
**PROPER PLACEMENT
OF INDEPENDENT-LEARNERS
IN THE PARTISAN IDENTIFICATION SCALE:
DATA FROM TWO ARKANSAS SAMPLES**

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What is an independent-leaner? More than a generation has passed since the Michigan NES/CPS group established its now standard, seven-point scale of classification of partisan identifiers [Campbell, et. al. 1960]; yet, suddenly, the correct way to conceptualize the different types of independent identifiers and interpret their behavior has re-emerged as an unresolved problem for students of political behavior.

The problem was identified as a result of Petrocik's [1974] analysis of intransitivities in the seven-point scale of partisan identification. If the scale were indeed a valid operationalization, then a monotonic relationship should have been found to exist between the various categories of identification and level of political activity. Such was not the case, however. Independent-leaners were found to be more active than weak identifiers on several measures of civic virtue. Accounting for this inconsistency spurred subsequent questioning of both the operational definition and the measurement of partisan identification.

Maggiotto and Piereson [1977] found that the factoring in of partisan identifiers' evaluations of the opposition party improved upon the ability of the standard, unidimensional partisan index to explain and predict electoral behavior. They concluded by calling for a multiple-indicator approach to the study of partisan identification that distinguished affect toward the party with which one identified from affect toward the opposition party. Katz [1979], who found that interparty changers tended to retain their intensity of attachment (i.e., strong Democrats and strong Republicans appeared to be closer to each other than either were to independents), concluded that partisan identifiers entertain a certain amount of identification with the idea of

particularly for the purpose of compelling policy fidelity (Hitlin and Jackson, 1979: 619). According to the authors, the three dimensions are listed in ascending order of difficulty with regard to implementation in the American system. Figure 1 illustrates this multidimensional concept of the party continuums (Hitlin and Jackson, 1979: 620).

Figure 1

Decentralized,	A	X	Centralized
Pragmatic,	B	Y	Ideological
Undisciplined, parties	C	Z	Disciplined parties

While this article will not address all dimensions of responsible party behavior, it will concentrate on the degree to which the political party elites (Democratic and Republican) offer meaningful and significant choices to the American voter, i.e., the pragmatic-ideological dimension. To date, the studies focusing on party elites and their philosophical and party positions vis-a-vis the American public have been small in number, but fairly consistent in their findings. In nearly every case the research has been based upon the pioneering work of Herbert McClosky and his associates (1960).

In this seminal piece, McClosky and colleagues presented their findings as a refutation of the general image of American political parties differing only slightly from one another in principle and doctrine. Using data comparing the 1956 national convention delegates to the mass public, McClosky demonstrated empirically that American political elites and followers existed along an ideological continuum. In particular, it was noted that Democratic delegates were consistently more liberal than Democratic identifiers with respect to certain public policy issues. Similarly, Republican delegates were shown to be more conservative than the Republican rank-and-file. McClosky attributed these differences in political opinion to the fact that the delegates were "political elites". Moreover, it was discovered that the views of the Republican rank-and-file were "much closer to those of the Democratic leaders than to those of the Republican leaders" (1960:422).

The McClosky study was not fully replicated until Jeane Kirkpatrick's (1976) study of 1972 Republican and Democratic national conventions. In keeping with the McClosky study, Kirkpatrick found

sizable differences between the Republican and Democratic Party elites (1972 national convention delegates) on four of the five policy issues selected for study. However, in stark contrast to McClosky's earlier finding, Kirkpatrick observed substantial differences between the Democratic Party's elite and their own rank-and-file. In Kirkpatrick's own words:

By 1972 the position of Republican and Democratic elites has been reversed and the Democratic presidential elite was 'odd-man out.' The Republican presidential elite more faithfully mirrored the views and values of their own party identifiers and of voters generally than did the Democratic elite which did not reflect the views of ordinary Democrats or of voters generally (1976: 315).

In a key study by Montjoy, Shaffer, and Weber (1980), responses were analyzed from a nationwide sample taken in 1972 of county chairmen and party followers on ten issues of state policy. Like McClosky and Kirkpatrick, Montjoy and associates document considerable cleavage between Republican and Democratic leaders on most of the issues. Unlike Kirkpatrick, Montjoy and his colleagues found the Republican elites to be the "odd-man out" with Democratic and Republican followers and Democratic elites holding similar political views. In their conclusion, the authors state that "as a group the Republican elites represent neither their own followers nor the followers of the other party on most of our ten policy questions" (Montjoy et al., 1980, 334-335).

While these results differ sharply from those presented by Kirkpatrick, it should be pointed out that Kirkpatrick and Montjoy used two different populations in sampling for party elites. Kirkpatrick used the more traditional population of national convention delegates, while Montjoy used a national sample of county chairmen. Furthermore, the "type" of issues examined was different in both studies. Kirkpatrick dealt with national policy issues, while Montjoy concentrated on state policy concerns. These differences might have contributed to the conflicting results.

Finally, the most significant recent addition to this genre of literature was completed by Jackson et al. (1982). In this study, Jackson extended the definition of "political elites" to encompass such groups as: national convention delegates, county and state chairs, and national committee members. When compared to the mass base of the two parties for 1980, Jackson reported "dramatic" interparty differences with the Democratic Party elites comprising the liberal alternative and the Republican

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Party elites the conservative choice in the American political system. Party identifiers were located in the ideological middle with Democratic identifiers leaning toward the left and Republican identifiers leaning toward the right. In a follow-up study, Jackson (1985) duplicated his previous findings while focusing on party elites and the mass voters of 1984.

At first blush the cumulative evidence of these nationwide studies is impressive.¹ The data clearly depict an image of Democratic Party leaders, rank-and-file voters, and Republican Party leaders arrayed along a political continuum, from left to right, sharply divided over various policy issues. This is a far cry from Lord Bryce's early 20th century observation that American parties were as similar as Tweedledum and Tweedledee—or George Wallace's more recent pronouncement that "there's not a dime's worth of difference" between the Democratic and Republican Parties. Yet, despite these consistent empirical findings, no distinction is made between party elites or followers from different regions. This is important for as Sharkansky cogently notes:

There is generally no awareness that findings produced by a fifty-state analysis may differ considerably from what exists in the environments of different regions (1970:8).

Even ideologies within each political party may vary from one region to the next (Sorauf and Beck, 1988). Thus, this research is the first of its kind in attempting to bridge this gap in the literature.

Nowhere is the image of regionalism more vivid than that of the South². For more than a hundred years the South has been "the" distinctive American region (Reed, 1982).³ Beginning with V.O. Key's (1949) classic analysis of southern politics, the portrayal of southern culture has been one characterized by low levels of political participation, one-party politics, racial conflict, elitism, paternalism, parochialism, agrarianism, and religious fundamentalism, to name a few.⁴ This is a region whose alienation from mainstream America for over seventy years following Reconstruction lead to the creation of a cultural identity and political solidarity unparalleled in American history (Harvard, 1986).

According to Daniel Elazar, real political power in the South is restricted to a

relatively small and self-perpetuating group drawn from an established elite who often inherit their right to govern through family ties or social position (1984:119).

Political leaders are encouraged to play “conservative and custodial rather than initiatory roles” unless pressed by the elite-oriented political order (Elazar, 1984:119). Southern political parties are often considered weak and ineffectual. Hence, political competition is conducted through factional alignments, the result of personalized politics (Black and Black, 1982; Whistler and Ellickson, 1988).

Thus the South is an extremely important region to bring under closer inspection. On the one hand, nationwide elite-mass studies have clearly indicated that party leaders, relative to mass voters, are significantly divided over important substantive policy issues; yet, the preponderance of studies aimed at southern culture suggest much greater homogeneity among party leaders and mass voters alike. Given these contradictory findings and the dearth of elite-mass studies focusing solely on the Confederate South, we have decided to state our hypotheses in the null format. With this in mind, the following hypotheses are presented to the reader.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Southern Democratic and Republican Party elites will exhibit no significant differences in their leadership stands on selected issues of foreign and domestic importance and a self-identified political ideology index (interparty hypothesis).

Hypothesis 2: Southern Democratic and Republican Party leaders will not differ significantly from the southern mass electorate in their viewpoints on selected public policy issues and a self-identified ideological index (elite-mass hypothesis).

Hypothesis 3: There will be no significant within-mass voter differences in terms of their position on the issue items and ideological index. Specifically, southern Democratic identifiers, Independents, and Republican identifiers, will not manifest any substantive differences on the various issues and index (intraelectorate hypothesis).

Data and Methodology

The data to be analyzed in this study are a subset of John S. Jackson's 1984 Party Elite data set.⁵ The eight different groups of Democratic and Republican Party elites in this study are as follows:

- (1) The delegates to the 1984 Democratic National Convention
- (2) The members of the Democratic National Committee (DNC)

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- (3) The State Chairs for the Democratic Party
- (4) The County Chairs for the Democratic Party
- (5) The delegates to the 1984 Republican National Convention
- (6) The members of the Republican National Committee (RNC)
- (7) The State Chairs for the Republican Party
- (8) The County Chairs for the Republican Party

The data were collected by way of a mail questionnaire that was sent to the Democratic and Republican Party elites (in 1984) after each party's national convention in July and August, respectively. A second wave was mailed in September and October to all those who had not yet responded. There was a total of 2,310 usable questionnaires returned after the second wave representing an overall return rate of 51 percent.⁶ This return rate compares favorably to those of other major studies of this sort. For example, McClosky's (1960) return rate was approximately 44 percent, while Kirkpatrick's (1976) return rate was 55 percent overall.

With regard to the national convention delegates for both parties, a systematic random sample was drawn from official lists provided by the Democratic and Republican Parties. For members of the DNC and RNC, as well as the Democratic and Republican state chairs, the entire population was included. The Republican county chairs were selected at random from an official party list, while the Democratic county chairs were randomly selected from a list compiled by Jackson and his associates. Furthermore, data pertaining to Independents and the party rank-and-file were culled from the Center for Political Studies 1984 National Election Survey (the Pre-Post version).

The use of multiple surveys to tap the views and opinions of party leaders and followers necessitates using the same questions from one survey to the next. In this study the following questions were selected from the Jackson and Center for Political Studies 1984 surveys. These questions deal with domestic and foreign policy issues, as well as ideology.

The research methodology in this study consisted of using one-way analysis of variance in conjunction with the Student-Newman-Keul's multiple comparisons test. These statistical techniques are considered appropriate when comparing three or more group means simultaneously (Champion, 1981). Note also that only political party elites, party identifiers, and Independents from the Confederate South were utilized in this study. They were drawn from the larger Jackson and National Election Survey data sets, mentioned above. Furthermore, the eight

Table 1

Survey Questions on Selected Issues - 1984

1. Ideology (self-indentification)
Response Range: Very Liberal - Very Conservative
2. Respondents' Position on Government Services
Response Range: Cut Services - No Cuts
3. Respondents' Position on Government Job Guarantees
Response Range: Government Job Guarantee - Laissez-Faire
4. Respondents' Position on Affirmative Action
Response Range: Help Minorities - No Special Effort
5. Respondents' Position on Womens' Right
Response Range: Place is in the Home - Equal Role With Men
6. Respondents' Position on Abortion
Response Range: Never Permitted - Woman's Choice
7. Repondents' Position on National Health Insurance
Response Range: Government Health Insurance - Private Health Insurance
8. Respondents' Position on Defense Spending
Response Range: Cut - Increase
9. Respondents' Position on Detente
Response Range: Pro - Anti

The following five questions dealt with balancing the federal budget. The response range was either yes or no.

10. Cut Education Spending to Balance the Budget?
11. Cut Social Security to Balance the Budget?
12. Cut Welfare to Balance the Budget?
13. Cut Health/Medicare to Balance the Budget?
14. Cut Defense Spending to Balance the Budget?

elite groups represented in the Jackson data sets were collapsed into two groups (Southern Democratic Party elites and Southern Republican Party elites) for ease and clarity of presentation and to maintain acceptable n sizes.

Findings and Discussion

In Tables 2 and 3 we have provided the results of the party elite groups compared to the mass public on the various issue items and self-identified ideological index. Table 2 displays the cross-tabulations, while Table 3 summarizes the statistical relationships between all party elite and mass voter groupings.

Beginning with the self-identified index there was little support for our hypotheses. Partisan division was far more pronounced than expected with the southern Democratic elites assuming a moderate-to-liberal position and the GOP elites an unadulterated conservative stance. Specifically, four out of five southern GOP elites identified themselves as conservatives, while *no* Republican leaders opted for the liberal alternative. In contrast, only 15% of the southern Democratic elites aligned themselves with the conservative perspective, but 58% did place themselves in the moderate category.

The spatial distribution of mean values, shown in Figure 2, illustrates the moderate-to-conservative leanings of the southern rank-and-file as well as the GOP elite. For example, over two-thirds of all Republican identifiers and nearly 45% of all southern Independents reported conservative responses. Southern Democratic rank-and-file tended to split their views equally among the liberal (29%), moderate (40%), and conservative (32%) positions. The spatial perspective also points out that the differences between southern Democratic and Republican Party leaders are far more pronounced than those exhibited by the mass voters suggesting that real ideological alternatives exist for the southern mass.

These findings then serve to reinforce the conservative image of southern politics long portrayed in the literature (Key, 1949; Bartley, 1969; Bartley and Graham, 1975; Hill, 1977). However, the lack of southern homogeneity among party leaders and followers alike tends to contradict this very same literature. While it is difficult to project from a single finding, these results do portend a possible shift in southern politics. As habitual Democratic presidential voting in the South comes to a close, some speculate that the South is entering an era of

Table 2*

Policy Preferences of Southern Party Elites,
Identifiers, and Independents - 1984

ISSUE	GROUP				
	Demo. Elites	Demo. Indent.	Indep.	GOP Ident.	GOP Elites
	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Ideology:</i>					
Liberal	28	29	20	15	0
Moderate	58	40	35	17	20
Conservative	15	32	44	67	80
<i>N</i> =	(315)	(157)	(133)	(92)	(315)
** <i>X</i> =	1.87	2.03	2.24	2.52	2.80
<i>Government Service:</i>					
Liberal (No Cuts)	36	30	16	14	3
Moderate	58	58	68	58	53
Conserv. (Pro Cuts)	6	12	16	28	44
<i>N</i> =	(316)	(215)	(183)	(105)	(314)
<i>X</i> =	1.70	1.81	2.01	2.13	2.40
<i>Government Job Guarantee:</i>					
Liberal (Yes)	20	37	28	19	2
Moderate	62	46	49	44	21
Conservative (No)	18	17	23	37	77
<i>N</i> =	(311)	(224)	(201)	(111)	(315)
<i>X</i> =	1.98	1.80	1.95	2.18	2.75
<i>NHI:</i>					
Liberal (Yes)	34	32	30	27	4
Moderate	44	49	46	39	29
Conserv. (No)	22	19	25	34	67
<i>N</i> =	(312)	(84)	(88)	(44)	(312)
<i>X</i> =	1.88	1.87	1.95	2.07	2.63
<i>Affirmative action action:</i>					
Liberal (Yes)	22	28	17	10	3
Moderate	60	56	57	63	48
Conservative (No)	18	16	26	27	49
<i>N</i> =	(312)	(224)	(194)	(108)	(310)
<i>X</i> =	1.96	1.88	2.09	2.17	2.45

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<i>Abortion:</i>					
Liberal (Woman's Choice)	49	27	26	31	17
Moderate	19	18	20	20	16
Conserv. (Never Permitted)	32	55	54	49	66
<i>N</i> =	(297)	(266)	(231)	(121)	(307)
<i>X</i> =	1.84	2.27	2.28	2.17	2.52
<i>Women's Rights</i>					
Liberal (Pro Equality)	70	47	43	44	44
Moderate	26	43	45	41	51
Conserv. (Trad. Roles)	4	10	11	15	6
<i>N</i> =	(316)	(244)	(201)	(112)	(305)
<i>X</i> =	1.34	1.63	1.68	1.71	1.62
<i>Defense Spending:</i>					
Liberal (Pro Cuts)	25	25	18	8	1
Moderate	70	59	59	60	72
Conserv. (No Cuts)	5	17	23	32	26
<i>N</i> =	(315)	(222)	(188)	(108)	(312)
<i>X</i> =	1.80	1.92	2.05	2.23	2.25
<i>Detente:</i>					
Liberal (Pro)	45	28	21	11	10
Moderate	48	44	51	51	63
Conserv. (Anti)	8	29	28	38	28
<i>N</i> =	(316)	(211)	(173)	(106)	(309)
<i>X</i> =	1.63	2.01	2.07	2.26	2.18
<i>Programs to be Cut:</i>					
Education (Yes)	8	3	7	6	49
<i>N</i> =	(317)	(232)	(194)	(104)	(311)
<i>X</i> =	1.08	1.03	1.07	1.06	1.49
Social Security (Yes)	8	2	7	3	30
<i>N</i> =	(317)	(234)	(199)	(106)	(311)
<i>X</i> =	1.08	1.02	1.07	1.03	1.30
Welfare (Yes)	38	28	37	43	89
<i>N</i> =	(317)	(229)	(188)	(105)	(311)
<i>X</i> =	1.38	1.28	1.37	1.43	1.89

Health/Medicare (Yes)	13	3	4	4	51
N=	(317)	(236)	(196)	(105)	(311)
X =	1.13	1.03	1.04	1.04	1.51
Defense (Yes)	77	19	17	11	33
N =	(317)	(225)	(192)	(103)	(311)
X =	1.77	1.19	1.17	1.11	1.33

*On all tables the mean scores range from 1.00 (most liberal) to 3.00 (most conservative). The first nine questions were originally based on a 5- or 7- point Likert-type format where 1 = most liberal answer and 5 or 7 = most conservative answer. We collapsed all Likert-type questions into three categories (liberal, moderate, or conservative) for clarity of presentation and to ensure respectable cell sizes.

**For a discussion of the effects of using mean scores with ordered data in large sample sizes see: E. L. Lehman, *Nonparametrics: Statistical Methods Based on Ranks* (San Francisco: Holden-Day, 1975), 76-81.

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TABLE 3

Comparison of Policy Preferences of Southern
Party Elites, Identifiers, and Independents - 1984

<i>ISSUE</i>	No Significant Mean Differences Detected Between *			
Ideology	(significant differences between all groups)			
Government Services	(3,4)			
Government Job Guarantee	(1,3)			
NHI	(1,2)	(1,3)	(1,4)	
	(2,3)	(2,4)	(3,4)	
Affirmative Action	(1,2)	(3,4)		
Abortion	(2,3)	(2,4)	(3,4)	
Women's' Rights	(2,3)	(2,4)	(2,5)	
	(3,4)	(3,5)	(4,5)	
Defense Spending	(4,5)			
Detente	(2,3)	(3,4)	(4,5)	
Education Cuts	(1,2)	(1,3)	(1,4)	
	(2,3)	(2,4)	(3,4)	
Social Security Cuts	(1,2)	(1,3)	(1,4)	
	(2,3)	(2,4)	(3,4)	
Welfare	(1,3)	(1,4)	(2,3)	
	(3,4)			
Health/Medicare Cuts	(2,3)	(2,4)	(3,4)	
Defense	(2,3)	(2,4)	(3,4)	

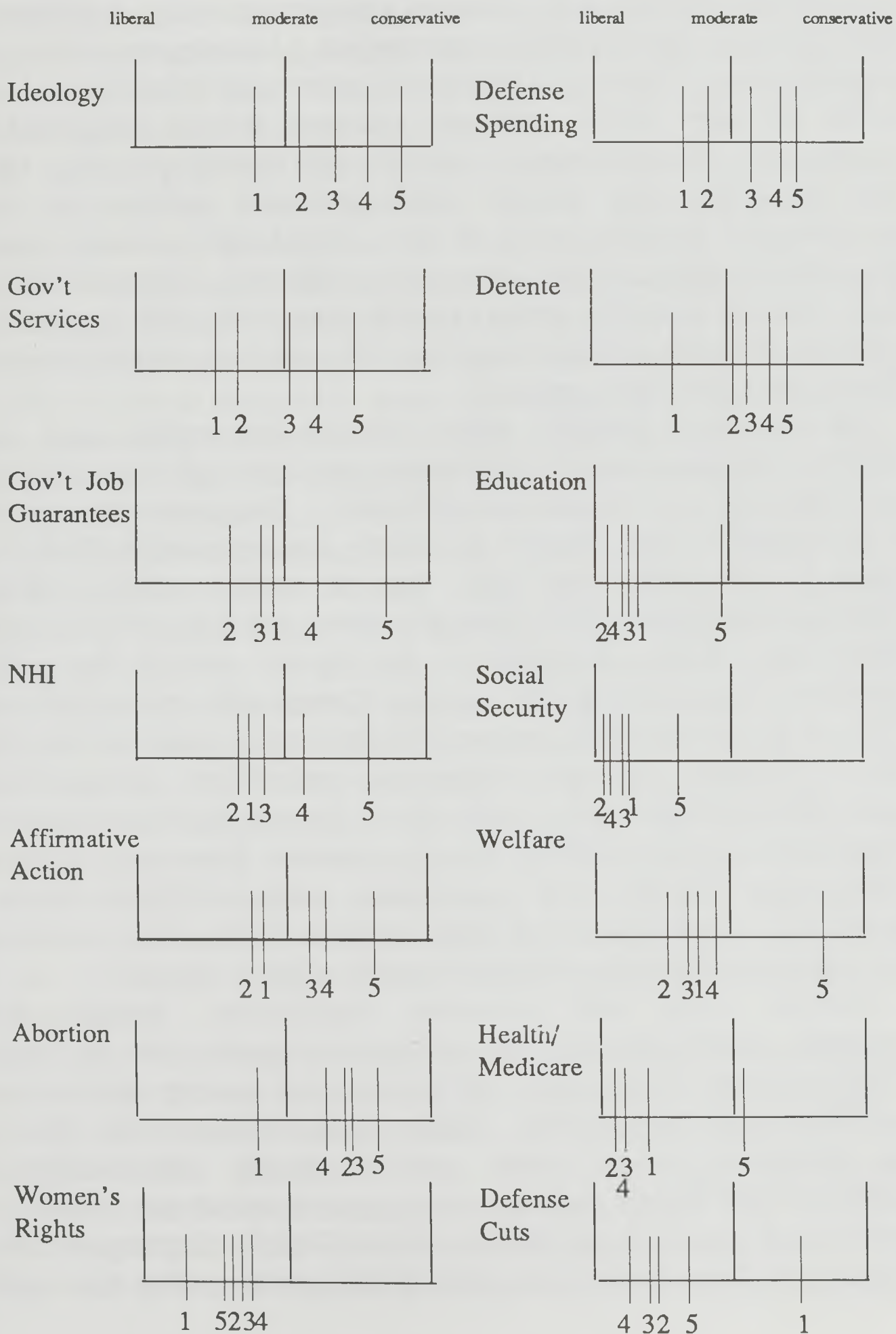
Key: Democratic Elites = 1
Democratic Identifiers = 2
Independents = 3
GOP Identifiers = 4
GOP Elites = 5

*Mean comparisons were conducted using one-way analysis-of-variance and Student-Newman-Keul's multiple comparison test with $p < .05$.

For ease and clarity of presentation, Figure 2 portrays the spatial distribution of the mean values of all groups for each topic.

FIGURE 2

Spatial Distribution of Issue Items and Ideological Identification for Part Elite and Mass Groupings—1984



competitive two-party politics (Bass and Devries, 1976; Beck and Lopatto, 1982; Lamis, 1984), while others point to continued Democratic Party dominance at the state level raising the specter of dual partisan identification in the South (Hadley), 1985).

In the next section our analysis turns to a series of explicit domestic and foreign issues of public policy. For example, on the question of governmental services, i.e., reducing versus maintaining, southern party elites and mass voters continue to manifest a high degree of divergence in policy views. Southern Democratic leaders and followers are located on the left side of the political spectrum and are committed to a continuation of governmental services and federal spending. On the other hand, the first Reagan Administration's efforts to curtail governmental services seems to have played well among southern Republican leaders and, to a lesser extent, followers. Southern Independents maintain a centrist posture on this issue with 68% registering a moderate response and the remaining 32% splitting evenly between the liberal and conservative positions.

On our second domestic policy question, respondents were asked whether "the government in Washington should see to it that every person has a job and a good standard of living." The conservative reaction of the southern GOP leaders is plainly demonstrated in Table 2 and Figure 2. No other issue, save that of welfare, elicits a stronger conservative response (77%) from the upper echelons of the southern Republican Party. Surprisingly, the liberal end of the political spectrum is anchored by the southern Democratic rank-and-file where 37% of the respondents approve of federal intervention in this policy area. Moreover, southern Democratic identifiers are significantly *more* liberal than the Democratic elites. Even Independents displayed larger liberal responses (28%) than the southern Democratic leadership (20%) who basically took a moderate position (62%) on this issue. Republican identifiers tended to be skeptical of this policy as conservative reactions outnumbered liberal ones by a 2 to 1 margin.

Another issue with economic implications, national health insurance, clearly illustrates the odd-man out position of the southern GOP leadership and the level of homogeneity among southern voters and Democratic Party leaders. While southern Democratic elites and the confederate mass public gravitate toward middle-of-the-road positions, GOP leaders assume a much greater conservative stance. As depicted in Figure 2 and documented in Table 2, all groups except the Republican Party leaders are evenly divided on this policy issue with no

response category greater than 59%. On the other hand, southern Republican leaders are resolute in their dislike of a national health insurance program as measured by their conservative or anti-NHI (67%) and liberal or pro-NHI (4%) replies.

We can conclude then strong-to-moderate support for our hypotheses on this topic. As noted in Table 3, the policy stands of the southern Democratic Party leader are very much in step with those of the mass public, nor is there any major difference of opinion within the southern electorate itself. Only the responses of the GOP elites deviated significantly from our expectations.

Our next question was directed at the controversial issue of government's obligation to assist minorities. That is, the respondents were asked whether "the government in Washington should make every possible effort to improve the social and economic position of blacks and other minority groups, even if it means giving them preferential treatment." Despite four years of the Reagan Administration's somewhat successful efforts to reduce the scope and impact of affirmative action, liberal responses (pro-affirmative action) among all southern groups were relatively small. Not surprisingly, southern Democratic rank-and-file members, political base of the southern black voting population, were the most liberal group on this topic (28%) edging out their party elders (22%).⁷ Southern GOP elites were least receptive towards the concept of affirmative action (49% against), while party followers and Independents fell on the moderate-to-slightly conservative end of the political spectrum. The fact that southern Independents and GOP identifiers have not been swayed to either party's position underscores the importance of the white vote on this issue. Moreover, the differences of opinion between the Democratic identifiers, on the one hand, and the remaining mass voters of the South, on the other, suggest a certain amount of racial polarization on this issue. The issue of race itself is thought to explain much of Reagan's popularity among white southerners (Moyers, 1984), but others dismiss this argument as too simplistic (Stanley, 1986).

The conservative impact of religious fundamentalism is clearly documented on our next two issues—that of abortion and women's rights.⁸ Beginning with abortion, southern voters are strongly united in their stand against this practice. Over 50% of southern Democrats, Republicans, and Independents oppose abortion under any circumstances. Republican elites are even more conservative than the public at large, with 66% opposing abortion under any circumstances and only

17% viewing abortion solely as a woman's choice. In contrast, southern Democratic elites deviate significantly from both the Republican leadership and the mass electorate with nearly half of the respondents favoring the liberal stance, i.e., the woman's choice position.

On the gender-related issue of whether women should be granted complete equality with men or adhere to their more traditional roles, some of the most unusual findings of this study are brought to light. First, as shown in Table 3, there is very little separating the conservative issue stands of the southern GOP elites, Independents, and Democratic and Republican rank-and-file,—conservative in that less than 50% of these respondents favored complete equality for women. Second, the strong liberal position of the southern Democratic elites, 70% pro-equality, served to effectively isolate them from all other groups on this issue. Third, on the basis of mean scores and conservative responses, GOP leaders were slightly more liberal on women's rights than the southern electorate. Undoubtedly, the atypical positioning of the southern GOP elites reflects the increasing significance of "gender-gap" politics in today's electoral campaigns (Goertzel, 1983; Mansbridge, 1985; Norris, 1985). Consequently, it is the Democratic elites that sharply diverge from prevailing southern opinion on this crucial issue.

In the next series of questions our analysis moves from domestic to foreign policy. The first question posed the dilemma of whether to increase, decrease, or maintain current levels of defense spending. As noted in Table 2 and graphically reaffirmed in Figure 2, southern Democrats and Republicans are arrayed along the political continuum from left to right. Support for current levels of defense spending was quite high among all groups, ranging from 59% (Democratic identifiers and Independents) to 72% (GOP elites). Even 70% of southern Democratic leaders approved of 1984 defense spending levels, despite an unprecedented peace-time military build-up by the Reagan Administration. In a region steeped in military tradition these findings are not totally unexpected.

Unlike previous studies, however, GOP elites no longer closely mirror the responses of the mass public (Jackson et al., 1982). By 1984 only the southern GOP followers were closely aligned with the views of the Republican leadership. Democratic followers were located closer to their party leaders with southern Independents situated between the two extremes. Furthermore, the regional level of support for further increases in defense spending was rather low as measured by the conservative responses. This finding is somewhat prophetic in light of the second Reagan Administration's struggles to boost military

expenditures.

On the issue of detente or “getting along with the Russians”, the odd-man out status of the southern Democratic elites is unequivocally confirmed. The spatial distribution of mean values for this issue, displayed in Figure 2, distinctly depict a regional party leadership (the Democrats) out of step with the electorate. Whereas southern mass voters are wary of relations with the Soviet Union, the southern Democratic leadership clearly embraces it (45% pro-detente and only 8% opposed to this policy). Southern Republican elites diverge sharply from their Democratic counterparts with only 19% favoring detente. In short, the views of the southern electorate are more closely reflected by the views of the Republic Party elites than those of the Democratic Party leaders on this particular issue.

The final series of questions ask whether certain programs should be cut in order to help balance the federal budget. From the results obtained it is evident that party elite cleavages are once again well defined. While southern GOP leaders singled out welfare (89%), health/medicare (51%), and education (49%) as places to cut the budget, southern Democratic elites focused solely on defense (77%). Social Security was the program least likely to be slated for any potential cuts, although 30% of the southern GOP elites did so identify it. On the other hand, welfare was the program of choice to cut among all groups except the Democratic elites.

Among southern mass voters there was a high level of homogeneity in their responses irrespective of program. Party rank-and-file and Independents were uniformly opposed to spending cuts in *any* program with the possible exception of welfare. (Approximately 40% of southern Independents and GOP identifiers advocated cuts in this area. (Only 28% of Democratic identifiers did so).

The relative positioning of the southern masses along the political continuum was also noteworthy in that they were consistently more liberal (anti-cuts) than *either* party elite groups regardless of program. It was also clear that aside from defense, the policy stands of the southern GOP elites diverged significantly from this same bloc of southern voters. Conversely, as noted in Table 3, the views of southern Democratic leaders and the mass public generally deviated very little from one another. Apparently, as one moves from economic (e.g., government services, job guarantees, NHI, and spending cuts) to social (e.g., Affirmative action, abortion, and women’s rights) to military (e.g., defense and detente) issues, the gap between southern GOP elites and the

southern masses narrows. On the other hand, the issue stands of the southern Democratic Party elites vis-a-vis the mass public tend to get further out of step while progressing along this same economic-social-military continuum.

Conclusion

The unique and distinctive traits of the southern culture had suggested a level of political homogeneity undetected in previous nationwide political elite-mass voter studies. The results of this analysis provide only mixed support for this assessment, while furnishing some interesting similarities and contrasts to earlier elite-mass studies. Contrary to expectations, differences among southern Democratic and Republican Parties are real and palpable. Irrespective of issue/index the southern Democratic leaders are significantly more liberal/moderate than the conservative GOP elites. In purely spatial terms, the absolute division is not exceedingly large, but the fact that party elite cleavage is far more pronounced than that demonstrated by the more homogeneous southern electorate means that real, contextually relevant alternatives do exist for the southern masses.

Support for our elite-mass hypothesis was inconsistent as patterns of opinion distribution across the five groups fluctuated considerably from one issue to the next. Most notable was the position of the southern Democratic identifiers. On seven of the thirteen issues surveyed, the Democratic rank-and-file were the *most* liberal group of respondents. In fact, on the issues of government job guarantees, welfare and health/medicare cuts, southern Democratic identifiers were significantly more liberal than the Democratic leadership. Undoubtedly the sizable shift in white support from the Democratic Party to an Independent status, and more importantly since 1980, the Republican Party, helps account for this unusual finding (Stanley, 1988). Specifically, the southern Democratic Party base, by shedding its more conservative white elements and simultaneously attracting the more liberal black vote, has emerged in the 1980s as fairly liberal body albeit fewer in numbers. If this process continues and the gap between Democratic identifiers and elites widens it could prove troublesome for the southern, and perhaps national, Democratic Party. The southern leadership would be faced with the dilemma of further liberalizing their issue positions at the risk of alienating additional partisan followers and recently converted Independents and Republican identifiers or moder-

ating their stands and risk losing the liberal white and black vote.⁹

Despite this potential Catch-22 facing the Democratic Party, southern GOP victory is far from assured as witnessed by their extreme conservative stands vis-a-vis GOP identifiers and Independents on a number of issues. Moreover, the rise in southern GOP identifiers and Independents has not proved all that helpful to candidates below the presidential and gubernatorial levels. State houses and elected executive branch officials are still heavily dominated by the Democrats. Yet, if the Republican leadership were to follow a Downsian strategy and shift closer to the moderate middle, the balance of power in the Deep South could conceivably tilt in their favor or at least mark the rise of a truly competitive two-party system. Ironically, the South's version of two-party politics may someday hinge on a system dominated by a white Republican Party over a black Democratic one.

Notes

¹Less comprehensive studies, i.e., state or county level of analysis or one-party oriented, that support these nationwide elite mass findings include: Constantini (1963); Eldersveld (1964); Sullivan, Pressman, Page, and Lyons (1974); Commission on Presidential Nominations and Party Structure (1983); Stone and Abramovitz (1983); Hutter and Schier (1984); Browning and Shaffer (1987).

²The South to which we refer is the old Confederate South, i.e., Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia.

³Despite the wide use of region in scholarly efforts, the task of defining this concept has been elusive (Isard and Reiner, 1968; Sharkansky, 1970; Markusen, 1987). For the purposes of this paper, we will define region in the following manner:

A region is an historically evolved, contiguous territorial society that possesses a physical environment, a socio-economic, political, and cultural milieu, and a spatial structure distinct from other regions and from other major territorial units, city or nation (Markusen, 1987, 16-17).

(For a good discussion on the alternative approaches to the study of regions and regionalism, see Markusen, 1987, 249-266).

⁴Studies dealing with the South as a separate political system are far too numerous to list here. An excellent bibliography of them is provided in *The Changing Politics of the South*, ed. William C. Harvard (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Press, 1972), pp. 736-738.

⁵See John S. Jackson (1985).

⁶A comparison of the known characteristics of the universe and the characteristics of the sample revealed no recognizable biases in the sample (Jackson, 1985).

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⁷The Democratic Party in the South includes a substantial and growing number of black voters. Measurement and analysis of this phenomenon, with regard to southern politics, is beyond the scope of this article and will be addressed in a later study.

⁸Compared with states outside the Confederate South, collective southern liberal responses were ten percentage points *less* than those of their nonsouthern counterparts for both abortion and women's rights. Mean scores for southern responses on these two issues were also significantly more conservative than the nonsouthern responses (t-test, < .05).

⁹Recent developments suggest that national party strategists are already attempting to diffuse this situation by appealing to both conservative white southerners (e.g., Texan Lloyd Bentsen as the 1988 Democratic nominee for vice-president) and liberal black voters (e.g., formal acceptance of Jesse Jackson as a major player in the Democratic Party). This bold, but risky, strategy reflects the major importance of this region in national politics.

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