

# **UCLA**

## **Recent Work**

### **Title**

Long-Term Continuities in the Politics of Race

### **Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8h93k5zb>

### **Authors**

Sears, David O.

Valentino, Nicholas A.

Cheleden, Sharmaine V.

### **Publication Date**

1999-08-31

# **Long-Term Continuities in the Politics of Race<sup>1</sup>**

David O. Sears

University of California, Los Angeles

Nicholas A. Valentino

The University of Michigan

Sharmaine V. Cheleden

University of California, Los Angeles

Prepared for presentation at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Atlanta, Georgia, September 3, 1999.

August 31, 1999 (17)

## **Abstract**

This study tests for long-term continuities in the politics of race. It uses a quasi-experimental method to examine the role of racial issues in presidential voting in the present era. It identifies two earlier historical eras in which it is generally agreed racial issues were a central point of partisan division in national politics: the immediately antebellum and civil rights periods. It uses presidential voting data to demonstrate continuity in the distribution of the vote across states between those two eras, and between both eras and the present. The pattern of the vote has been quite different in eras when race has not been a central national political issue. We argue that these data are consistent with the view that divisions over race continue to underlie partisan preferences to a significant degree in the present era.

The puzzle that motivates us in this paper is the sharp change in American partisan politics from the mid-1970's to the contemporary period. The Reagan election of 1980 and the period of his presidency produced a significant shift in the underlying partisan alignments of the American public. In terms of party identification, Democrats no longer hold a stable majority, while Republicans have come close to parity (Miller & Shanks, 1996). The Republicans achieved strong, seemingly almost effortless, presidential victories in 1984 and 1988, while the Democratic victories in 1992 and 1996 were achieved with only a minority of the popular vote, and seem to have been partially contingent on the strong third-party candidacies of Ross Perot. In all four elections, the Democrats captured only a minority of the white vote. In 1994 the Republicans took control of the House of Representatives for the first time in nearly half a century, and for now appear to hold a secure majority in the Senate. In state politics, there has been a switch of governorships from a healthy Democratic majority to a strong Republican majority. Republicans have gained much ground in state legislatures as well.

Although numerous explanations have been given for this substantial switch of partisan preferences, we are particularly interested in exploring the role of race, especially in helping us to understand partisanship among whites. Serious social and economic problems continue to face the African American population. Severe racial inequalities continue in such domains as life expectancy, income, employment, education, and wealth. Progress toward reducing most of these inequalities seems to have stalled over the past two decades (for a brief review, see Sears, Hetts, Sidanius, & Bobo, 2000).

Most black leaders believe that the political system has been unable or unwilling to act constructively to ameliorate these problems. White Americans have been strongly opposed to the

major liberal policies that have been proposed to reduce racial inequality (Schuman et al, 1997; Sears et al 2000). This opposition is plainly stronger among Republicans and conservatives than among Democrats and liberals, according to conventional survey measures (e.g., Sniderman & Carmines, 1997). But how much of their opposition stems from their racial attitudes?

The role of race in contemporary politics -- or more properly, the role of racial prejudice in politics -- has been a highly controversial subject. Public intellectuals vehemently disagree, with some opining that “when the official subject is presidential politics, taxes, welfare, crime, rights, or values . . . the real subject is race” (Edsall and Edsall, 1991) and other writing about “the end of racism” (d’Souza, 1993). Similarly, scholars of public opinion and voting behavior disagree. Some see the continuing influence of whites’ racial animosity in politics, whether flowing from a “new racism” (e.g., Sears et al, 1997; Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995; Kinder & Sanders, 1996) or conflicts between groups at different positions in the group status hierarchy (e.g., Bobo, 2000; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). But others believe that much of the once-considerable force of racial prejudice has been spent: “prejudice is very far from a dominating factor in the contemporary politics of race” (Sniderman & Carmines, 1997, p. 73), reflecting a major social change: “A quarter century ago, what counted was who a policy would benefit, blacks or whites” (Sniderman & Piazza, 1993, pp. 4-5), while “the contemporary debate over racial policy is driven primarily by conflict over what the government should try to do, and only secondarily over what it should try to do for blacks” [emphasis in the original] (Sniderman & Carmines, 1997, p. 4).

The literature on the contemporary party system emphasizes the role of racial issues in the realignment that occurred during the 1960’s and 1970’s (Black & Black, 1992; Carmines & Stimson,

1989; Sundquist, 1983). Carmines and Stimson's conclusion is that "[t]he struggle over race, at its peak the dominant issue of American political life for only some three years in the mid-1960's..., permanently rearranged the American party system" (1989, p. xiii). Their analysis is particularly detailed, arguing that it was triggered by the ideological polarization of the two party caucuses in Congress after the election of 1958, shifting the balance of power in each party away from the center. The exogenous pressure of the civil rights movement forced these more polarized parties to take positions on civil rights issues, positions that therefore proved to be more distinctive than they had been in the past. The "Goldwater gamble" in 1964, campaigning on opposition to federal intervention to protect blacks' civil rights, triggered a heightened emphasis on race in the two parties' platforms, increased polarization of party activists on racial issues, and sharply polarized perceptions within the mass public of the two parties' positions on desegregation. Later in the decade the Nixon "Southern strategy" accelerated the realignment of Southern whites into the Republican camp (also see Sundquist, 1983).

As careful and persuasive as the Carmines and Stimson analysis is, it deals only with the period from the end of World War II to 1980. Their lack of attention to racial issues prior to 1945 was based on the quite reasonable grounds that, "The ending of Reconstruction marked the end of race as a national political issue. For most of the next eighty years...its life as a national political issue was only sporadic and inconsequential" (p. 29). Nor did their analysis take the story past 1980. Part of our purpose, then, is to provide a larger historical context, both before and after the period covered by Carmines and Stimson.

In regard to the period since, there is disagreement. Some see a continuing role of racial

prejudice in whites' preferences between the two political parties (Kinder & Sanders, 1996; Sears et al, 1987). But others do not, arguing that it began to drop out as a central factor in the mass public's partisanship in this period. Instead, party identification has become aligned with more general ideological preferences, with race only one of numerous areas that liberals and conservatives disagree about (Abramowitz, 1994; Abramowitz & Saunders, 1998; Carmines & Stanley, 1990; Sniderman and Carmines, 1997; Sniderman and Piazza, 1993; Hagen, 1995). Indeed some argue that racial prejudice, paradoxically, divides Democrats and liberals more than it does Republicans and conservatives (Sniderman & Carmines, 1997; Carmines & Layman, 1998).

It is also clear that many Southern whites in particular have realigned with the Republican party (though there is some disagreement about the timing of the realignment, and about whether a transitional period of dealignment occurred; Beck, 1977; Black & Black, 1992; Campbell, 1977a, b; Carmines & Stanley, 1990; Miller & Shanks, 1996; Petrocik, 1987; Sundquist, 1983; Stanley, 1988). Some data point, at least indirectly, to a role of racial attitudes in this changed partisanship. For example, there is good evidence that migration from the North was not solely responsible; many native Southerners themselves changed parties, especially in the Deep South and to a surprising degree, among older cohorts (Beck, 1977; Campbell, 1977a, b; Carmines & Layman, 1998; Carmines & Stanley, 1990; Glaser & Gilens, 1997; Petrocik, 1987; Stanley, 1988). Southern whites continue to have more negative racial attitudes than do Northern whites (Carmines & Layman, 1998; Kuklinski et al, 1997; Peffley & Hurwitz, 1998; Steeh & Schuman, 1992; Steed et al, 1990; Tuch & Martin, 1997). And racial policy attitudes have been correlated with party identification among Southern whites (Beck, 1977; Carmines & Layman, 1998; Carmines & Stanley, 1990; Petrocik, 1987).

But others writing on the subject have concluded that, even if some white Southerners defected to the Republican party on the basis of racial issues in the 1960's, today their support for Republicans is primarily due to other factors, especially preferences for religious conservatism, a strong national defense, freedom to bear arms, a less intrusive federal government, a reduction in the welfare state, and/or ideological conservatism encompassing a variety of such themes (Abramowitz, 1994; Abramowitz & Saunders, 1998; Campbell, 1977a, b; Miller & Shanks, 1996; Carmines & Stanley, 1990; Green et al, 1998; Kellstedt, 1990; Petrocik, 1987; Steed et al, 1990).

The literature on party systems usually focuses particularly on such discontinuities as realignments and critical elections. But such an emphasis always leaves the door open for the contrary emphasis, on continuities over long periods of time. The frequent evocation of a Serbian battlefield loss in 1389 as a symbolic justification for ethnic cleansing forcefully reminds us of the power of long-term collective memories. In the 1960's, the French Revolution continued to be a rallying symbol for both Left and Right in organizing partisan divisions in France (Pecheron, 1967). A classical illustration of the power of geographic continuity in Americans' partisan preferences is V.O. Key, Jr.'s (1959) demonstration that Indiana counties maintained strikingly constant presidential preferences over several decades, in both the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Continuity of contention over racial issues is one of the hallmarks of American political history. Race was a most conflictual issue at each of the young nation's three early pivotal moments: the debates over the language of the Declaration of Independence and of the Constitution, and the debates that triggered the Civil War. It again was the nation's most conflictual issue in the 1960's when the wrenching abandonment of the Jim Crow system took place. The substantive question we raise is



whether race might not have played a more important role than ordinarily recognized in the surge of the Republican party in the 1980's and 1990's. That is, is race still a central factor in partisanship today, as it was three decades ago?

This paper focuses specifically on continuities in the influence of racial issues on state-level presidential voting behavior over the past century and a half. By “continuity” we mean that the high salience of racial issues in different periods has resulted in a similar pattern of electoral alignment across those periods, even when separated by many years. Our hypothesis is twofold. First, the parties’ alignment today is substantially the same as in both earlier periods of maximum political conflict over racial issues, the periods immediately before the Civil War and during the 1960’s. As a result, presidential elections and electoral coalitions at the state level once again look much as they did in those two eras. And second, their alignment bears no resemblance to the alignments that held in the elections between those two periods when race was not central to the national political agenda.

To be sure, the manifest issues are different: the set of issues surrounding chattel slavery and its immediate aftermath concerned citizenship for slaves, the treatment of fugitive slaves, extension of slavery to new states, land redistribution, subsistence resources for the freed slaves, protection from white violence, provision of minimal public education, and suffrage. In the 1960’s, the political focus was on eradicating the system of formal, legal lower-caste status of emancipated African Americans. Both sets of issues seem quite different from today’s concerns with affirmative action, majority-minority districts, the criminal justice system, or welfare reform. But we would argue that underneath, the latent concerns are quite similar, revolving around the legitimacy of racial inequality and about federal intervention to ameliorate it. We think there is value to taking a look at the link between racial issues and

political partisanship with a broader historical span in mind.<sup>2</sup>

A wide variety of techniques have been applied to address such questions (see, *inter alia*, Kinder & Sanders, 1996; Sears et al, 2000; Sniderman & Carmines, 1997; Hurwitz & Peffley, 1998; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Each methodology has its strengths and weaknesses. Sample surveys usually mimic the ongoing political debate and have representative samples, but they have only relatively recently been available, often have inadequate continuity over time, their causal inference is often weak, and responses can be biased on sensitive topics like race. Experimental techniques offer stronger causal inferences, but often rely on hypothetical situations, on unrepresentative samples, and artificial laboratory settings. Voting returns provide “hard” behavioral data, and are available in comparable terms well back in American history, but any linkage to specific attitudes (other than the specific choice on the ballot) often requires some interpretive leap. Not surprisingly, at this point there is no consensus that any one provides a royal road to the truth.

Given our interest in partisan preferences over many years’ time, including periods well before the collection of systematic survey data, we approach these questions with a quasi-experimental methodology that has not been used before to investigate race and party alignments.<sup>3</sup> Our basic strategy is to compare the presidential vote in each state, across elections known to vary in the salience of racial issues. As a result our focus is on electoral behavior rather than on public opinion. If race plays an important role in the vote, we should see continuities across periods in which racial tensions are central to national politics, and discontinuities with periods in which it is not. We do not claim this method is a perfect solution to the methodological problems raised in this literature. But both its strengths and its weakness differ from those of other methods, which may help to provide a fresh

perspective.

### **Racial Issues and Presidential Elections**

Political history can be viewed as a sequence of periods, each characterized by tensions over different issues, tensions that often influence partisan alignments at the time, and provoke change. Such periods are likely to be interspersed with periods of stasis. In periods of racial tension, partisan alignments might be strongly influenced by contention over racial issues, while in static periods the parties might not differ on racial issues at all, and their disputes would revolve around other issues. If we take race as the pivot, then, partisan alignments might look quite similar across various periods of maximum racial tension, even if they are widely separated in time. The parties might or might not wind up on the same sides of the issue, of course. Indeed in American politics the parties have clearly switched, with the Republicans initially championing a limit to or abolition of slavery, while today Democrats are the party more supportive of blacks' interests.

If we reexamine the history of American presidential elections from this perspective, five periods of particular interest appear. We review them briefly less because the details are unfamiliar but to highlight our reasons for classifying some as periods of high political tension over race in national politics, and others as periods of low tension.

#### Slavery as a settled issue: 1789-1844.

The first period is interesting because of what did not happen. During the formative period of the American nation, the South generally was successful at keeping race and the "peculiar institution" of slavery off the public agenda. Jefferson's effort to incorporate a repudiation of slavery in the

Declaration of Independence was quickly thwarted by the Continental Congress. Slavery was all but explicitly legitimized in the Constitution of 1789. The official end of the slave trade in 1807 merely aligned the United States with European nations that had colonies in the Americas. And the Missouri Compromise of 1820 settled for some time the question of slavery in the land acquired in the Louisiana Purchase by drawing an East-West line distinguishing areas to which slavery could be extended from those in which it was forbidden. For the time being, it effectively removed the issue of slavery from national politics.

#### Tension over slavery: 1848 to 1860.

Beginning in the 1830's, the Abolitionist movement began to fuel controversy over the continuation of slavery in the South, as well as over the treatment of freed or fugitive slaves, but it generally operated outside the party system. However, in 1846, the growing confrontation over slavery came to a head in Congress with the Wilmot Proviso, which proposed to exclude slavery from the territory acquired in the Mexican War. It was defeated in 1847 by the Southern opposition, led in the Senate by John C. Calhoun. But the regional lines were drawn, and it led immediately to the formation of the Free Soil Party. Martin Van Buren, its first presidential candidate, won 10% of the vote in 1848, running especially strongly in Massachusetts, New York, Vermont, and Wisconsin.

Congressional conflict over slavery grew more intense over the next twelve years. The Southerners proved successful at several junctures. The Compromise of 1850 brought them the Fugitive-Slave Law, giving slaveowners the assistance of federal commissioners in recovering their escaped human "property," even in states where slavery was illegal. The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, of which Senator Stephen Douglas was a leading supporter, established the principle of "popular

sovereignty” in the territories: they could vote to be slave or free, at the time of entering the Union as states. The Republican Party was formed in 1856 in large part as a response to the Kansas-Nebraska Act, by those who believed that the territories should be free and that slavery should not be extended beyond the existing slave South. However, no votes at all were recorded for its losing presidential candidate, John C. Fremont, in the future Confederacy. His strength was concentrated in New England, New York, and the upper Midwest, such as Michigan, Wisconsin, and Iowa.

Kenneth Stampp has argued (1990, p. 330) that 1857 was the highwater mark of the national political power of the Southern pro-slavery forces. The nomination of Abraham Lincoln by the Republicans in 1860 led to threats by Southerners that they would secede if he were elected. Although Douglas, the Democrat, was pledged to preserve the Union by preserving slavery, the Southerners put up John C. Breckinridge as an alternative Southern Democrat. The Republicans again were not on the ballot in the South; instead John Bell ran on a Constitutional Union ticket. Nonetheless, Lincoln was elected, and tensions over slavery came to the bursting point. Within a few months eleven slave states had seceded to form the Confederacy, while four remained in the Union -- Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri.

Throughout this period, the congressional Democratic party consistently played the more racially conservative role, both protecting the South from challenges to slavery and promoting the option of extending slavery to the western territories. Its presidential candidates were also consistently more racially conservative, though their principal early opponents, the Whigs, were not invariably opposed to the southerners’ proposals. The 1856 and 1860 elections did offer clear alternatives on the issues relating to slavery, since the Republican nominees were both explicitly opposed to the Kansas-

Nebraska Act, while the Democrats nominated the pro-slavery James Buchanan and Stephen Douglas, a leading proponent of that Act.

This period was, of course, followed by the Civil War, and then Reconstruction and the eventual reintegration of the Confederate states into the Union. Presidential voting is a less useful index of party differences on racial issues in this period. In 1864 the most pro-slavery states were not involved in the presidential vote, since they had seceded from the Union. In 1868 several Confederate states still had not been permitted back into conventional politics. As a result we will focus our attention on the four antebellum presidential elections, and especially 1856 and 1860, as those that reflected most clearly the partisan lines of division that had emerged over slavery leading up to the Civil War.

#### Black invisibility: 1880 to 1956

In the Compromise of 1877, the Republicans essentially eschewed further political designs on the South in return for victory in the presidential election of 1876. Over time the Jim Crow system of formal segregation and discrimination gradually fell into place in the South, while politically the region remained for many years the “Solid South,” loyal to the Democrats. By common agreement racial issues were largely kept off the national political agenda, initially by the Republicans largely ceding the South to the Democrats, and later by Southern Democrats’ holding other aspects of the party’s program hostage to their specific interests in maintaining the racial status quo. Blacks themselves had relatively little political power until after World War II.

In 1948, race became a focal point of intense debate again, as black activists demanded integration of the armed forces, and liberal forces demanded a strong civil rights plank in the Democratic party platform. That led to a walkout by some Southern delegates, and in the Fall, a Dixiecrat rebellion

led by Governor Strom Thurmond of South Carolina that took four Southern states away from the Democrats. Through the mid to late 1950's there was considerable agitation in the South about the Brown vs. Board of Education school desegregation decision (1954) and the beginnings of black civil rights protests. However neither Dwight Eisenhower nor Adlai Stevenson placed much emphasis on racial issues in their presidential races in 1952 and 1956. Nevertheless the Solid South had been cracked: Stevenson held only a bare majority of the former Confederate states each time, and split the four slave states that had remained in the Union.<sup>4</sup>

#### Racially-based realignment: 1960 to 1972

Soon the two parties again polarized over racial issues, with Democrats now emerging as the racially more liberal party. The starting point is a matter of debate, as will be seen. The events of 1948 had certainly provided an early warning. But racial issues seemed not to feature prominently in the 1960 election. But the civil rights movement was escalating its efforts. The Kennedy administration finally took a forceful pro-civil rights position in 1963, supported by large numbers of Northern congressmen, especially after Kennedy's death. LBJ described support for the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as the most suitable memorial for the slain president.

In presidential politics, a new racially-based realignment seemingly was triggered by the 1964 campaign. Lyndon Johnson ran on a platform of support for civil rights, whereas Barry Goldwater defended his vote against the Civil Rights Act. Party images became strongly polarized in the mass public on the question of desegregation (Carmines & Stimson, 1989; Pomper, 1972). Goldwater and Johnson each won their own home states, but aside from that the electoral map began to shift irreversibly. Johnson, the first major-party Southern presidential candidate in almost 50 years, lost half

of the other former Confederate states, and Goldwater won no other states outside the South. In addition, African Americans were on their way to being the most loyal constituency within the Democratic Party.

Nevertheless ghetto riots became a regular feature of summers in the 1960's. Racial issues rose to the top of the public's assessment of the nation's "most important problem" (Hagen, 1995). In 1968, George Wallace, known to the public primarily from his strident opposition to desegregation, ran a strong racially-tinged third-party campaign, but still further Southern states fell to the Republicans. Hubert Humphrey, a central proponent of civil rights legislation took only two of the fifteen former slave states. The Nixon administration was initially rather favorably disposed to civil rights, but became increasingly responsive to its conservative and Southern constituents, in terms of policies toward school integration, Supreme Court nominees, and opposition to "quotas." Burnham (1996) describes 1970 as the critical year for that realignment. Whatever the specific timing, by 1972 the Republican party was committed to the racially conservative "Southern strategy" designed to bring the formerly solid Democratic South into the Republican fold.

The contemporary period: 1984 to 1996.

Since 1964 racial tensions have continued, over issues such as busing, affirmative action, crime, and welfare. As indicated earlier, much has been written claiming that racial issues had become a minor factor in American partisan politics. But there are good reasons to believe that they have continued to be a central wedge in presidential elections, and that the party system continues to revolve around the old racial split.

We will skip briefly over the 1976 and 1980 elections. Jimmy Carter, an elected governor of a



deep Southern state, proved capable of bringing many white Southerners back to the Democrats on what V. O. Key, Jr. (1949) called a “friends and neighbors” basis, despite being, in general, a racial liberal. At the level of party identification, there was evidence of “dealignment,” especially in the South (Beck, 1977; Miller & Shanks, 1996). But plainly Ronald Reagan, without emphasizing racial issues, had allied himself with racial conservatives in the South, with a track record of having opposed the major civil rights legislation of the 1960’s (Carmines & Stimson, 1989).

We suspect, however, that the 1984 presidential campaign once again had strong racial undertones. In that year, Jesse Jackson, perhaps the most prominent African American civil rights leader of his day, mounted a highly credible campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination. In several primaries he amassed significant numbers of votes. Elsewhere we have presented evidence that his candidacy had a chilling effect on conservative whites, especially in the South, and accelerated their flight into the Republican party (Sears, Citrin, & Kosterman, 1987). In 1988, Jackson ran an even stronger campaign in early primaries. The Republican nominee, George Bush, prominently featured an attack on the record of the ultimate Democratic nominee, Michael Dukakis, on issues of “law and order.” His frequent use of the “revolving door” commercial, portraying a series of racially ambiguous convicts being released from prison, and his occasional allusion to the “Willie Horton” case served to prime whites’ racial attitudes (Kinder & Sanders, 1996; Mendelberg, 1997).

In 1992, the general election campaign was dominated by economic issues, such as the recession of the early 1990's, tax cuts, and health care, along with some attention to moral issues like abortion and “family values.” Racial issues did not appear to be particularly salient. But almost immediately after the election, race once again was on the front burner, in a new way. Bill Clinton has

often been said to be the first American president to have genuinely comfortable personal relationships with blacks, and with the black community more generally. As a result he was often seen casually socializing with blacks, unlike previous presidents. Moreover, he made a highly publicized pledge to insure that his administration would “look like America,” meaning a strong representation of racial minorities. And indeed his early high appointments were far more racially diverse than had been true in any previous administration. He appointed blacks as secretaries of agriculture (Mike Espy), energy (Hazel O’Leary), and commerce (Ron Brown), and as Surgeon General (Jocelyn Elder), prominent Latinos as secretaries of HUD (Henry Cisneros) and transportation (Frederico Pena), and nominated Lani Guinier as assistant attorney general for civil rights. The first African American woman in the Senate, Carol Moseley-Braun, was also elected at the same time. Unhappily for Clinton, almost all of these individuals ultimately came under strong attack for various reasons, generated great controversy, some were included in the list of “scandals” Clinton’s detractors compiled, some attracted independent counsels, and almost all left office with a cloud over their heads. In a related domain, Clinton quickly moved to remove discrimination on the basis of sexual preference from personnel decisions in the armed forces, a proposal which too attracted great opposition, and ultimately he backed down to the compromise “don’t ask, don’t tell” standard.

In short, although race was not a central issue in the 1992 election, Clinton’s pledge to be racially inclusive resulted in a number of highly publicized controversies that centered on his minority appointees. There were many other controversies in his first term of office -- most notably the abortive effort to reform the American health care system, the effort to pass a budget bill without any Republican support, and the confrontation over the budget in late 1995 and early 1996 that resulted in the closure

of the government. Nevertheless we believe that an argument can be made that his administration was marked by numerous and highly salient minority-related issues, and that they were surrounded by attack and failure. We feel it is therefore plausible that the elections of 1994 and 1996 were influenced by this constant negative attention to minorities.

### **Continuities in Presidential Voting**

If our hypothesis is correct, there should be considerable continuity in presidential voting behavior from earlier periods in which race was central to the present era. That is, across those periods there should be strong similarities in which states voted for the more racially conservative presidential candidate, and strong similarities in which states voted for the more racially progressive candidate. To test this hypothesis we have correlated the state-by-state presidential vote across elections beginning with 1828. If the hypothesis is correct, the correlations should be higher among the elections during the two periods of highest racial tension, and of elections in those periods with present-day elections, than with the periods in which race was not as visibly on the public agenda, and so not as likely to have been involved in presidential politics.

As our index we have chosen the percent Democratic out of the total popular vote, with two exceptions. Other indices might have been selected, of course. The main complication in selecting an index concerns the votes cast for candidates other than the nominees of the two major parties. One logical alternative would be the percent Democratic of the two-party vote. We rejected that because some of the third-party candidacies are meaningful for our hypothesis, and therefore should not be ignored. An obvious example is the George Wallace vote in 1968. A second logical alternative would

be the percent Republican of the total vote. We rejected that because in practice, in almost all cases, the third party vote turns out to be most politically meaningfully grouped with the Republican vote.

The first exception is in 1860, an important year for our hypothesis. In that case we have added the votes for the Southern Democratic candidate, John C. Breckinridge, to the votes cast for the Democrat, Stephen A. Douglas. We did so because they ran, in essence, parallel regional campaigns, Breckinridge in the South and Douglas in the North: Breckinridge took an average of 54% in the soon-to-be Confederate states, and Douglas, an average of 8%; Douglas took an average of 31% in the other states, and Breckinridge, 11%. The other exception was that for 1892, we added the Populist vote to the Democratic vote for William Jennings Bryan, on the grounds that in 1896 he ran on a combined Democrat-Populist ticket.

In the Appendix we discuss these and the other individual cases where significant numbers of votes were cast for individuals other than the nominees of the two major parties. We present our rationale in each case, and also analyses using alternative indices. As will be seen, the overall story line does not change substantially. We take that to support both our hypothesis and the methodological decisions we have made, but we recognize that these decisions are open to reasonable debate.

### Two periods of racial tension

The two periods in which race is generally agreed to have been a central issue in national politics were the period immediately before the Civil War (in particular, during the presidential elections from 1848 to 1860, inclusive) and the Civil Rights era marking the end of the Jim Crow system (in particular, during the presidential elections from 1964 to 1972, inclusive). A first step is to establish similarity in presidential voting between these two eras. If the two periods showed quite different patterns of

partisan division, it would be difficult to argue that the salience of racial issues common to both was driving partisanship in voting behavior.

As a preliminary test for that similarity, we simply correlated the state-by-state Democratic presidential vote across each pair of elections, and then averaged these correlations to arrive at an overall estimate of the similarity in partisan division from the antebellum era to the civil rights period. These average  $r = -.56$  across all elections in the two periods. They rise to a peak in the later stages of both eras: the average  $r = -.70$  across the 1856 and 1860 by the 1968 and 1972 results, when the racially-driven alignment had presumably crystallized most fully. These correlations are all negative, of course, because the two parties' relative positions on racial issues had reversed in the interim. It is the absolute value of the correlations, not their direction, that is relevant to our hypothesis.

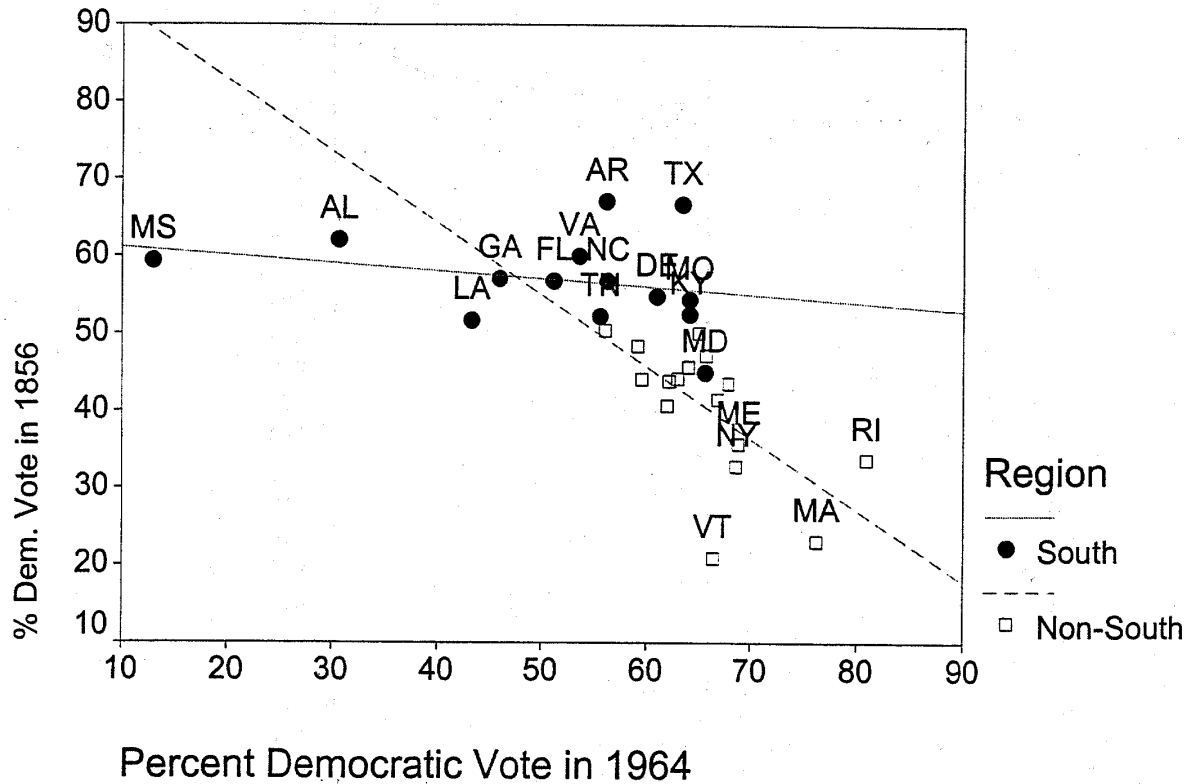
In order to assess continuity between the two eras in more detail than these overall correlations permit, we selected a pivotal year from each era, and then examined, state-by-state, the association of Democratic presidential vote across the two years. We selected 1856 from the antebellum period, since some of the major conflicts over slavery had already come to a head (e.g., the Kansas-Nebraska Act passed in 1854), and it was the maiden presidential campaign for the Republican party, at a moment of extraordinary tension over the slavery issue.<sup>5</sup> Indeed it was the first election in which one of the major parties had defined itself in part in terms of opposition to the extension of slavery. We selected 1964 from the civil rights period because it is the year most widely regarded as the pivotal year for the racially-based realignment of that decade (Carmines & Stimson, 1989; Sundquist, 1983).

The electoral outcomes in each state across these two periods were strongly correlated. The Pearson correlation of the state-by-state Democratic vote is  $r = -.60$ . The continuity between the two

years is even more striking when we examine the specific states themselves. Figure 1 shows the scatterplot of 1856 and 1964 voting. The continuity of the partisan distribution of the vote with pre-Civil-War partisan divisions shows up clearly in 1964. The deep South is to the upper left, reflecting strong Democratic allegiance in 1856, and a strong Republican vote in 1964. Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia stand out, with the rest of the Confederacy next in line (especially Florida, Virginia, and North Carolina). Following them are the two Confederate states that first rejoined the Union, Tennessee and Louisiana. They are joined by the four border slave states that remained in the Union, but whose allegiance was much in doubt in the early years of the Civil War – Missouri, Kentucky, Maryland, and Delaware. At the lower right, strongly Republican in 1856 but strongly Democratic in 1964, are five far Northeast states, Vermont, Massachusetts, New York, Maine, and Rhode Island.<sup>6</sup>

Figure 1.

### Democratic Vote: 1856 by 1964

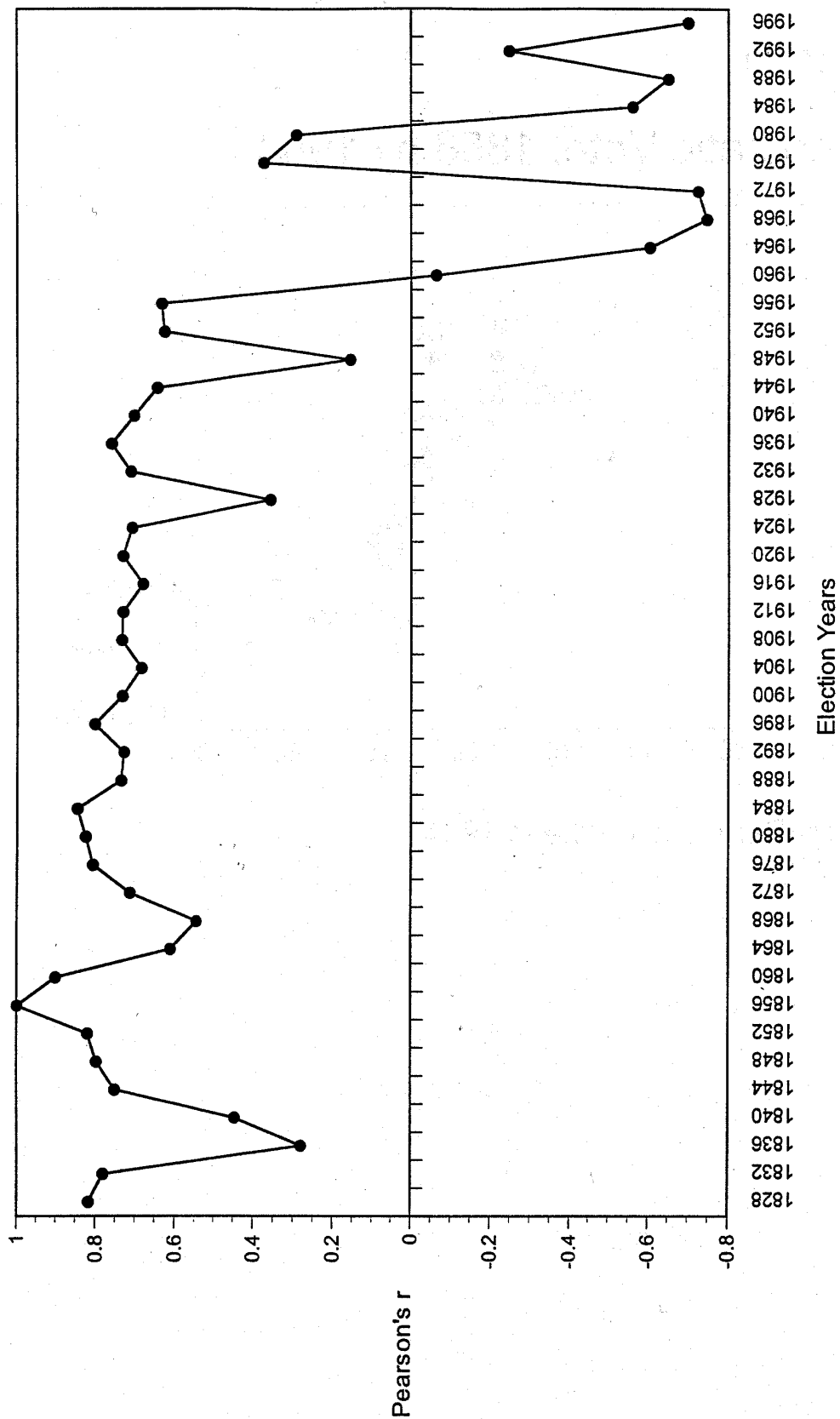


More generally, Figure 2 presents the Pearson correlations of the 1856 vote with all other presidential years. The 1856 results correlated, on average,  $r = -.69$  with the results of all three elections we have classified as within the civil rights era.





Figure 2. Correlations of Democratic Share of Total Presidential Vote in 1856 by Vote in Subsequent Elections, Across All States

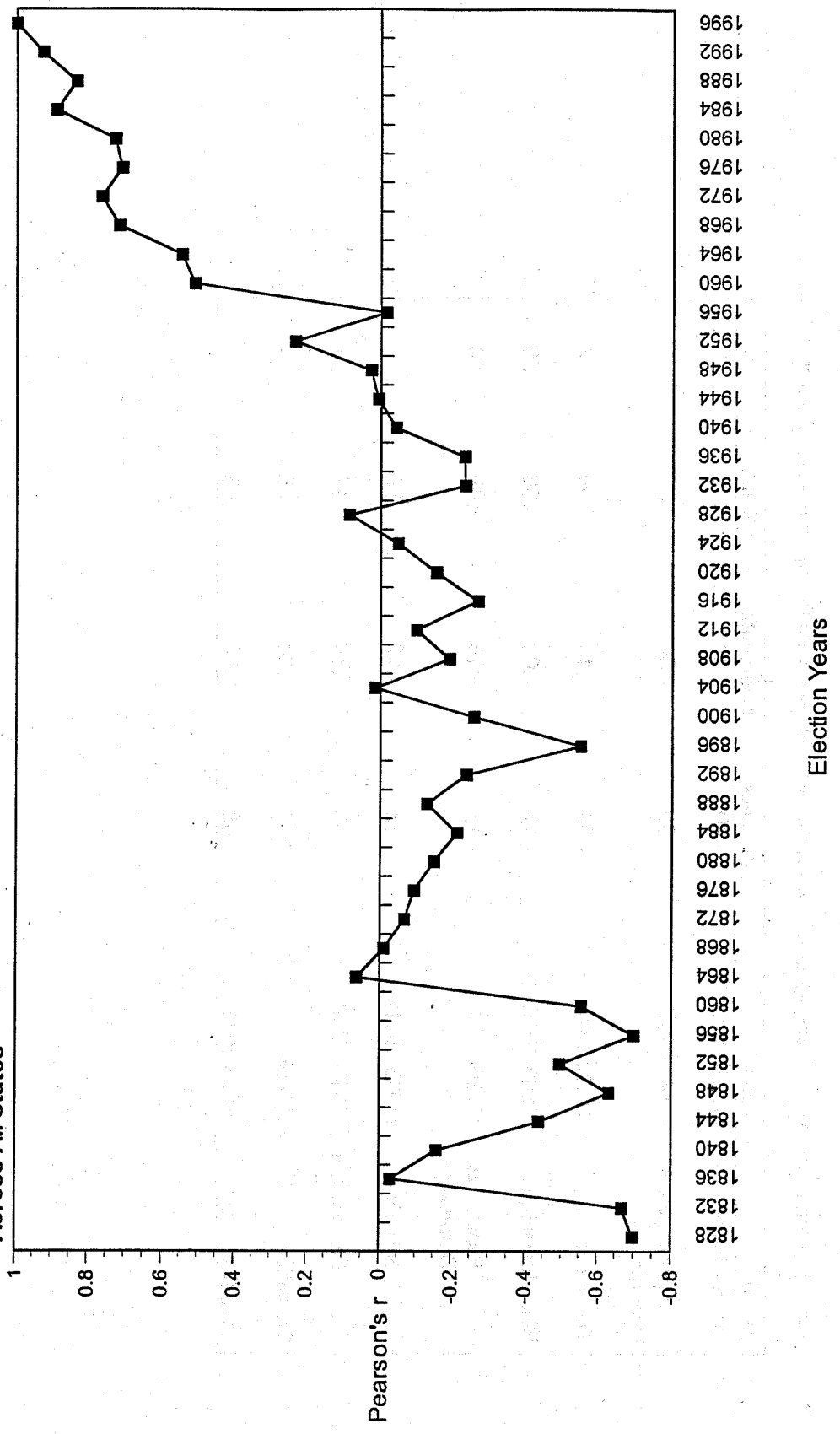


To link these two historical periods with the present, we present the Pearson correlations of the state-by-state Democratic vote in each presidential election from 1828 to 1992 with the comparable vote in 1996. These are shown in Figure 3. To permit comparisons of distinctive historical periods, the correlations were then averaged across individual election years and are presented in Table 1. The results support the hypothesis. Presidential voting in the present era shows the greatest continuity with the two periods that were the most racially charged in American history, and much less continuity with periods in which racial issues were, by most historians' agreement, not central to national politics. But let us discuss each period in detail.

Table 1. Average Pearson's Correlations of Presidential Vote in 1996 with Presidential Vote in Selected Prior Periods

Period	Years	All States	Non-South	South	n
Storm Clouds	(1828-1844)	-.40	-.37	-.25	5
Antebellum Splits Over Slavery	(1848-1860)	-.60	-.54	-.31	4
Transition	(1872-1876)	-.08	.14	-.09	2
Black Invisibility	(1880-1956)	-.12	-.08	-.36	20
Republican Dominance	(1880-1928)	-.17	-.14	-.39	13
New Deal	(1932-1944)	-.13	-.12	-.39	4
Postwar Era	(1948-1956)	.08	.19	-.17	3
Transition	(1960)	.51	.64	.08	1
Civil Rights Era	(1964-1972)	.68	.86	.43	3

Figure 3. Correlations of Democratic Share of Total Presidential Vote in 1996 by Vote in Previous Elections, Across All States



### Linking the antebellum period to the present

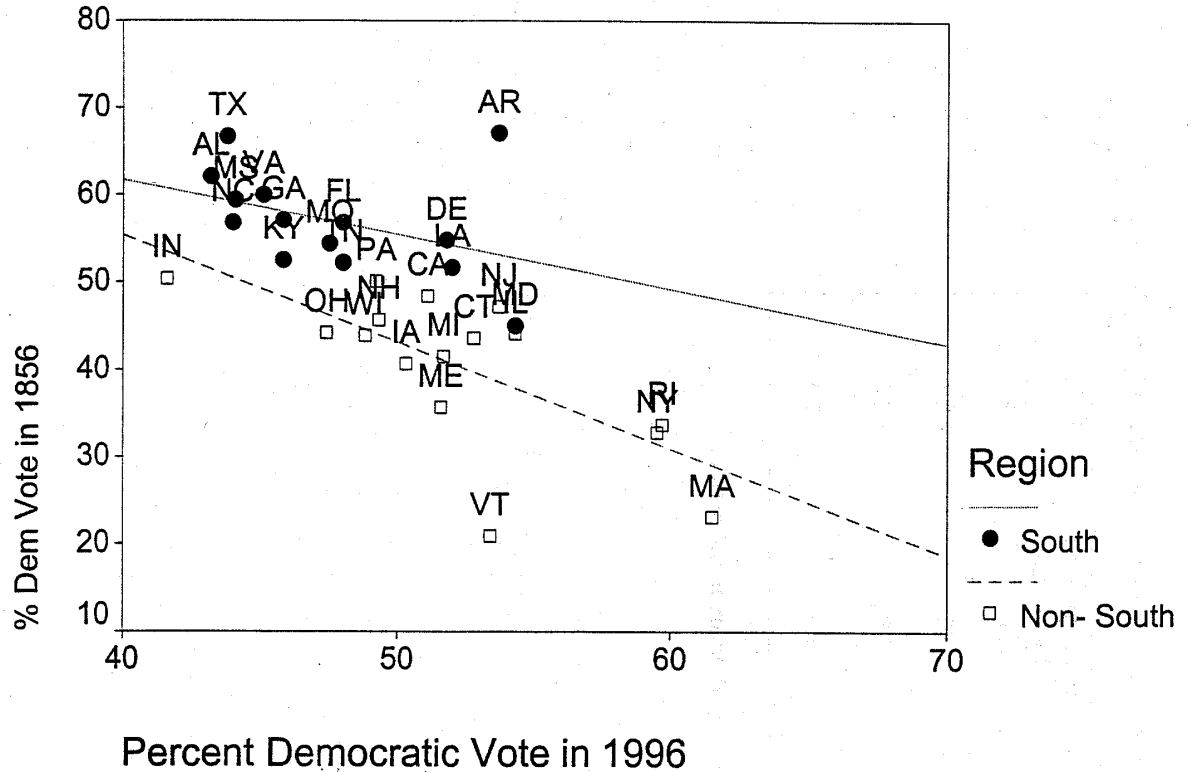
Intense racial controversy began to spill over into presidential politics in the period that spawned the Civil War, from 1848 to 1860 inclusive, a period of great and mounting tension over slavery. The vote in all four presidential elections correlates very strongly with the 1996 vote. The average correlation of the vote in those earlier elections with the 1996 vote was  $r = -.60$ , with relatively little variation across elections (the range was  $r = -.70$  to  $r = -.50$ ).

In testing continuity of the present with the pre-Civil War era, we have averaged across the four elections from 1848 to 1860. But to illustrate in dramatic form the continuity of that seemingly long-dead partisan alignment with the present, we return to the 1856 results. Figure 2 shows that the results of the election of 1856 correlated  $r = -.70$  with those of 1996. No other election before 1968 ( $r = .72$ ) demonstrated such a strong continuity with the present.<sup>7</sup>

Correlations offer only crude statistical descriptions of the actual patterning of the vote. To appreciate in more textured fashion the true continuity of the presidential vote over this long period, it is again useful to look at specific states. Figure 4 therefore presents the scatterplot of the state-by-state voting percentages in both 1856 and 1996. These results too reveal a striking level of continuity over nearly a century and a half.

Figure 4.

### Democratic Vote: 1856 by 1996



At the upper left are the states that provided the strongest Democratic base before the Civil War, and provide the strongest Republican base today. These are exclusively those of the old Confederacy, such as Texas, Alabama, Mississippi, Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia.<sup>8</sup> The similarity of partisan preferences in these largely Deep South states on both occasions is noteworthy. At the other extreme, the states that were strongest for the Republicans in 1856 and for the Democrats in 1996, are five Northeastern states -- Massachusetts, Vermont, New York, Rhode Island, and Maine.

In some ways the continuity shown around the middle of the distribution in both years is more surprising.

The four Union slave states fall around the middle of the distribution in both 1856 and 1996.

Tennessee and Louisiana, the first two Confederate states to return to the Union, also fall into the middle of the distribution in both years, joining the ambivalent Union slave states.

We can also learn something from the exceptions to the rule, the three states that seem to fall furthest from the regression line. The first two actually are good cases for the continuity hypothesis, despite their off-diagonal status. One is President Clinton's own home state of Arkansas, which resisted the strong trend to the Republican side of the rest of the Confederate states. The value of the "friends and neighbors" effect to Bill Clinton in Arkansas was about 10%, if its "expected" outcome (based on 1856 results) was like that of Texas. A second is Vermont. Although it moved from the Republican column to the Democrats over this period, along with other Northeastern states, it was much more strongly Republican in 1856 than it was Democratic in 1996. But like a talking dog, the miracle is that it became Democratic at all: it will be recalled that only Vermont and Maine remained Republican in the face of the Roosevelt landslide in 1936, and so were long regarded as the most rock-ribbed Republican states in the nation. It might also be noted that in 1848, Vermont produced the strongest vote in the country for the Free Soil candidate (29%), and in 1852, only Massachusetts generated a stronger Free Soil vote. Finally, the third clear outlier is Indiana. In 1856 it voted much like its near-neighbor slave states to the south, Kentucky and Tennessee. But today it is more strongly Republican than they are. We have no special explanation for its special discontinuity from the past.

#### Legacy of the civil rights era

The second period in which racial issues were among the most important on the public agenda

was the civil rights era of 1964 to 1972. The presidential vote in those years is also strongly correlated with the vote in 1996, as shown in Figure 3 and Table 1: the average correlation is  $r = .68$ , and the range is from  $r = .55$  to  $r = .76$ .

It might justifiably be objected that the continuity of the presidential vote from the civil rights era to the present is simply a function of their not being separated by very many years. Such elections might share a number of similar features and singling out one, as we have, may seem quite arbitrary. It is indeed true that the average correlation of the 1996 outcomes with those of all elections from 1976 through 1992 is  $r = .82$ . However, we believe that the continuity from the civil rights era to the present is not merely artifactual, since that explanation cannot explain the continuities between the antebellum period and both the civil rights era and the current period.

#### The years of black invisibility.

In contrast, the many years between these two racially-charged periods demonstrate little continuity with present partisan divisions. As can be seen in Figure 3, the correlations for the outcomes of elections from 1880 to 1956, inclusive, with 1996 generally hover around zero. The average correlation for the 20 elections in that period (1880-1956, inclusive) with the 1996 outcomes is  $r = -.12$ . The main exception is 1896, which shows a substantial link to the election a century later ( $r = .55$ ). We have no explanation for this exception.

Any such summary statistic covering a long period of time can conceal meaningful variation within that period. To test for that we subdivided it into three separate historical subperiods. But as can be seen in Table 1, that does not change the general picture.<sup>9</sup> Elections in the period of Republican hegemony from 1880 to 1928, interrupted only by the Cleveland and Wilson administrations, correlate

only minimally with current party divisions (average  $r = -.17$ ).<sup>10</sup> Those during the New Deal period of 1932 through 1944 do as well (average  $r = .13$ ). The first four postwar elections preceding the civil rights revolution do not show much continuity with the present, either (average  $r = .08$ ).

Continuity limited to 1996?

Are our findings of an electoral association of the contemporary period with the two earlier eras of racial tension limited to the 1996 election, or does it hold more generally throughout recent presidential elections? We have argued that 1984 might have stimulated considerable racial tension, because of the strong candidacy of Jesse Jackson for the Democratic nomination, and 1988 might have as well, because of the racially-coded nature of various aspects of the Bush campaign, but that 1992 might not have been a campaign with so much underlying racial imagery.

The 1984 and 1988 results do indeed show the resemblance to the 1856 and 1964 elections that such an hypothesis would expect, as shown in Table 2. They correlate almost as tightly with the 1856 results ( $r = -.56$  and  $-.65$ ) as 1996 does ( $r = -.70$ ; see Figure 3). Similarly, they correlate almost as strongly with the 1964 results ( $r = .49$  and  $.62$ ) as 1996 does ( $r = .55$ ). But 1992 shows less clear continuity with those earlier years of racial tension, correlating only  $r = -.25$  with 1856 and  $r = .42$  with 1964. So 1996 looks much like the 1984 and 1988 elections, with their relatively strong racial subtexts, but the 1992 election, by this test, seems to have been less racialized.

Table 2. Pearson's Correlations of Presidential Vote in Recent Elections by those of Previous Periods.

Years	Antebellum Era (1848-1860)	1856	Civil Rights Era (1964-1972)	1964
-------	-------------------------------	------	---------------------------------	------



1984	-0.50	-0.56	.67	.49
1988	-0.53	-0.65	.76	.62
1992	-0.28	-0.25	.56	.42
1996	-0.60	-0.70	.73	.55

Note: The entries for the two eras are mean correlations for all years in the period.

In short, we find strong continuities in the patterns of presidential voting between the two most racially-charged periods in American politics, the antebellum and civil rights periods. And we find strong continuities in the vote between both those eras and most recent presidential elections. But we find little connection between the present and the long period in which racial issues were essentially off the national political agenda, from 1880 to 1956. This does not by itself demonstrate that racial issues continue to be a central factor in today's partisan divisions, but the data are consistent with that view.

Our findings broaden the story presented by Carmines and Stimson (1989) and others in two ways, then. First, they demonstrate considerable continuity of the antebellum period of racial crisis, which takes the story much earlier than their starting point of 1945. Second, although Carmines and Stimson do not treat the period since 1980, numerous other contemporary writers assume a diminishing continuity with that racially-torn era. These data demonstrate clear continuity of the present era with the racially-driven realignment of the 1960's.

### **Regional Realignment Revisited**

The consensus among students of the party system is that the realignment that began in the 1960's primarily affected Southern whites. According to this story, the large body of “yellow dog” Democrats in the South, many quite conservative on a variety of issues (including race), began to move toward the Republican party to join their ideologically more compatible conservatives. By implication this view suggests that little race-based realignment occurred outside the South, where the civil rights issues were only a remote spectator sport.

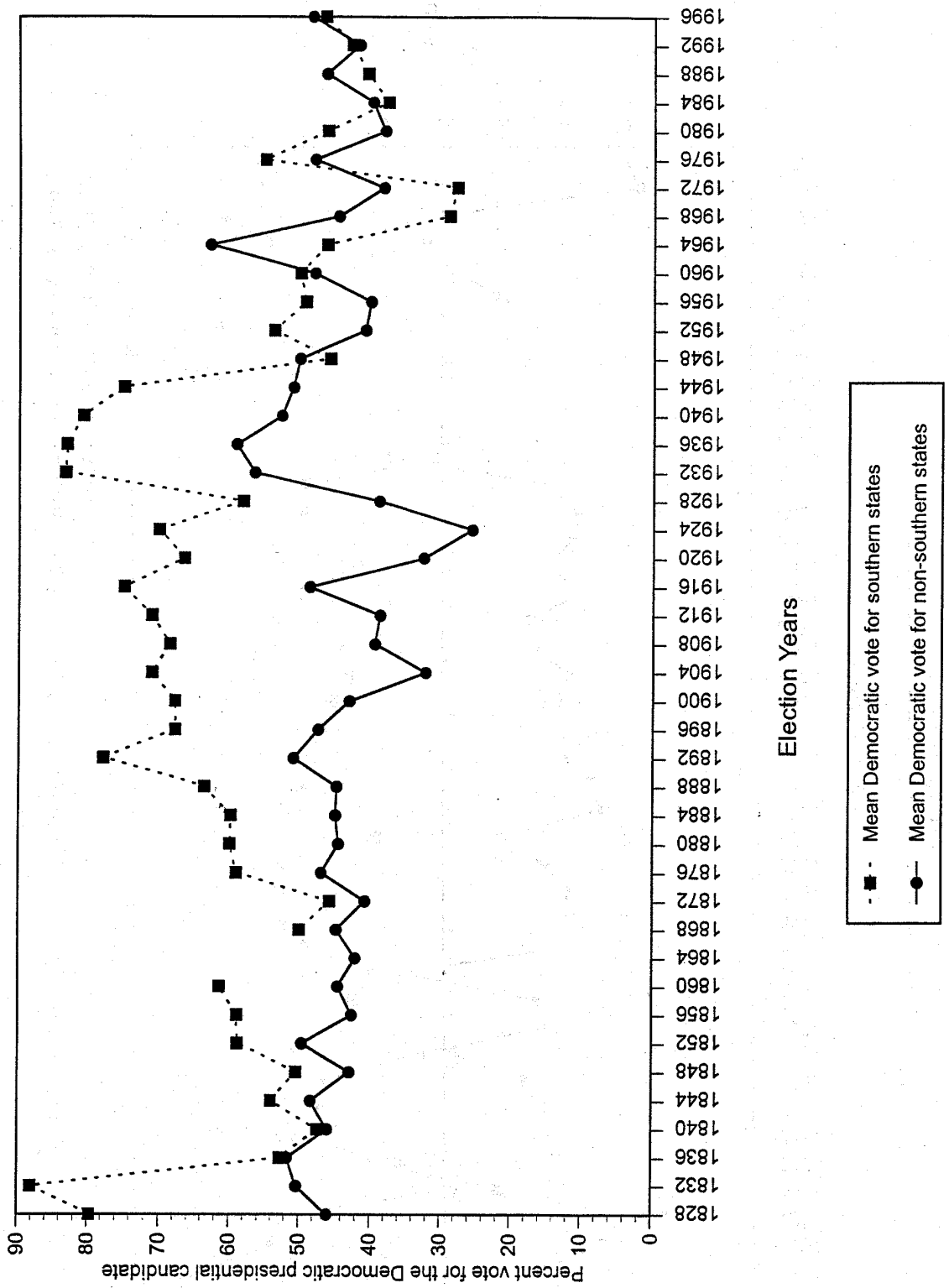
Our own view is that racial issues or quasi-racial issues such as busing, welfare, law and order, tax cuts, and affirmative action had quite strong effects on white public opinion throughout the country (Kinder & Sanders, 1996; Sears et al, 1997; Sears & Citrin, 1985). If so, we should see the tendency to reinstate the antebellum partisan alignment to have occurred in both the North and the South. Because of our interest in establishing continuity with the antebellum period, we define the South here solely in terms of the fifteen slave-holding states – eleven that joined the Confederacy, and four that stayed in the Union.

This restoration, we will argue, took three demonstrable forms: (1) most obviously, the wholesale shift of the South toward the Republican party; (2) within the South, the strongest shift to the Republicans in presidential voting occurred in the states most committed to the Democrats in the antebellum period, triggered initially by the events surrounding the election of 1948; and (3) within the rest of the country, the strongest shift to the Democrats occurred in those states that had been most committed to the Republicans in the antebellum period, again restoring the party alignment of that long-distant period, a movement well underway as early as 1960.

### Restoring the antebellum system in the South

One major reason for the restoration of the antebellum system is the shift of the South back to the more racially conservative party. The South had been strongly Democratic in its presidential voting from 1880 through World War II, of course, and much more Democratic than the rest of the country. After World War II, the South shifted quite sharply away from the Democrats, at first in 1948, and then again in the civil rights era. For example, Franklin Roosevelt swept all of the old Confederacy states in all four of his elections. In contrast, in both 1992 and 1996, Clinton took only two of those eleven states other than his home state and that of his running mate. The more general aggregate voting statistics are shown in Figure 5, which depicts the mean Democratic vote (across states) in the South and the non-South for the entire period we are concerned with. This massive shift of the South is a major reason for the restoration of the antebellum partisan alignment that persists today.

Figure 5. Aggregate Mean Democratic Vote in the South versus non-South



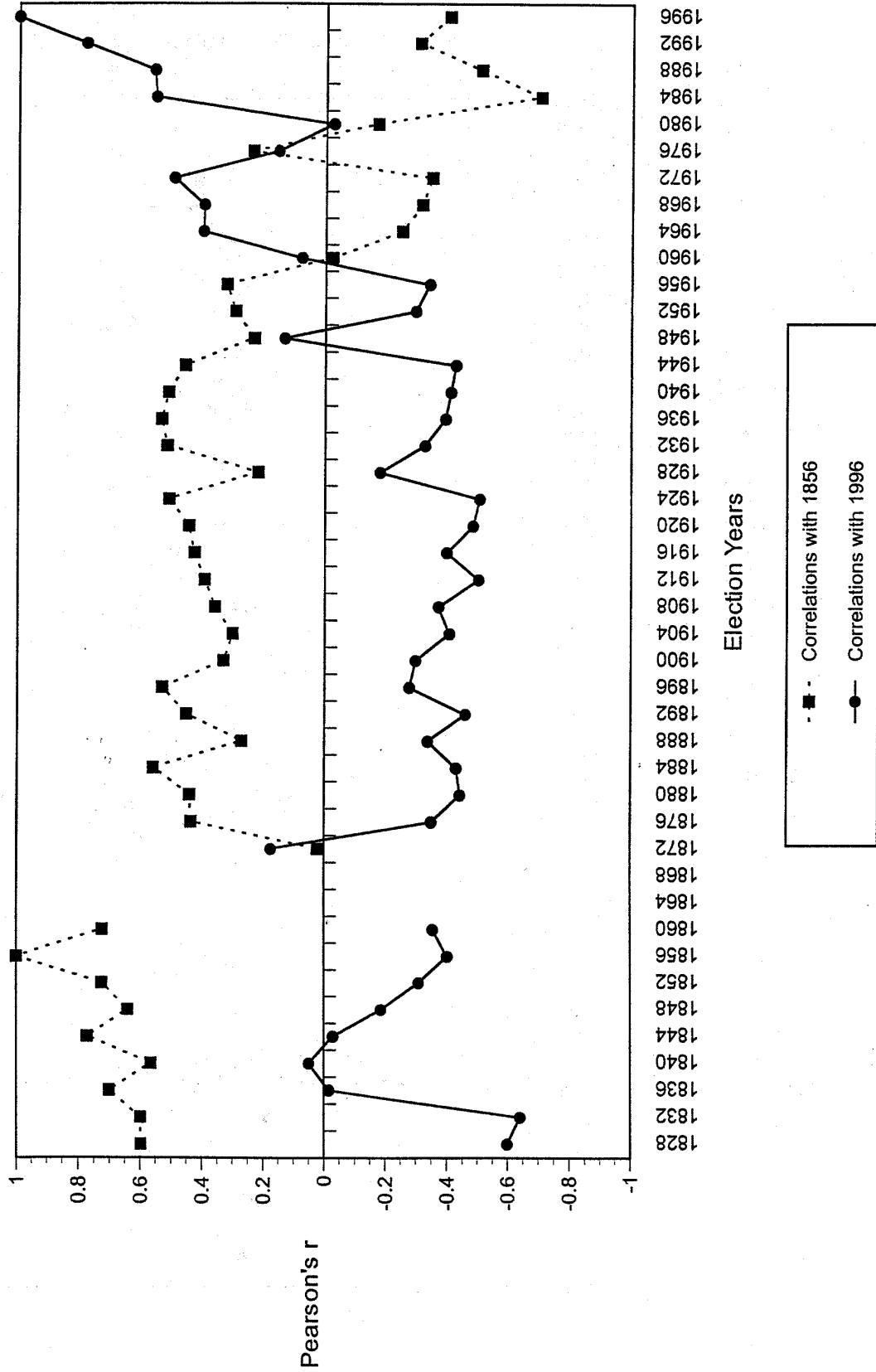
A second reason is continuity within the South in which states give most support to the racially conservative party. As recently as 1964, the political differences among the Southern states showed considerable continuity with differences that had existed in the antebellum period. The scatterplot shown earlier in Figure 1 showed this continuity within the South between 1856 and 1964. In the latter year, the Deep South gave the strongest support to the Republicans – Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, and Louisiana, whereas the four Union slave states were considerably more favorable to the Democrats (as was Texas, LBJ’s home state). The other Confederate states fell in the middle. The average correlation across all years of the antebellum and civil rights periods is  $r = -.25$ ., but these correlations become more substantial with the 1856 and 1860 elections, after the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act (average  $r = -.43$ , as opposed to  $r = -.03$  for 1848 and 1852).

The continuity of those differences in the shift of Southern states to the Republicans over the shorter period from the civil rights era to the present is somewhat stronger, not surprisingly. The correlation of the 1996 results with the entire civil rights era, shown in Table 1, averaged  $r = .43$ . In this period the 1988 election, with its focus on race and crime, consistently shows the greatest continuity with the civil rights era in the South (average  $r = .71$ ).

Across the entire period, then, the partisan divisions within the South in the immediate antebellum period show reasonably strong continuity with the present. Table 1 shows that the average correlation of election results in the antebellum period with those in 1996 in the South is  $r = -.31$ . This level of continuity can also be observed by using 1856 as a single marker year for that earlier period. Figure 6 displays the same two sets of correlations that we started with, correlating the presidential vote in 1996 and 1856 with every other year, but for the South only. The 1856 election results correlate

quite strongly with the outcome in 1996 ( $r = -.40$ ). That is, the differentiation of the most recalcitrant from the more ambivalent states within the antebellum South has considerable parallel in the 1990's. The highest correlation between the antebellum and present periods in the South, interestingly enough, is that between 1856 and 1984, the year of Jesse Jackson's first run for the presidency:  $r = -.70$ . This presumably primarily reflects the strong racial conservatism of the Deep South in both eras.

Figure 6. Correlations of Democratic Share of Total Presidential Vote in 1996 and 1856 by Vote in Other Years, Southern States Only.

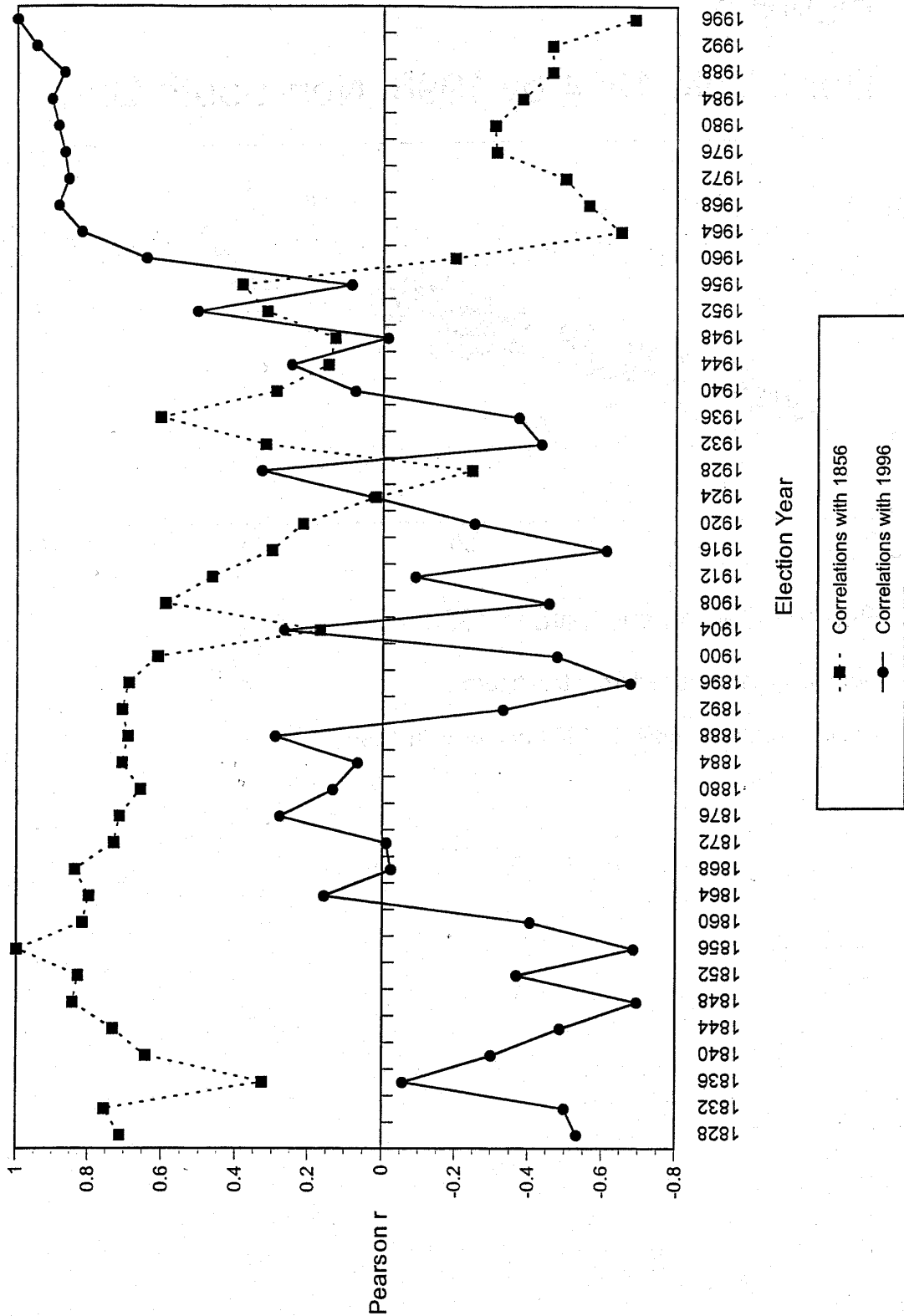


### Continuities outside the South.

But it would be too simple to imply that the general shift of the South toward the Republican party, especially the shift of the Deep South, fully explains the partisan realignment that has occurred. The restoration of the antebellum partisan system is also due to important changes in the North and West. The realignment of states outside of the old slave-holding region along the lines laid out before the Civil War can be seen most clearly in the correlations of the 1856 and 1996 votes with all election results, shown in Figure 7. In the century between the Civil War and the 1960's, no other election forecast the 1996 results as well as 1856 does ( $r = -.69$ ).<sup>11</sup> Indeed the continuity between the 1856 election and the three elections we have described as the "civil rights era" was somewhat higher in the North than in the South ( $r = -.57$  vs.  $-.43$ ).



Figure 7. Correlations of Democratic Share of Total Presidential Vote in 1856 and 1996 by vote in Other Elections, non-Southern States Only



The pattern in the North fits the three-period historical model that we suggested above. The antebellum vote anticipates the 1996 vote. But then in the century following the Civil War, the correlations with 1996 bounce all over the place, as would be expected if other issues had come to dominate race in that period. This is also shown in Figure 7. Then beginning in 1960, the antebellum system was restored, and almost exactly the same pattern has held to the present. The correlations with the 1996 vote are invariably over .80.

Moreover, from 1964 to the present there is even greater continuity in the North and West than in the South. Table 1 shows that the average correlation of election results in the civil rights era with those in 1996 was  $r = .86$  in the North, but only  $.43$  in the South. Similarly, continuity from 1964 to 1996 was higher in the North ( $r = .82$  vs.  $r = .40$  in the South).

Finally, the scatterplot presented in Figure 8 shows this strong continuity of differences among non-Southern states from 1964 to the present. The Democratic strength in states such as Massachusetts, New York, and Rhode Island has been matched by its weakness in the Mountain and Great Plains states. Put another way, the alignment of non-Southern states in an era with race as a central issue 30 years ago persists, more or less unaltered, today.



In short, we find a striking level of continuity between the state-by-state division of the popular presidential vote from the antebellum period to the 1960's, and then again to the 1990's, though the two parties have almost exactly switched places. The Republican party now draws its strongest support from exactly those states that had most vigorously opposed it in the tense antebellum period. Once the champion of restricting the growth of slavery, its strongest base is now in those states that broke away from the Union to preserve slavery. Indeed the single presidential election that most closely anticipates current partisan divisions is 1856, an election that marked the maiden appearance of the Republican party.

#### The timing of racially-based realignment

What about the timing of the restoration to partisan divisions typical of the antebellum period? In general our findings concur with those developed by earlier analysts who see the 1964 election as pivotal (Sundquist, 1983; Carmines & Stimson, 1989). Its results correlate particularly strongly with the 1856 outcomes ( $r = .55$ ), indeed with those of all four of the immediately antebellum elections (average  $r = -.50$ ). In keeping with the Carmines and Stimson notion that “issue evolution” continues to mold partisan divisions over some extended period of time, rather than acting cataclysmically all at once, the 1968 election looks very similar to 1964 in our data. Its results correlate strongly both with those of the 1856 election ( $r = -.75$ ) and with those of the 1996 election ( $r = .72$ ).

That said, we wish to take some mild issue with their timing of the race-based realignment. In our data, the crucial period for this realignment of the mass public began a little earlier than they suggested. They see some polarization on racial issues among elites, but not much in the mass public, before 1963. Instead, our data suggest that presidential voting began to shift back to the antebellum

system as early as in the 1960 election returns. We have three reasons for saying that.

One comes from the pattern of the correlations of the 1960 returns with those before and after. 1960 seems to be a transition or bridging year. It already provided a bridge as the antebellum alignment began to reappear in the civil rights period. The 1856 returns correlated  $r = .63$  with 1956, then  $r = -.06$  in 1960, and swung to  $r = -.60$  in 1964, as shown in Table 3. Similarly, the link to the contemporary period is anticipated as strongly in the 1960 returns as it is in the 1964 returns. The 1996 returns correlated  $-.02$  with those in 1956, then rose to  $r = .51$  in 1960, but only increased a little further in 1964 ( $r = .55$ ).

Table 3. Pearson's correlations of Presidential Vote in Antebellum Era, Civil Rights Era, and 1996, By Region.

Years	All States		Northern States		Southern States	
	1856	1996	1856	1996	1856	1996
1956	.63	-.02	.39	.09	.32	-.34
1960	-.06	.51	-.20	.64	-.02	.08
1964	-.60	.55	-.65	.82	-.25	.40
1968	-.75	.72	-.56	.89	-.32	.40

Second, 1960 was a critical year in the shift of the South away from the Democrats relative to the North at the aggregate level, shown earlier in Figure 5. Figure 6 shows that the 1856 and 1996 votes in the South are each correlated at a constant level with other election outcomes after Reconstruction through 1956. In 1960 the directions of the correlations begin to reverse, a trend that

continues to the present time (with some interruption in the years of fellow Southerner Jimmy Carter's races). In the South, then, we are really dealing with only two eras. The antebellum and Jim Crow periods look remarkably similar, despite the temporary trauma of the Civil War. Only in the 1960's did the inversion of the old alignment begin. The civil rights policies of the national Democratic party drove the Southern states into the waiting hands of the Republican party, and especially the most racially conservative of the Southern states.

But 1960 was also a critical year in the North. As can be seen in Figure 8 and Table 3, the 1856 results were consistently positively correlated with the Northern vote through the 1950's (e.g., .39 in 1956). But it changed radically in 1960 ( $r = -.20$ ), and then the change to strong negative correlations was complete in 1964 and 1968 ( $r = -.65, -.56$ ). Similarly, the correlation of those years with 1996 shows the same pattern in the North: averaging  $r = .20$  from 1948 to 1956, then surging in 1960 (to  $r = .64$ ), and still further in 1964 and 1968 (to  $r = .82$  and  $.89$ ).

Turning to the South, our data highlight 1948 as an early warning year for the restoration of the old system. The successful civil rights fight over the Democratic platform at the convention, and the later Dixiecrat candidacy of Strom Thurmond, began the ultimate dissolution of the Solid South. Figure 5 shows that it was the first election in history in which the Democrats did more poorly in the South than in the North. Moreover, within the South the correlation of vote outcomes between 1948 and 1964 was  $r = .82$ . So the 1948 election already anticipated the later enduring defection of the South as a whole, and especially the Deep South. However 1948 did not anticipate the results outside the South in the elections we have been focusing on. For example, the correlation of 1948 and 1964 vote outcomes outside the South was but  $r = .01$ .

## Discussion

The goal of our study was to test for long-term continuities in the politics of race. Specifically, we wanted to examine the role of racial issues in presidential voting in the present era. Our strategy is a quasi-experimental one. We identified two earlier historical eras in which it is generally agreed race was a hotly debated issue in national partisan politics. By demonstrating continuity in the distribution of the presidential vote across states between those eras and the present, and showing that the pattern of the vote has been quite different in eras when race has not been a central national political issue, we could make the case that in the present era, racial issues remain a major influence over partisan preferences.

Our empirical analysis began by documenting the continuity in presidential voting between the period immediately preceding the Civil War and the civil rights era of the 1960's. Then we documented the striking similarity between today's party alignment and that of those previous periods. In addition, we found that the contemporary period is clearly dissimilar from the party alignment in the long period between the Civil War and the civil rights era, when race was essentially off the national political agenda. The enduring realignment of the presidential vote that we see today actually consisted of three separate changes. First, there was a substantial aggregate-level switch of Southern states away from the Democrats to the Republicans after World War II, anticipated in the Dixiecrat revolt in 1948 and in the 1960 election, and then solidified in the 1964 election. And second, there was a significant level of continuity from the antebellum period to the civil rights era, and to the present day, in terms of which Southern states most supported the racially conservative candidates. The Deep South was then, and remains, now, the most receptive. In some ways more surprising were our findings about states in the North and West. There we find even more continuity of the presidential vote of today with its alignment

both in the antebellum period and the civil rights period. Even states like Vermont and Maine, not long ago the most reliably Republican of all states, have reverted to their antebellum ways. In these ways, then, we find a striking level of continuity in the alignment of partisan politics at the presidential level today with its alignment in the two earlier periods of highest racial tension in American national politics. From that we infer the continuing influence of racial attitudes on presidential voting behavior.

This study is intended to supplement the research using standard survey-based methods that has shown close associations between racial attitudes on the one hand, and racial policy preferences, and voting behavior, on the other (e.g., Kinder & Sanders, 1996; Sears, Lau, Tyler, & Allen, 1980; Sears et al, 1997). We use data that have not been previously utilized for this purpose – state presidential election returns. They have some particular advantages. They are collected in a relatively uniform manner over a far longer time span than are public opinion data, and they are “hard” behavioral data as opposed to “soft” opinion data. They also may be more sensitive to change than are survey measures of party identification: presidential voting is a leading indicator of change, and party identification, a lagging indicator.

State-level data also have a certain special appropriateness for the substantive question at hand, as well. The debates over slavery were often carried out at a state level in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, and the most visible debaters were frequently those public officials with state-level constituencies – senators and governors. The Civil War was fought largely by units drawn from within the states, with each side trying to capitalize on their men’s loyalties to their own states, even though in fact the war was regional in nature. “States’ rights” was a central justification for maintaining the racial status quo in both the antebellum and civil rights era, and a core proposal of current Republican leadership is to return



resources and power to the states from the federal government. Even in the 1960's, racial conservatives like Governors George Wallace and Ross Barnett presented themselves as defending their own states, and their own state universities, against desegregation.

No type of data in social science is without disadvantage, though. These aggregated presidential voting returns have the disadvantage of being quite distant from the presumably causal individual racial attitudes. So, as Schuman (2000) argues in another context, while they are spared the “circularity” or “tautology” charge that measures of racial attitudes are vulnerable to when used as predictors of racial policy attitudes, they are more subject to alternative explanations. Nevertheless, it is challenging to think of factors that would promote similar voting behavior in the antebellum and civil rights eras other than attitudes about the racial status quo. Moreover, these observed continuities in the vote must overcome the many other changes that have occurred in each state that could influence voting outcomes. Among them are immigration, out-migration (both perhaps selective), and the enfranchisement of blacks in the South and higher levels of turnout of Northern blacks.

One thing missing in this analysis is any direct evidence that racial attitudes are responsible for these effects. That is not for lack of research on them. A great deal has been done (for a review, see Sears et al, 2000). But one obstacle that is immediately confronted is a dispute at the most fundamental level possible – on what constitutes a valid measure of racial prejudice. This dispute threatens to block any consensual appraisal of the role of racial attitudes. Our research, and that of others kin to it, offers measures of prejudice that presumably express racial animosity in terms of resentments or moral complaints about black people (e.g., Kinder & Sanders, 1996; Tarman & Sears, 1998; Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995; Sears et al, 1997). However those who do not see much role for racial prejudice in

today's politics view measures of symbolic racism or racial resentment as inextricably "confounded" with general political ideology, and so not as true measures of prejudice (Sniderman & Piazza, 1993). This view is accompanied by the conviction that both racial and partisan politics today revolve around general political ideology (particularly debates about the size and role of government) more than it does around race (e.g., Sniderman & Carmines, 1997; Carmines & Stanley, 1990). These researchers instead rely on direct measures of racial affect, such as group thermometers or group stereotypes, or on indirect and unobtrusive measures that presumably prevent respondents from being aware that the investigator is measuring prejudice (e.g., Fazio et al, 1995; Kuklinski et al, 1997; Sniderman et al, 2000). We in turn have some skepticism about the former, as excessively vulnerable to social desirability pressures and as at best measuring outdated forms of racial prejudice, and the latter only because they have not yet been sufficiently tested to form a basis for firm conclusions.

The view that racial prejudice has been displaced by other issue concerns as a basis for the mass public's partisan preferences is certainly a legitimate one. And there is no dearth of candidates for that alternative role: opposition to federal intervention in local political decisions (Campbell, 1977b), fatigue with the welfare state (Abramowitz, 1994), fundamental values about equality (Miller & Shanks, 1996) religious orientations (Green et al, 1998; Kellstedt, 1990; Steed et al, 1990), attitudes about a strong defense or abortion (Carmines & Stanley, 1990), as well as ideology (Abramowitz & Saunders, 1998; Carmines & Stanley, 1990; Sniderman & Carmines, 1997; Citrin, Green, & Sears, 1990). Indeed an oft-expressed belief is that many of these domestic issues have become so bundled together with basic ideology that they all push in the same direction at once.

One research strategy often employed in such situations is to try to control on the potentially

confounding attitudes, and then see if the attitude of most interest (in this case, racial prejudice or racial policy attitudes) continues nevertheless to have the effects of interest. On a bivariate basis, they do seem to have reliable effects on policy attitudes, party identification, and presidential vote preferences (Carmines & Layman, 1998; Carmines & Stanley, 1990; Kinder & Sanders, 1996; Miller & Shanks, 1996; Sears et al, 1997; though see Abramowitz, 1994). When those other attitudes are controlled, racial prejudice (at least our version of it) continues to have strong effects on policy attitudes (e.g., Sears et al, 1997). But they often do not continue to have strong effects on either party identification or voting preferences (Kinder & Sanders, 1996; Abramowitz, 1994; Miller & Shanks, 1996; Citrin, Green, & Sears, 1990).

At that point the conventional methodology seems to run out of gas. We are left with only our priors about causal ordering, as Kinder and Sanders (1996) and Miller and Shanks (1996, pp. 314-6) wisely point out. Our assumption is that these other attitudes themselves have been infected by racial prejudice. For example, welfare and law and order issues are demonstrably infused with racial considerations (Sears et al, 1980; Kinder and Sanders, 1996; Gilens, 1999). Even issues of overall size of government and levels of taxation have a surprisingly large racial component that remains with controls on ideology and party identification (Sears & Citrin, 1985). Conventional measures of egalitarian values may also be strongly influenced by racial prejudice (Sears, Henry, & Kosterman, 2000). If so, controlling those other factors essentially is “controlling out” variance that more properly should be assigned to prejudice.

The analytic method used in the present study provides another approach to the same problem. Presumably the partisan debates during the New Deal era were highly polarized about just the issues

undergirding today's debates about the size and role of government. The New Deal was an effort to import a welfare state to the United States, and greatly expand the regulatory state, while the Republicans consistently opposed the expansion of government responsibility. Race was very much of a side issue, and indeed the two national parties differed rather little on it. Yet we find that the partisan alignment during the New Deal era correlates very little with the alignments in either the civil rights era or the present era. That may offer one additional piece of evidence suggesting that a significant portion of today's ideological polarization has a racial subtext.

When we argue that the racial tensions in the antebellum and civil rights eras affected partisan choice, there is not much dispute about how that might have happened. In both cases competing presidential candidates, and especially their partisan allies in Congress, were explicitly debating large policy issues surrounding race, taking very different positions. That is less obviously true in the 1990's, with occasional exceptions like some recent state ballot measures abolishing official affirmative action. And even there it should be remembered that the anti-affirmative-action rhetoric often invokes the rhetoric of the civil rights movement itself, in favor of a "color-blind" society. If race enters partisan politics today, it seems to do so indirectly. But that presents the challenge of determining which issues are in fact racial. The welfare reform legislation of 1996? Gilens (1999) makes a strong case that it was. But what about current drug policy? It has drastically differential racial consequences. But is it racialized in the minds of the white mass public? What about the death penalty? The attacks on Jocelyn Elder, the treatment of Carol Moseley-Braun or Mike Espy? Why did Henry Cisneiros come under more attack than Henry Hyde or Robert Livingston or Newt Gingrich? Are these examples of a racial double standard? Is Bill Clinton's close and very public friendship with Vernon Jordan a "racial issue"?

analogous to the Kansas-Nebraska Act in the 1850's? Perhaps it is these indirect effects of racial attitudes, conveyed by issues with relatively secondary manifest racial content, that may have helped alter the overall partisan balance in the land -- especially by affecting the preferences of white racial conservatives in the South.

Finally, one more uncertainty. We have offered some evidence that the election of 1960 was a turning point in the partisan alignment of the states. As conventionally analyzed by public opinion researchers, that election was not so much racialized as it was driven by religion (Converse et al, 1963). In the North, Catholics were drawn to the Democrats more than usual, while in the South, Protestants defected from the Democrats more than usual. It is clear that evangelical Protestantism is closely associated with Republicanism and political conservatism in the South today (Green et al, 1998; Kellstedt, 1990; Steed et al, 1990). Racial conservatism appears also to be correlated with those predispositions, but the evidence on such relationships is more fragmentary. What can be said with certainty is that the Northern Catholic surge to the Democrats during the Kennedy candidacy has long since relapsed. In that sense if it was religion and not race that was responsible for the party alignment beginning to tip in 1960, an alignment that persists to today, the asymmetrical long-term effects of religion would need to be explained.

What do we think we have learned? (1) We have extended the case for a racially-based realignment back to the antebellum period, to show that today's partisan alignment has a longer history than usually thought; (2) we have provided another kind of data to show that race remains important in presidential politics today, even if the issues being debated are often not explicitly or only racial ; (3) the persisting effects of the 1960's racially-driven realignment occurred in the North as well as in the South;

and (4) we argue that 1960 may have been transitional, not just 1964.

## APPENDIX

In assembling the data on presidential vote, our main problems occur from two sources: missing data (especially but not exclusively during the Confederate rebellion), and third party candidacies. We have presented the core data in the most parsimonious and uniform fashion we could think of, taking the percent Democratic of the total presidential vote in each year. In this Appendix we discuss the consequences of this decision in years with substantial missing data and/or third party candidacies. Our general strategy has been that whenever there are missing data, they can be entered as 0 for one party or treated as missing. We try both. We treat third party candidacies as rebellions and try alternative assignments of their votes accordingly.

Leftwing rebellions from the party of the left. In these cases the politically sensible solution is to pool the rebelling left with the vote for the party of the left, if the left-right distinction makes sense with respect to racial issues. In 1848 the Free Soil Party split off from the Whigs. We pool the two against the Democrats, which seems most sensible given the predominantly Southern base of the latter and the specifically anti-slavery stance of the free soilers. In 1892 the Populists split off, but presumably had a more natural affinity with the Democrats since in 1896, Bryan ran on a Democrat-Populist joint ticket. However, our basic rule pairs them with the Republicans, yielding  $r = .47$  with the 1996 vote. If pooled with the Democratic vote the correlation with the 1996 vote is  $r = -.24$ . The decision is not consequential for our story, but we chose to make an exception to our general rule in this case because the Democrats and the Populists were drawing on similar pools of electoral support.

Centrist rebellions against the party of the left. In 1856 Whigs collected votes in every state despite the entry of the Republican Party in the North, against the pro-slavery Buchanan on the Democratic ticket. In practice, however, the Republicans attracted no votes at all in any slave state except Maryland and Delaware, and received tiny numbers even there. The Whigs ran competitive (though mostly losing) races with the Democrats in every slave state, but were competitive with the Republicans in hardly any Northern states. Our rule of thumb assigns the Whigs to the Republican side, which seems most sensible since both essentially ran against the Democrats, but in different regions.

1860. In 1860, Stephen A. Douglas ran as the Democratic candidate, but the Southern Democrats put up John C. Breckinridge as a Southern Democratic alternative. Lincoln, the Republican, was blanked in virtually all the Southern states, where the Constitutional Union Party had put up John Bell (though he also got some votes in the North). That is, in the North the contest was essentially between Lincoln and the Democrats, while in the South, it was Bell against the Southern Democrats. So there were basically two separate Democratic campaigns, one in the South and one in the North. In practice Douglas won few votes in the South (a median of 9% in the Confederate states), while Breckinridge did poorly in almost all non-slave states. Lincoln won almost no votes in the South (1% in Virginia, and none in any of the other Confederate states), whereas the CU party did rather well (a

mean of 39% in the Confederate states).

How this is handled matters a lot. Our rule of parsimony would compare Douglas votes with all others ( $r = .32$  for the correlation with the 1996 vote). However in this case that would be an obviously politically meaningless option, in a year fraught with racial tension. The fallback solution we have chosen is to pool Democrats and Southern Democrats against the Republicans and CUP ( $r = -.56$ ). One could argue for a tougher criterion for anti-slavery voting, pitting Lincoln against all the rest ( $r = -.51$ ). But the Bell vote was basically a Southern Whig vote. It was clear that opinion about secession was quite divided in the Southern states, reflected in the considerable Bell vote in several slave states (indeed, he took both Virginia and Tennessee).

The Confederacy problem. The most serious missing-data problem concerns the missing Confederate states in 1864 (eleven) 1868 (four). If we just declare them missing, then the correlations with the 1996 vote are  $r = .06$  and  $-.02$ . However, there is no perfect strategy because there is no way to estimate the votes of the most extreme racially conservative states. These are not absolutely pivotal years for our purposes, though it is interesting how the debates in 1863 and 1864 about Lincoln's war strategy sound a lot like the contemporary racial debates, with the "usual suspects" carrying the war banner -- Massachusetts rather than Southern Ohio, for example (see Waugh, 1996).

Racially conservative rebellions against the racially liberal party. In these cases the most obviously appropriate response is to assign the racially conservative third-party votes to the more racially conservative major party. But actually our standard rule of thumb, assigning it all to the Republicans, does not distort the political realities on the ground very much in each case. In 1948 the Dixiecrats rebelled against the Northern Democratic Party. Assigning their vote to the Republicans yields  $r = .03$  with the 1996 vote; assigning them to the Democrats yields  $r = .05$ . No difference. In 1948, the Alabama electors were unpledged. Setting the Democratic vote to 0, rather than declaring the state missing, raises the correlation with 1996 from  $r = .03$  to  $r = .08$ . Again no real difference so we chose to set them as missing. In 1960 the main third party vote was for Southern segregationists, in Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, and Arkansas. Our rule assigns those votes to the Republicans, which yields a correlation of  $r = .51$  with the 1996 vote. Assigning them instead to the Democrats would yield  $r = .40$ , a relatively modest difference. In 1964 the unpledged Democratic slate in Alabama protested desegregation. We assign them to the Republicans (a reasonable outcome in that Goldwater year), yielding  $r = .49$  with the 1996 vote). The same occurs if they are assigned to the Democrats. In 1968 the Wallace vote was in significant degree a racially-based protest against the Democrats, so it should logically be assigned to the Republicans, which our rule does in any case. Either way it correlates strongly with the 1996 vote ( $r = .72$  and  $.49$ , respectively).

Rebellions to the left from the conservative party. Neither of these two cases is consequential for our themes. In 1912 and 1924 the Progressives split off from the Republicans. Our rule of thumb assigns them back to the Republicans, generating  $r = -.10$  and  $-.05$  with the 1996 vote, respectively. Assigning their votes to the Democrats yields  $r = -.01$  and  $-.32$ , not a large difference. In 1980



Anderson split off from the Republicans, but our rule assigns him right back ( $r = .73$  with the 1996 vote). Still he was closer in ideology to Carter. Assigning him to the Democrats yields  $r = .86$ . This doesn't make much difference, either.

The Perot vote in 1992. This does not fall neatly into any of the other categories of rebellions. It was mainly a rebellion against government as usual, and in that sense might have been thought to have more in common with the Republicans (vide Reagan having campaigned on "government is the problem, not the solution"). Still, it was clearly not explicitly racial in nature, unlike Wallace. Our rule pools his vote with the Republicans, yielding  $r = .93$  with the 1996 vote. If his vote is pooled with the Democrats,  $r = .78$ .

## REFERENCES

- Abramowitz, Alan I. and Saunders, Kyle L. (1998). Ideological realignment in the U. S. electorate. *Journal of Politics*. 60:634-652.
- Abramowitz, Alan I. (1994). Issue evolution reconsidered: Racial attitudes and partisanship in the U.S. electorate. *American Journal of Political Science*. 39:1-24.
- Beck, Paul Allen (1977). Partisan dealignment in the postwar South. *American Political Science Review*. 71:477-498.
- Black, Earl, and Black, Merle (1992). *The vital South: How presidents are elected*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Bobo, Lawrence (2000). Race and beliefs about affirmative action, In D.O. Sears, J. Sidanius & L. Bobo (Eds.), *Racialized politics: The debate about racism in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- \*Burnham, Walter Dean. (1996). In Bert Rockman (Ed.).**
- Campbell, Bruce A. (1977a). Change in the Southern Electorate. *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 21, No. 1. (Feb., 1977), pp. 37-64.
- Campbell, Bruce A. (1977b). Patterns of change in the partisan loyalties of native Southerners. *Journal of Politics*, 39:730-761.
- Carmines, Edward C. and Layman, Geoffrey C. (1998) "When prejudice matters: the impact of racial stereotypes on the racial policy preferences of Democrats and Republicans" In Hurwitz, Jon, and Mark Peffley, Editors. (1998) *Perception and prejudice*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Carmines, Edward C. and Stanley, Harold. (1990) . In Robert P. Steed, Laurence W. Moreland, & Tod A. Baker (Eds.). *The disappearing South?: Studies in regional change and continuity*. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press.
- Carmines, E. G., & Stimson, James A. (1989). Issue evolution: Race and the transformation of American politics. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

- Citrin, J., Green, D. P., & Sears, D. O. (1990). White reactions to black candidates: When does race matter? Public Opinion Quarterly, 54, 74-96.
- Converse, P. E. (1966). Religion and politics: the 1960 campaign. In A. Campbell, P. E. Converse, W. E. Miller, & D. E. Stokes (Eds.), Elections and the political order (pp. 96-124). New York: Wiley.
- DeSouza, Dinesh (1995). The end of racism. New York: The Free Press.
- Edsall, T. B., & Edsall, M. D. (1991, May). When the official subject is presidential politics, taxes, welfare, crime, rights, or values . . . the real subject is race. The Atlantic Monthly, pp. 53-86.
- Fazio, R. H., Jackson, J. R., Dunton, B. C., & Williams, C. J. (1995). Variability in automatic activation as an unobtrusive measure of racial attitudes: A bona fide pipeline? Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 69(6): 1013-1027.
- Gilens, Martin. (1999). Why Americans Hate Welfare: Prejudice, Misperception, and the Politics of the American Welfare State. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Glaser, James M., & Martin Gilens. 1997. Interregional Migration and Political Resocialization: A Study of Racial Attitudes Under Pressure *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 61:72-86.
- Green, J. C., Kellstedt, L. A., Smidt, C. E., and Guth, J. L. (1998). In Bullock, Charles S. III and Rozell, M. J. (Eds.). The new politics of the old South: An introduction to Southern Politics. (pp. 261-276). Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Hagen, M.G. (1995). References to racial issues. Political Behavior, 17, 49-88.
- Hurwitz, Jon, and Mark Peffley, Editors, (1998) Perception and prejudice. New Haven; Yale University Press.
- Kellstedt, L. A. (1990). In Robert P. Steed, Laurence W, Moreland, & Tod A. Baker (Eds.). Searching for the mind of the South. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press.
- Key, V. O., Jr. (1949). Southern politics in state and nation. New York: Vintage Books.
- Kinder, D. R., & Sanders, Lynn. M. (1996). Divided by color: Racial politics and Democratic ideals. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

- Kuklinski, James H., Michael D. Cobb, & Martin Gilens. 1997. Racial attitudes and the "new south." *Journal of Politics*, May, 59:323-349.
- Mendelberg, Tali. 1997. Executing Hortons: Racial Crime in the 1988 Presidential Campaign. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 61(1): 134-157.
- Miller, Warren E., & J. Merrill Shanks. 1996. *The New American Voter*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Peffley, Mark and Hurwitz, Jon. Whites' stereotypes of blacks: sources and political consequences. In Hurwitz, Jon, and Mark Peffley, Editors. (1998). *Perception and prejudice*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Petrocik, J.R. (1987). Realignment: New party coalitions and the nationalization of the South. *Journal of Politics*, 49, 347-375.
- Pettigrew, Thomas F. & Meertens, Roel W. (1995). Subtle and blatant prejudice in Western Europe. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 25, 57-75.
- Schuman, Howard (2000). The perils of correlation, the lure of labels, and the beauty of negative results. In D.O. Sears, J. Sidanius & L. Bobo (Eds.), *Racialized politics: The debate about racism in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Schuman, Howard, Charlotte Steeh, Lawrence Bobo, & Maria Krysan. (1997). *Racial Attitudes in America: Trends and Interpretations*. Revised Edition. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Sears, D. O., & Citrin, J. (1985). *Tax revolt: Something for nothing in California* (Enlarged ed.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Sears, D. O., Citrin, J., & Kosterman, Richard. (1987). Jesse Jackson and the Southern White Electorate in 1984. In Robert P. Steed, Laurence W. Moreland, & Tod A. Baker (Eds.), *Blacks in Southern politics* (pp. 209-225). New York: Praeger.
- Sears, D. O., Lau, R. R., Tyler, Tom R., & Allen, Harris M., Jr. (1980). Self-interest vs. symbolic politics in policy attitudes and presidential voting. *American Political Science Review*, 74, 670-684.
- Sears, David O., Hetts, Jolin J., Sidanius, Jim, and Bobo, Lawrence (2000). Race in American politics: Framing the debates, In D.O. Sears, J. Sidanius & L. Bobo (Eds.), *Racialized politics: The debate about racism in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Sears, David O., Henry, P. J., and Kosterman, Rick. (2000). Egalitarian values and contemporary racial politics. In D.O. Sears, J. Sidanius & L. Bobo (Eds.), *Racialized politics: The debate about racism in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Sears, D.O., van Laar, C., Carrillo, M., & Kosterman, R. (1997). "Is it really racism? The origins of white Americans opposition to race-targeted policies." Public Opinion Quarterly, 61, 16-53.
- Sidanius, J. & Pratto, F. (1999). *Social dominance: An intergroup theory of social hierarchy and oppression*. NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Sniderman, P. M., & Carmines, E. G. (1997). *Reaching beyond race*. Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press. Sniderman, Paul M., Crosby, Gretchen C. & Howell, William G. (1999). The politics of race and political argument. In D.O. Sears, J. Sidanius & L. Bobo (Eds.), *Racialized politics: Values, ideology, and prejudice in American public opinion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Sniderman, Paul M., & Piazza, Thomas. (1993). The scar of race. Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press.
- Sniderman, Paul M., Crosby, Gretchen C. & Howell, William G. (2000). The politics of race and political argument. In D.O. Sears, J. Sidanius & L. Bobo (Eds.), *Racialized politics: The debate about racism in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Stampp, Kenneth M. (1990). *America in 1857: A Nation on the Brink*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Stanley, Harold (1988). . Southern Partisan Changes: Dealignment, Realignment or Both? *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 50, No. 1. (Feb.), pp. 64-88
- Steed, Robert P. et al, (1990). In Robert P. Steed, Laurence W. Moreland & Tod A. Baker (Eds.). *Searching for the mind of the South*. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press.
- Steeh, Charlotte & Krysan, Maria. (1996). Trends: Affirmative action and the public, 1970-1995. Public Opinion Quarterly, 60, Spring (1) 128-158.
- Steeh, C., & Schuman, H. (1991). Changes in racial attitudes among young white adults, 1984-1990. American Journal of Sociology, 96, 340-367.
- Sundquist, James L. (1983). *Dynamics of the party system* (rev. ed.). Washington: Brookings Institution.

Tarman, Christopher and David O. Sears. 1998. The Measurement of Symbolic Racism: A Structural Equations Model. Prepared for Annual Meeting of International Society of Political Psychology. July 12-15, 1998. Montreal, Canada.

## ENDNOTES

---

1. We wish to express thanks to Christopher Tarman, David Karol, and Rich Benton for their help at various stages of this project.
2. A third set of events is what to us is the underexplained vehemence of the Republican response to President Clinton. From the beginning of his administration, he has drawn a surprisingly vigorous partisan response from congressional Republicans, from the debates over gays in the military to those over health care, from the “Contract with America” in the 1994 congressional elections to the shut-down of the federal government in the winter of 1995-1996 and the year-long impeachment process in 1998-1999. Many explanations have been offered, including those that invoke his alleged fondness for “big government” solutions to societal problems, claims of his untrustworthiness, his draft status or drug use in the 1960's, allegations about sexual affairs, the increased visibility of the Christian Right within the Republican party, and resentment of Hillary Clinton's active feminism and involvement in the administration. One that is not often heard is the fact that Clinton is arguably the president most understanding of, and sympathetic to, African Americans in American history. This was perhaps illustrated by the fact that his most loyal, outspoken, and unequivocal supporters during the impeachment crisis came from the Black Caucus in the House of Representatives.
3. Though see Clubb, Flanigan, and Zingale (1980), who have used state-level voting data to identify realigning elections.
4. In 1952, he took seven of the former secessionist states, and in 1956, six of them.
5. On a priori grounds, 1860 might have served just as well, but there are greater complications in terms of which candidates were on the ballot in various states (see the Appendix). In any case the findings for 1860 look very much like those for 1856.
6. In 1856, South Carolina did not collect a popular vote for President; electors were selected by the state legislature.
8. It might of course be objected that the continuity of the 1996 vote with those in the period beginning in the 1960's, like the continuity of any vote with those in years immediately prior, would have a number of possible explanations that have little to do with our hypothesis. Indeed the results of the 1996 election correlates  $r = .82$ , on average, with those of all elections from 1976 through 1992. However, we believe this level of continuity is not merely an artifact of being relatively close in time. The same objection cannot explain continuity of the present with the far-earlier period of racial crisis immediately preceding the Civil War.
8. Virginia, notwithstanding that West Virginia was carved from it soon thereafter, and is a strong Democratic state today.

---

10. The two elections during the transition from Reconstruction do not show any association with the 1996 results (average  $r = -.08$ ).

10. In 1864 and 1868, much of the white support for the Confederacy had been disenfranchised, of course, producing an artificial discontinuity with the antebellum period.

12. For 1856,  $r = -.50$ ; for 1896,  $r = -.61$ ; and for 1952,  $r = .52$ ). We have no particular insight into these latter two results.