratic leaders could (barely) avoid directly confronting the issue that most divided their party. But when grassroots activists in the civil rights movement – many of whom had close ties to the Democratic Party – finally forced the issue to the top of the agenda, there was no doubt that northern Democrats would prove their most forceful allies.

Rather than a case of elite choice at a critical juncture followed by path dependent lock-in, the civil rights realignment exemplifies how political transformations can emerge from the intersection of multiple institutional trajectories (see Orren and Skowronek 2004). Along the first trajectory, the party system was reshaped in the 1930s without regard for civil rights politics, as the Democrats embraced New Deal liberalism and new coalition partners in response to the Depression, and Republicans countered with a turn to anti-statism. Meanwhile, on an initially separate trajectory, grassroots activists and groups gradually pushed the civil rights issue onto the national agenda (Lee 2002). Many of these activists and groups had ties to the New Deal Democratic Party due to the economic policies and ideological doctrines embraced by the party in the 1930s; but these

linkages developed for reasons independent of the push for civil rights. The key is how these two trajectories intersect: when civil rights activists succeed in pushing the issue onto the national agenda – often over the opposition of national elites in both parties – it is the Democrats who are disposed to embrace the issue because of the changes along the first timeline. By remaking the Democratic Party to be the representative of CIO unionists, northern African Americans, Jews, and liberal egalitarianism, the New Deal set the stage for the later realignment on the race issue – though the latter could not occur until actors on the second timeline forced the issue to the decision stage. The civil rights realignment was thus shaped by the braiding together of two distinct institutional trajectories over time. It is a gradual process that starts in the mid-1930s, gathers momentum in 1940s as the war mobilization creates a window of opportunity for civil rights activists to force fair employment laws onto agenda, and continues into the 1950s.

The civil rights case thus points to an alternative way to think about institutional development than that suggested by the notion of elite choice at a critical juncture followed by lock-in (cf. Orren and Skowronek 2004; Thelen 2004). While less open-ended at the start, this perspective raises the possibility that the coexistence of multiple, potentially contradictory institutional streams at any given point in time also generates less deterministic lock-in downstream.

Appendix A: Platform Coding Guide

Table A1: Summary Score

General civil rights language	Summary score
Platform advocates a government policy of outlawing discrimination broadly across at least two different issue dimensions in what at least appears to be an enforceable manner (e.g. a Fair Employment Practices Commission with enforcement powers and a ban on segregated primary education).	5
Platform calls for a government policy of outlawing discrimination in one issue dimensions in what at least appears to be an enforceable manner.	4
Platform proposes a <i>qualified</i> government policy of outlawing discrimination (e.g. proposed FEPC with explicit time limits or evidently limited enforcement).	3
Platform advocates not the explicit outlawing of discrimination but its discouragement, including through incentive plans, alternative opportunities, and non-discrimination in government (e.g. a proposed commission to educate citizens on the virtues of nondiscrimination).	2
Platform states that the party opposes discrimination, but does not propose any government actions to prevent or discourage discrimination.	1
Platform does not mention civil rights.	0
Platform does not take a position on civil rights legislation, but views some government actors as inappropriate for advancing civil rights (e.g. the courts, the federal government). Platforms employing “states’ rights” language within their civil rights planks are included in this category.	-1
Platform explicitly endorses the status quo (e.g., “current state civil rights legislation is adequate”)	-2
Platform advocates discriminatory policies. This advocacy need not be framed in strictly civil rights language. For example, a plank mentioning “freedom of choice in home sales” qualifies.	-3
warns that civil rights legislation will lead to breakdown in law and order; questions the motives or character of civil rights proponents, or claims that civil rights leaders are exploiting minorities.	-4

Table A2: Issue Scores

(for fair employment practices, housing, public accommodations, and education issues)

Platform proposes law (including commission with apparent enforcement powers) or claims credit for recent passage of law that aims to protect minorities from discrimination in this issue area. (For education issues, this category also includes explicit endorsements of the Brown v. Board decision)	3
Platform calls for some government action, but proposal does not seem expansive enough to significantly reduce or end discrimination in the issue	2

area. For example, a plank that proposes a commission on civil rights to examine the issue and make recommendations merits a “2.”	
Platform is vaguely supportive of civil rights in this issue area, but does not take a position on the appropriateness of legislation (e.g., “we favor such laws as necessary”).	1
Platform does not mention the issue.	0
Platform views the issue as best left to the private sector or condemns past or proposed government action in this area.	-1

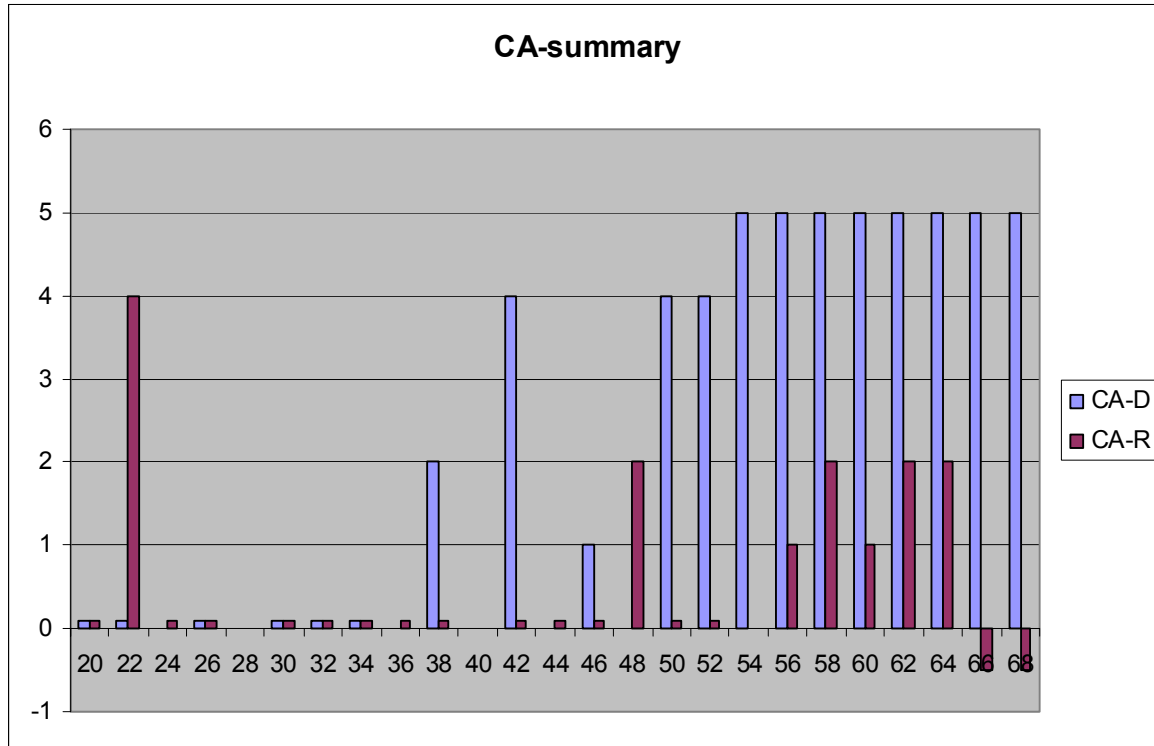
(for voting rights issues)

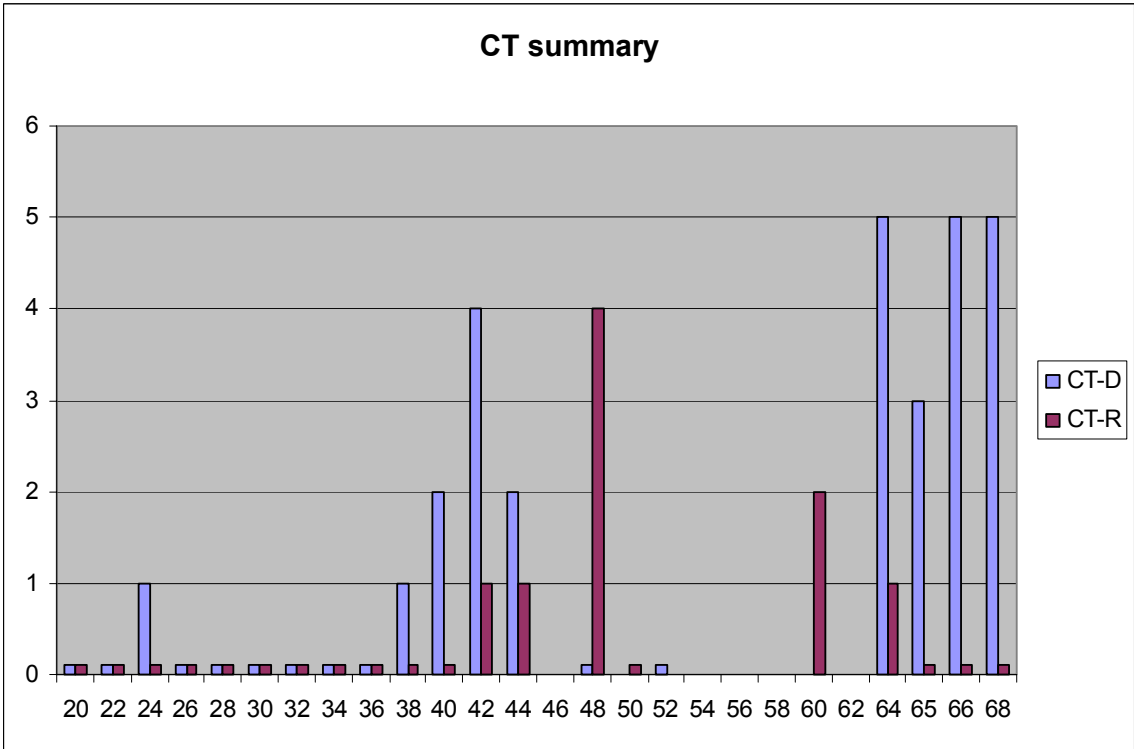
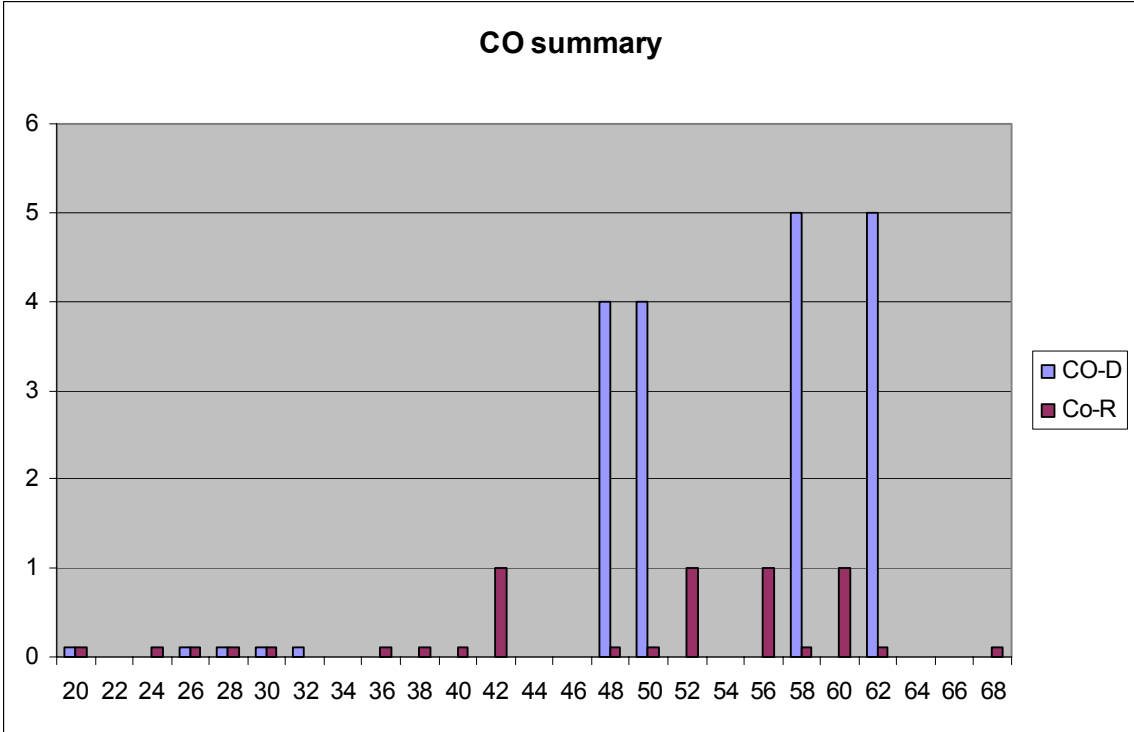
Platform advocates the elimination of multiple barriers to voting through legislation or other binding actions.	3
Platform calls for the elimination of one specific barrier to voting, e.g. the poll tax.	2
Platform is vaguely supportive of civil rights in this issue area, but does not take a position on the appropriateness of legislation (e.g., “we favor such laws as necessary”).	1
Platform does not mention the issue.	0
Platform views the issue as best left to the private sector or condemns past or proposed government action in this area.	-1

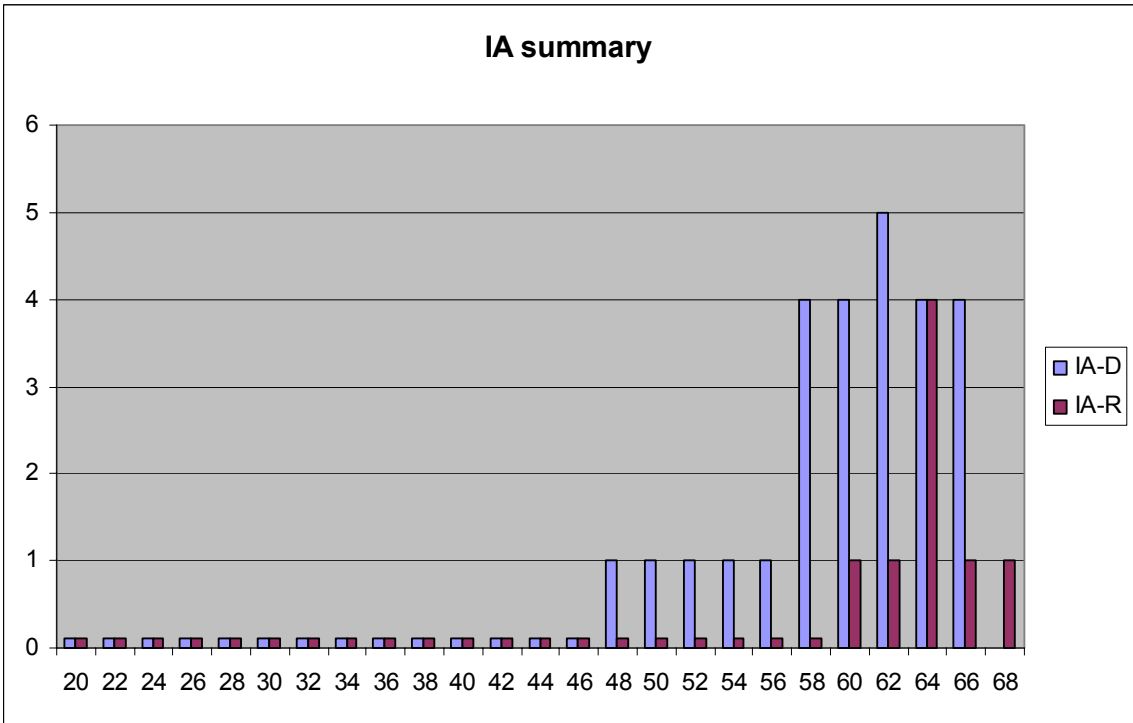
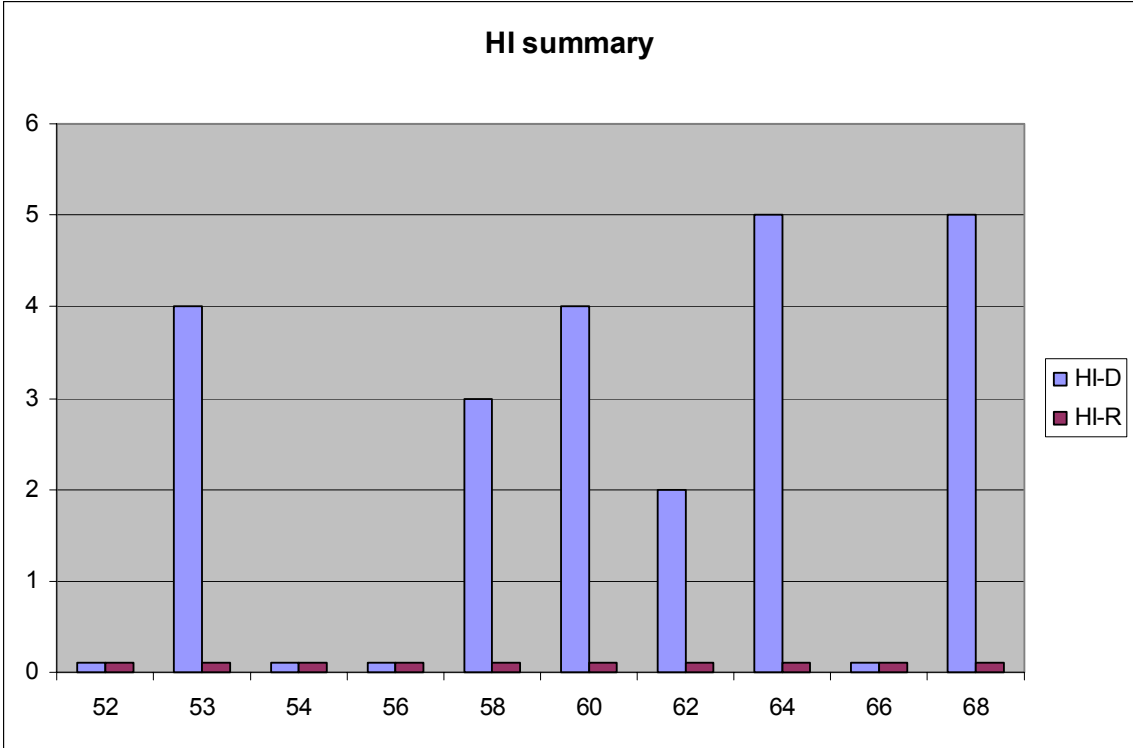
Appendix B: State Party Platform Summary Scores

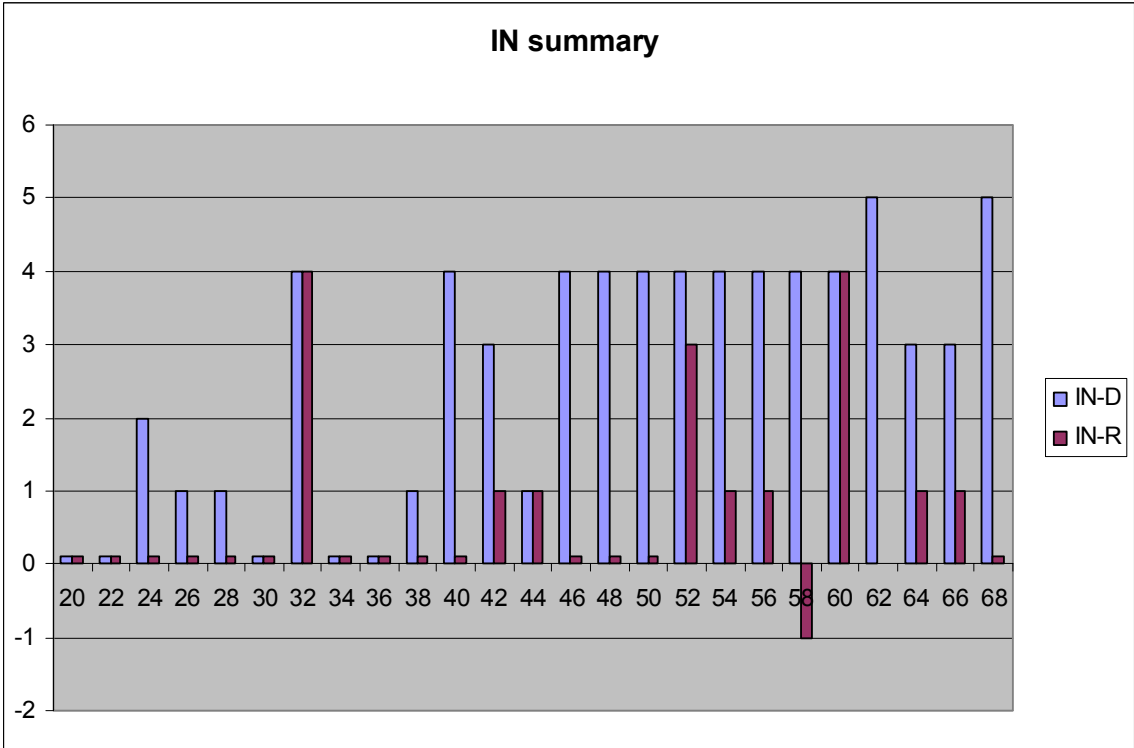
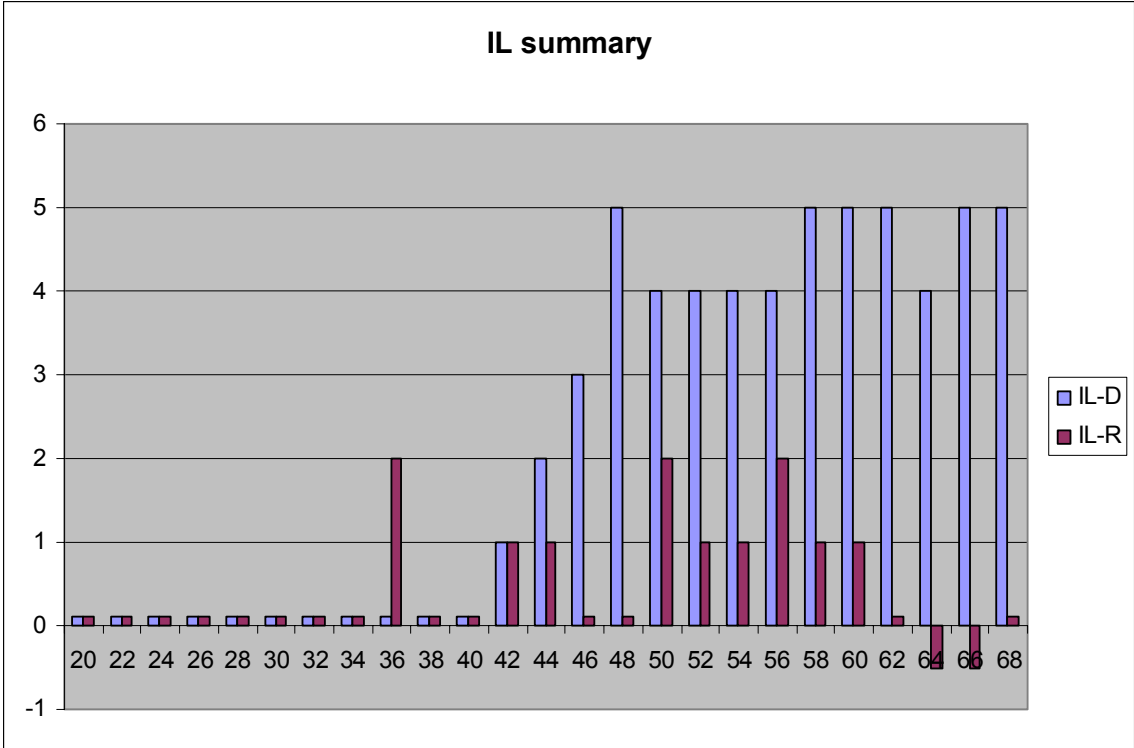
For 22 non-southern states (plus North Carolina and Texas, for comparison)

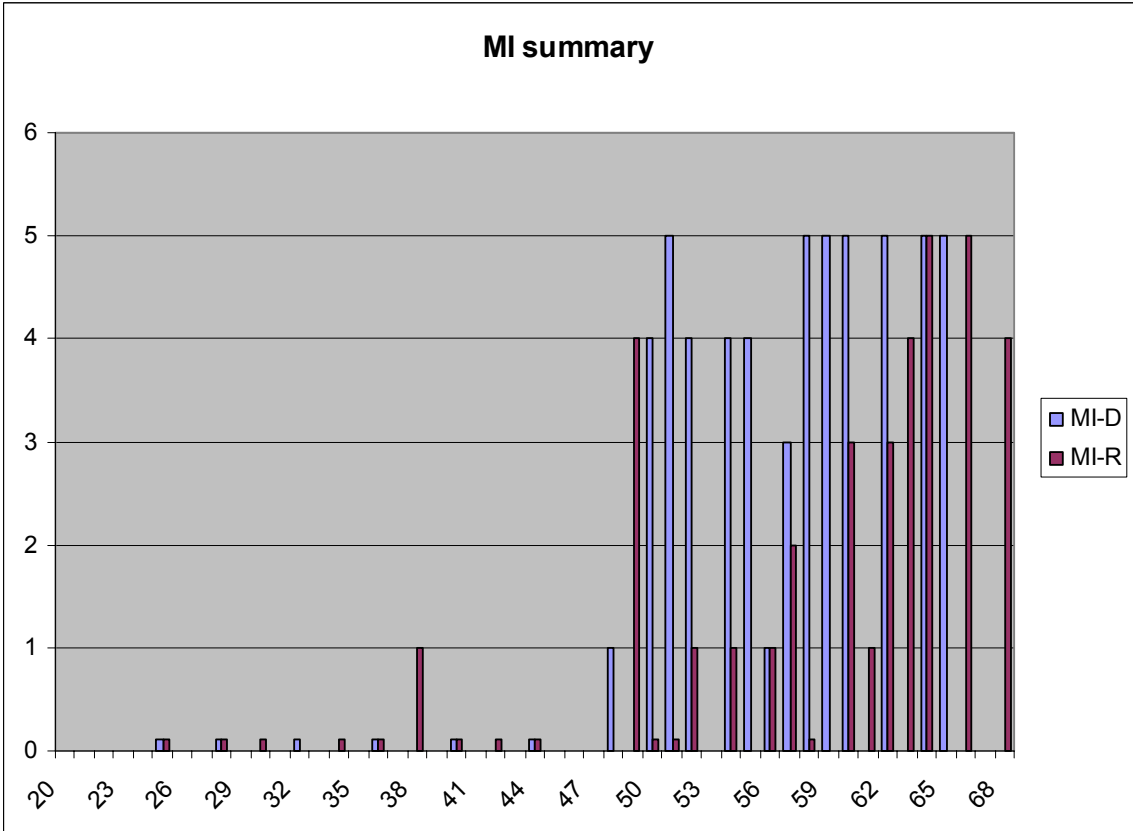
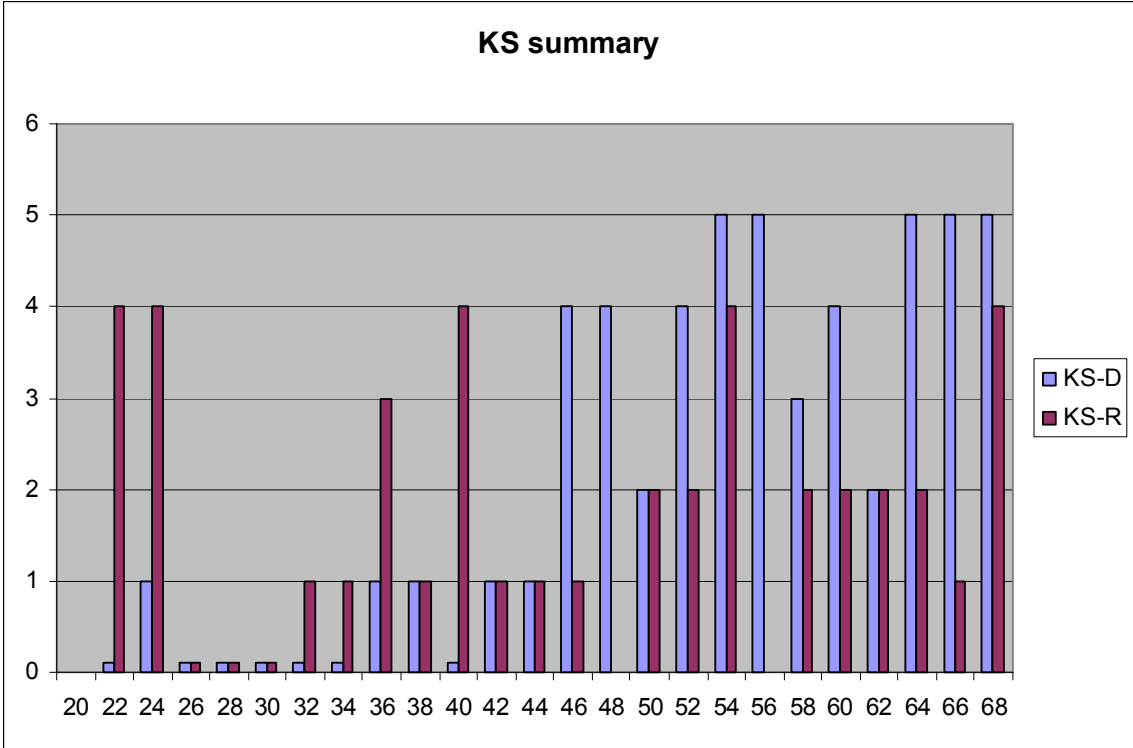
Note: In order to differentiate platforms that received a summary score of zero from those that we did not obtain, platforms that received a zero were coded slightly above the x-axis (at $y=0.1$, rather than $y=0$ for those platforms that are omitted from these graphs).

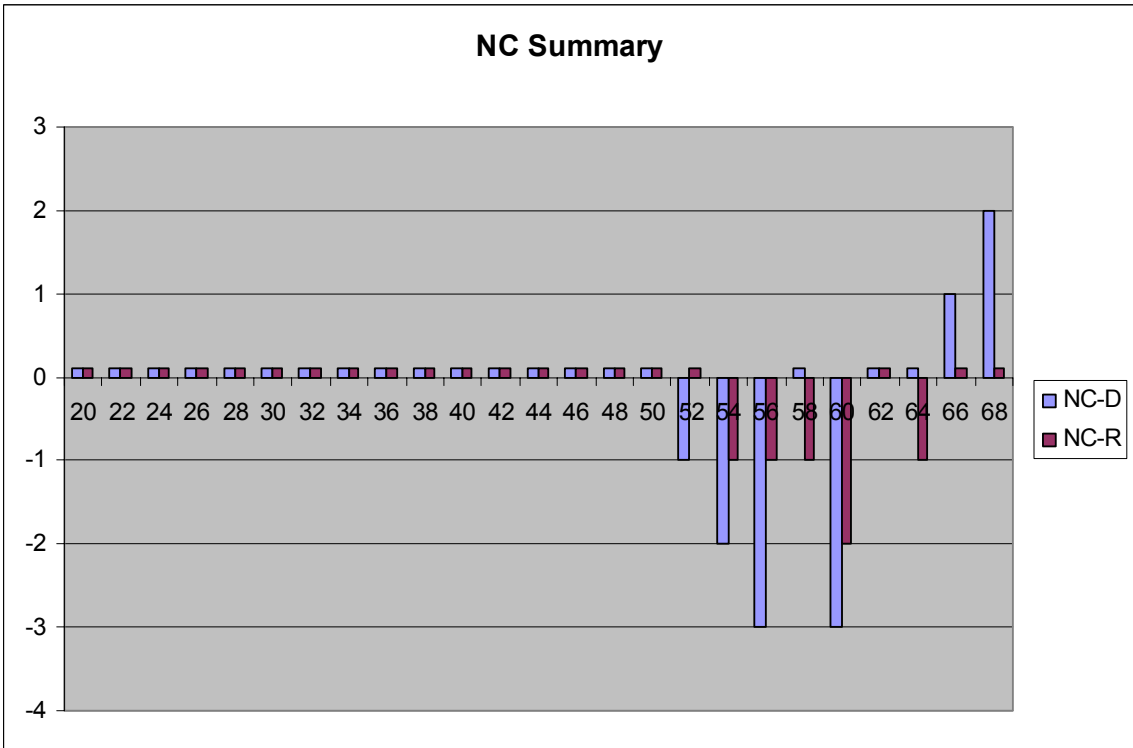
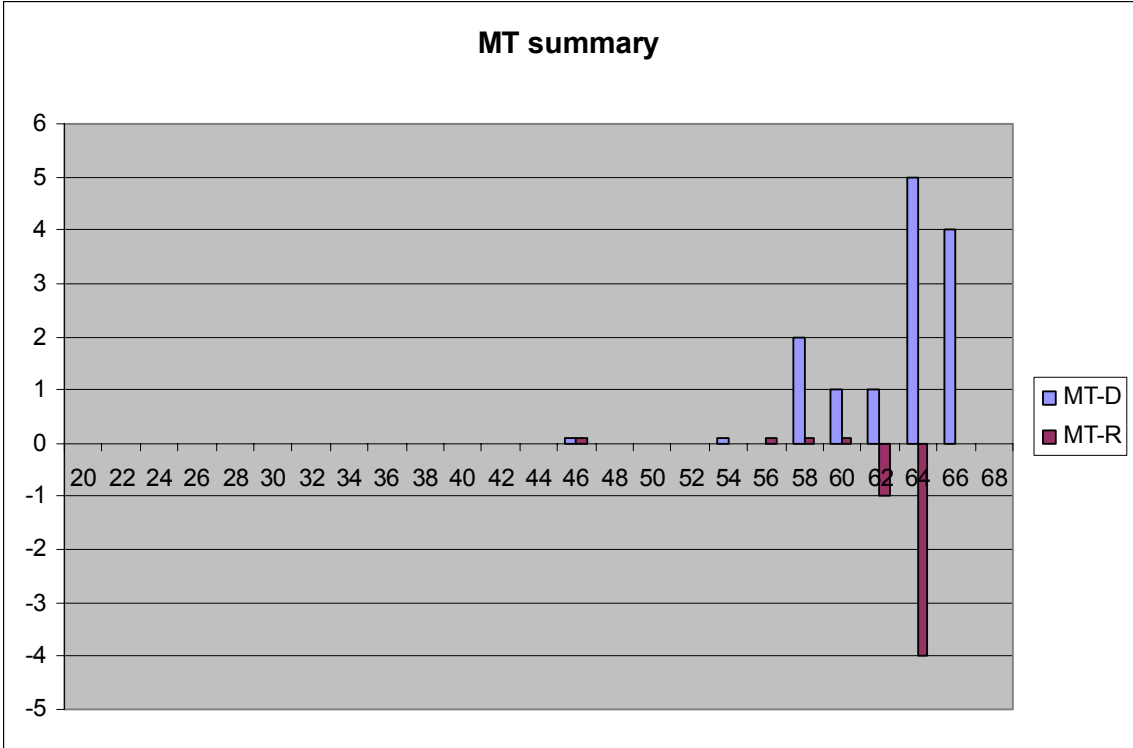


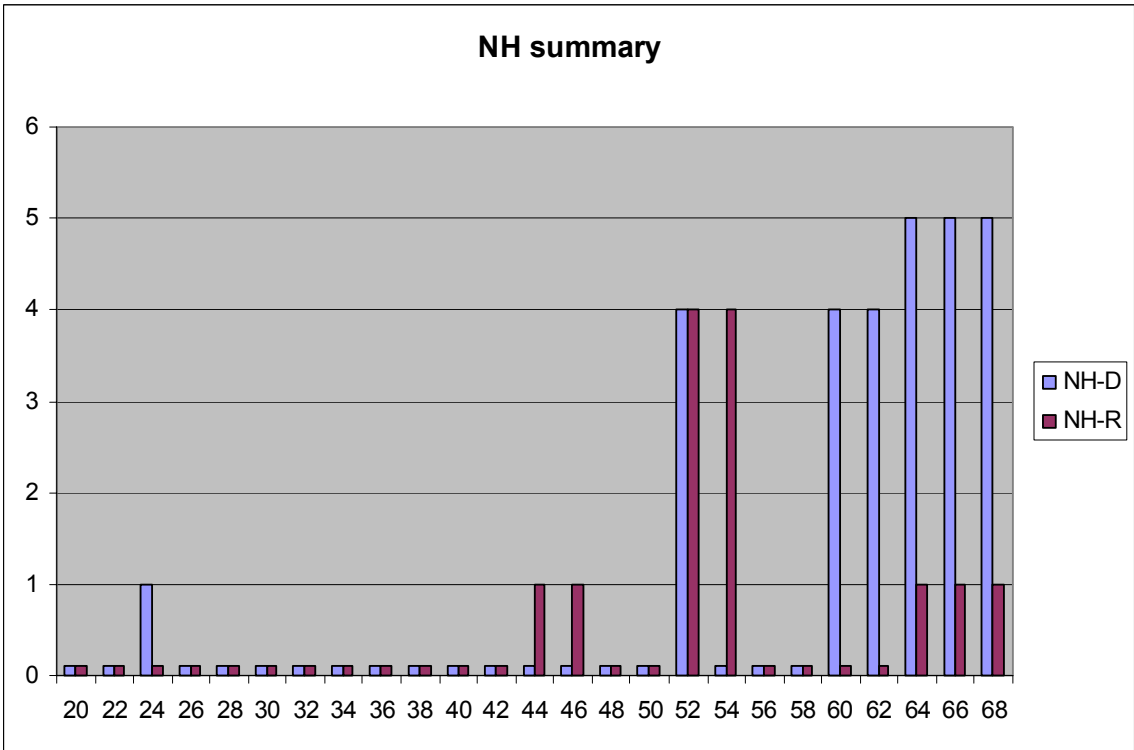
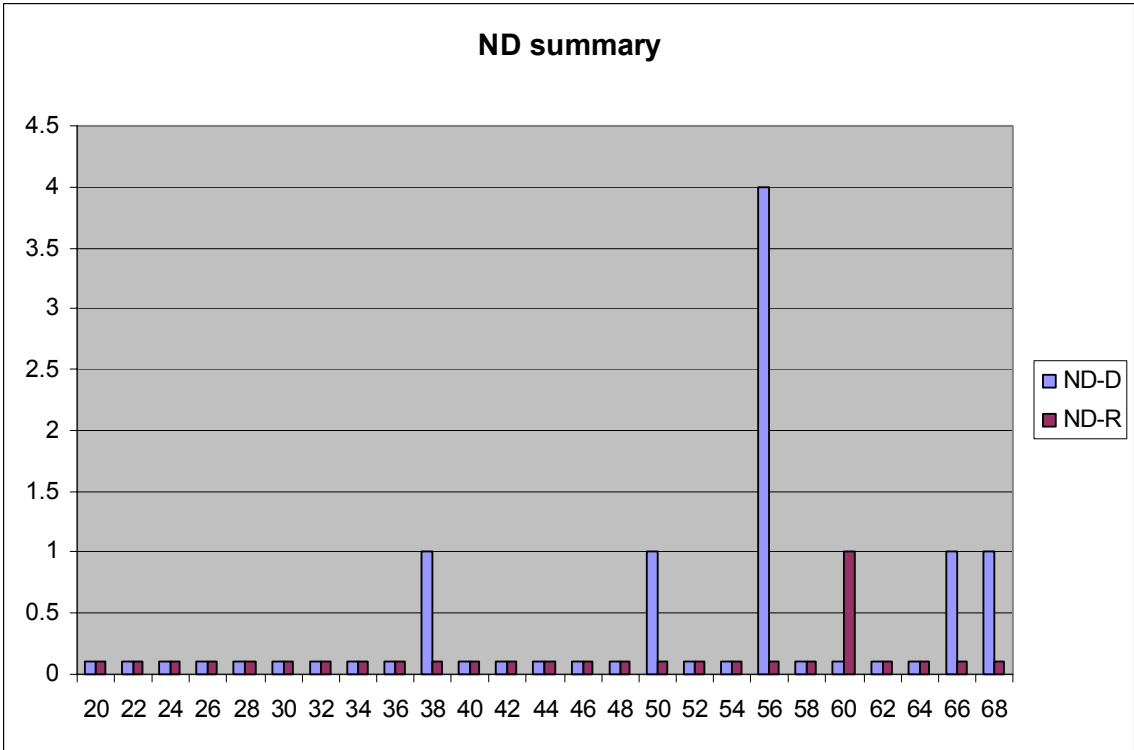


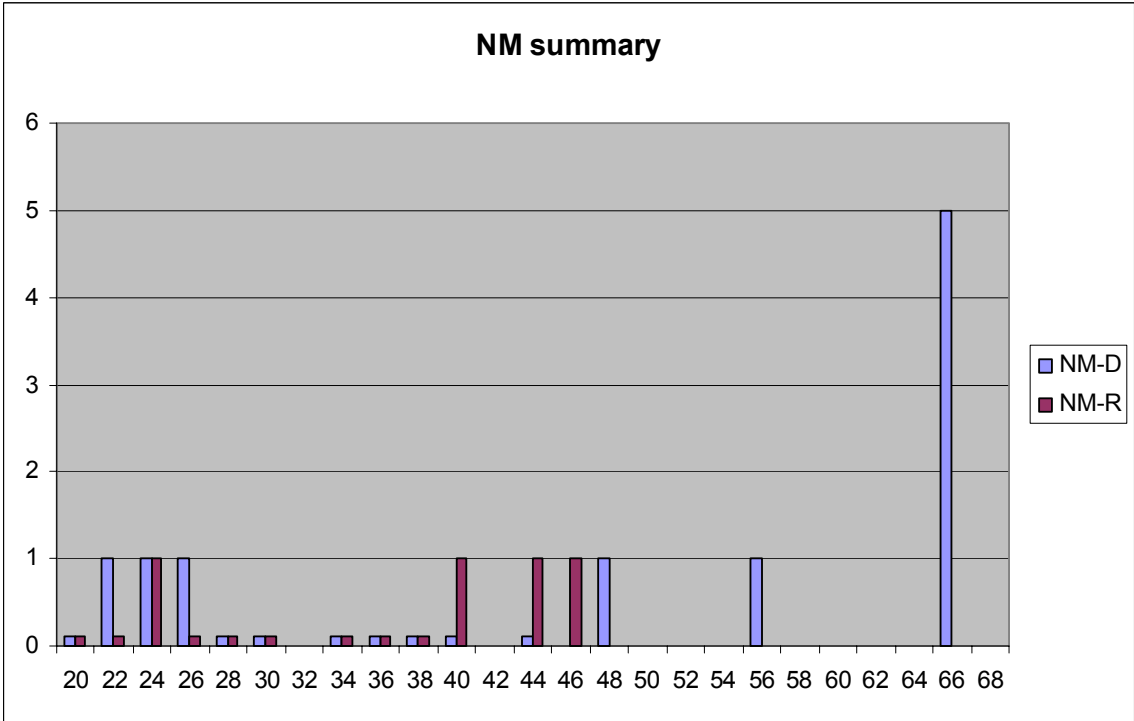
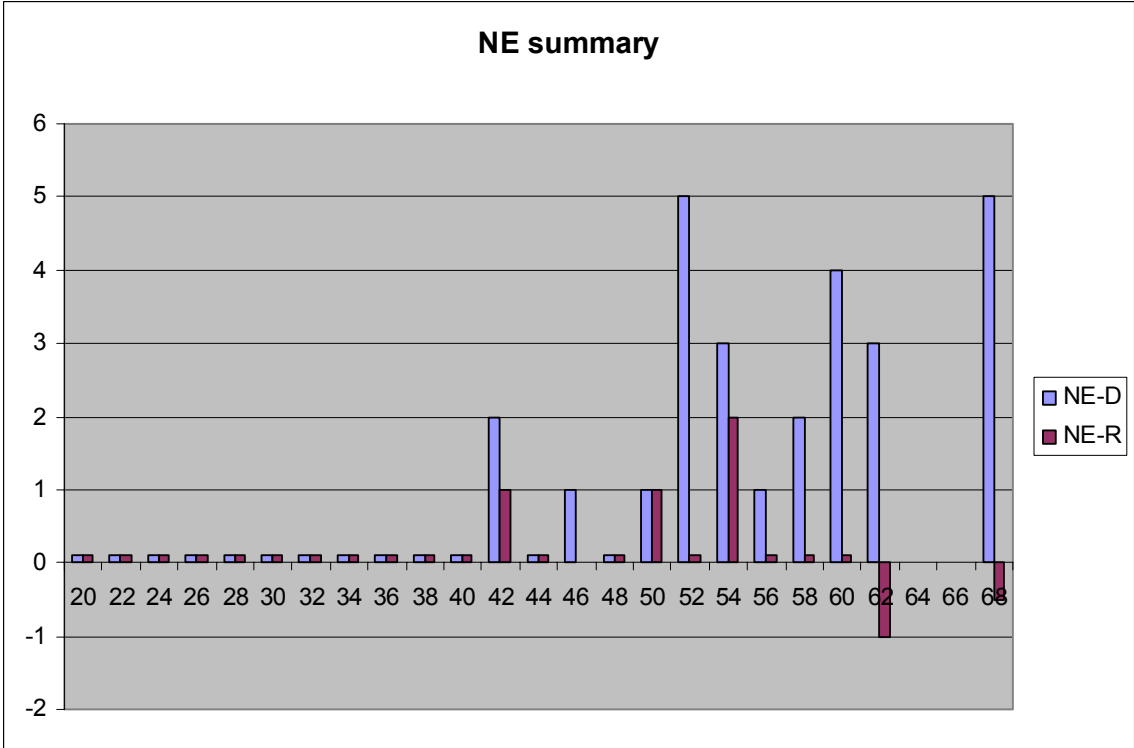


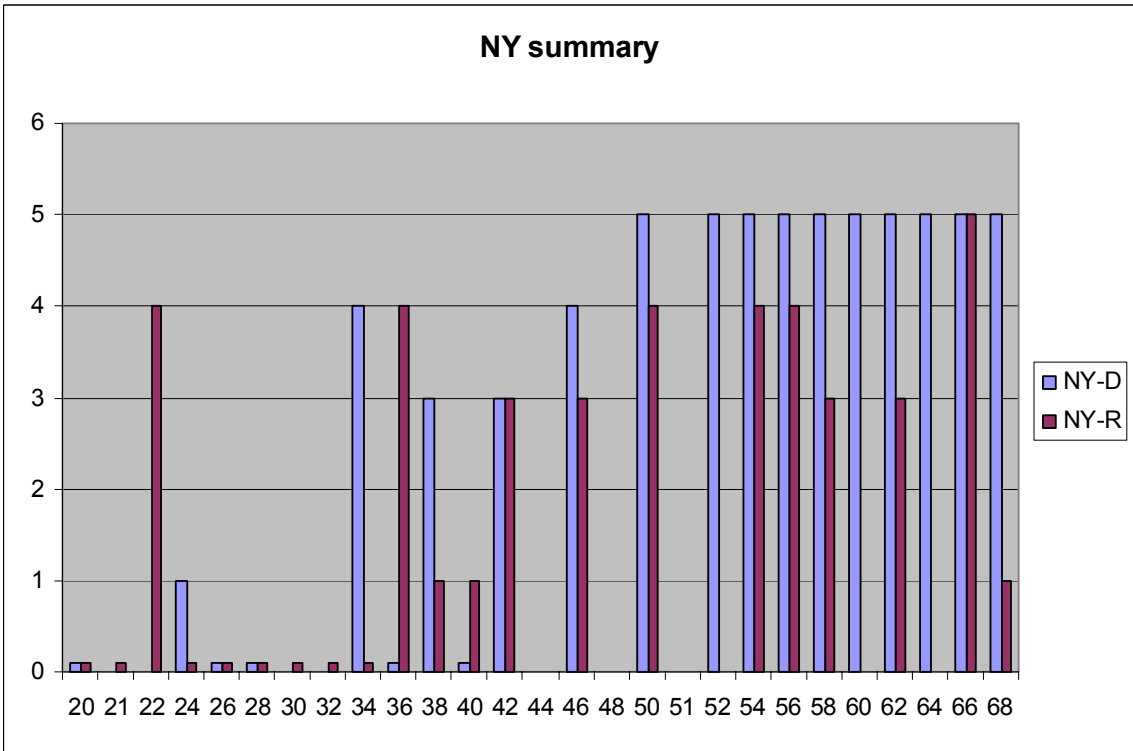
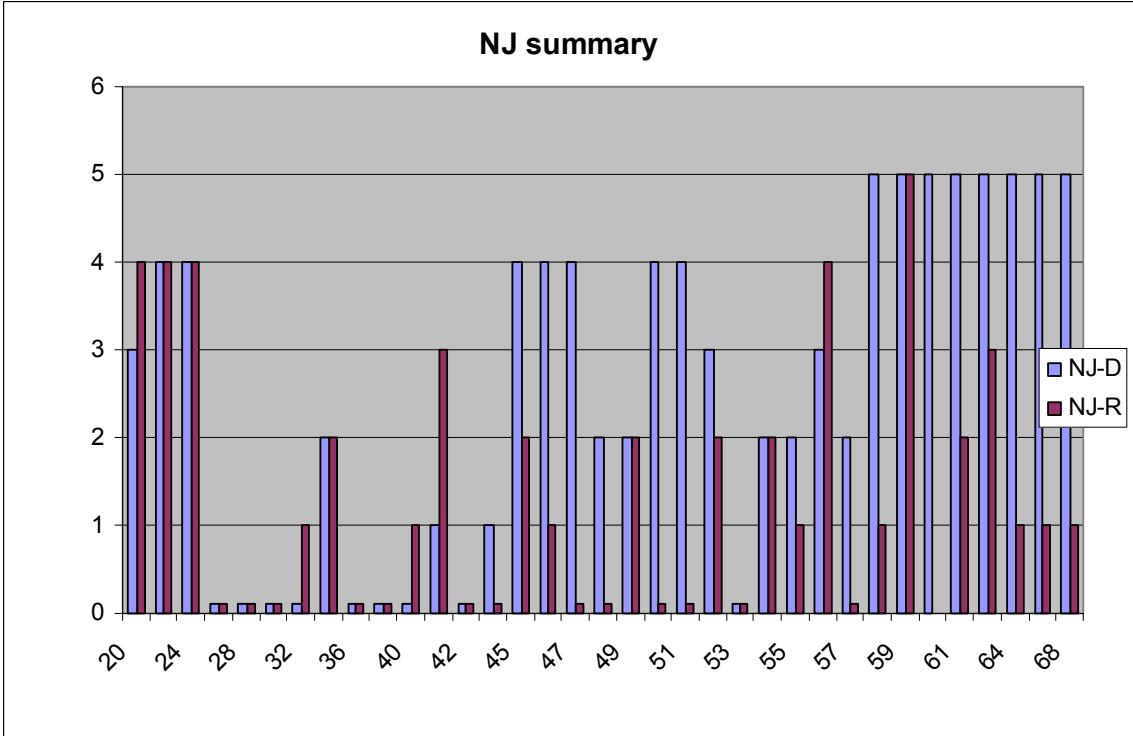


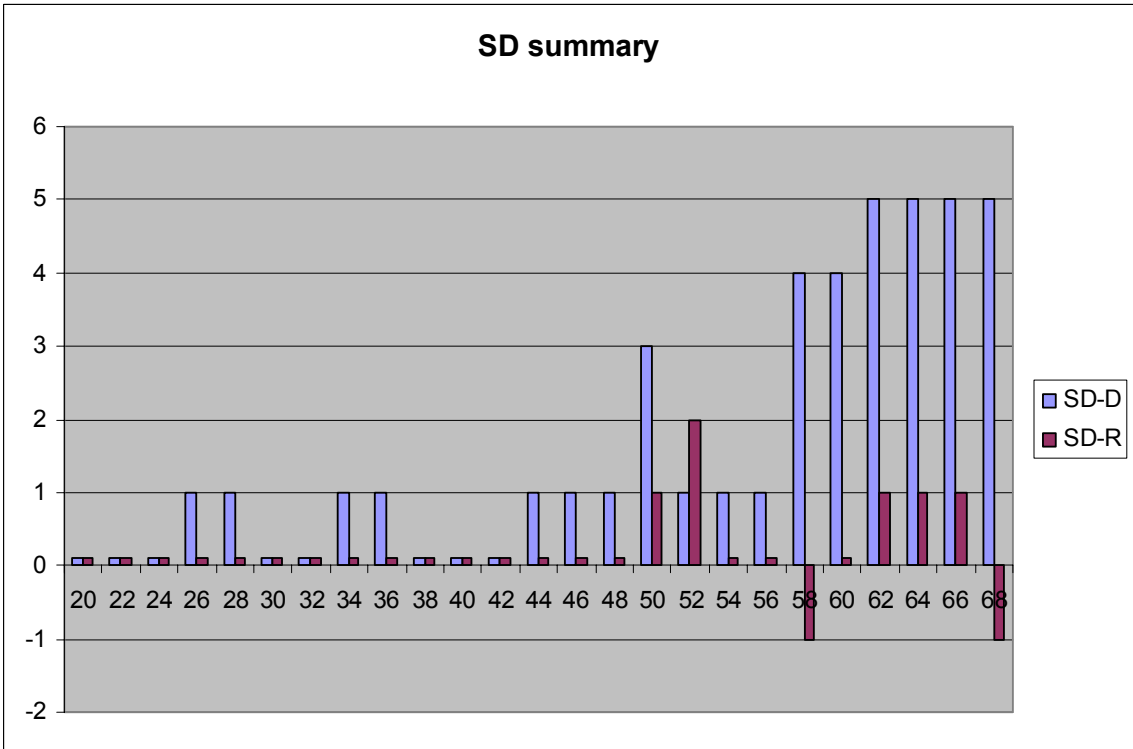
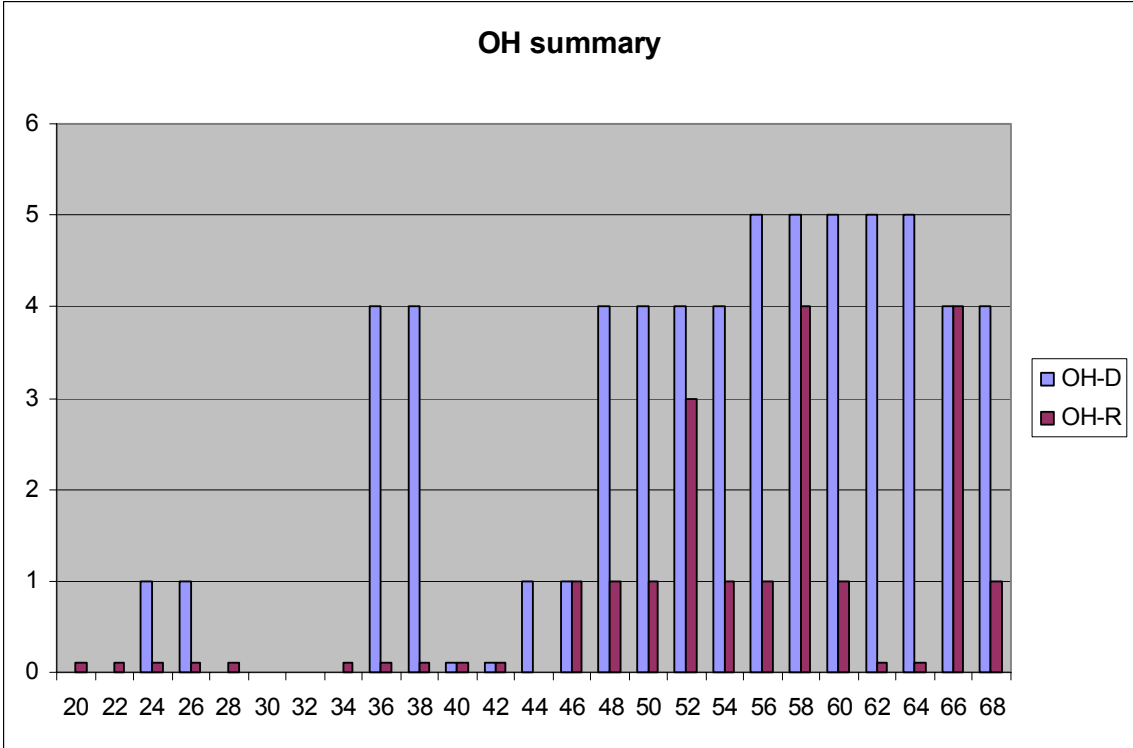


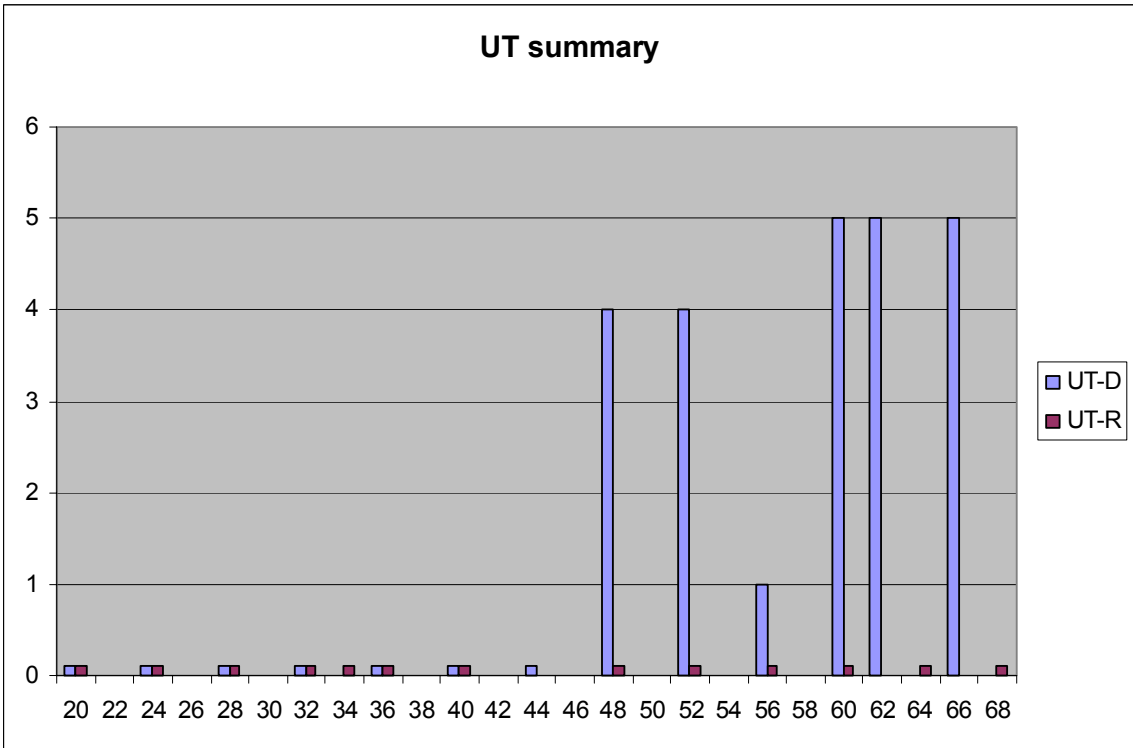
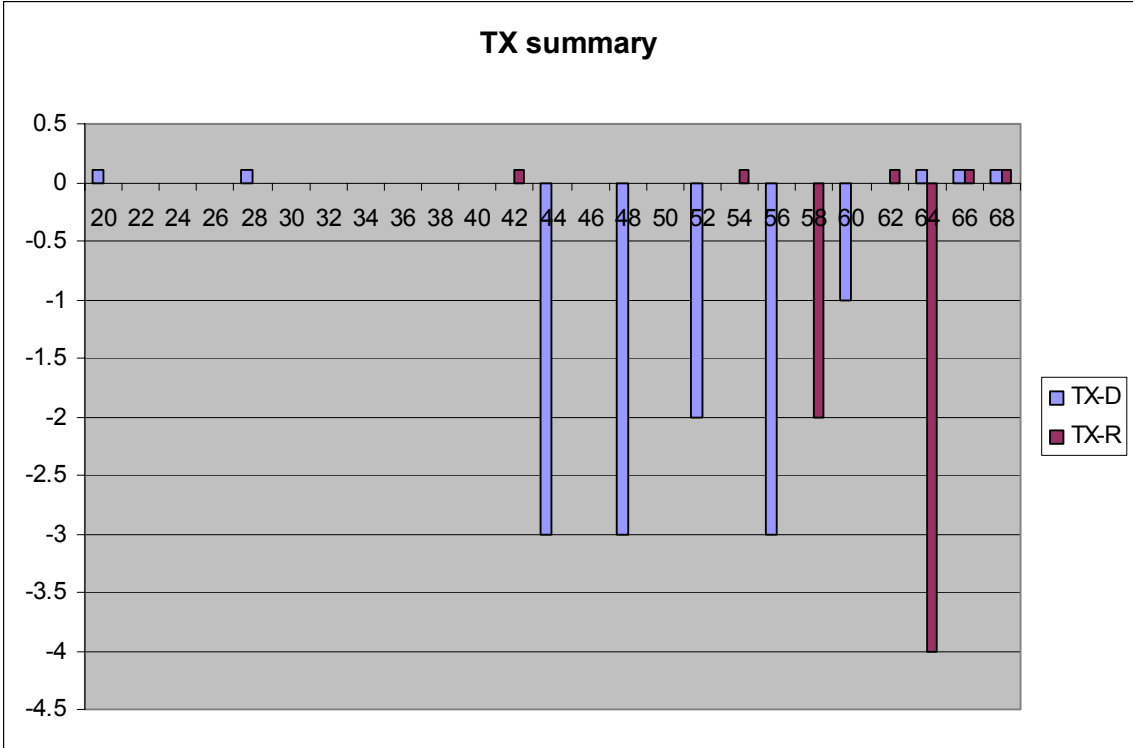


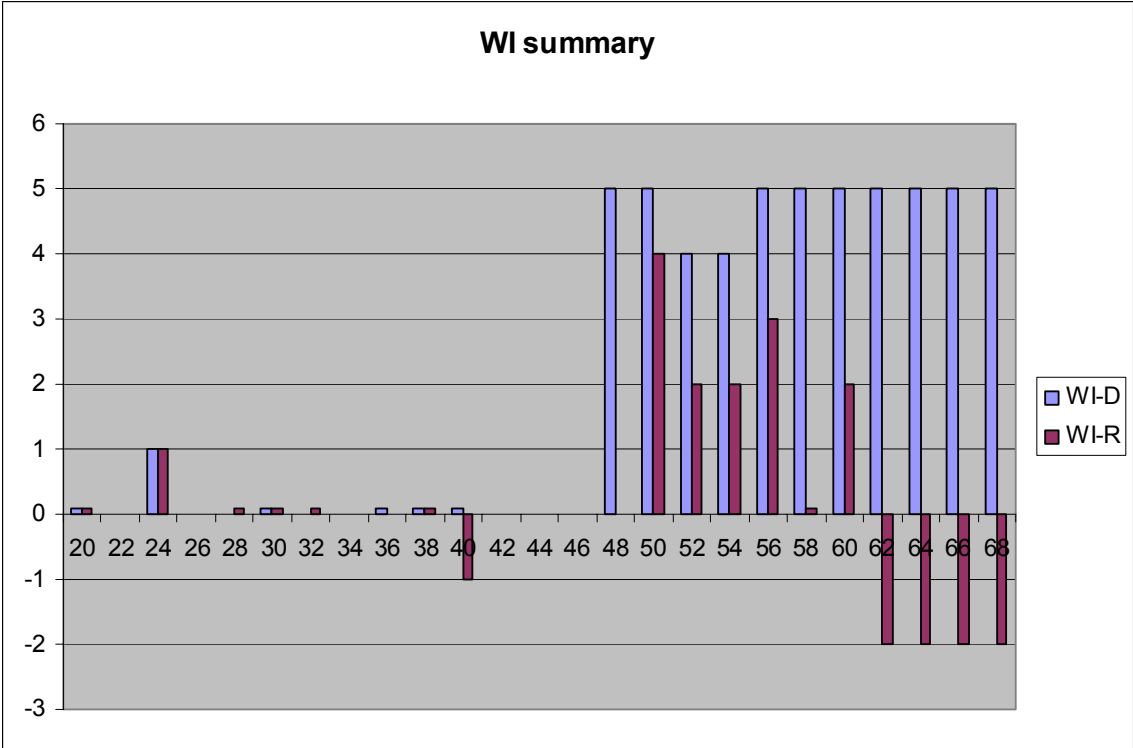








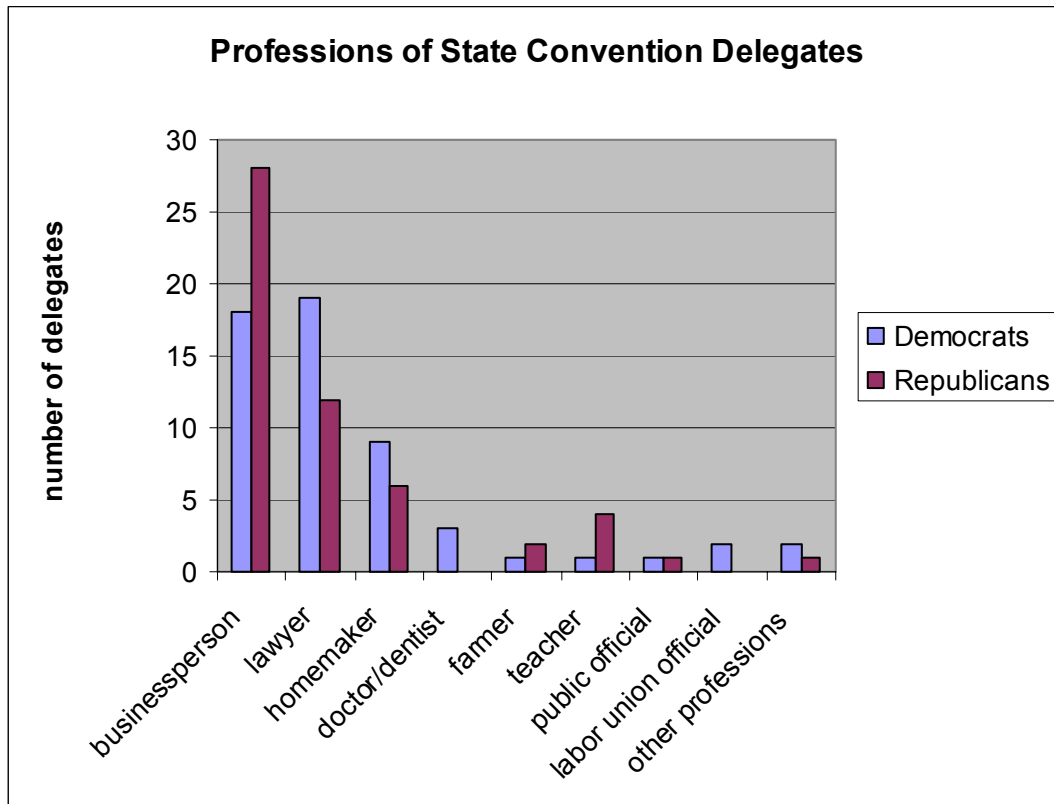




Appendix C: Biographical Study of State Party Executive Committee Members

Of the approximately 7200 people that a 1950 *Who's Who in U.S. Politics* guide identified as serving on a state party executive committee that year, we examined biographical sketches for a random sample of 55 Democrats and 55 Republicans (all non-southern). As the following figure shows, this group was mostly comprised of political amateurs.¹¹⁴

Figure C1

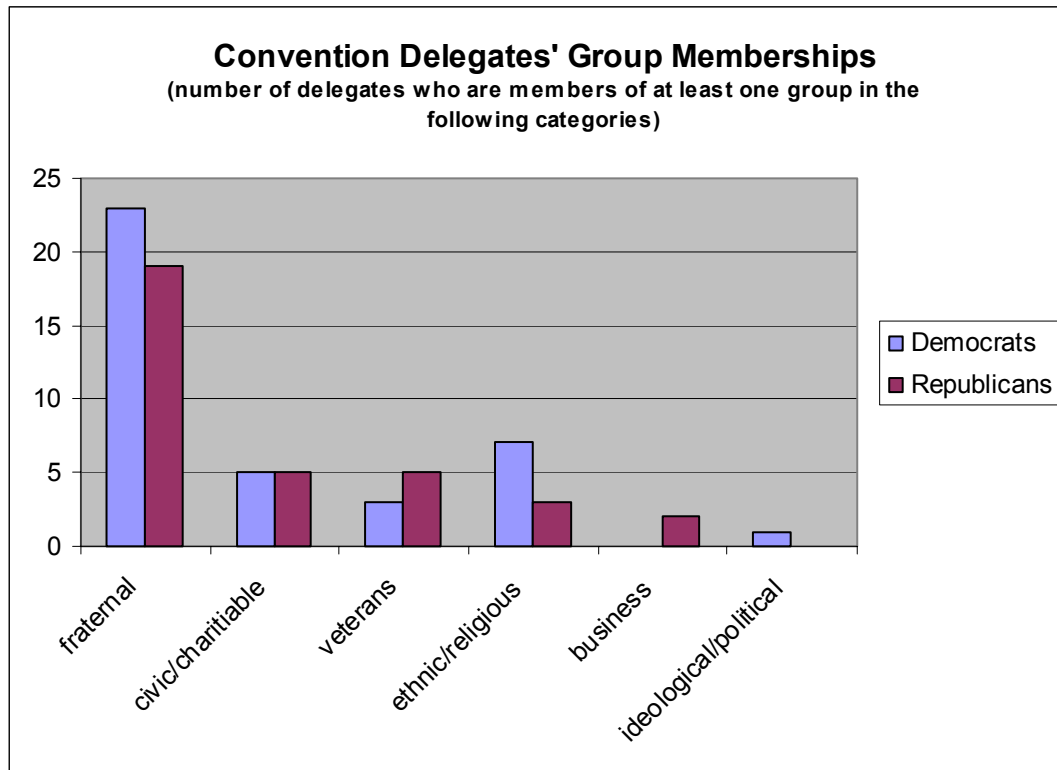


By and in large, the people who ran their parties' conventions – a major purpose of which was to write and ratify a party platform – were not professional politicians. While the

sample included one county sheriff (an elected official) and a state university trustee (possibly an appointed position),¹¹⁵ the state parties' leadership ranks were culled mostly from business and the law.¹¹⁶

Despite the fact that elected and appointed officials did not play a sizeable role in state party organizations, though, is it possible that their other organizational affiliations belie their activist status? For example, a high official in the state Chamber of Commerce or AFL could more accurately be classified as a member of the political elite, not an activist, even if his listed profession is business owner or carpenter. As the following figure illustrates, however, this was mostly not the case. For the most part, state party executive committee members listed fraternal societies; charitable, civic, and veterans groups; and ethnic and religious organizations as their other group attachments. Only one person indicated membership in an expressly political organization aside from his state party (a Democrat who also sat on his state's Americans for Democratic Action board).¹¹⁷

Figure C2



The vast majority of state party leaders – the very people who approved these platforms (and possibly wrote them as well) were not past or present office holders, or high-ranking officials in ideological groups allied with either party, but rather professionals who “donated” significant amounts of their time to party activities.

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¹ See Karol (2001, 2005) on patterns of partisan change across a range of issues in the second half of the twentieth century.

² We use "realignment" here to mean a process by which partisan coalitional alignments change. It is worth noting that these theoretical stakes do not depend on the validity of the claim that racial issues drove the changes in mass partisanship in the south from the 1960s to the present. Regardless of whether one agrees with Shafer and Johnston's (2006) thesis that the role of racial attitudes in shaping southern partisanship and election outcomes has been greatly exaggerated, it is nonetheless the case that the shift in the parties' stance on civil rights issues is a crucial development in American politics. In other words, even if the mass electorate did not follow the parties' issue evolution, it is nonetheless critical to understand the parties' changing stances on this central policy battleground.

³ Party elites are defined as the president, members of Congress, and candidates for high office, while activists include delegates to the national conventions, minor officeholders and party officials. (Carmines and Wagner 2006, 70; Carmines and Woods 2002, pp. 363-364; also see Carmines and Stimson, 1989, 162)

⁴ Carmines and Wagner (2006, 70)

⁵ Carmines and Stimson (1989, 179)

⁶ Carmines and Stimson (1989, 57)

⁷ Carmines and Stimson (1989, 179)

⁸ Carmines and Stimson (1989, 18)

⁹ Carmines and Stimson (1989, pp. 192-193)

¹⁰ Carmines and Stimson (1989, 18)

¹¹ Carmines and Stimson (1989, 35)

¹² Carmines and Stimson (1989, 37-39); Carmines and Stimson (1989, 76)

¹³ Carmines and Stimson (1989, 154)

¹⁴ Aronson and Spiegler (1949) come to a similar conclusion. They charge that, while Democrats pushed for fair employment practices legislation in many states throughout the 1940s, the GOP was largely indifferent or opposed to these measures.

¹⁵ But see Sanbonmatsu (2002) for a critique of this view.

¹⁶ Of course, rank-and-file white union workers were not necessarily supportive of civil rights (see Sugrue 1996). But while relations between African Americans and unions were by no means smooth, it is still the case that the CIO was a crucial supporter of both civil rights legislation and Democratic candidates.

¹⁷ We plan to examine whether northern Democrats shifted to the left on civil rights issues earlier and more decisively in states with large numbers of African Americans (and strong NAACP presence), high union density (particularly CIO), and large Jewish (and other minority) populations. Collins (2002) finds that state-level fair employment laws are more likely in states with strong unions and NAACP organizations, though the size of the state's African American population does not have a significant impact. Collins does not assess whether these variables have differential effects depending on party control of the state government.

¹⁸ Gerring (1998, ch. 7)

¹⁹ Beyond this project, we believe that this new state party platforms database can help provide insights into a wide variety of questions related to elections, policy agendas and parties. For instance, are perennially losing parties more likely to introduce new policy alternatives in their platforms, in an effort to divide and conquer the current majority party, as Riker (1986) suggests? Under what circumstances do new policy proposals introduced in one state cross state boundaries or become nationalized? During what periods have the parties been relatively “national,” with few variations among same-label parties across states? Is the supposed postwar transition in emphasis from patronage to issues reflected in longer, more sophisticated, or more forceful platform stances?

²⁰ Carmines and Wagner (2006, 70); Carmines and Woods (2002, pp. 363-4). The authors use Shafer’s (1998) definition of party activists, as will we.

²¹ Mayhew (1986)

²² Nowinson, Richard, ed. 1950. *Who’s Who in United States Politics and American Political Almanac*. Capitol House.

²³ These six newspapers are: *The Hartford Courant*, *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Providence Journal-Bulletin*, *Appleton (Wisc.) Post-Crescent*, and *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, as well as their predecessor papers.

²⁴ Sanbonmatsu (2002, 91)

²⁵ California, Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Utah and Wisconsin. This map also shows our coverage for two southern states, Texas and North Carolina, which were not included in our analysis.

²⁶ Key (1950, 396)

²⁷ Key (1950, 646)

²⁸ This estimate is based on the conservative assumption that all non-southern state parties published platforms biennially in all cases in which we lack evidence to the contrary.

²⁹ Carmines and Stimson (1989, 56)

³⁰ Carmines and Stimson also construct a “racial priority index” which examines the position in each platform in which a paragraph on civil rights first appears, and divides that number by the total number of paragraphs in the platform. Since state party platforms often present issue areas in alphabetical order, a similar analysis would not be useful for our data.

³¹ See Budge (2001, 211), for a discussion of the advantages of using measures of platform length to gauge party priorities.

³² Carmines and Stimson (1989, 56)

³³ Carmines and Stimson (1989, 154); Carmines and Stimson (1989, 18)

³⁴ As before, we use 423 sets of paired platforms as our sample here. Those state-years for which we could not obtain both parties’ platforms for a given year are excluded from the analysis.

³⁵ Carmines and Stimson (1989), 18

³⁶ The results are substantively identical if one focuses on the average score (on our five point scale, see Appendix Table A2 for more information) for each party on each issue, as opposed to the simpler ranking of which party took the more liberal position.

³⁷ As previously mentioned, the summary score ranges from -4 to 5. South Dakota’s scores range from -1 (signifying that the platform views some government venues as inappropriate for advancing civil rights) to 5 (signifying advocacy of outlawing discrimination broadly in at least two issue areas). Illinois parties take positions ranging from -0.5 (a rarely-employed designation referring to opposition to some civil rights measures, but tepid support for others) to 5. Please see Appendix A for a more complete look at how these values were assigned.

³⁸ For comparison, Appendix B also includes graphs for North Carolina and Texas, the two southern states for which we have a sufficient number of platforms to conduct such an analysis.

³⁹ Party organization type is taken from Mayhew’s (1986) five-point “traditional party organization” scale. We correlated TPO scores with party positioning on civil rights and found little relationship (although we are planning a more refined analysis).

⁴⁰ As noted above, we are planning a more systematic quantitative analysis.

⁴¹ An obvious next step is to undertake case studies of some of these exceptions.

⁴² Carmines and Stimson, 56

⁴³ Of course, we are by no means the first to make this argument. Indeed, historians' accounts of the period have often depicted northern Democrats as more liberal than Republicans on civil rights (see, e.g., Zelizer 2004, ch. 3). But political scientists – relying upon roll call data and national platforms – have generally downplayed northern Democrats' relative liberalism (see Karol 2005 and Chen 2006, 2007 for noteworthy exceptions).

⁴⁴ Frederickson (2001, 123)

⁴⁵ Gerring (1998, 253)

⁴⁶ Sindler (1962, 233)

⁴⁷ Heard (1952, 152). Indeed, Truman's decision not to seek the nomination in 1952 was partly rooted in his belief that his candidacy would lead to a southern walkout and permanent split in the Democratic Party (see Berman 1970, pp. 196-197).

⁴⁸ Berman (1970, ch. 5) and Frederickson (2001).

⁴⁹ Berman (1970, ch. 5)

⁵⁰ Anderson (1964, ch. 3)

⁵¹ Berman (1970, pp. 209-210)

⁵² Berman (1970, pp. 209-210)

⁵³ Delegate numbers were roughly based on the size of a state's congressional delegate, plus between zero and 10 at-large delegates.

⁵⁴ In his speech accepting the Republican gubernatorial nomination for North Carolina, John Parker stated: "I have attended every state convention since 1908 and have never seen a Negro delegate ... The Negro as a class does not desire to enter politics. The Republican Party of North Carolina does not desire him to do so." (*Greensboro Daily News*, 19 April 1920. quoted in Watson (1963, 218)

⁵⁵ Heard (1952, 166). Black Republicans still controlled the patronage-oriented Mississippi Republican Party; Georgia and South Carolina Republican organizations were mixed.

⁵⁶ Indeed, a 1957-8 survey of 3,020 national convention delegates, reported in McClosky, Hoffmann and O'Hara (1960), reveals substantial differences between Democratic and Republican delegates on civil rights, with 43.8 percent of the former group and only 25.5 percent of the latter favoring "enforced integration." Democratic delegates' stronger support for civil rights measures is especially striking in light of the fact that the survey was administered to a national sample – including southern delegates (McClosky, et al., 1960, 413).

⁵⁷ Kesselman (1948, 151)

⁵⁸ Anderson (1964, ch. 2)

⁵⁹ Anderson (1964, ch. 2); Berman (1962); Kesselman (1948)

⁶⁰ Sitkoff (1971, 606).

⁶¹ Brock (1962)

⁶² Kesselman (1948, pp. 29-31)

⁶³ Caro (2002, 927)

⁶⁴ <http://www.adaction.org/staff.htm>

⁶⁵ Brock (1962, pp. 179-180)

⁶⁶ Martin (1979, 170)

⁶⁷ Gerring (1998, 253)

⁶⁸ Kesselman (1948)

⁶⁹ *Pittsburgh Courier* 4 January 1947, p. 4. quoted in Berman (1970, 59)

⁷⁰ Cf., for example, Griffin, William. 1983. "The Political Realignment of Black Voters in Indianapolis, 1924." *Indiana Magazine of History* 79(2): 133-166.

⁷¹ Lawrence (1996, 34)

⁷² Berman (1970, 130)

⁷³ Of course, a broad swath of urban, working class voters (not just African Americans) shifted to the Democratic camp during the New Deal era. Democrats' support for government intervention in the economy to alleviate the Depression struck a chord with an overlapping set of voters: Catholics, Jews, immigrants, the working class, immigrants, and city-dwellers (Sundquist 1983, pp. 214-223). As previously mentioned, groups tied both to these voters and to the Democratic Party soon became core supporters of the civil rights movement.

⁷⁴ Lubell (1956, 217)

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- ⁷⁵ Lubell (1956, 115)
- ⁷⁶ Heard (1952, 233)
- ⁷⁷ Myrdal (1944, 511)
- ⁷⁸ Heard (1952, 234). We are planning to explore early public opinion data to allow for a fuller understanding of the timing of African Americans' changing partisan allegiances. See Berinsky and Schickler (2005) for a discussion of the early survey data.
- ⁷⁹ Freidel (1965, pp. 91-92)
- ⁸⁰ as quoted in Patterson (1965, 603)
- ⁸¹ Patterson (1965)
- ⁸² Heard, (1952, 160)
- ⁸³ Patterson (1965) notes how Republicans, such as Senator Arthur Vandenberg (R-MI), Kansas Governor and 1936 presidential nominee Alf Landon, and former Senator George Moses (R-NH), explored the possibilities for a realignment in the late 1930s. Moses wrote Carter Glass in November 1937: "You and I have often discussed realignment but you have always raised the color question. This condition no longer exists. Jim Farley and the Roosevelt largess have made the colored vote in the North impregnably Democratic. Therefore, with the color line obliterated, why cannot those of us who are free, white, and twenty-one get together and do a job as effective as Mussolini did when he made his march upon Rome?" (as quoted in Patterson 1965, 605). Similarly, Vandenberg considered forming coalition tickets with southern Democrats for 1940, writing that "a 1940 realignment may not be 'absolutely essential' even though my 'hunch' runs in that direction" (as quoted in Patterson 1965, 605).
- ⁸⁴ Frederickson (2001, 227)
- ⁸⁵ Sitkoff (1971, 613)
- ⁸⁶ Aronson & Spiegler (1949); Berman (1970)
- ⁸⁷ Aronson & Spiegler (1949)
- ⁸⁸ Lawrence, W. H. "Republicans Woo States Righters." *New York Times*. March 9, 1950. p. 23.
- ⁸⁹ *Savannah Morning News*, July 3, 1950; as quoted in Heard (1952)
- ⁹⁰ Berman (1970)
- ⁹¹ Mundt's NOMINATE scores place him near the Republican Senate delegation median.
- ⁹² Democratic Senator Hubert Humphrey seemed to agree, defining a southern Democrat as "a conservative Republican with a southern accent" (Heidepriem, 1988, 162).
- ⁹³ Heidepriem (1988, 158)
- ⁹⁴ Heidepriem (1988, 163-164)
- ⁹⁵ Berman (1970)
- ⁹⁶ Black & Black (2002, 188)
- ⁹⁷ Brock (1962, 119)
- ⁹⁸ Sundquist (1983, 264)
- ⁹⁹ Maslow (1946, 419)
- ¹⁰⁰ Maslow (1946, 419)
- ¹⁰¹ For example, House Minority Leader Joe Martin (R-MA) announced on December 11, 1945 that enough Republicans would sign the petition to get it to the floor, but as of May 1, 1946, this promise had not been fulfilled (Maslow 1946, 419). See Pearson and Schickler (2007) on discharge petitions more generally.
- ¹⁰² Berman (1962, 118)
- ¹⁰³ as quoted in Patterson (1972, 304)
- ¹⁰⁴ See Patterson (1972, 304).
- ¹⁰⁵ Patterson (1972, pp. 509-511). It is worth noting as well that even when Republicans backed modest civil rights legislation in the 1950s, a close examination indicates that mainstream GOP leaders were far more tepid in their support than were northern Democrats. For example, in the battle over the Civil Rights Act of 1957, Eisenhower appears to have been at best a reluctant supporter of his own administration's bill (Anderson 1964). In addition, Senate Republican leader William Knowland (R-CA) fought to water down the bill before it was introduced (Anderson 1964; Montgomery and Johnson 1998: 213). Knowland's biographers conclude that due to weakening amendments adopted en route to passage, "by the time the legislation was enacted into law, Knowland had come around to believing that perhaps passage of a civil rights bill was the right thing to do" (Montgomery and Johnson 1998, 213).
- ¹⁰⁶ I.e., individuals who give multiple civil rights speeches in 1945 are only counted once.
- ¹⁰⁷ Carmines and Stimson (1989, chapter 3)

¹⁰⁸ Carmines and Stimson (1989, 62)

¹⁰⁹ To obtain these data, we examined all pages in the 1945 Congressional Record that were mentioned in the index under the headings “colored rights,” “Negro rights,” “Fair Employment Practices Committee,” “Fair Employment Practices Commission.” (The term “civil rights” does not appear in the index.) We then determined, where applicable, whether each speaker favored or opposed the civil rights issue in question. Items that were inserted in the Congressional Record, but were not voiced on the floor, are not included.

¹¹⁰ Carmines and Stimson (1989, 18)

¹¹¹ Another reasonable counterfactual – though equally at odds with the issue evolution perspective as with ours – is that Thomas Dewey wins the 1948 election and continues on a national stage the pro-civil rights policies that he pursued as governor of New York. While it is impossible to determine how a hypothetical Dewey administration would compare to Truman’s – particularly since liberal New York afforded Dewey an entirely different and more pro-civil rights political context than Truman’s national context – the behavior of the two candidates during the general election campaign provides for a common context to evaluate this counterfactual. During the campaign, Truman became the first U.S. President to speak in Harlem, where he highlighted his pro-civil rights executive orders; establishment of the Civil Rights Committee; the 1948 Democratic platform’s landmark civil rights plank; and his Justice Department’s role in outlawing restrictive covenants. According to historian Harvard Sitkoff (1971), These highly publicized acts “established Truman more firmly as the leader of the Second Reconstruction.” (Sitkoff 1971, 613). While Dewey would have likely pursued pro-civil rights policies in the White House, it is not at all clear that this hypothetical action would have been more vigorous than Truman’s or would have drawn a supportive response from rank-and-file Republicans. Perhaps a Dewey presidency would have resulted in the GOP taking a more favorable position on civil rights, but it seems implausible that the 1948 election was a “critical moment” that would have significantly altered the parties’ relative positions for decades.

¹¹² Black and Black (1992, 193)

¹¹³ Lowndes (2007)

¹¹⁴ Nowinson, Richard, ed. 1950. *Who’s Who in United States Politics and American Political Almanac*. Capitol House.

¹¹⁵ State university boards of trustee are typically comprised of a mix of members appointed by the governor, university alumni association, and university president or chancellor.

¹¹⁶ At least one member of the Minnesota Republican Central Committee, however, held high appointed office later in his career: Warren Burger.

¹¹⁷ We classify the League of Women Voters as a civic group. Despite the group’s advocacy of the United Nations during this period, its primary purpose was apolitical voter education. Similarly, although the Knights of Columbus led the successful political campaign to include the words “under G-d” in the Pledge of Allegiance in the mid-1950s, we classify it as a religious-based fraternal organization, because most of its activities were in this latter realm. (source: Nowinson, Richard, ed. 1950. *Who’s Who in United States Politics and American Political Almanac*. Capitol House.)