THE EFFECT OF CONTEXT ON THIRD PARTIES AND THIRD-PARTY SUPPORT
IN THE UNITED STATES

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ABSTRACT

ADAM SANDER CHAMBERLAIN: The Effect of Context on Third Parties and Third-
Party Support in the United States
(Under the direction of Thomas Carsey)

The dissertation explores third parties from a contextual perspective, moving

away from the traditional view of third party support as being merely the product of anti-

party or anti-system sentiment. I study how context affects third party support in modern

presidential elections, the development of third party voting in the 1800s through an

empirical case study of Vermont from 1841-1854, and third party behavior in an electoral

context that allows cross-endorsements (fusion balloting).

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Throughout American history, third parties, or those political parties that are not classified as the two largest parties on the national level, have been influential in shifting the course of American politics. For example, the Anti-Masonic Party of the 1830s was able to gain power in several Northeastern states in the wake of a dying Federalist Party; the Liberty and Free Soil Parties were able to advance a message of limiting the spread of slavery; the Populists were able to force the major parties, specifically the Democrats, to incorporate elements of its platform into the Democratic message; and Ralph Nader's 2000 run for the White House as the Green Party presidential candidate has often been considered the reason George Bush was able to win Florida by a very narrow margin, thus securing enough Electoral College votes to be elected president.

Third parties have also been influential at the state and local levels, sometimes winning and controlling governments. Prominent examples include the success of the Social Democrats in Wisconsin and the City of Milwaukee during the first half of the 20th Century and the current power of the Vermont Progressive Party in the City of Burlington and, to a lesser degree, in the state capitol of Montpelier. Thus, there are numerous examples of how third parties have gained power and/or influenced the political landscape.

There is an existing literature in political science which speaks directly to what factors led to individual votes for third parties and their candidates in a particular

election, how the vote totals a party receives are sometimes related to the requirements for obtaining ballot space, and how long term trends have shown a natural decline in third party voting since the late 1800s-early 1900s. However, this literature has failed to adequately address the issue of geographically-defined context and its effects on individual and party behavior in relation to third parties. My goal in this dissertation is to offer new theoretical insights into third parties and third party support by understanding how the contextual dynamic plays a crucial role in determining support for, and the functionality of, third parties. The common theme that runs through all three chapters of this dissertation is that third parties, and the behaviors of individuals in relation to third parties, are affected by geographically-defined contexts. Additionally, this dissertation will be able to speak to scholars in American politics more generally by adding to our store of knowledge on context, political development, state politics, and party organizations.

The first chapter will posit that individuals in areas with a history of voting for third parties will be affected by this tradition. In areas with higher levels of past third party voting, residents will be generally more aware of potential and current third party candidates and will assess these candidates differently than residents of areas with a weak history of third party voting. This geographically-based "subcultural" dynamic will affect how individuals feel about current third party candidates and their potential vote choice, providing evidence that context can have an effect on individual behavior in relation to non-major party candidates.

The second chapter posits that past research on third parties from a historical perspective, which focus on the decline in third party voting since the 1800s and early

1900s, cannot explain how third parties were able to develop their bases of support and sustain such support over time. I argue that third parties relied on the social dynamics of the town during the 1800s, and support this viewpoint with town-level voting and demographic data in the state of Vermont during the 1840s and 1850s. Through this empirical case study, I am able to uncover some of the ways in which third party support developed in this era of American history.

The third chapter investigates the state of New York, where fusion balloting allows minor parties to cross-endorse major party candidates; this has created minor parties that are consistently involved in elections from year-to-year. However, research has not uncovered how these parties, in a relatively unique institutional (and geographic) context, view their political roles. For example, are they able to influence policy and election outcomes in ways not seen through looking at legislative voting records and election results? How do individuals within the parties feel about their chosen party's abilities to be successful without cross-endorsement? To answer such questions, I interview minor party activists in the state to learn more about their perceptions of their party's successes and gain a better understanding of how these parties are able to be successful organizations in regards to both policy and elections.

The fourth chapter draws out the implications of the three chapters for the study of third parties. I argue that third parties were more successful in the 1800s by taking advantage of prevailing conditions and building party support from the "bottom-up," whereas third parties and major independent candidates today focus on major elections and do not generate the same levels of support over the course of multiple elections. Because of this failure to develop geographic support bases in the population, third

parties and major independent candidates are failing to convert their popularity in particular elections into sustained support. I then argue that the adoption of the fusion ballot has the potential to alleviate some of these concerns yet still allow minor parties to build via a "bottom-up" approach. I also point out that current and future third parties should be more cognizant of geographic support, and the effect of context on particular voters, when attempting to build the party. Finally, I provide details on future projects that can grow from the research presented in the earlier chapters.

Taking the four chapters together, the information presented reveals new insights into third parties, context, state politics, and electoral systems. This dissertation has the potential to add to our store of scholarly knowledge on these topics while providing third party practitioners with information that could be useful in future elections. In other words, the dissertation has academic and normative importance, and I hope you (the readers) find the topics as engaging as I do.

Chapter 2

THE EFFECT OF CONTEXT ON SUPPORT FOR THIRD-PARTY CANDIDATES

In political science, one line of inquiry has focused on the social, contextual nature of politics. Scholars such as Lazarsfeld and Berelson focused on how individuals are politically influenced by those they deal with on a daily basis (Lazarsfeld et al. 1944; Berelson et al. 1954). Recent research has confirmed that there are social dynamics to political behavior, such as voting, which cannot always be discerned through simple survey responses (Beck et al. 2002). An individual's characteristics, which may help predict such actions as voting, are often better understood when placed within a particular social context, such as one's neighborhood or workplace (see Finifter 1974; Huckfeldt 1979).

Research in American politics has not appropriately addressed this contextual dynamic regarding third (minor) political parties and independent candidates. Studies that have focused on third party supporters have emphasized the individual's voting calculus (Gold 1995; Gold 2005; Southwell 2003) or used aggregate-level data of third party vote totals over time (Rosenstone et al. 1984; Chressanthis and Shaffer 1993; Hirano and Snyder 2007).[1] However, such research is limited since it does not address

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[1] Of course, the research could also be distinguished by the many studies that focus on individual candidates, regardless of methods. Largely, these studies can be split into those that focus on George Wallace (Crespi 1971; Wright 1977; Canfield 1983) or H. Ross Perot (Rapoport and Stone 2005; Koch 1998; Feigert 1993).

the contextual aspects of third party support. Since scholars like Lazarsfeld et al. (1944) and Huckfeldt (1986) have found that a person's immediate social environment has a strong effect on one's political orientations, it is likely that a person's environment also can affect her views toward third parties and their candidates.

I argue in this paper that a subculture supportive of third parties pervades particular geographic areas, such that past support for third parties in certain locations will affect how individuals in those locations assess future third party candidates. Using vote percentages by county for major independent and third party candidates as the context measuring the subculture, I find that support in 2000 for Ralph Nader significantly changes based on an interactive effect between a respondent's ideology and her county context. However, this effect evolves over the course of the election cycle. I also discover that vote choice is affected by the third party subculture. These results provide evidence that context matters for individuals' support of third party candidates, a finding that has yet to be shown in the political science literature.

Developing the Theory of a Subculture

The theory of a third party subculture is based on constant interactions individuals have with others in their environment, including, but not limited to, the workplace, home life, and other arenas of socialization. Past research has emphasized that individuals exposed to certain community values tend to reflect these values. As Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet note in *The People's Choice*, "People who work or live or play together are likely to vote for the same candidates" (1948). This same viewpoint is

reflected almost forty years later when Robert Huckfeldt, studying the impact of neighborhoods on political behavior, reaffirmed the importance of "geographically based social relations" (150, 1986).

However, these studies focused on the influence of one's community and geographic location on political attitudes toward major parties. Third parties rarely win elections, and they often receive a paltry number of votes. Even when there is a successful third party candidate, his vote share may only be 15 or 20%.

This means that the geographically-based support for third parties should best be labeled, in the terminology of Heinz Eulau, as a subculture (79, 1963). That is, while there are larger cultures one is a part of, an individual can also be part of a political culture that is "set off by other patterns that are *relatively* unique to itself." For instance, all 50 states constitute an American culture, yet within this framework, Vermont could be said to have a different culture than Alabama. Within Vermont, cities that share the national and state-specific culture might develop in different political directions; Bennington and Brattleboro might have unique differences that lend themselves to the definition of political subcultures within two broader, shared cultures.

In this paper, I argue that particular geographic locations (contexts) have a greater or lesser tendency to support third parties (a subculture), and this will affect the political behavior of those who live within the context. Eulau notes that using culture to analyze behavior "seems more viable in a group," which to him "refers to an institution, a local community...a geographical region...and so on." It appears, then, that Eulau's conception of culture fits nicely with the concept of a contextual analysis of third party support, and

for the purposes of this study, the terms context and subculture can be used interchangeably.

This contextual subcultural analysis is also supported by other research. The best example of such research comes from Allen and Brox (2005), who correlated state-wide vote totals for a number of third party presidential candidates throughout the 20th Century (Debs, Roosevelt, LaFollette, George Wallace, Anderson, Perot, and Nader). While the authors focus on the highest recent correlation between Nader and Anderson (.73), there are some fairly surprising correlations over long periods of time, such as a .54 correlation between Perot in 1992 and LaFollette in 1924. With additional individual-level analysis, Allen and Brox argue that this "suggests that an anti-party or anti-system sentiment is at work." Collet and Hansen (2002) put forth a very basic OLS regression model that also shows similar results, where past county-level vote totals for third party presidential candidates helped predict county-level vote totals for other third party presidential candidates. For instance, Perot's 1992 county-level results helped predict county-level Nader results in 2000, but Perot's 1996 county-level results did not.

In contrast, Reiter and Walsh (1995) and Gold (2005) argue that an "alternative culture" of third party voting does not exist. However, these studies do not approach the topic from a contextual, subcultural perspective, but rely on finding consistency across demographic predictors to uncover a "culture." For example, Gold (2005) takes evidence of women voting more highly for one third party candidates, but less for another, as proof that a culture of third party voting does not exist. This is not truly what a culture is, as a subculture can be present but have a different effect on individuals within the subcultural context.

To be more specific, I argue that in areas where the subculture is strongest, individuals will develop a different perspective about how to approach elections and the party system than areas with a weak subculture. First, the experience of living in an area with a tendency to vote outside the two party system means that individuals will likely interact with voters who have cast third party votes, influencing their perspective on voting. Second, this past tendency to support third party candidates will lead to an increased awareness of current third party candidacies, allowing individuals to make more informed decisions about these candidates. This idea mirrors findings from Beck (2002) that show people more likely to support Perot if other people they converse with also support Perot.

I also argue that particular individual-level characteristics will vary the effects of context from election to election, and over the course of an election.[2] Two such factors are ideology and partisan identification, which are strong predictors of opinion and voting. Taking these into consideration, it would seem unlikely that all individuals, across ideologies and parties, would be more supportive of a third party candidate in an area that experienced higher third party voting in the past. In fact, there are probably two core reactions: some groups are positively affected by the subculture and other groups negatively so, especially if the third party candidate has a somewhat distinct ideological orientation. For example, strong partisans in these contexts should exhibit the strongest positive and negative reactions, as they would be more sensitive to the ideological orientations of the non-major party candidate.

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[2] The mechanism behind this could be through close friendship networks, but research tends to find that the vehicle for such influence occurs through acquaintances or "weak ties" (Granvovetter 1973).

Furthermore, the election cycle itself needs to be considered as a crucial component. Individuals who want to have a legitimate effect on an election will not want to "waste" their support or vote on a candidate who will not win, especially in a close election between major party candidates. Individuals do not want to be perceived as supporting a third party candidate that could swing an election to a less desirable major party candidate because the major party candidate closest to them does not receive their support. When Election Day gets closer, and when individuals begin to see that the election is close, many will begin to change their views about third party candidates that could serve as "upsetters" in the election. This effect should be most noted by those in strong subcultures, where the history and tradition of supporting third parties is greatest and the ramifications of support are best understood.

Needless to say, this could promote problems from a data standpoint. First, subcultures are naturally beneath a broader culture, and most surveys of individuals sample across contexts, making it hard to discern when such a subculture is present. Using data sets that record respondents and their discussion partners, and other contexts in which they socialize like workplaces or places of worship, are also problematic (see Huckfeldt and Sprague 1984 data set; for use of data, see Huckfeldt and Sprague 1987). Though this style of data contains information about conversation partners and interactions among individuals, it restricts the researcher to only one or two particular geographic contexts. However, ample evidence from earlier studies confirms that people within geographically-defined contexts and discussion networks tend to behave in politically similar manners. There is no reason to doubt these findings in relation to

viable third party and independent candidates even though the specific underlying causal mechanism cannot be shown.

Second, if one wanted to isolate individuals who vote for third party candidates in a national survey, there would be few cases to study, even in "good" election years. Still, as Eulau points out, "The technical difficulty of discovering cultural patterns in diverse areas of behavior [third party support, for example] must not be confused with the absence of patterns." Thus, studying a subculture with survey data requires a shift away from voting as the only standard of assessment.

It is my contention that this reliance on vote choice neglects certain aspects of a third party subculture that using favorability scales can help uncover. For example, an individual in an area known for its support of third parties may choose to vote for a major party in an election because of particular candidate characteristics, the state of the economy, or some other factor. This would lead to the conclusion that the context failed to affect the individual.

However, this individual could still hold a favorable opinion of a third party candidate, above and beyond what a similar person would feel towards that third party candidate if he or she came from an area less supportive of such candidates in the past. In this way, the person is still influenced by the subculture, yet makes a particular decision in an election that does not lead to voting for a third party candidate.

Hypotheses

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From the previous sections, several hypotheses can be derived. To do this, two of the concepts discussed earlier must be detailed. First, "context" or "subculture," which can be used interchangeably in this article, is measured as the percentage(s) of past third voting in a particular geographic area. This provides the best proxy to measure an area's tendency to support third party candidates. "Stronger" subcultures are those areas with a past history of above average third party voting; "weak" subcultures are those areas with a history of low-levels of third party voting. Second, candidates that are "favorable" are those that respondents place more highly on a traditional favorability scale, an easy way to aggregate individual perceptions of a candidate into one scale.

With these concepts put forth, the first hypothesis is the "baseline" hypothesis: as previous voting for third parties in a context increases, respondents will be more favorable towards current third party candidates. This is to test whether context alone is a driving force in understanding support for third party candidates.

However, as noted in the theory above, I argue that the contextual effect will be dependent on an individual's ideology and partisanship, implying an interactive, not direct, effect of context. For ideology, I hypothesize that, as previous voting for third parties in a context increases, favorability will increase or decrease more for the strong ideologues and less so for those less ideological and moderates. In other words, I expect to see liberals and conservatives reacting more across contexts than moderates, and that stronger subcultures will lead to more extreme increases/decreases in favorability. Whether there will be an increase or decrease in favorability will depend upon the ideological orientation of the candidate/third party, with conservatives being more

attracted to conservative candidates and liberals being more attracted to liberal candidates.

After controlling for ideology, the effects of partisanship are less clear. By nature, third party candidates do not have a large, built-in partisan base. Even those classified under third parties who are truly major independent candidates do not necessarily receive support from self-identified independents, who may support Democrats and Republicans dependent on the election. Still, I hypothesize that, as previous voting for third parties in a context increases, favorability will increase or decrease more for partisans than for Independents. Again, the increases/decreases are dependent on whether a third party candidate is more proximate in his policy positions to the Republicans or Democrats.

The exceptions to these hypotheses occur when a third party candidate is perceived to be a potential upsetter in a close election. The ideological and major party identifiers closest to a third party candidate would fear supporting him if it meant that the other major party candidate would win. For example, if Election Day was approaching and polls showed a tight race between the Democrats and Republicans for President, conservative and Republican supporters of a conservative third party candidate would begin to reconsider their support, as it could cost the ideologically-closer Republican candidate the election. These movements away from the third party candidate will be more pronounced in stronger third party subcultures, as these areas have more experience with, and a better understanding of, the potential ramifications of third party support. Of course, when the election is not perceived to be close, then this movement away will not

be present or will not be as exaggerated. This is why the election cycle itself needs to be considered a crucial element when studying third party subcultural support.

Contextual Analysis of Third Party Favorability

To test these expectations, I use the first and last samples from the National Annenberg Election Study's (NAES) 2000 rolling cross-sectional sample. From December 14th, 1999 to April 3, 2000, respondents were asked a battery of questions that included favorability scales for presidential candidates, including Ralph Nader, whose 2000 candidacy was the largest third party run in the election cycle. This was repeated in the final wave of the survey administered over the month prior to Election Day, from October 3rd, 2000 to November 6th, 2000.

The dependent variable for the first set of models will be Nader's favorability on a scale ranging from 0-100, with a higher score indicating a more positive evaluation. After these models, an additional model of vote choice will be presented using the final wave only, with the dependent variable being categorized as a likely vote for Bush, Gore, Nader, or Buchanan.

As well, a number of theoretically-relevant predictors and controls will be added to the models. First, to measure subculture through context, the criterion for this study is the county-level vote percentage for H. Ross Perot in 1996, plus two average measures of county-level vote percentage of Perot in both 1992 and 1996 and Anderson in 1980 and Perot in 1992 and 1996. These three measures provide a thorough test for the subculture argument by evaluating the added effect of including earlier non-major party candidacies

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into the equation. The NAES provides a FIPs code for each respondent, which is a Census designation for a county. Using the FIPs code, percentages of the vote for each of these candidates can be attached to each individual, placing that person in a more or less favorable third party environment.

The NAES also asks about people's party identification and ideology. Earlier studies note that support for third party candidates comes largely from self-identified independents (for example, Chressanthis and Shaffer 1993). Ideology should also have an effect on one's views toward Nader, as his past political activities, and his membership in the Green Party, place him clearly to the left-of-center on a specific set of issues. Controlling for other factors, Nader's support base should be among the most liberal respondents and Democrats and Independents, with the weakest support among conservative identifiers and Republicans.

This effect of ideology and partisanship will be studied through an interactive effect with context. If areas with stronger third party subcultures lead to more information and discussion about third parties and their candidates, then respondents of various ideologies and partisan identifications will use this knowledge in their candidate assessments and ultimately their vote choice. For example, conservatives in weak third party subcultures will have less information upon which to assess Nader, whereas conservatives in strong subculture have more information about which to assess Nader. This should lead to more negative responses toward Nader among conservative respondents in strong third party subcultures as they will have clearer views of his ideology. Accordingly, the reverse scenario would be the case for liberal respondents.

Finally, these differences across ideology and partisanship could change over the course of the election.

As for other individual level predictors, the NAES contains basic demographics which are used in any model of vote prediction, such as age (younger to older), sex (0=female, 1=male), education (least to most educated), race (0=non-white, 1=white), and suburban and rural dummy variables (urban as a baseline). Based on earlier research, it is expected that favorability towards Nader will be higher among men, those who achieve higher levels of education, and white respondents. Additionally, I add two variables measuring general interest in government (most to least interested) and whether a respondent cares who wins the election (0=care; 1=does not care). This helps to control for earlier findings that claim third party supporters are potentially "anti-system" and less likely to care about electoral outcomes. Finally, a variable measuring the percentage difference between the major parties in the 2000 election (lower to higher difference) is used in the models closest to the election to control for the distinct possibility that individuals in battleground states would be more concerned with how Nader could affect election outcomes.

Results for Predicting Nader Favorability and Voting

Table 1 shows baseline models, which include context, ideology, and partisanship, but do not look for an interactive relationship. Only the most basic and most complex measures of context are used (Perot 1996 and Perot 1996, 1992, and Anderson 1980). Context is significantly and positively related to higher rankings of

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Nader only in the month prior to the election and when both Perot and Anderson's

election returns are used as an average measure. On the surface, this indicates that there

is some support for the first hypothesis of a basic contextual effect.

[Insert Table 1 Here]

To see whether the effect of the subculture becomes clearer when studied in

relation to ideology and partisanship, Table 2 displays the results with interactive effects

included. The first, third, and fifth columns correspond to the sample of respondents

taken from the first wave of the NAES rolling cross-sectional survey, which went from

December 14th, 1999 to April 3rd, 2000, and the second, fourth, and sixth columns

correspond to the sample taken from the last wave of the survey taken over the month

prior to Election Day, from October 3rd, 2000 to November 6th, 2000. The two left

columns use Perot 1996 vote percentages as the context measure, the two middle columns

use Perot 1992 and 1996 averaged as the context measure, and the two right columns use

an average of Anderson 1980 and Perot in 1992 and 1996. As can be seen across the

specifications, the interactions between ideology and context tend to be significant in the

first, third, and fifth columns, but not in the second, fourth, and sixth columns.

Partisanship interactions do not reach standard levels of significance in any model.[3]

[Insert Table 2 Here]

Still, interactions should not be assessed solely on their significance (Brambor et

al. 2005), so it is necessary to graphically display the results if a real story about context

can be developed. This is done in Figure 1 for Perot in 1996 in the early election sample,

in relation to context and ideology, and in Figure 2, in relation to context and

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[3] The interactions are calculated with the baseline ideology being strong conservatives. As well, Republicans are the baseline party identification.

partisanship. Graphing these relationships using the average measures of Perot in 1996 and 1992, and Anderson in 1980, generate similar results, albeit slightly weaker (not shown).

Strong liberals and liberals in contexts where Perot was more successful in 1996 were much more supportive of Ralph Nader than liberals in contexts where Perot received smaller vote shares in 1996. The reverse scenario is true for strong conservatives, though independents and self-identified conservatives do not appear to react differently toward Nader when they reside in areas that were more supportive of Ross Perot in 1996. Both these findings comport with the hypothesized directions of the ideological, interactive relationship. For partisanship, only Independents are affected, and they become less likely to support Nader in higher Perot contexts. This does not comport with the hypothesized effect, but the expectations regarding partisanship were less clear to begin with and the effect is quite small (a -7 point decrease from weakest to strongest subculture).

[Insert Figure 1 Here]

[Insert Figure 2 Here]

It appears, then, that the areas where Perot did well in 1996 are areas that are in-tune to other third party candidates, and the residents of these areas can react more positively or negatively to these candidates depending on their ideological and, to some degree, partisan leanings. The difference in favorability between strong conservatives and strong liberals in counties where Perot received 5% of the vote is approximately 20 points, and the difference in favorability for strong conservatives and conservatives at this level is almost exactly even. In counties where Perot received 15% of the vote, the

difference is approximately 45 points. With Nader's campaign still operating under the media's radar early on in the election season, areas where respondents were accustomed to recent third party voting in the form of Perot in 1996 had greater positive and negative reactions than those respondents in less supportive third party subcultures.

[Insert Figure 3 Here]

[Insert Figure 4 Here]

The second, fourth, and sixth models in Table 2 show the same analysis run on a sample of respondents during the final month of the election. Graphing these results allows for a comparison between the two samples to see what ideologies and partisan identifications shifted in their favorability toward Nader, dependent on context. Such movements clearly occurred when we look at Figure 3, which also uses the Perot 1996 context measure. The biggest shift occurred among strong liberals in strong third party subcultures, who became less supportive of Nader by approximately 15 points, and strong liberals in less supportive third party subcultures, who became more supportive of Nader by approximately 15 points.

Liberal identifiers in more supportive third party subcultures remained the same, while liberals in less supportive subcultures became more supportive as the campaign progressed. There were also dips in support for Nader among conservatives, and especially among strong conservatives, in less supportive third party subcultures, while moderates remained unaffected. Of course, liberals continued to rank Nader more highly than conservatives, but the gap narrowed in the more supportive Perot contexts and widened in the less supportive Perot contexts. At 5% Perot support in 1996, the gap is about 40 points; at 15% Perot support in 1996, the gap is about 23 points. The partisan

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changes were smaller, with Republicans remaining about the same, Democrats in higher

Perot contexts becoming less favorable toward Nader by about 10 points, and

Independents in higher Perot contexts becoming slightly more favorable.

To account for these changes, especially in regards to ideology, part of the

movement is likely caused by the increased exposure Nader received as the election

campaign progressed; the difference of living in a subculture that is more supportive and

interested in third parties dissipated once the national media began to report on the Nader

phenomena. As noted earlier, the theory underlying the third party subculture does not

necessarily imply that areas of past third party support whole-heartedly support another

third party candidate; electoral conditions can play a large role in determining how the

subculture reacts.[4] Furthermore, this movement among strong liberal identifiers and

Democrats follows the expectation about a close race between the two major party

candidates. The media was reporting more about Nader, but a significant portion of this

coverage was on the basis that Nader could pull votes away from Al Gore, leading to a

victory for George W. Bush.[5] This caused strong liberals and Democrats in strong third

party subcultures to reorient their evaluations of Nader.

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[4] Using National Election Study (NES) data from 1996 and 1992, I run the same analysis using Perot's
1992 county on Perot favorability in 1996 with the addition of a 1992 vote choice variable, as well as
Anderson's 1980 context on Perot favorability in 1992. The results, provided in the Appendix, show that
context in relation to ideology mattered, especially for those classified as extremely conservative or liberal.
In 1992, both groups viewed Perot much more positively in areas where Anderson performed well in 1980.
In 1996, both groups again exhibited the largest reactions after controlling for 1992 vote choice, with
extremely conservative respondents in 1992 Perot contexts being more supportive than their counterparts in
weaker contexts and extremely liberal respondents being less supportive than their counterparts. Much like
the Nader favorability models, the movements of less ideologically extreme respondents, and those who
classify themselves as moderates, are not as distinct. Partisanship and context matter for Republicans, who
were more supportive of Perot in stronger Perot contexts in 1996 and in 1992, but they do not matter for
Democrats, Independents, or those with No Preference/Other.

[5] This also speaks directly to the argument that Nader was the "viable" third party option in this election,
and support for him could have serious electoral ramifications. The same did not hold true for Pat
Buchanan, who had name recognition but ran an extremely weak campaign. Using Buchanan favorability

One potential criticism is that these findings could be attributed to campaigning in particular areas by Nader. If Nader went to areas where Perot had done well, attempting to win over support in those areas, then potentially the theory of a subculture is somewhat confounded. However, recent findings about the Nader campaign imply that this is not the case. Burden (2005) found that Nader appeared in places where he could attract the largest crowd; he was not thinking strategically about the competitiveness of the state race. Perot and Anderson followed similar strategies in attracting a general campaign audience rather than focusing efforts (Burden 2005; West 1983).

The next step is to determine whether these shifts affected vote choice. To do so, it is necessary to predict a respondent's potential vote choice at the time of the second survey sample used in this study. A multinomial logistic regression model is estimated and presented in Table 3 with Bush as a baseline, and predicted probabilities of the outcomes are presented in Table 4, with common ideological-partisan combinations chosen for clear interpretation.[6]

[Insert Table 3 Here]

[Insert Table 4 Here]

As can be seen, Republican and Independent conservatives are more likely to vote for Nader in contexts where the third party subculture is strongest, and both groups

as a dependent variable, the results, presented in Table 3A and Figures 5A-8A in the Appendix, show no such drastic movements in Perot context on favorability as the election went on. However, we do see a drop in Democratic and Republican support for Buchanan, in higher Perot contexts, in the later sample; Independents became much more favorable toward Buchanan in the second sample. As for voting, the predicted probabilities in Table 4A show that Buchanan did not get the same boost from context as Nader did, except among conservative Independent voters.

[6] The logit model was also estimated with Nader favorability as a predictor, with a similar pattern of results for the predicted probabilities (though stronger/weaker effects can be found depending on what value Nader favorability is set at). Furthermore, using the combined Perot 1996, Perot 1992, and Anderson 1980 context measure, the results are actually a bit stronger.

experience large shifts in their predicted vote choice from the weakest to strongest subculture. Strong conservative Republicans have approximately the same, low probability of voting for Nader, regardless of context. On the surface, this indicates that the relatively stable favorability rankings given to Nader by conservatives and moderates across subcultures are separate from the act of voting. The subculture has a positive effect on the vote choices of these individuals.

The same does not hold true for liberal Independents, liberal Democrats, and strong liberal Democrats, who become less likely to vote for Nader in strong subcultures. The drop among liberal Independents, liberal Democrats, and strong liberal Democrats is likely caused by the same reasons for the decrease in favorability in the second sample: being more aware of third parties and what support for third parties represents. In a close election, liberals were less willing to cast votes for Nader if the election was close and Gore's chances of victory could be affected. In fact, in the strongest possible subculture, conservative Republicans and Independents had a higher probability of voting for Nader than any liberal group. Still, the liberal groupings all had a higher average probability of voting for Nader. Moderate Independents, as hypothesized, were essentially not affected by the subculture.

This leads to three specific findings in regards to the third party subculture and voting for Nader. First, conservatives are positively affected by a strong third party subculture when it comes to voting for a third party candidate who is an ideological opposite. Second, liberals are negatively affected by a strong third party subculture when it comes to voting and candidate evaluations when the probability of harming an ideologically-similar candidate is high. Third, moderates Independents, which is the

group that best approximates "true" independent political activity, are not affected by the subculture.

What is perhaps most intriguing is that conservative Republicans and conservative Independents have a higher predicted probability of voting for Nader than liberal Democrats and strong liberal Democrats in a strong third party subculture though conservatives were only weakly affected by context in their favorability toward Nader. All else equal, one might still expect that liberals would be more likely to vote for a Green Party candidate than a conservative, even if the direction of the predicted probabilities remained the same across contexts (increasing probability for conservatives, decreasing for liberals, as the subculture becomes stronger). Furthermore, liberals maintain a higher probability of voting for Nader in strong subcultures than conservatives do in weak subcultures, indicating an overall average probability of voting for Nader that is higher than that for conservatives.

The likely reason for this increased probability in voting, and much weaker effect on Nader favorability, is that these groups correspond very closely to those who originally supported Ross Perot. As Rapoport and Stone (2005) noted, a good portion of Perot voters went on to support Nader, and, at the very least, this contextual finding points toward the group most associated with the Perot movement. This is additionally intriguing in light of findings by other researchers that link Nader support to support for John Anderson in 1980, and link Anderson support to Perot support (Allen and Brox 2005). While this chapter cannot provide this additional evidence, there is a distinct possibility that a core group of Independent and Republican self-identified conservative voters are more supportive, over time, of third parties and major independent candidates

in general, and that this group is even more supportive of such candidates when those around them also support them. Though they do not necessarily rank a particular third party candidate higher, the history and experience of past third party voting can drive them to support a candidate that is not ideologically-aligned with them.

Results for Predicting Perot Favorability and Buchanan Favorability and Voting

To test these findings on a broader sample, additional data on other third party candidates is needed. The prime example of another prominent, modern third party presidential candidate is Ross Perot in both 1992, as an independent, and in 1996, as the Reform Party candidate. However, the NAES did not begin until 2000, so the logical data set to use is the National Election Studies (NES) in both 1992 and 1996, which contain county-level identification for respondents. The model specifications for the main predictors will match earlier models. Context is measured as Perot 1992 and/or Anderson 1980 for Perot in 1996 and Anderson vote in 1980 for Perot in 1992. Partisanship in the NES has a category labeled No Preference/Other that was created by merging the two separate categories and ideology is split into a seven-point scale (extremely liberal/conservative, liberal/conservative, and slightly liberal/conservative). Interactions between ideology and partisanship with context were also created.

For control variables, sex, age, education, and race are carried over, though an ordinal measure of urban to rural is used instead of dummy variables. It was created by rescaling the Census Belt Code question into urban, suburban, and rural. As well, dummy variables for attention to the campaign and whether a respondent cares who wins

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the election are also included (no attention to campaign/does not care who wins=1), along with the difference between the major party presidential candidates' vote shares in a respondent's state for that year.

One limitation to the NES data are that they are not conducted as a rolling cross-sectional survey, so the temporal element of the NAES Nader models cannot be replicated. However, the NES does provide one advantage, especially in 1996: respondents are asked who they voted for in the previous election year. This allows for a thorough test of the effect of context on third party support after we control for those that voted for the same third party candidate in the previous election year.

Since this provides a substantial hurdle for the theory and hypothesis discussed earlier, the results from the 1996 NES data about Perot favorability are presented first in Table 1A. The interactive effects of interest are provided in Figures 1A and 2A. In Figure 1A, which displays ideology's effect on Perot favorability in 1996 based on Perot's 1992 county-vote, we can see that extremely conservative respondents became much more favorable to Perot in stronger subcultures and that extremely liberal respondents became less favorable in stronger Perot contexts. Had the election between Clinton and Dole been competitive, the movements may have been different than those displayed; extremely conservative respondents in strong subcultures might have mimicked the earlier results for strong liberals and Nader and become less supportive. However, as Perot was generally viewed as conservative-leaning, and Dole was not a threat to win the election, Perot's ability to win over support among staunch conservatives was affected by the subculture. A similar pattern is evident in Figure 2A,

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where the uncompetitive nature of the election pushed Republicans in strong subcultures to be more supportive of Perot than Republicans in weak subcultures by about 10 points.

When we move back to 1992 and his independent campaign, only Anderson's county-level vote in 1980 is used. Here, the findings for partisanship match closely with the 1996 results. In Figure 4A, Republicans support Perot about 8 points higher on the favorability scale from the least to most supportive subcultures. For ideology, the most extreme conservative and liberal respondents, once again, have the greatest reactions across subcultures. However, unlike in 1996, the 1992 results in Figure 3A show that both ideological groups were more supportive of Perot in stronger subcultures than in weaker subcultures. Extremely conservative respondents are 50 points higher on the favorability scale for Perot from the weakest to the strongest subcultures, and extremely liberal respondents are about 30 points higher. This is countered by basic liberal respondents, who decrease their support across the range of subcultures by 15 points.

In general, these findings do help to confirm a few of the hypotheses. Once again, ideological moderates and Independents, the groups most prone to support third party candidates, are unaffected by the subculture. While Independents do tend to be those most consistent in high rankings of third party candidates, the movement in support across subcultures is less than the movements of partisans. Additionally, those with the most extreme ideologies continue to exhibit the greatest movements in support across subcultures, indicating that these groups are sensitive to the appeals of third party candidates, even after controlling for partisan identification. The effect of partisanship across subcultures followed in hypothesized patterns, as Republicans were more favorable to Perot in stronger than in weaker subcultures.

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While the evidence provided shows once more that context matters in understanding third party support and voting, one could argue that the results only hold for the pre-eminent third party candidate in a given election year. However, the 2000 election featured former Republican presidential primary challenger Pat Buchanan, well-known within conservative circles and among anti-free trade activists. Though he was much less successful than Nader, the NAES kept Buchanan in its rolling-cross sectional survey. This means that a favorability question was asked, and he was included as an explicit option in its potential vote choice question. This allows me to test the effect of context on a third party candidate that was not the most prominent of such candidates in the election.

The expectations about what will happen are slightly different than for the other two candidates. Unlike Perot and Nader, who never ran for president as the member of a political party, Buchanan had tried as a Republican and had been a relatively prominent member of the party. Because of this past partisan attachment, I would expect partisanship, not ideology, to be more affected by the strength of the subculture when it comes to favorability.

Using the same models provided for Nader earlier, Table 3A shows the early and late election sample results, with the substantive interactions displayed in Figures 5A-8A. In Figures 5A and 7A, which correspond to the earlier and later samples, respectively, it is clear that ideological attachment across the strength of subculture weakly affects Buchanan favorability in both periods. The relatively consistent findings are not surprising across time, as ideology was expected to have less of an effect in these models. The only perceptible change to note is that liberal identifiers in the later sample do

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increase their favorability of Buchanan from the weakest to the strongest subcultures by about 10 points.

The most notable effects are, as expected, for partisanship. In the early sample, Republicans, Democrats, and Independents were all more favorable toward Buchanan as the strength of the subculture increased. The smallest effect was on Independents, and Republicans and Democrats each increased support by about 10 points from the weakest to strongest subcultures (though Republicans remained, overall, more supportive of Buchanan). In the later sample, the results change. In stronger subcultures, Republicans and Democrats alike drop in their favorability of Buchanan, though these drops are not as extreme as those found by ideology for Nader. Apparently, the close election did affect partisan rankings of Buchanan, but since he was never viewed in the same "upsetter" light as Nader, the drops in favorability were not as large. Interestingly, Independents in stronger subcultures actually increased their support for Buchanan by about 20 points from the weakest to the strongest subcultures.

This finding can be explained by looking at Table 4A, which shows predicted probabilities of voting for Buchanan by ideology and partisanship across contexts. The probabilities are derived from the same vote choice model used for Nader in Table 3. As can be seen, the increasing support in stronger subcultures for Buchanan among Independents carried over to the act of voting for Independents who were conservative or liberal, but not for moderate Independents. For Buchanan, Independents were those most likely to vote for him, but this was only among those Independents with an ideological orientation in the strongest subcultures.

Combining the results for Nader and Buchanan voting, the group that was the most likely to vote for both candidates in stronger subcultures were conservative Independents. This provides additional evidence that self-identified conservative Independents may help to facilitate third party voting more so than other groups, as they are the most susceptible to changes in voting patterns by the strength of a subculture.

Conclusions

The analysis presented points toward the existence of third party subcultures that can affect how individuals evaluate third party presidential candidates and how individuals vote for such candidates. Across ideologies, favorability towards Ralph Nader changed based on the strength of a county's third party subculture, as did the probability of voting for him. As well, this effect changed over the course of the election cycle, so that the impact of the subculture was different in the month before Election Day than it was several months earlier. Additional evidence is presented that also shows how Perot (1996 and 1992) and Buchanan (2000) favorability were affected by the strength of a third party subculture.

In the prominent cases of Perot and Nader, the most extreme ideologies showed the greatest reactions by context. In 1992, the most liberal and conservative respondents were most favorable to Perot in stronger subcultures. In 1996, the dynamic changed as the most liberal respondents favored Perot more than other groups, but less so in strong subcultures; the most conservative respondents were least favorable in weak subcultures but gained in favorability as the subculture became stronger. In 2000, the strong liberals

and conservatives once again showed the greatest reactions, with the most conservative respondents being much less supportive of Nader in stronger subcultures and the most liberal respondents being clearly more supportive in stronger subcultures until the election neared. Then, the most liberal respondents became much less favorable towards Nader, who became the potential election upsetter that would keep Gore from winning office.

These findings have important theoretical implications. First, the theory of a third party subculture moves the literature beyond the belief that support for third parties is mainly a protest against the two major parties and the political system. People's views of third party candidates are shaped by the history of their geographic area, and the ability to be shaped by the geographic subculture is dependent largely on one's ideological position and the ideology of the third party candidate. Second, the findings show that even the effect of context is time-dependent and that the idea of a "wasted vote" or "wasted support" affects how people evaluate third candidates. With a tight race between Bush and Gore going into the election, the group of strong liberal identifiers, who were the biggest supporters of Nader months before in strong third party subcultures, dropped their support dramatically. Such drops in support are typically framed as being caused by individuals without reference to the context individuals live in, yet the results clearly show that context moderates perceptions of third party candidate approval (and voting). Third, the use of favorability scales provides an alternative to using vote choice as a way of assessing a contextual effect on political behavior. Indeed, the use of favorability scales along with voting provides a more thorough picture of how context can affect behavior in regards to a subculture.

The findings also have practical implications that could be beneficial to future third party and independent candidates. While there are many impediments to third party and independent candidacies, a separate but related problem is understanding where to target resources and which voters to target. This study provides new insights into this matter by showing what individuals a candidate might want to attract to his campaign and in what contexts these individuals reside. Though the findings presented focus on presidential campaigns, these findings could still be informative to third party candidates in statewide elections who could use available data and conduct similar analyses.

 Future studies need to build upon this framework of a subcultural, contextual effect on third party support. For instance, did those areas that voted for Perot, in high numbers, in 1992 and 1996 (and Anderson in 1980) also lend more support to third party candidates for state-level office, or is this effect uniquely national? Were the success stories of Jesse Ventura in Minnesota and Angus King in Maine, and the strong showing by Thomas Golisano in New York, backed by supporters from local contexts that had also been more supportive of third party presidential candidates like Perot or John Anderson? In light of the findings in this article, such studies could provide further evidence that areas have developed a more or less supportive subculture that affects how individuals evaluate and vote for third party candidates.

Even though the context being studied is not a specific area, but the percentage of the vote in a county one resides in, the results lend credence to the idea that an area's past support for a third party candidate can affect individual evaluations of third party candidates in the future and affect vote choice. Past studies that have searched for an "alternative culture" were flawed by a.) focusing solely on individual-level attributes

without reference to a narrow electoral environment (in this case, the county) and b.) failing to look outside the act of voting for a contextual effect. Therefore, this study breaks new theoretical ground and provides evidence that the concept of a third party subculture is credible, influencing individuals and their views on third party candidates at the national level.

Table 1: Predicting Nader Favorability, Baseline Models

Predictors	NAES Rolling Cross-Section, 1999-April 2000 (Perot 1996 Context)	NAES Rolling Cross Section, 1999-2000 (Both Perot Elections and Anderson Context)	NAES Rolling Cross-Section, Last Month Before Election (Perot 1996 Context)	NAES Rolling Cross-Section, Last Month Before Election (Both Perot Elections and Anderson Context)
Perot's 1996 County Vote (Percentage)	.06 (.20)	.12 (.15)	.14 (.15)	.30 (.12)*
Democrats	7.56 (1.51)**	7.57 (1.51)**	4.59 (1.10)**	4.58 (1.10)**
Independents	8.36 (1.39)**	8.36 (1.39)**	6.11 (1.02)**	6.06 (1.02)**
Conservative Ideology	3.94 (2.16)	3.96 (2.16)	5.47 (1.62)**	5.34 (1.62)**
Moderate Ideology	7.90 (2.20)**	7.90 (2.20)**	11.11 (1.66)**	10.98 (1.66)**
Liberal Ideology	13.70 (2.44)**	13.67 (2.44)**	17.45 (1.83)**	17.27 (1.83)**
Strong Liberal Ideology	21.02 (3.34)**	21.02 (3.34)**	27.35 (2.56)**	27.13 (2.56)**
Sex (Men=1)	6.44 (1.09)**	6.43 (1.09)**	-1.72 (.78)*	-1.74 (.78)*
Age	-.01 (.04)	-.01 (.04)	-.03 (.03)	-.03 (.03)
Race (White=1)	-.98 (1.70)	-1.12 (1.70)	1.58 (1.43)	1.15 (1.43)
Education	1.12 (.25)**	1.11 (.25)**	1.25 (.18)**	1.23 (.18)**
Suburban	.98 (1.41)	.86 (1.34)	-.97 (.93)	-1.11 (.92)
Rural	.66 (1.66)	.55 (1.53)	-3.32 (1.22)**	-3.18 (1.12)**
Interest in Government	1.52 (.65)*	-1.50 (.65)*	.52 (.50)	.50 (.49)
Care Who Wins	1.53 (1.25)	-1.51 (1.25)	1.36 (1.00)	1.26 (1.00)

Elections				
Margin Between Major Parties in 2000	---	---	.05 (.04)	.05 (.04)
Constant	32.79 (4.27)**	32.06 (4.11)**	26.36 (3.10)**	25.00 (3.10)**
	N=2408 Adjusted R-Sq.=.0966 F=18.17 Prob.>F=.0000	N=2408 Adjusted R-Sq.=.0968 F=18.20 Prob.>F=.0000	N=4866 Adjusted R-Sq.=.0887 F=30.60 Prob.>F=.0000	N=4866 Adjusted R-Sq.=.0896 F=30.93 Prob.>F=.0000

Ordinary least squares regression coefficients with standard errors in parenthesis. Two-tailed tests. **$p<.01$; *$p<.0$

Table 2: Predicting Nader Favorability with Early and Late Election Year Samples, with Various Contextual Measures

Predictors	Perot 1996, 1999-April 2000	Perot 1996, Oct.-Nov. 2000	Perot 1992/1996, 1999-April 2000	Perot 1992/1996, Oct.-Nov. 2000	Anderson 1980 and Perot 1992/1996, 1999-April 2000	Anderson 1980 and Perot 1992/1996, Oct.-Nov. 2000
Context (Percentage)	-1.28 (.68)	-.17 (.51)	-1.19 (.49)*	-.19 (.38)	-1.39 (.63)*	-.46 (.47)
Democrat	13.26 (4.59)**	7.47 (3.30)*	9.18 (5.35)*	4.86 (3.83)	9.21 (5.61)	1.21 (3.91)
Independent	17.19 (4.15)**	5.14 (3.10)	13.22 (4.86)**	4.08 (3.69)	10.15 (5.04)*	1.90 (3.74)
Conservative Ideology	-12.28 (6.96)	-1.7 (5.04)	-14.97 (7.97)	-1.17 (6.02)	-13.74 (8.22)	-3.47 (5.88)
Moderate Ideology	-8.01 (6.97)	7.85 (5.09)	-11.33 (8.00)	7.06 (6.06)	-9.70 (8.27)	4.95 (5.94)
Liberal Ideology	-12.88 (7.64)	16.57 (5.56)**	-17.51 (8.81)*	15.44 (6.57)*	-16.18 (9.24)	11.77 (6.56)
Strong Liberal Ideology	-7.21 (11.13)	36.35 (7.50)**	-4.62 (12.13)	37.33 (8.74)**	1.25 (12.50)	34.79 (9.22)**
Democrat x Context	-.65 (.50)	-.36 (.36)	-.11 (.37)	-.03 (.27)	-.15 (.47)	.30 (.33)
Independent x Context	-1.03 (.45)*	.11 (.34)	-.35 (.33)	.14 (.25)	-.17 (.42)	.37 (.32)
Conservative x Context	1.82 (.74)**	.84 (.55)	1.30 (.53)*	.48 (.42)	1.52 (.68)*	.81 (.52)

Moderate x Context	1.77 (.75)*	.39 (.56)	1.32 (.53)*	.30 (.42)	1.52 (.69)*	.56 (.52)
Liberal x Context	3.05 (.82)**	.09 (.62)	2.20 (.59)**	.15 (.46)	2.59 (.77)**	.51 (.58)
Strong Liberal x Context	3.30 (1.30)**	-1.19 (.87)	1.80 (.86)*	-.78 (.63)	1.71 (1.07)	-.66 (.80)
Sex (Men=1)	6.40 (1.09)**	-1.69 (.78)*	6.42 (1.09)**	-1.72 (.78)*	6.46 (1.09)**	-1.70 (.78)*
Age	-.02 (.04)	-.03 (.03)	-.02 (.04)	-.03 (.03)	-.02 (.04)	-.03 (.03)
Education	1.10 (.25)**	1.25 (.18)**	1.09 (.25)**	1.24 (.18)**	1.08 (.25)**	1.24 (.18)**
Race (White=1)	-.83 (1.70)	1.86 (1.45)	-.93 (1.72)	1.58 (1.46)	-1.04 (1.72)	.94 (1.46)
Suburban	.93 (1.41)	-.78 (.93)	1.00 (1.35)	-.83 (.93)	1.04 (1.34)	-1.04 (.92)
Rural	.74 (1.66)	-3.26 (1.22)**	.65 (1.56)	-3.12 (1.15)**	.70 (1.54)	-3.12 (1.12)**
Interest in Government	1.44 (.65)*	.55 (.49)	1.40 (.65)*	.52 (.50)	1.43 (.65)*	.50 (.49)
Cares Who Wins Election	1.56 (1.25)	1.34 (1.00)	1.57 (1.25)	1.28 (1.00)	1.55 (1.25)	1.18 (1.00)
Margin Between Major Parties in 2000	---	.05 (.04)	---	.04 (.04)	---	.04 (.04)

Constant	44.98 (7.20)**	28.46 (5.27)**	50.74 (7.98)**	30.08 (6.00)**	49.73 (8.15)**	33.37 (5.87)**

	N=2,408 Adjusted R-Sq.=.1015 F=13.94 Prob.>F= .0000	N=4,866 Adjusted R-Sq.=.0905 F=23.00 Prob.>F=.0000	N=2,408 Adjusted R-Sq.= .1005 F=13.80 Prob.>F=.0000	N=4,866 Adjusted R-Sq.= .0892 F=22.67 Prob.>F=.0000	N=2,408 Adjusted R-Sq.= .0991 F=13.60 Prob.>F=.0000	N=4,866 Adjusted R-Sq.= .0900 F=22.86 Prob.>F=.0000

Ordinary least squares regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Two-tailed tests. **$p<.01$; *$p<.05$

Figure 1: Ideology's Effect on Nader Favorability Based on Perot's 1996 County Vote

Source: NAES Cross-Section, December 1999-April 2000

Figure 2: Partisanship's Effect on Nader Favorability Based on Perot's 1996 County Vote
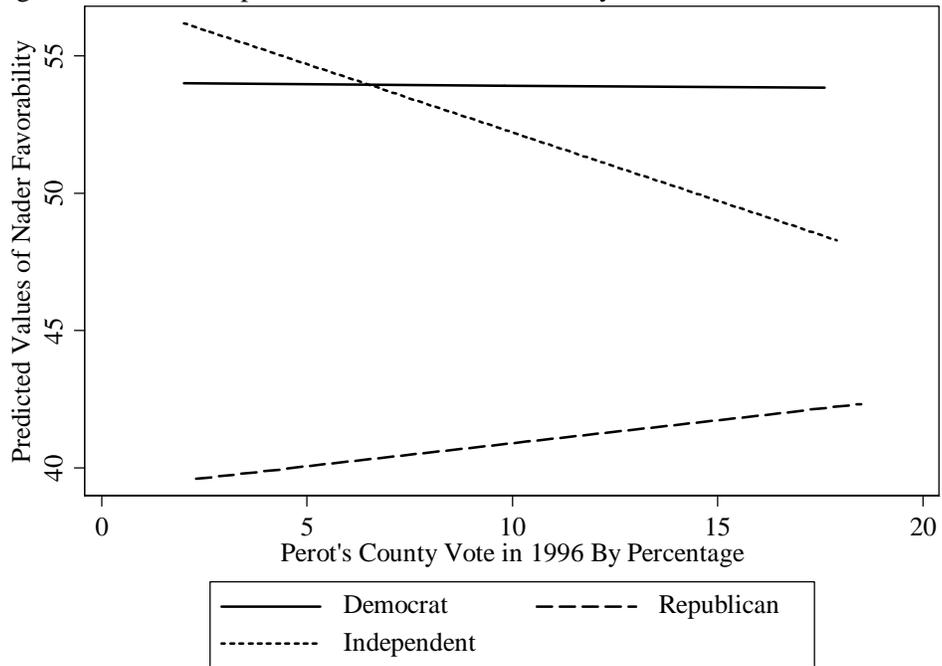
Source: NAES Cross-Section, December 1999-April 2000

Figure 3: Ideology's Effect on Nader Favorability Based on Perot's 1996 County Vote
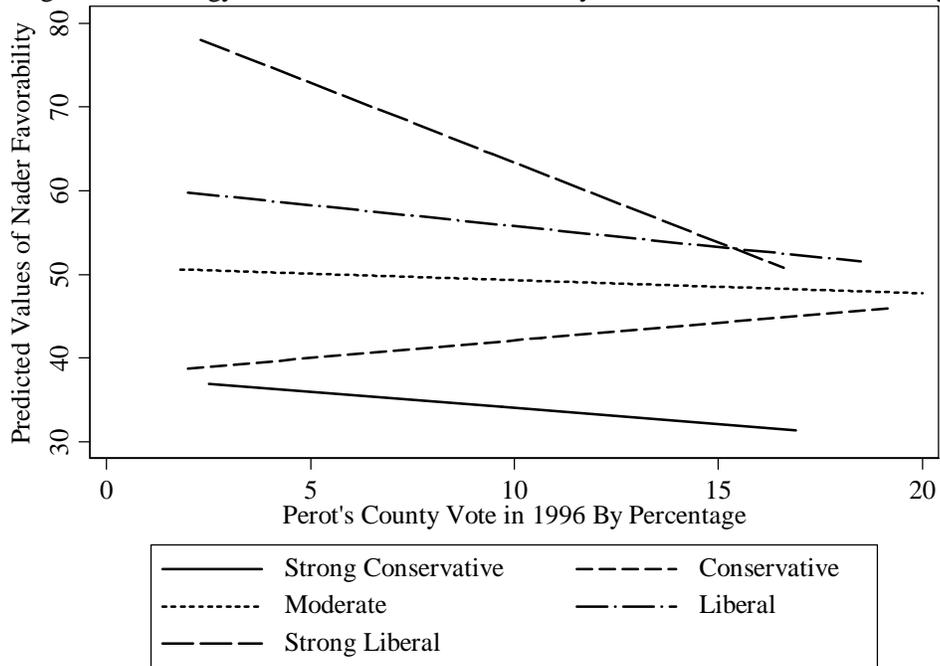
Source: NAES Cross-Section, October 2000 to Election Day 2000

Figure 4: Partisanship's Effect on Nader Favorability Based on Perot's 1996 County Vote
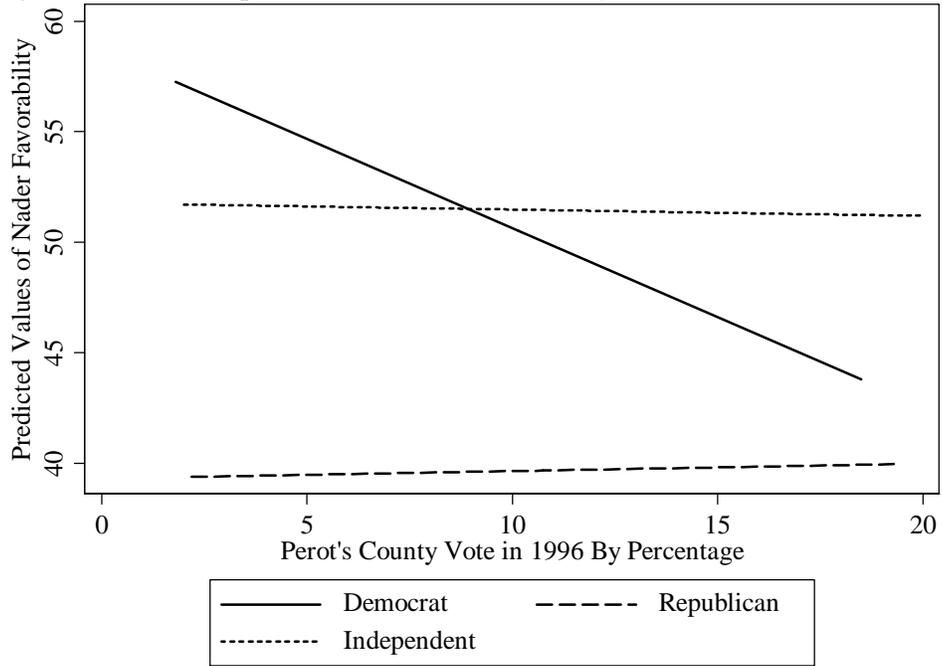
Source: NAES Cross-Section, October 2000 to Election Day 2000

Table 3: Predicting Vote Choice in 2000, with Bush as the Baseline

Predictors	Nader/Bush	Buchanan/Bush	Gore/Bush
Context (Percentage)	.03 (.13)	.07 (.14)	.07 (.09)
Democrat	3.27 (.66)**	3.00 (1.19)*	4.59 (.44)**
Independent	2.58 (.56)**	.78 (1.00)	2.75 (.38)**
Conservative Ideology	-2.02 (1.19)	.13 (1.38)	.38 (.80)
Moderate Ideology	.57 (1.11)	.77 (1.45)	1.96 (.78)*
Liberal Ideology	2.52 (1.16)*	.60 (1.68)	3.03 (.84)**
Strong Liberal Ideology	3.44 (1.42)*	3.04 (2.48)	3.08 (1.15)**
Democrat x Context	-.12 (.07)	-.15 (.13)	-.07 (.05)
Independent x Context	-.10 (.06)	.07 (.10)	-.08 (.04)
Conservative x Context	.19 (.13)	-.03 (.14)	-.02 (.09)
Moderate x Context	.06 (.13)	-.14 (.15)	-.02 (.08)
Liberal x Context	-.01 (.13)	-.02 (.17)	-.03 (.09)
Strong Liberal x Context	-.06 (.16)	-.30 (.29)	-.07 (.13)
Sex (Men=1)	.14 (.13)	.60 (.27)*	-.34 (.09)**
Age	.004 (.005)	.003 (.009)	.02 (.003)
Education	.03 (.03)	-.17 (.06)**	-.01 (.02)
Race (White=1)	-.65 (.32)*	-1.41 (.47)**	-1.70 (.22)**
Suburban	-.34 (.16)*	.28 (.37)	-.26 (.11)*
Rural	-.56 (.21)**	.71 (.41)	-.29 (.15)*
Interest in Government	.03 (.08)	.52 (.14)**	-.04 (.06)
Cares Who Wins Election	.63 (.15)**	.28 (.29)	.08 (.11)
Margin Between Major Parties	-.01 (.01)	.001 (.01)	-.004 (.005)

in 2000			
Constant	-3.84 (1.21)**	-4.55 (1.56)**	-2.83 (.85)**

N=4,569
Pseudo R-Sq.=.3630
LR Chi-Sq.=3312.51
Prob.>Chi-Sq.= .0000

Multinomial logistic regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Two-tailed tests. Other/Bush category was estimated, but results depressed due to estimation issues (only 19 cases). **p<.01; *p<.05.

Table 4: Predicted Probabilities of Nader Vote Choice, by Ideology and Partisanship, Across Contexts

Scenarios	Strong Conservative Republican	Conservative Republican	Conservative Independent	Moderate Independent	Liberal Independent	Liberal Democrat	Strong Liberal Democrat
Suburban, Minimum Context	1.8%	.3%	2.3%	12.2%	30.4%	14.4%	25.1%
Suburban, Mean Context	1.6%	1.1%	4.9%	11.9%	23.4%	9.7%	18.8%
Suburban, Maximum Context	4.8%	14.1%	17.6%	11.3%	10.4%	5.0%	10.0%
Δ Min-Max	+3.0%	+13.8%	+15.3%	-.9%	-20.0%	-9.4%	-15.1%

Predicted probabilities generated using CLARIFY (King et al. 2000; Tomz et al. 2001). All other control variables are set to mean or median values except for the suburban and rural dummies, with suburban=1 and rural=0.

CHAPTER 3

WHY THIRD PARTIES IN THE 1800S? AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON THE
DEVELOPMENT OF THIRD-PARTY VOTING IN VERMONT

The literature on the role of third parties in American politics has often taken a

historical approach. Third parties were more prominent during the 1800s and early

1900s, receiving higher vote totals and winning offices at rates than modern third parties.

In Rosenstone et al.'s classic book, *Third Parties in America*, the authors used vote totals

and records dating back to 1840 to help support their theories on third party voting and

minor party candidate mobilization (1996 [1984]). They note that third parties tend to

arise when a significant policy issue is not being addressed by the major parties and when

there are voters willing to vote against the major parties (Rosenstone et al. 1996).

Recently, Hirano and Snyder (2007) used historical evidence to present reasons for the

decline in third party voting since the late 1800s. They argued that anti-fusion laws,

changes to the Australian ballot in the South, direct primaries, and co-optation of policy

goals, especially by the Democrats, were prime reasons for the decline in third party

voting.

In this paper, I attempt to build on these past findings by looking into the factors

behind higher levels of third party voting in the 1800s. I develop and test a theory of

third party support that is based on the ability of third parties to develop and maintain

support in specific geographically-based contexts. I argue that this development was

aided by winning over "opinion leaders" in an area, which then allowed the party

message to spread to neighboring areas, and by specific social and institutional factors that advantaged third parties of this time period. To test this theory, I conduct an empirical case study of Vermont during the 1840s-1850s. I examine the rise of the Liberty Party, a third party formed to push for the abolition of slavery, and its transition into the Free Soil Party, which took a more moderate approach to stopping slavery's expansion.

Using town-level voting records for annual state gubernatorial elections, I present evidence that the Liberty Party in Vermont was formed through the development of geographically-based support, which started by winning over support in more educated towns. I then present evidence that these support bases then helped to spread Liberty Party voting to surrounding areas and that they remained areas of strong Free Soil Party voting into the early 1850s. These findings provide scholars with new insights into how third parties were able to successfully contest elections during the early 1800s, thus adding to our knowledge of third parties and party development.

Development of a Third Party

The goal of this article is to uncover how third parties were able to receive relatively high percentages of the vote during the 1800s. My argument is that such support developed through geographically-based social relationships, which created areas that were more supportive of third parties. The idea that geographically-based social relationships would affect political behavior is not unique, as the impact of such social relationships on political behavior has been found by numerous scholars (Lazarsfeld et al.

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1948; Berelson et al. 1954; Putnam 1966; Huckfeldt 1979, 1986; Huckfeldt and Sprague 1987).

The important question is why geographically-based social influence would play a significant role in the development of third parties in the 1800s. I argue that there are several reasons. First, mobility in the 1840s, which is the time period studied in this article, was limited. While people did move, as America was a growing nation, most people tended to live and work within a limited region. Railroads were not as popular as they would become, and the "mass media" as we know it was in its infant stages. This put an emphasis on town life, and the influence of the town on one's political activities was quite strong.

Second, the electorate was much smaller, in terms of overall population and because the right to vote was typically granted only to white male citizens. Once a political party had established itself and decided to run candidates, it had to appeal only to this segment of the population. Winning the support of one or two individuals in a town could help to alter political outcomes, especially since populations were small by today's standards.

Winning over town support likely occurred early on in the most educated towns, where there were more politically interested individuals that could potentially serve as "opinion leaders" and influence others in the community (see Lazarsfeld et al. 1948; Katz and Lazarsfeld 1955; Kingdon 1970; Black 1982; Roch 2005). Gaining political information required some level of education, or at least communities with more educated residents, since learning during this time period was based largely on oral transmission, reading newspapers/pamphlets, the ability to write letters to discuss politics

and learn about political trends, and time to spend on politics. Towns with a more educated populace, then, would have a greater probability of being more receptive to a third party and spreading information about the party locally.

Since this was an era where parties sent clear partisan signals to voters (Silbey 1984), educated towns could serve as bases from which to articulate a clearer party message and formulate a plan of action. To borrow from Sinclair (2006), the educated towns would be more likely to contain "intellectual elites." While Sinclair was describing Republicans during the 1970s and 1980s who had to adopt certain policy views before others in the party would deem these views as legitimate, the same could be said for opinion leaders in a community. Until a trusted elite or elites in the community spurs the support and development of the party, few will support it.

Third parties also benefited from advantageous electoral arrangements to help spread the party agenda. Electoral laws in many states established short terms in office, with elections being held in some states every year (including Vermont). With a constant electoral stimulus, elections gave third parties an opportunity to remind the voting public that they were active and what their "brand" was (see Downs 1957 about a party brand).[7]

This constant electoral stimulus would also reduce the risk involved in a "wasted vote," a reason often cited for why modern third parties are unsuccessful (Ferguson and Lowi 2001; De Maio et al. 1983). Yearly elections reduce the possible risk in voting for a party with little experience in office. If a third party candidate won and was a poor politician, she could be removed from office within a year. Thus, the risk of "wasting" a vote is reduced somewhat during these shorter terms.

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[7] Historical evidence shows that these minor parties acted just like their major party rivals when it came to campaigning, platforms, and mobilizing voters. As Silbey (1991) wrote, "In each case, they emulated their enemies."

To summarize, I argue that the lack of mobility and mass media, the small size of the electorate, the constant electoral stimulus, and the reduction of the "wasted vote" syndrome created an environment where a third party could develop stable bases of support from election-to-election. Once a third party was able to win over support in more educated towns, then these towns served as support bases, helping to increase vote totals and spread the party message. Since other voters were part of local discussion networks that involved individuals from these towns, some people were attracted to voting for a third party after seeing others support its candidates. Elections were "an opportunity for communities to express themselves…and to affirm their communal commitments" (Silbey 1983). This took time to develop, but the result was a context that was more supportive of third parties and willing to vote outside the two main party options. It is my argument that in this era and electoral environment, third parties were advantaged at the state-level and that support developed within geographically-distinct units.

Reasons for Studying Vermont

To test this theory about the development of third parties, I argue that the town-level in Vermont during the 1840s and early 1850s can be used. Familiarity with the political context of Vermont during this time period is low, and this section provides reasons for using the Vermont case combined with a brief overview of the state's party system.

The first reason is that the period from 1840-1855 saw the emergence of the anti-slavery Liberty Party (1841-1845), which was replaced within one year's time by the less radical Free Soil Party (1846-1854), which moderated its views on slavery and contained the pragmatic wing of the old Liberty Party (Sewell 1976). In other words, there was third party voting that can be studied in the state.

Second, towns were the main unit of local governance, containing rural farmland and, at times, concentrated centers of population. These concentrated areas of settled populations could be incorporated as villages within the town boundaries, and this practice was most prominent in New England in Vermont (Bates, 1912). However, the race to incorporate villages and cities did not take off in the state until 1870; only eight villages were incorporated prior to 1850, with four more being incorporated between 1850-1859 (Howe 2005). This makes the town the relevant political unit of local governance, especially since the Vermont town hall meeting is, even today, a vital part of the state's identity (see Bryan 2004).[8]

More support for this reason is given in the historical account by R.L. Morrow, who noted that the Liberty Party sustained itself in its early years through lecturers who went from town to town with the party message. It was not until 1844 that the lecture circuit was stopped and the activists worked on establishing county and town committees, as well as establishing the *Green Mountain Freeman*, the party's official newspaper (Morrow 1929).[9]

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[8] The town was the level used to record election results, further indicating the relevance of this geographic and governmental unit.

[9] Data on where the specific committees formed, to my knowledge, is not available in any form.

The third reason for focusing on Vermont is that the Liberty and Free Soil Parties in Vermont had to thrive in an environment where the Whig Party of the state was, to a large degree, anti-slavery. As Holt points out in his work on the history of the Whig Party, the Vermont Whig Congressmen would staunchly oppose the Compromise of 1850 and the Whig Party's President Fillmore, further solidifying the strength of the party in the state (Holt 1999). More evidence of Vermont Whigs' anti-slavery positions can be observed from Congressional members from the state opposing gag rules in the House in the late 1830s-early 1840s (McPherson 1963) and in inaugural speeches made by newly-elected Whig governors who portrayed Vermont's generally anti-slavery ideology in a positive light (State Archives of Vermont Online). In the face of a strong anti-slavery element in the Whig Party of Vermont, the Liberty Party faced an obstacle in developing a consistent support base in the population.[10]

This is not to say that the Democratic Party was weak. Though the Whigs were the dominant party in the state, winning all gubernatorial elections from 1840-1852, the state was a competitive partisan environment. During the Liberty Party years from 1841-1845, the Democrats received between and 38.2% and 45.2% of the yearly gubernatorial vote even when the Liberty Party was receiving above 10% of the vote and the Whigs polled in the mid-40% to just over 50% range. This added up to a significant number of state representatives for the Democrats, since each town had one representative. The Democrats also retained one of the four House districts throughout the 1840s. While the political system heavily favored the anti-slavery Whig Party of Vermont, the Democratic Party was still a viable political party that the Liberty and Free Soil Parties had to contest.

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[10] Finally, Vermont is used because accurate town-level voting data is available for the state.

A fourth reason for using Vermont is that the Liberty Party shifted into the Free Soil Party starting in 1846 and survived the movement of Democrats into the party organization from 1849-1851, both significant hurdles to maintaining party support. The Free Soil Party took on a less radical orientation than the Liberty Party, attracting Democratic voters with the nomination of former President Martin Van Buren as its presidential candidate in 1848. In Vermont, this election led to a coalition known as the Free Soil Democrats, who ran candidates until 1854, but was only "successful" as the second major party through the election of 1851, when the Democrats began to reassert themselves as a separate political entity. The Free Soil Party remained the Free Soil Democrats after the departure of most of the true Democratic identifiers, though I will refer to this organization as the Free Soil Party to avoid confusion. In 1852 and 1853, the Free Soil Party continued to win elected office in the state without the need for Democratic support. 1854 was the last election for the Free Soil Party in the state, with the remnants moving back to one of the two major parties.[11] With these reasons and history in mind, the next step is to develop hypotheses about how the theory provided earlier will be applied to the study of party development in Vermont during the 1840s.

Hypotheses about the Development of Liberty Party Voting

The foremost concern of this study is explaining whether the Liberty Party in Vermont developed geographic-support bases and what advantaged the party in

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[11] The last election of importance to the Free Soilers came in 1853, when elected Free Soil representatives in the statehouse supported the Democratic candidate for governor in exchange for the Speaker of the House position after a clear majority could not be obtained over two elections. This maneuver was not supported by Free Soil voters and non-elected Free Soil candidates, who then began to support the Republican Party in 1854(FairVote.org; Markowitz, n.d.).

developing in particular towns. The first hypothesis, and the first step in this developmental process, is that the Liberty Party vote by town will increase as the level of a town's education increases. Educated towns are, as noted earlier, more likely to contain a potential opinion leader who could either join the party or, at the very least, bring the topic to the attention of others in the town. Through either mechanism, the Liberty Party could begin to establish itself initially in a few towns with a more educated population.

This hypothesis has support in the writings from the *Green Mountain Freeman*, even if the paper was published three years after the initial development of the party. In a resolution passed by the Orange County Party Convetion in 1844, it was stated that "…it is the duty of every lover of universal freedom to exert his influence in private circles, public assemblies, and at that ballot box…" (Orange County Convention, June 28th 1844). These sentiments were surely held prior to a formal party organization, and those who took the cause to heart likely helped in dispensing party writings and spreading the party message.

The second hypothesis is that the Liberty Party vote by town will increase as the percentage of the vote for the Liberty Party in the previous election increases. Though this is empirically an autoregressive relationship, it is crucial to the argument of this article, as it indicates that voting for the third party was not the product of shifting support across towns that was unrelated from election to election. Instead, strong bases of Liberty Party voting developed and were maintained across election cycles.

The third hypothesis is that the Liberty Party vote by town will increase as the percentage of the vote for the Liberty Party in neighboring towns, in the previous election, increases. In other words, this hypothesis tests for a basic spatial relationship.

Towns are influenced by the behavior of neighboring towns, as people within these communities are more likely to communicate on a regular basis and influence each other's political behaviors. However, due to historical circumstances, it is likely that this geographic dependence is not the same across elections. It is likely weakest for the period starting in 1842 with the poor showing for the Liberty Party until 1844, when the party began to mirror the major parties through the establishment of party organizations in towns and starting its own newspaper in the state.[12]

The *Green Mountain Freeman* contains direct evidence that the formation of party organizations was intended to facilitate this spread. County committees were encouraged to put papers and tracts "into the hands of such men in each town as will circulate them to every nook and corner of their town" (Green Mountain Freeman, Jan. 24th 1845). Additionally, county and town committees were urged to "obtain bundles of papers to circulate in those places where our principles are not fully understood, and have not obtained a footing…as in no other way can the same amount of light be brought directly before the minds of the people" (Green Mountain Freeman, April 4th 1845).

A related expectation is that Liberty Party support bases will carry over into the Free Soil Party and survive the tumultuous party movements that occurred between 1848 and 1851, when Democrats temporarily shifted into the Free Soil Party to support Martin Van Buren. I hypothesize that towns where the Liberty Party developed the strongest support bases in the early- to mid-1840s will also be strong supporters of the Free Soil

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[12] One could argue that the relationship should be strongest prior to the development of a formal party organization. When word of mouth was used to spread support, neighboring towns would likely be the most influenced. This is a viable alternative explanation, but I argue that the development of a formal party structure enhanced the localized spread of the Liberty Party beyond what word of mouth could provide. With a structured approach to disseminating the party message, it should lead to higher percentages of Liberty Party voting in a town as neighboring towns increase their voting.

Party in 1852 and 1853, after the Democratic Party reasserted itself and former

Democratic identifiers returned to the major party. Finding support for this hypothesis

would show that the Liberty Party was able to develop strong bases committed to voting

for parties that opposed the expansion and entrenchment of slavery, leading to higher

levels of third party voting over the course of this political era.

Together, these hypotheses can help to advance knowledge about third parties and

why they were more successful in the 1800s than they are today. By showing that voting

for the Liberty Party was the product of developing support bases in certain towns, that

this voting was also the product of neighboring towns exhibiting higher levels of Liberty

voting, and showing that party support remained strong even after the movement of

members into the Free Soil Party, scholars will have a better idea of why the parties of

this time period were able to win significant shares of the vote and maintain this over

election cycles. Evidence that towns where the Liberty Party performed well continued

to be areas of Free Soil support in 1852 and 1853 provides even stronger support for the

notion that third parties could develop and maintain stable voting blocs. This helps add

to the story of higher levels of third party voting in the 1800s, a recurring point made by

major third party research (Rosenstone et al. 1996; Hirano and Snyder 2007).

Still, it is possible that there are other reasons behind the higher levels of third

party voting in Vermont at this time. This means that a number of factors need to be

considered that could affect the expectations and provide different reasons for the

development, maintenance, and diffusion of Liberty and Free Soil voting. Instead of

voting being the product of bases of support, the third parties could have been receiving

more votes because of factors unrelated to the presence of opinion leaders, previous party voting, or the behavior of neighboring towns.

The first such consideration is that the Liberty Party could have been the product of winning over voters in occupations which tended to be either Whig or Democratic. Traditionally, Democrats are viewed as being the party of agriculture and the Whigs/Federalists are viewed as the party of those involved in the manufacturing and distribution of marketable goods. It is possible that the Liberty Party, being the anti-slavery party, would perform better in the areas with more industry and worse in heavily agricultural areas, as the Whigs in Vermont tended to be anti-slavery. The opposite could also be true: the Liberty Party could perform worse in the manufacturing areas if they are competing head-to-head with the Whigs for votes. Either way, these possibilities need to be considered. Second, the Liberty Party could have received more votes because of electorally-lopsided towns where only one major party was dominant. This is because third parties often become attractive options for voters when only one major party has a viable chance for victory in a town, county, or state. Since the Democrats and Whigs were more successful in certain parts of the state than in others, this could lead to incorrect conclusions about the maintenance and spread of Liberty voting if not controlled. A third factor is the size of a town's population. It is possible that the Liberty Party was more successful in either very small or very large towns. In the former, having a smaller population means less voters, so winning over one or two individuals could significantly affect the percentage of the Liberty Party vote in a town. In the latter, large population towns might have an advantage in developing more opinion leaders because of the increasing size of the voting bloc. Furthermore, town populations are not evenly

spread across the state. Some areas of Vermont were more rural than others, even if the state during this time period was essentially all rural by modern population standards. Population size, then, could affect arguments about the effect of neighboring towns noted earlier.

Data Set

I obtained the data for this project from the State Archives of Vermont. The dependent variables being used in the Liberty Party analyses are town-level vote percentages for the Liberty Party candidate for governor from 1841-1846 (elections were yearly), which bookends the first race for governor featuring the Liberty Party in 1841 and the first race for governor featuring the Free Soil Party in 1846. When it comes to determining whether Liberty Party support bases continued to support the Free Soil Party, data from 1852 and 1853 will be used. These years represent the two successful elections for the Free Soil Party after the departure of the Democrats. Additional town-level variables have also been added to the data set to control for localized factors that may have systematically affected third party voting. All of these variables are available from the 1840 U.S. Census, which provides results by town.

The first predictor is simply the percentage of the Liberty Party vote at t-1, which controls for the influence of past voting on current voting. It is expected to be positive and significant in all models. I also used election results to calculate the absolute value of the percentage difference between Whig and Democratic support by town, starting in 1840, which serves to control for the level of major party competition. Higher absolute

values indicate towns where the major parties are not competitive, thus increasing the probability that voters will cast their ballots for a third party that is unlikely to win votes in a close contest between Whigs and Democrats.[13]

I also generated the average percentage of the Liberty Party vote, for each town and in each year from 1841-1845, that combines all the percentages of the vote from bordering towns. For example, if Town A is bordered by Towns B, C, D, E, and F, Towns B-F were averaged together. This variable will help to determine whether town voting for the Liberty Party is affected by higher levels of voting in nearby towns in the previous election. It is expected to have a positive effect, as stronger Liberty Party voting in neighboring towns at t-1 should lead to higher levels of Liberty Party voting in a particular town at time t if party support is spreading across town boundaries.

For measuring the level of education in a town, the best available measure in the 1840 Census is the population of a town that is illiterate. This is turned into a percentage of the total population that is literate, with higher values indicating a greater percentage of literate residents in a town. While there is no way to directly test whether opinion leaders drive the growth in the vote at the town level, and help to spread the party message, this measure does allow me to test whether more educated towns were more receptive to the Liberty Party message and whether they served as initial support bases in the growth and spread of party support to other towns.

The remaining controls mentioned in the previous section are measured using Census data. For occupational categories by town, the population employed in agriculture and the population employed in manufacturing and trade are used, representing

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[13] For the vote totals, there were years when a town's results were either rejected or were not turned in. However, there are few cases of this, and the missing data does not appear to be caused by any systematic pattern/bias.

traditional areas of Democratic and Whig support, respectively. These are converted into percentages of a town's population involved in each occupational category. The final control is the total population of a town. Potentially, this could be positive or negative. Small population towns could have higher Liberty Party voting because winning over very small numbers of voters could significantly alter the town's percentage Liberty vote. Likewise, towns with larger populations have more potential voters to be won over, so higher percentages of the vote could develop in these towns first.

The Liberty Party, 1841-1845

The first step in analyzing the data is to establish whether town-level vote percentages for the Liberty Party are related to one another from year-to-year. Increasingly high correlations from year-to-year would indicate that particular towns consistently supported the Liberty Party. Though this would not indicate what factors predicted Liberty Party vote percentages, correlations would help to establish that towns did develop consistent groups of Liberty Party voters. This follows analyses of third party vote totals in the 20th Century that rely on such techniques at the county- and state-level to infer that there are areas more supportive of third parties across election cycles (see Allen and Brox 2005).

When examining the over time correlations in the Liberty Party vote in Vermont, I am interested in: a.) whether the Liberty Party developed voting bases in towns over the course of its existence and b.) whether the Liberty Party bases of support reached a level consistent with those of the major parties, meaning high year-to-year correlations similar

to those of the major parties. Evidence that the Liberty Party developed stable voting

bases would lend credence to the idea that the party was able to build and sustain support

in some towns over several elections. Furthermore, should the year-to-year correlations

for Liberty Party votes reach levels that parallel year-to-year correlations for the Whigs

and the Democrats, then I have evidence that the Liberty Party in 1840s Vermont was

able to generate consistently strong support bases on par with its major party

counterparts.

[Insert Table 5 Here]

The correlations are presented in Table 1. Whig and Democratic Party

correlations are high from year to year, ranging from .90 to .98. Between 1841-1842 and

1842-1843, the Liberty Party correlations are .73 and .69, respectively. This is fairly

large, but clearly not on par with the Whigs and the Democrats. By 1844-1845, this had

changed, with a correlation of .93, which is much closer to the Whig and Democrat

correlations. Also, between 1845 and 1846 (not shown in Table 1), when the Liberty

Party shifted into the Free Soil Party, the correlation between votes by town was .93.

This is evidence of the stability of support bases being developed and maintained

for the Liberty Party that were almost equivalent to those of the two major parties in

strength.[14] This supports the theoretical argument that third parties in the 1800s were

able to develop bases of voters who would support their party from election-to-election.[15]

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[14] The size of the bases was not equivalent. On average, a town gave 46.36% of its vote to the Whigs (S.D.=18.77; min=0, max=100), 39.64% to the Democrats (S.D.=17.47; min=0, max=100), and 14% to the Liberty Party (S.D.=13.17; min=0, max=61.15) in 1845.

[15] The correlations also speak to research that argues that it takes three election cycles for a voting habit to develop (Butler and Stokes 1974; Franklin 2002), which appears to be the case for the Liberty Party in Vermont. Statewide, there were towns where Liberty Party voting became a habit.

Readers should keep in mind that these are aggregate-level findings. The results cannot speak to the average voter in each town and how they behaved in any one election or across elections; this would be committing the "fallacy of ecological inference" (see Kramer 1983). It is plausible to imply that *some* voters remained loyal to the Liberty Party, much like they did for the Whigs and Democrats; the correlations are quite high and the town populations were quite low by modern standards. However, the main point about party development to glean from the preliminary analysis in Table 1 is that the Liberty Party appears to have developed and maintained support bases at the town-level.

Predictive Model of Liberty Party Voting

The correlations provide a good preliminary step in analyzing Liberty Party support, yet the correlations cannot test the hypotheses laid out earlier. To do so, an empirical model needs to be specified. I will utilize ordinary least squares regression models with the percentage of the Liberty Party vote, by town, as the dependent variable. There are 237 towns for most years, though voting returns for individual towns are sometimes missing from the original records. The standard errors in these models will be clustered by the 14 counties in Vermont. The independent variables are the town's previous vote for the Liberty Party at t-1, the percent of the population that is literate, the town's neighboring percentage of the vote for the Liberty Party at t-1, the town's absolute difference in the major party vote for governor at t-1, overall population, percent of the

population involved in agriculture, and the percent of the population involved in manufacturing and trade.[16]

[Insert Table 6 Here]

These models are displayed in Table 6, along with statewide Liberty or Free Soil vote percentages and fit statistics for each model. First, the models for 1841 and 1842 confirm some expectations about the formative years of the party, especially in regards to the proxy for opinion leadership. As can be seen from the significant percent literate variable, voting for the Liberty Party increased in 1841 and 1842 as the percentage of literate residents in a town in 1840 increased. This confirms expectations that, initially, the Liberty Party was relatively more successful in areas where the populace was more educated. The percent literate is not significant from 1843-1846, but since the models account for past town voting, which itself was affected by the presence of a more educated public in establishing a voting base, this does not go against expectations. [17] Second, all models show that past town voting for the Liberty Party helped predict the vote percentage for the party in the next election. This supports the story described from the correlations in Table 1 and confirms my second hypothesis.

Third, the variable measuring neighboring towns' average percentage of the vote from the previous election is significant in the 1842, 1845, and 1846 models while not significant in the 1843 and 1844 models. These findings comport with expectations. The 1842 election was a poor showing for the Liberty Party (3.9%), but the party did better in

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[16] Tables 1B and 2B in the Appendix provide summary statistics for voting related variables and predictors derived from the Census. Table 3B in the Appendix runs the same models without lagged values of Liberty Party voting and the average Liberty Party vote in neighboring towns.

[17] In Table 3B in the Appendix, when lagged values of voting are not considered, the percent literate is also significant in 1843, with a larger coefficient than in 1842. Thus, in the three years without a formal party organization, voting for the Liberty Party occurred at higher rates in towns with a more literate, educated populace.

towns that had neighbors who voted more highly for the party in 1841. In the 1843 and 1844 election models, past voting by neighboring towns had no significant effect, though Liberty Party voting increased throughout the state and the past town-level vote percentage remained significant (indicating within-town growth in support). With the development of a formal party organization and newspaper in 1844, support was able to spread to neighboring towns, and towns in 1845 were more likely to vote in higher percentages for the Liberty Party if neighboring towns voted in higher percentages in 1844. This continued into 1846, when the Liberty Party changed into the Free Soil Party.

Fourth, the controls do not seem to offer any consistent alternative explanation for party growth. The absolute difference in the major party vote for governor in the last election is only significant and positive in 1841. This indicates that Liberty Party voting was not just a product of electorally lopsided districts. Instead, the Liberty Party had towns in which it was perceived to be electorally competitive or, at the very least, had a committed partisan base. These features are rarely found in regards to 20th and 21st Century third parties.

There also does not appear to be any set pattern of intruding in on traditional Democratic or Whig bases of support. The percent of the town involved in manufacturing and trade, which would represent traditional Whig strongholds, was not significant, and the percent of the town involved in agriculture, which would represent traditional Democratic strongholds, was negatively related to Liberty voting in 1842 but positively related in 1845. Finally, town population is significant and positive in 1841 and in 1846, but is not significant from 1842-1845 and negatively signed in 1843 and 1844.

One critique that could be leveled against these findings is that the parties were tapping into an underlying opposition to slavery in these towns that is not measured. The findings I present do not go against this interpretation of the results, but they do show that the initial support bases, and the spread of support, were built on winning over the most educated towns first and then moving the party message outward.   If there was a general sense of opposition to slavery in these areas, the party still had to spread the message and contest a state Whig Party that was, as mentioned earlier, decidedly anti-slavery in orientation to begin.

Transition to the Free Soil Party/Free Soil Democrats

The next step is to see how the transition from the Liberty to the Free Soil Party affected the support bases, and whether or not the towns that were strong Liberty Party supporters remained so with the new party organization. In fact, one cannot assume that the Liberty Party support bases remained loyal once the Free Soil campaign of former Democratic President Martin Van Buren is taken into account. Vote percentages skyrocket for the party in 1848 (29.6% for the gubernatorial vote) and more so in 1849-1851 (with a high of 44% in 1849) as Democrats move into the party. These increases correspond to the party's name change from the Free Soil Party to the Free Soil Democrats, and the number of Democrats moving in obfuscates the underlying support base generated during the 1841-1846 period.

Still, there are two years of moderate success for the Free Soil Democrats in 1852 and 1853 in which its total percentages of the vote (19.6% and 17.5%, respectively) are

more comparable to the percentages of the vote the Liberty and Free Soil Parties obtained in the period from 1844-1846 (10.2%-14.6%). Therefore, correlation analysis such as that used earlier in this work can help uncover whether town-level support in these earlier years was able to maintain itself through the tumultuous movements of the very late 1840s-very early 1850s. Framed as a question: are the bases of support for the Liberty Party prior to 1848-1851 good indicators of support for the Free Soil Party once the Democrats move out of the party?

[Insert Table 7 Here]

The correlation results are displayed in Table 7. The two years after the Democrats had left the Free Soil organization (1852 and 1853) are both years in which Free Soil vote percentages are correlated at levels above .6 with Liberty Party voting in 1844 and 1845.[18] The correlations show that the movement of Democrats into the Free Soil Party, and their abandonment of the party after 1851, did not completely destroy the Free Soil's traditional support bases that formed under the Liberty Party. Thus, the third party voting bases that developed in particular towns during the Liberty Party years remained relatively strong after the move to the Free Soil Party.

Geographically-Based Support from Liberty to Free Soil

The correlations presented in the previous section go only so far in explaining the maintenance of Liberty Party support as members moved into the Free Soil Party. Earlier regression results do help to support these correlations, as they showed that there was a

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[18] Correlations involving the Free Soil Party from 1849-1851 are quite low with 1846-1848 and 1852-1853. The correlations are typically around .15-.25, indicating that the party was gaining support outside the traditional areas of Free Soil support.

neighboring towns effect that influenced Liberty Party, and the first year of Free Soil

Party, voting. However, neither result can ensure that a.) the party's message was able to

diffuse from particular centers of party support that developed early on and b.) that these

early bases of Liberty Party strength remained strong supporters for the Free Soil Party in

the early 1850s. Additional regression models like those in Table 6 for this later Free

Soil period would also not be able to easily isolate whether the strongest groups of

Liberty Party towns continued in their support, nor could they enable us to see any

patterns of diffusing support. To do this, spatial analysis, combined with mapping the

results, provides an intuitive way of testing for diffusion and the maintenance of support.

I first utilize the program SaTScan™ (Kulldorff and Information Management

Services, Inc. 2006) to identify where spatial "clusters" of Liberty Party voting

developed.[19] Originally designed to be used in the study of diseases, the program allows

users to test whether clusters are randomly distributed over space, over time, or over

space and time by utilizing scan statistics. This is accomplished by the program

"gradually scanning a window across time and/or space, noting the number of observed

and expected observations inside the window at each location" (SaTScan™ User Guide,

Version 7.0).   After running through a pre-determined number of simulations, the

"window" with the maximum likelihood is considered the primary "cluster," with other

secondary clusters provided. The primary cluster is "the cluster least likely to be due by

chance," with the secondary clusters also being less likely to be due by chance. With

these clusters come p-values, allowing the user to determine whether the null hypothesis

of complete spatial randomness can be rejected (SaTScan™ User Guide, Version 7.0).

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[19] SaTScan™ is a trademark of Martin Kulldorff. The SaTScan™ software was developed under the joint auspices of (i) Martin Kulldorff, (ii) the National Cancer Institute, and (iii) Farzad Mostashari of the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

If significant clusters of Liberty Party voting exist, the significant clusters can then be mapped over levels of Liberty and Free Soil Party voting, by town, for selected years. This mapping of the clusters will provide an intuitive way to see if the early clusters of Liberty Party voting, when mapped over Liberty and Free Soil vote percentages in later election cycles, overlap. I can also check for localized diffusion this way, as we should see that voting for these parties spread to towns near the significant clusters and that the clusters generally remain concentrated areas of high-level Liberty and Free Soil Party support.

To test this in SaTScan™, a spatial analysis was conducted on the Liberty Party percentages of the vote in 1843, as 1843 signifies the start of high year-to-year vote correlations but is not part of the highest year-to-year correlation (see Table 1) (see Kulldorff 1997).[20] The program ran 999 Monte Carlo simulations on the case data. All significant clusters identified by the program at the p<.01 level were retained.[21] As run, the spatial analysis allows for each town to be its own cluster and clusters cannot overlap one another.[22]

[Insert Figure 5 Here]

To best display the results, maps of Vermont were created using ArcGIS 9.0 that identify the 1843 spatial voting clusters over town-level voting percentages in later

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[20] Using 1843 also provides a tougher test for the diffusion and maintenance of Liberty/Free Soil voting, as 1843 was a year before the development of the Liberty Party's formal party organization.

[21] Towns within clusters were dropped if the program could not identify the number of observed/expected cases in which the town in question was a part of a "window" during the simulations that lead to the clusters. This is part of the output provided by SaTScan™. Out of 38 cases, this occurred in 11 cases. Placing them on the maps as diamonds provides the same general result, and these maps are available from the author upon request.

[22] A total of five clusters were significant at the p<.01 level. One of the clusters was a single town (West Fairlee, located in the central-eastern part of Vermont).

election years.[23] In Figure 5, the two maps show the significant 1843 clusters overlaid on 1843 and 1845 Liberty Party vote percentages by town, with towns filled in with darker shades indicating higher percentages of the vote. The towns in significant clusters are displayed with white diamonds placed within the geographic center of each town's boundaries.

We can observe that there was a tendency for Liberty Party voting to spread out from the significant clusters from 1843 to 1845. Towns near clusters in 1843 increased to darker shades by 1845, showing an increase in Liberty Party voting. This provides further evidence that the Liberty Party's ability to form and maintain voting blocs was not merely a process of "winning over" specific, isolated towns. Instead, the Liberty Party's success hinged on expanding outward from earlier bases of support, lending additional support to the earlier empirical models that Liberty Party voting in a town was related to the voting of neighboring towns in earlier election years.

[Insert Figure 6 Here]

The next step is to then identify whether these clusters continued to be areas of strength for the Free Soil Party. A stringent test is to see whether the significant clusters of Liberty Party voting in 1843 continue to be areas of strong Free Soil support in the years 1852 and 1853, after the Free Soil successes in 1848-49 and the brief merger with Democrats. As Figure 6 shows, this is clearly the case; the areas of Liberty Party support in 1843 remain firmly in the Free Soil camp. Even as votes for the Free Soil Party

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[23] At the time of this article, no maps that are GIS-ready exist for Vermont during this time period at the town-level. A modern map was used, and thankfully, town boundaries were largely established by this time; earlier maps were consulted to verify that the units remained largely unchanged. While the results are not affected, two points should be made for clarification. First, there are a few small white spots on the map, corresponding to cities within towns that separated much later from the towns than is dealt with in this article. Second, the county of Grand Isle, which is a series of islands with towns in the far northwestern part of the state (Lake Champlain), are pushed inward on this map, as they "border" the mainland towns.

decline in 1853, the clusters remain strong supporters. This is most observable in the southern-most cluster, where some of the nearby voting outside the cluster began to weaken in its support for the Free Soil Party.[24]

The results of the spatial analysis help further confirm and expand on the findings earlier in this article. First, Liberty Party support was not just a town-level phenomenon; towns that voted at higher levels for the party tended to cluster near one another. Second, there is evidence that the Liberty Party did expand from areas of early party successes, allowing the party to increase its vote totals. Third, this allowed the Liberty Party in Vermont to transform relatively easily into the Free Soil Party and helped to maintain the Free Soil Party, even after the 1848 Van Buren presidential campaign and the brief working relationship with the Democrats had ended. This is strong evidence for the argument that the core voting bloc for the Liberty Party, after moving into the Free Soil Party, was maintained. Unlike modern third parties, a true constituency formed and maintained partisan attachments and helped the Liberty and Free Soil Parties to achieve relative third party success at the ballot box.

Conclusion

The findings presented in this article show that during the 1800s, third parties could develop localized bases of support, maintain such bases over time, and use these bases to increase voting in surrounding towns. First, due to the limitations placed on communication and transportation, localized development was aided by building support

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[24] Using higher upper thresholds for the Free Soil Party vote (up to 40%) provide the same substantive results as the 13% threshold for 1852 and 1853, when the average Free Soil vote was higher than 13%. These maps are available upon request.

in towns with a more educated public and a greater probability of containing "opinion leaders" who would be willing to support, and spread the message about, a third party. Once this support developed, then the party could build its support within a town. This appears to be the case, for as voting for the Liberty Party increased between 1841-1845, the best predictor of a town's vote percentage for the Liberty Party is the previous election cycle's town vote percentage.

There was also a neighbor effect on Liberty Party voting, where a town's percentage of the vote for the Liberty Party, and the first year of the Free Soil Party, was affected by the average vote percentage for the Liberty Party in neighboring towns in the previous election year. This provides evidence that voting was not an occurrence focused solely on individual towns, but that there was likely a social dynamic aiding the maintenance of such support among towns. It also alludes to the argument that, in some years, voting was able to diffuse to neighboring towns.

The bases of support for the Liberty Party carried over to the Free Soil Party and helped the expansion of third party voting during this time period. The spatial analysis, combined with correlation results, shows that town-level Liberty Party voting and the significant clusters of towns that were more supportive of the Liberty Party in 1843 helped to increase the party's vote totals in nearby towns. These clusters of towns continued to serve as strong supporters of the Free Soil Party until that party's death.

This article gives scholars an in-depth look into the actual development of third party voting, at the state-level, during the 1800s. Existing research has focused mainly on why third party voting has declined across states and at the national level since the 1800s (Rosenstone et al. 1986; Hirano and Snyder 2007), but this article has shed light on

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an important preceding question. I have shown that towns with higher levels of education were the starting point for the development of third parties in the 1800s. These groups of towns served as the centers of party support before successfully spreading the message to neighboring towns, another finding that helps us to understand how third parties could contest over multiple election cycles and win government offices. Finally, these findings help to differentiate between the experiences of early and modern third parties, the latter of which are not successful at establishing core bases of support. Overall, the evidence adds to our understanding of third parties and party development in the 1800s.

Table 5: Year-to-Year Correlations for Town Percentage Vote for Governor, for Each Party, 1841-1845

Year	Whigs	Democrats	Liberty
1840-1841	.90	.98	---
1841-1842	.93	.98	.73
1842-1843	.96	.97	.69
1843-1844	.97	.97	.83
1844-1845	.97	.97	.93

Table 6: Predicting Percentage of Liberty and Free Soil Party Votes, by Year and by Town

Predictors	1841	1842	1843	1844	1845	1846
Liberty Vote, t-1	---	.33 (.05)***	1.2 (.12)***	.75 (.05)***	.98 (.05)***	.77 (.06)***
Liberty Vote in Neighboring Towns, t-1	---	.12 (.05)**	.38 (.23)	.15 (.17)	.18 (.07)**	.18 (.08)**
Absolute Difference in Major Party Vote, t-1	.12 (.04)**	-.01 (.01)	-.03 (.02)	.03 (.03)	.02 (.01)	-.01 (.02)
Agriculture	.06 (.04)	-.06 (.02)***	.07 (.09)	.09 (.08)	.1 (.04)**	-.01 (.04)
Manufacturing and Trade	.13 (.17)	.03 (.09)	.07(.23)	-.24 (.15)	-.17 (.2)	-.2 (.15)
Literate	.78 (.22)***	.16 (.06)**	.09 (.19)	-.36 (.44)	.05 (.16)	.02 (.1)
Town Population	.002 (.0001)**	.0001 (.0003)	-.0003 (.0004)	-.001 (.001)	.001 (.001)	.002 (.0005)***
Constant	-79.25 (21.61)***	-13.69 (5.94)**	-8.30 (17.29)	38.28 (43.98)	-7.61 (16.03)	-1.94 (9.75)
Liberty/Free Soil Vote %	6.3%	3.9%	7.5%	10.2%	13.5%	14.6%
N=	223	225	229	229	230	230
F=	6.7	98.58	74.25	81.96	149.28	750.78
Prob.>F=	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
R-Sq.=	.13	.51	.44	.49	.79	.80

Ordinary least squares coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Standard errors are clustered by county. ***$p<.01$, **$p<.05$, *$p<.10$.

Table 7: Year-to-Year Correlations for Town Percentage Vote for Governor, Between
Liberty and Free Soil Voting

Years	Correlation
1841-1852	.32
1841-1853	.32
1842-1852	.36
1842-1853	.37
1843-1852	.49
1843-1853	.49
1844-1852	.66
1844-1853	.63
1845-1852	.66
1845-1853	.68

Figure 5: 1843 and 1845 Liberty Party Vote in Vermont, by Town, with Spatial Clusters
from 1843 Represented by Diamonds

1843   1845
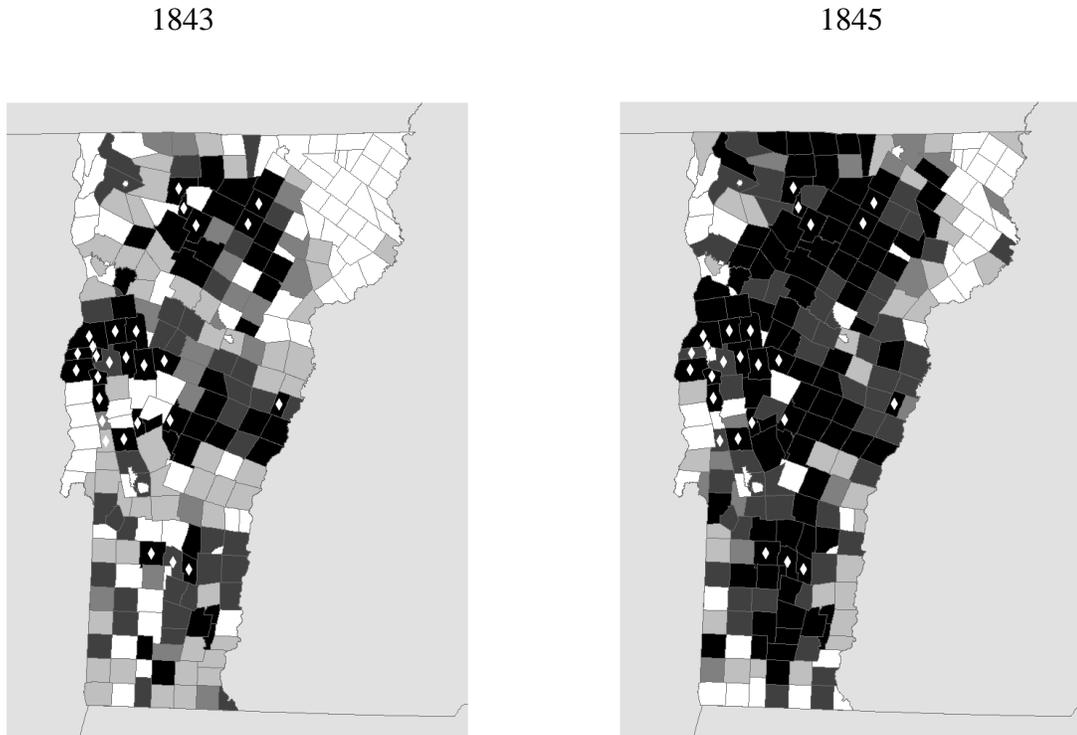
Darker colors indicate higher percentages of the Liberty Party vote by town. White areas
indicate 0% of the vote; light gray 1-3%; gray 4-6%; dark gray 7-12%; and black 13%
and above. Diamonds indicate towns that were included in spatial clusters, in 1843, as
generated using SaTScan™.

Figure 6: 1852 and 1853 Free Soil Party Vote in Vermont, by Town, with Spatial
Clusters from 1843 Represented by Diamonds

1852   1853

Darker colors indicate higher percentages of the Liberty Party vote by town. White areas
indicate 0% of the vote; light gray 1-3%; gray 4-6%; dark gray 7-12%; and black 13%
and above. Diamonds indicate towns that were included in spatial clusters, in 1843, as
generated using SaTScan™.

Chapter 4

MINOR PARTIES AND FUSION: DO THE THIRD PARTIES BEHAVE LIKE REAL
POLITICAL PARTIES

The presence of two major political parties is well-established in the United

States. Scholars note that this is because of Duverger's Law (1954), which states that

there is a tendency for two parties to develop in a first-past-the-post electoral system.

Still, electoral laws can change this two-party dynamic if they provide minor parties with

a method for institutionalizing their support. This is typically done through the adoption

of a proportional representation system, which is noted by scholars as the way in which

minor parties can take an active role in the political process (Duverger 1954; Cox 1997;

Katz 1997).

However, one way that minor parties can exist in a first-past-the-post system is

through the allowance of fusion candidacies, with the premiere example of this system

being in New York. With fusion, a minor party can cross-endorse a major party

candidate, and in New York, this means that the major party candidate will also appear

on a separate minor party ballot line. Minor parties retain the ballot space for four years

if their candidate receives 50,000 votes in the gubernatorial election. The cross-

endorsement of a major party candidate is the most common method of accomplishing

this task.[25]

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[25] There are exceptions. The 1990 gubernatorial race featured a separate Conservative Party candidate, and
the Independence Party, until the 2006 election, always nominated millionaire Thomas Golisano for the
office.

Scholars have paid little attention to this distinct electoral arrangement, even though the system as implemented in New York allows these fusion (minor) parties to thrive under a first-past-the-post system. Studying this system could illuminate how fusion parties view their role in the political process and provide new insights into how these political parties operate in relation to the major parties, how they influence policy and major party candidates, and whether they function like major political parties. These findings would speak to a wide array of existing scholarship on political parties, electoral systems, and state politics and have practical implications for reformers interested in changing state election law.

I study this electoral system by conducting elite interviews with fusion party leaders. By utilizing interviews, the goal was to obtain detailed, first-hand accounts of how these parties and their activists perceive their role in the political process and in the formation of public policy. I found that activists in fusion parties behave and act like major party activists and that the electoral system grants these parties more leverage in candidate selection and policy debates than one might expect. Even though candidates rarely get directly elected on a fusion party ballot line, the chance that a candidate might need votes on a fusion party line, and the threat posed by a fusion party deciding to run its own candidate instead of cross-nominating, gives these parties power beyond what their vote totals typically suggest.

These findings are in contradiction to scholarship that views minor parties as little more than "pressure groups" (see Schattschneider 1942). I find that fusion parties attempt to harness the goals and desires of politicians to win office and affect policy change (Aldrich 1995) much like major parties. Fusion balloting, then, can help to create

a multi-party system in a first-past-the-post electoral system. Though major parties still want to reduce the amount of electoral competition they face (Cox 1997), candidates will support a fusion system if there are positive benefits that can be accrued from receiving multiple ballot lines and fusion party endorsements. This final point helps to answer why fusion is accepted in New York, why politicians in Oregon actively supported legislation that will bring fusion to statewide elections in 2010, and why this issue demands attention as a state-level electoral reform.

Fusion Parties in New York

There are currently three "fusion" parties in New York, designated as such due to their reliance on cross-endorsements of major party candidates: The Conservative Party, the Working Families Party, and the Independence Party. Each is distinct on the ideological spectrum, with the Conservative Party occupying the right-wing, the Working Families Party the left-wing, and the Independence Party straddling the "center." The Conservative Party tends to nominate Republican candidates, the Working Families Party tends to nominate Democratic candidates, and the Independence Party makes its selections on a case-by-case basis. Additionally, each party does run its own candidates in select races.

The oldest of the three is the Conservative Party, which was founded in 1962 in response to the leftward shift of the Republican Party in the state. Its platform is a testament to its true ideologically-conservative roots (Conservative Party Website, 2008), as the Republican Party in New York is often noted as being less conservative than most state Republican Parties. The Conservative Party was, for a long time, the

counterbalance to the Liberal Party, which was founded in 1944 and used cross-nominations prior to the emergence of the Conservative Party (Liberal Party Website, 2010).[26] During this time, they elected James Buckley to the US Senate in 1970 on the Conservative Party line and were able to get William Carney, a registered Conservative, elected to the US House of Representatives through the Republican Party in 1978. Today, the Conservative Party still operates with a heavy reliance on cross-endorsing major party candidates, mainly Republican candidates.

The Independence and Working Families Parties are both newer. The Independence Party formed in 1991 and became loosely affiliated with United We Stand America and the Reform Party/Perot campaign in 1996. Its platform is focused on a mixture of centrist policies, but they are known for advocating modern populist principles, such as adopting initiative, referenda, and campaign finance reform in the state. The party rose to prominence in the state behind Thomas Golisano, a billionaire businessman who resided in the Rochester area and was a founding member of the party. Golisano was its gubernatorial candidate in the 1994, 1998, and 2002 races, finishing in 2002 with approximately 14% of the vote. The party also has a tendency to nominate other minor party candidates for president, giving their ballot line to John Hagelin (Buchanan's Reform Party opponent) in 2000 and Ralph Nader in 2004. However, the Independence Party has been weakened by rifts in their organization between leftist ideologues in the New York City party and more moderate members throughout the rest of the state. After a series of court battles, the Independence Party of New York City

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[26] Though they operate a website, the Liberal Party has been all but dead in the state since 2002, after the party gave its line to Andrew Cuomo for the gubernatorial race. Cuomo pulled out of the race and the Liberal Party did not have time to replace Cuomo with a new candidate. They failed to reach the required 50,000 votes in the gubernatorial election to maintain ballot access, and the party has since been replaced by the Working Families Party.

tends to operate independently within its sphere of influence (see Independence Party of New York City website).

The Working Families Party is even newer, having gained official ballot status for the first time in 1998. They campaign on a series of left-wing, progressive topics such as "living wages," increasing and improving public transportation, controlling housing costs, and universal health care. Their greatest successes to date have been in the New York City area, and a recent *New York Times* article noted that the Working Families Party played a significant role in the 2009 New York City primary races (Bosman and Fahim 2009). They have also been active in promoting fusion in other states. The Working Families Party started a Connecticut branch of the party in 2002 and in South Carolina (Working Families Party Website 2010), and, as will be discussed again later, party members helped to push for legislation legalizing a version of fusion balloting in Oregon in 2009 (Mapes 2009). New York State, however, remains the primary focus for the party and the establishment and expansion of their message.

What Earlier Scholars Have Said on New York's Minor Party Arrangement

Most recent research done on the role of minor parties in New York politics can be attributed to two scholars, Howard Scarrow and Robert Spitzer. In Scarrow's book, *Parties, Elections, and Representation in the State of New York* (1983), one chapter focuses on the issue of New York's multi-party system and cross-endorsement of candidates. While offering a thorough description of the history of New York's "fusion" ballot, the chapter is absent empirical analysis. In fact, the final section of the chapter is a

normative argument for why the system is out-dated and should be done away with. This is due to four negative consequences of the fusion system: the strength of minor parties outweighs their electoral strength, the bargaining between major and minor parties adds to cynicism about politics, the system does not provide a multi-party system with a wide variety of choices, and the system leads to minority election outcomes when a minor party enters its own candidate into an election (Scarrow 1983).

Spitzer's recent book chapters (1997/2002) are similar to Scarrow's book in content. In Spitzer's book, *The Right to Life Movement and Third Party Politics* (1987), the author does use survey data to investigate party leaders and activists in New York's Right to Life Party. However, the last chapter of the book takes on a normative bent, actively opposing Scarrow's position that the system is outdated (this is also a feature of Spitzer's articles). Less normative presentations put forth by Stonecash (1998) and Schneier and Murtaugh (2001) cover the same material presented by Scarrow and Spitzer.

The only prominent published study that looks specifically at the fusion ballot in New York is by Michelson and Susin (2004). They assess whether or not votes for the Working Families Party, in a special election for the Nassau County legislature, are displaced Democrats or new voters. Their evidence suggests the latter, though the relationship did not hold for other third parties in the election.

While a beneficial step in starting to assess the issue of minor parties in New York and how electoral arrangements that aid these parties lead to certain outcomes, the study is limited. First, the election chosen was a special election to fill a vacant seat, and the office being contested (a seat in the Nassau County legislature) was local in nature

and not prominent. Second, though the authors argue that the election was "highly publicized and hotly contested," turnout was below 30% and the Democrat/Working Families/Independence/Liberal candidate won with 58% of the vote, compared with 22.4% for the Republican candidate and a staggering 19% for the Green Party nominee.

Unpublished dissertation work by Shan (1991) studied the decline in State Senate competition in New York from 1950-1988. He found that minor party endorsements were critical to major party candidates in three percent of all races when the candidate received enough votes to win the election on the minor party ballot line. This indicates that minor party endorsements can influence outcomes in tight races. A prominent example of this outside State Senate races was the 1994 race for governor. George Pataki obtained enough votes to defeat Mario Cuomo only after the Conservative Party totals were added to his Republican total. This is strong evidence that fusion parties matter for electoral outcomes in the state, but we do not have a theory about, and knowledge of, how the parties view themselves, what their goals are, what their motivations are for staying politically active, and how they influence political outcomes.

Fusion Balloting and Electoral Systems

The effect of the fusion ballot also has implications beyond New York State and research on political parties, as understanding the institution can speak to scholars of electoral systems. Fusion balloting was quite common in the late 1800s and early 1900s, but was ended in many states by the Republican Party, as the system was believed to advantage Democrats and Populists, who often fused their ballots (Argersinger 1980). In

one unique example, Populists in North Carolina relied on fusing with the state's Republican Party. Together, the coalition swept into power in 1896, bringing with them a host of black office holders. When the Democrats were able to regain power in 1898 by running a vehemently racist campaign, provisions were put in place to eliminate this practice of cross-endorsement from continuing (Faulkner, accessed 2/14/2009). This shows how both major parties were willing to remove the system of fusion balloting when it did not work to their electoral advantage.

Recently, there have been attempts to bring the system back in some states, making it a viable area for study. In *Timmons v. Twin Cities Area New Party* (1997), the New Party sued the state to allow them to cross-endorse candidates who were willing to accept their ballot line. The U.S. Supreme Court, in a 6-3 decision, found that the State of Minnesota could control access to the ballot and prevent the New Party from cross-endorsing major party candidates, thus limiting the expansion of the fusion system. Disch (2002) argues that this decision was a victory for the major parties, as those in the majority on the Supreme Court believed that existing laws did not overly burden or restrict third parties and that fusion could lead to a confusing ballot in an unstable system where political parties are "created" just for the purposes of the ballot.

This decision still allows individual states to determine whether fusion is allowed, and one prominent attempt to bring back the system has been successful. In the summer of 2009, fusion was approved for use in elections in Oregon after being passed through both houses of the legislature and receiving the governor's approval (Mapes 2009). Additionally, the system is still used to a limited degree in Vermont, Connecticut, and South Carolina, with the latter two operating under a system that is similar to that in

New York. This will be mentioned again later, as the Working Families Party is working

to establish themselves as a legitimate force in Connecticut and South Carolina and take

advantage of the electoral arrangement.

This brings to light the question of how fusion balloting fits within the broader

framework of established work on electoral systems, as the system has some role in the

election processes of some US states. Katz (1997) breaks down electoral systems into

four dimensions, those being how the distribution of votes cast translates into seats, the

format of the choice given to the electorate, the electorate itself, and the candidates and

their concerns. The presence of fusion balloting has an effect on all four aspects.

For translating votes into seats, the fusion system in New York provides third

parties that cross-endorse the opportunity to "win" elections without necessitating that

their chosen candidate wins a plurality of votes on the party line. Since voting for a

fusion party is counted on a separate party line, and then added to a candidate's total from

other party lines, the exact nature of the vote can be broken down by party. Other fusion

systems operate with all the endorsements on one ballot line, thus making it harder to

disentangle whether a candidate received a vote as a major or minor party candidate.

Thus, the format of the choice is also different than in most American states.

The electorate itself can also approach the ballot differently. Instead of merely

casting a vote for Candidate X on a major party line, a voter can determine whether there

is symbolic or ideological value in casting a vote for Candidate X on a fusion party line.

For example, if a candidate has the Republican, Independence, and Conservative Party

endorsements, a voter who believes the candidate should be more ideologically

conservative can cast her vote on the Conservative Party line. A voter with no party

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affiliation or who is ideologically moderate may choose to cast her vote on the Independence Party line to signal to the candidate that she wants a politician who is not entirely beholden to the Republican platform.

Finally, candidates have to accept the cross-endorsement or actively campaign for it in some circumstances, which can affect candidates and their concerns. This adds an additional layer of depth to the traditional campaign, as now a candidate could potentially campaign for two (or more) party nominations. Not only does a candidate deal with a major party that pressures them, but they also face scrutiny from a second, third, or fourth cross-endorsing fusion party.

Current literature on electoral systems would suggest that the above concern about additional electoral pressure might lead major parties to oppose a fusion system. In the book *Making Votes Count*, Cox noted that, "Successful electoral coordination necessarily involves a reduction in the number of competitors" (1997). This appears to explain why Democrats and Republicans during the Populist and Progressive eras were willing to discard the system of cross-endorsement in most states when it did not help them win office.

It would seem, then, to be counterintuitive for the two major parties in New York to allow the system to exist and that both parties in Oregon would be willing to adopt the fusion ballot. However, the system can succeed if candidates are self-interested and the minor parties serve this self-interest. As Aldrich (1995) noted, modern political parties are no longer focused on the "party principle," where the party itself is more important than the individuals in the party. Individuals that compose the greater body of parties are most important, as parties "are constructed to realize both shared *and* self-interested

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goals" (278). The minor parties in New York that rely on cross-endorsement can exist electorally because the members have shared political goals and the candidates they endorse have self-interested goals that can benefit from the cross-endorsement. For example, a moderate Republican who is interested in increasing the minimum wage or working on lower housing costs shares goals with the Working Families Party and their endorsed candidates but still benefits from the collective strength of the Republican Party on other issues such as taxes. In this way, this example candidate has an interest in promoting herself on both party lines.

This also aids the goals of the major and the minor party, both of which are concerned with "the regulation of [candidate] ambition to achieve desirable outcomes…" (Aldrich 1995, 294). With a major party, the ability to control candidates with incentives is greater than what minor parties can offer. Still, the ability to cross-endorse grants these minor parties the opportunity to provide added incentives to candidates and help with their re-election and career goals. In New York, the greatest incentive is an additional ballot line, as the New York fusion system separates out the major endorsement from the cross-endorsement. This also means that the minor party support can be quantified, unlike states such as Vermont where the candidate only receives one ballot line with multiple parties listed beneath her name. Also, minor parties do have resources that are made available to candidates who win a nomination, especially in terms of manpower for campaign activities.

For candidates to have continued access to cross-endorsement, minor parties must receive 50,000 votes or more on their party line for governor to continue to have statewide ballot access. The easiest way to do this is through cross-endorsing a major

party gubernatorial candidate. Major parties and their candidates benefit by undercutting

potential third party opposition, and minor parties can help "benefit-seekers" (Aldrich

1995) and candidates achieve their long-term goals, too. In the 1990 gubernatorial

election, the Republican candidate failed to win the Conservative Party nomination and

almost received fewer votes than the Conservative Party's own candidate. Then, in 1994,

Republican George Pataki narrowly defeated Democratic Governor Mario Cuomo after

the votes he received on the Conservative Party line were tabulated into his total.

Conservative Party elites were appointed to state positions as a result (cite). These fusion

parties, then, exist because they can help ambitious candidates win office, they reduce

overall ballot competition, and they can help push for shared policy goals across major

party lines in an era of candidate-centered elections.

Developing Systematic Expectations

The first step in developing a relevant theory of fusion parties must first establish

whether these are truly "political parties." They rarely win elected office outright, and, as

Spitzer has pointed out, they might not want to win office when they can obtain benefits

through cross-endorsement (Spitzer 2006). This viewpoint implies that these minor

parties can be viewed more as "pressure groups," since they do not want to control office,

or as "educational movements" rather than "genuine parties" (Schattschneider 1942).

I argue that such an assessment is too facile when observing New York. The

fusion parties in New York are organized attempts to gain political control through

winning elections, which is a crucial factor in Schattschneider's definition of a political

party. The problem is that winning elections is a different calculus in New York than it is in other states. As William Riker asserts, "when the definition of winning forces candidates to maximize votes in order to win…they [candidate] have strong motives to create a two-party system; but when the definition of winning does not require them [candidates] to maximize votes…then this motive for two parties is absent" (1982, 755; parenthetical insertions mine).

In a sense, the fusion system falls somewhere between these extremes. Candidates still need to maximize votes in order to win, but this can occur across party labels because each party label is separate. For the fusion parties, then, winning under a system of cross-endorsement does not require that the candidate maximize her vote on their party line, so long as the candidate they endorsed is maximizing votes across all party lines. We can expect the fusion parties of New York to act like major political parties, though with a different definition of electoral victory than is held by the major parties; these are not "pressure" groups that are not concerned with winning office. Thus, the election of cross-endorsed candidates can be viewed as a sign of party strength and influence, especially when an election is close.

Expectation One: The fusion parties in New York will view themselves as legitimate political parties and will view electoral victory largely through the election of cross-endorsed candidates as a means to achieving their policy goals.

Another aspect of political parties set forth by Schattschneider is that major parties have supremacy over minor parties. However, in the case of New York, accounts

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note how major party politicians often appeal to the minor parties for their support and fear losing their support.[27] The additional fusion party line can serve as a method for "branding" a candidate (Downs 1957) as being a true conservative, if they win the Conservative Party nomination, or a true liberal, if they win the Working Families Party nomination. Still, the fusion parties do need to be somewhat deferential to the candidates put forth by the major parties to be effective. The Conservative Party would likely not survive if they refused to cross-endorse a majority of the Republican candidates, and the same holds true for the Working Families Party and its relationship to the Democratic party. In return, activists in fusion parties can receive patronage positions when an endorsed major party candidate is elected, providing an incentive to go along with a major party's wishes (Schneier and Murtaugh 2001).

There are times, however, when a fusion party will run its own candidate, even if a candidate is not a legitimate threat to the major parties. In general, major party candidates want to limit competition in their district (Aldrich 1995), especially if the race might be close, and running a non-viable candidate does not help the fusion party obtain benefits from a major party in this scenario. This makes a fusion party's decision to run its own candidate relatively rare for major offices.

In some situations the fusion parties appear to push their chosen candidate through a major party's primary process, eliminating the need to run their own candidate on their own ballot line. This occurred in the case of Tim Gordon, who was the Independence Party's selection to run for the state legislature in 2006 in Assembly District 108 after the incumbent Republican assemblyman chose not to run. Gordon, the

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[27] Edward Koch, when mayor of New York City, was once quoted as saying in 1982: "I believe that the people of the state of New York are finding that the minor parties are the tail that wags the dog, and are seeking to impose their candidates on the major party" (taken from Spitzer 2006).

vice chair of the Albany County Independence Party (Benjamin 2006), entered and won the Democratic Party line and ran a successful general election campaign, winning a seat in the state legislature. Thus, the system appears to be more symbiotic than an absolute dominance by the major parties, even if the major parties hold actual power and are the stronger organizations.

Expectation Two: The fusion parties are aware that their role in the system relies on the major parties, though at the same time, they are keenly aware that the major parties are reliant on them as well. Thus, the fusion parties will tend to cross-nominate ideologically similar candidates and will try to work within the two-party framework to pursue electing their own candidates.

There are situations in this fusion system where the Conservative Party nominates a Democratic candidate or the Working Families Party nominates a Republican. I argue that access to the policy-making process will play a role in these cases. Cross-endorsement will provide the proverbial "foot in the door" needed to influence a politician's political behavior. Policy cannot be influenced without a channel for communications, and opening your party line to a candidate, even if less ideologically similar than most cross-endorsed candidates, can be the necessary component. To achieve party ends, there are times when some ideological flexibility is needed.[28]

This does not mean that the parties operate without regard for ideology, for each party does have a specific label that provides information to the voter (Downs 1957).

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[28] For the Independence Party, which pursues "centrist" policies, it is unclear what ideology they are, as it varies. However, for the Conservative and Working Families Parties, ideological flexibility is clear.

What it does mean is that electoral considerations can, under certain circumstances, lead a fusion party to support a candidate from an ideologically opposite major party if the minor party believes it can influence the candidate on some issue/subset of issues. This should not be too surprising, as current political parties are faced with the problem of harnessing the ambitions of individual politicians into outcomes that are desired by the party (Aldrich 1995). For fusion parties, this will include nominating candidates from a major party that is often seen as being generally opposed to its party platform.

Expectation Three: Fusion parties will cross-endorse candidates that are from an ideologically opposite major party to achieve their goals of electoral victory and policy influence when they believe a candidate can be influenced on a subset of issues.[29]

These three expectations focus more on the electoral aspect of the fusion parties and their goals/motivations, which are connected to the concept of "party-as-organization"; deciding who to nominate is the essential function of these parties (Key 1964). What has not been touched upon are the ways in which the fusion parties function once their endorsed candidates are put in office. The next step, then, is to try and develop expectations about how fusion parties view their relationships with the major parties.

Since cross-endorsement is believed to be a "foot-in-the-door" for the fusion parties to influence legislators, the fusion parties will have some agenda, or set of issues, that they wish to pursue once in office. Though each fusion party has a party platform, a strategic party would emphasize a different agenda based on what is being dealt with in

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[29] One addendum to this is that a major party candidate does not have to accept the cross-endorsement and may choose to decline it. In this case, the major party candidate will likely win office, and the fusion party would have no "foot in the door" to influence policy goals.

the state capitol, county seat, or city council. This is especially true given that the fusion parties cannot set the legislative or media agendas (Baumgartner and Jones 1993); they must work within the framework set by the major parties.

Expectation Four: Fusion parties will have a limited role in setting the legislative and media agendas, thus forcing them to adapt their policy agenda to the issues that the major parties deem important at that time.

Another purpose that the fusion parties could serve is to be a check on the major parties and their behavior. In the electoral sense, a politician who was nominated by the Working Families Party who begins to vote against liberal legislation will likely lose the party's nomination in the next election cycle. When an election is not on the horizon, the Working Families Party will warn that politician that her behavior will not be tolerated and that opposing more liberal legislation will likely result in the loss of the party's nomination.

Framed differently, the fusion parties will act as ideological "shadow" governments for the major parties. The Conservative Party does function in this role, providing legislative scores for the State Assembly and Senate based on votes on key pieces of legislation. While the other parties do not go this far, I expect to see that all fusion parties monitor those politicians they endorse in some way, whether through formal meetings or informal conversations. Additionally, the fusion parties likely search for candidates they did not endorse in the last election but proved themselves sufficiently

conservative/liberal/centrist in their legislative voting to garner a nomination in the next election cycle.

Expectation Five: Fusion parties will monitor legislative behavior, especially as it regards cross-endorsed candidates, and they will attempt to keep their endorsed candidates voting in an ideologically-consistent manner on policy.

It is also necessary to uncover what keeps the activists and leadership of the fusion parties motivated. Ideological desires and policy play roles even when candidates rarely win outright on a fusion party line. Unlike minor parties outside a fusion system, the "wasted vote" syndrome that pushes people away from third parties is not a factor when cross-endorsements are the norm (see Riker 1982; Palfrey 1989; Feddersen 1992). The activists and leadership of fusion parties do not feel as though they are undercutting their ideological brethren in a major party.

This leaves us with a puzzle as to why supporters remain in a minor party. I would expect that a large number of activists have developed a partisan attachment at the state level, especially in the Conservative Party, which has existed longer than the Working Families and Independence Parties. Since these parties also nominate national-level candidates who are running in their state, not just candidates interested in state offices, individuals would not need to have split partisan identifications at the state and national levels.[30] The leaders become entrenched in the party and will see it as a legitimate, long-term attachment (see Michels 1949).

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[30] This would be possible if, for example, the state parties did not cross-nominate presidential, House, and Senate candidates. In Canada, many individuals have split partisan identifications between the provincial

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Expectation Six: Leaders and activists in fusion parties will view themselves as partisans of their chosen party across all levels of government offices.

These expectations, generated by theory about how political parties and activists operate and think, are generalized examples of what is expected by interviewing elites within the fusion parties. They form a baseline from which to work and tie these interviews into broader conceptions of political parties, governance, and partisanship.

How to Extract Information in the Interviews

To obtain the necessary information to test the expectations, I conducted interviews with leaders and activists in the Conservative, Independence, and Working Families Parties. The goal of the questioning was to elicit responses about: party goals at the state and local level, what the party hopes to achieve, and the individual activist's perceptions of the party and his or her motivations for being active in it. I allowed the interviews to move away from my general line of questioning to ensure that the interviewees could best express their views and perceptions about their roles in the fusion parties. I was still able to obtain answers to my questions, even if they were not presented in such a straightforward manner, depending on the tone and direction on the interview. The following are the main questions that I wanted answered:

- What goes into your party's decision to cross-endorse?

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and national level, depending on how parties operate in their province.

– When does your party choose to run your own candidate, and when do you choose to avoid an election?

– What do you hope to accomplish by cross-endorsing/running your own candidate?

– Do you feel your party has been able to influence local or state policy? How so?

– Do you feel your party is electorally-successful, or a failure?

– Are you aware of the activities of party members in X part of the state?

– How are your relations with the party you cross-endorse/the party you do not cross-endorse?

– Do you see yourself as a member of the X party at both the state and national level, or do you feel you are a member of a different party nationally?

These questions are expected to be answered differently depending on the region of the state, the level of the election being discussed, and an individual interviewee's own personal biases. Through these questions, a host of insights into the organizational structure and electoral desires of the parties were obtained, as well as knowledge about how individual activists perceive themselves within their party.

The interviews were conducted through two methods: by telephone and by electronic mail. The first was the preferred method of communication. In the latter case, the "interview" took place over an email or series of emails to ensure that proper answers to the general questions were obtained and that the interviewee had a chance to add his or her own comments/perceptions. I gave the interviewees open-ended questions and provided space for them to express their points of view without feeling limited by choices in a survey. This is advantageous, as some of these individuals are reluctant to take part

in a phone interview. These are not career-politicians with years of experience answering

questions, and the individual party contacts all have varying levels of handling an

interview.   By offering the email option to those who expressed interest in it, they were

able to take part in this project without having to go through an interview process that

would make them uncomfortable (and potentially unable to focus on the task of

answering questions properly).

For telephone interviews, the length varies from approximately 10-12 minutes in

the fastest case to over 1 ½ hours in the longest. This variation is a product of my

attempt to ensure that I am not coercing anyone into talking beyond what they would like,

but probing those most interested in participating to give adequate details and stories.

From those most interested in being interviewed, I have been able to receive information

that would not have been available through my general, basic interview framing. By

being flexible in the interview process, I obtained more information than would have

been collected by survey responses. To help me organize these interviews, and think

about the interview process, I relied on Dexter's (1970) book on elite and specialized

interviewing for guidance.

Discussion

Nine interviews were conducted with party activists in the Conservative Party (4),

the Independence Party (2), and the Working Families Party (3). Only one was

conducted by e-mail, and this was for a Conservative Party contact. Information about

who to contact was obtained through party websites, which list local contacts and

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executive committee members, depending on the party. Though this number is small, the

interviewees were forthcoming with information about their parties, other parties, and

politics in New York.[31] I present my findings by attending to each expectation in either

its own subsection or in conjunction with a similar expectation when supporting

information overlaps.

Expectation One: The fusion parties in New York will view themselves as legitimate

political parties and will view electoral victory largely through the election of cross-

endorsed candidates as a means to achieving their policy goals.

The first step is to address Expectation One, which was that fusion parties view

themselves as legitimate political parties that achieve victory through having their cross-

endorsed candidates elected. The Conservative Party leaders see their party as relatively

successful, with standards for success varying from electing cross-nominated politicians

to obtaining over 10% of the vote on their party line to receiving more votes for the

Conservative candidate than there are registered Conservative Party members. Receiving

such vote totals also "justifies their existence," in the words of one interviewed party

activist. The Conservative Party is also strongly committed to the fusion system, and one

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[31] I started with listing contacts for the three parties based on information on party websites. This list
contained 51 Conservative Party activists, 21 Independence Party activists (6 of which were members of
the breakaway Independence Party of New York City), and 21 Working Families Party activists. This is 93
total contacts. However, as the interview process began, it was found that some contacts had information
that was no longer up-to-date. Furthermore, there were some people listed who other people, in interviews,
told me were no longer active in the party. The latter problem was most acute for the Independence Party,
which has been facing problems within their organization. Additionally, one Independence Party
interviewee noted that the party was not interested on uploading and updating contact information on the
web. I plan on continuing this process after the dissertation, but I am confident that the information I
obtained from these individual activists helps to answer the expectations put forth in this chapter. There
was amazing consistency across parties for several of the expectations, which will be discussed in text.

leader noted that the party's success did not rely on running its own candidates. Doing so, and performing badly, would "taint" the party's image and make it less effective at pressuring Republican candidates on policy. At the same time, this particular interviewee made a point to emphasize that the Conservative Party also served to "educate" the public, which is largely composed of "zombie voters" who vote only based on partisan identification, and alert them to the lack of distinction between the Republicans and Democrats in the state. Success, it would appear, is also based on alerting the public to the purported dangers of two-party dominance.

The Independence Party and Working Families Party interviewees also noted these as good measures of success, as well as trying to be the "difference-maker" in an election by providing enough votes to a major party candidate in a close race to defeat another major party candidate. One interviewee from the Working Families Party used the term "leverage party" in describing its role.

Additionally, the Independence and Working Families Parties perceived victory in several other ways. For the Independence Party, maintaining a partisan balance at the state-level (divided government) was mentioned as a key goal. As the political party that represents the "non-partisans," the Independence Party pursues a moderate platform, and cross-endorsing both Democrats and Republicans who win office allows it to apply pressure on policy that transcends the partisan divides. For the Working Families Party, victory also occurs when they successfully influence the Democratic Party to seek progressive-minded candidates for public office, not "corrupt Albany politicians." This provides evidence that these parties see themselves as viable parties through cross-nomination that play a role in the political process and affect electoral outcomes.

Expectation Two: The fusion parties are aware that their role in the system relies on the major parties, though at the same time, they are keenly aware that the major parties are reliant on them as well. Thus, the fusion parties will tend to cross-nominate ideologically similar candidates and will try to work within the two-party framework to pursue electing their own candidates.

and

Expectation Three: Fusion parties will cross-endorse candidates that are from an ideologically opposite major party to achieve their goals of electoral victory and policy influence when either a.) a fusion party believes the candidate can be influenced on a subset of issues and/or b.) the district is not competitive.

For Expectations Two and Three, interviewees from all three parties noted that they try to nominate ideologically-similar candidates for state-level races. Politicians who want a party line are given surveys, quizzes, or are asked to come in front of a small group to answer policy-related questions. For local races, where policy choices are less partisan, the ability to obtain a party line is easy and the questioning process, if there is a formal one, is less rigorous. These nominations also cross party boundaries, with Working Families interviewees quite willing to admit to nominating good Republican candidates and Conservative Party interviewees stating that they are not opposed to nominating Democrats.

Based on Expectation Three, though, it appears that this is done at the state-level when candidates agree with a fusion party's platform and that district competitiveness

plays less of a role. In Upstate New York, where the unions are more conservative and Republican than downstate, a Working Families Party interviewee noted that the endorsement of liberal Republican candidates occurs more regularly. For the Independence Party, balancing endorsements to ensure a more centrist government in Albany plays a role. In one interview, the "best" candidate varied by region, with incumbent Republicans downstate receiving the party line over incumbent Democrats; they will only endorse "insurgent" Democrats who oppose the current Albany leadership. These examples make clear that if a candidate for state office does not have the proper issue positions, she rarely gets the cross-nomination (though two interviewees noted that state party leaders within their respective parties have entered the selection processes to override a decision not to nominate).

While it appears that the Conservative Party, the oldest of the three, is content with this style of politics, both the Independence and Working Families interviewees noted that their parties are waiting for the opportunity to push out from beneath the two party arrangement with cross-endorsement. One interviewee noted that the Independence Party was winning seats, on its party line and/or with its chosen candidates, in many towns and villages. This grassroots success was noted as being essential if the party was to maintain itself as a successful entity without relying on cross-nominations. Another Independence Party interviewee stated that the party was trying to move away from its past connections to the Perot campaign and the Reform Party, whose supporters had merely waited for a "white knight" to ride in and bring the "Ottoman Empire" of political parties to prominence. To try and move away from this, the party has started focusing

more on local and county elections, and one leader noted that the Independence Party is trying to strengthen its base in the African-American and Latino communities.

The Working Families Party has also been able to win office without cross-nomination in recent years. The party was able to elect its own candidates to office in the New York City area on its own party line, and even upstate elections in Binghamton and Albany have seen candidates that were pushed by the Working Families Party win Democratic primaries and get elected to office. This appears to be more prominent in this party than in others, largely because of the party's ties to unions, which serve with members of citizen action groups on the party's endorsement committee. The Democrats need to keep these groups content as they are both strong parts of their support base. In the future, as one interviewee noted, the party wants to maintain itself as an independent political organization that can stand as a viable third party. This same interviewee also described in detail how s/he and other party members were working on finding qualified candidates and training them to run professional-style campaigns without the support of either major party. In some circumstances, one interviewee claimed the Democrats actually hire Working Families Party members to conduct campaigns for Democratic candidates and that the party has been successful at doing this on Long Island and in Upstate.

The findings provided show clear support for Expectation Two, some support for Expectation Three, and additional evidence that shows how the Independence and Working Families Parties are oriented toward a future without the need to cross-nominate. From a "parties-as-organizations" perspective, the fusion parties of New York are working to win office via cross-endorsement, and two of the parties are planning for

future endeavors that do not require fusion balloting by focusing efforts on winnable local and state races.

Expectation Four: Fusion parties will have a limited role in setting the legislative and media agendas, thus forcing them to adapt their policy agendas to the issues that the major parties deem important at that time.

and

Expectation Five: Fusion parties will monitor legislative behavior, especially as it regards cross-endorsed candidates, and they will attempt to keep their endorsed candidates voting in an ideologically-consistent manner on policy.

For Expectation Four, which addresses how the fusion parties can affect policy, the findings follow my earlier beliefs. The fusion parties admit that they are limited in their capacity to affect what policies get addressed in Albany. One point that was made clear by a Conservative Party interviewee is that the partisan make-up of the state limits how much the party can actually "do"; instead, they have to try and protect what is. This aligns with findings by scholars such as Krehbiel (1998) that show how legislative minorities are more adept at blocking, rather than passing, legislation.

A prime example here occurred when former Governor Eliot Spitzer came out in support of the state issuing driver's licenses to undocumented workers. The Conservative Party leaders and activists used this as a litmus test for its cross-endorsed candidates and told them that they need to oppose this to keep their ballot lines in the next election. While other factors played out that caused Spitzer to back down from his position, this

mobilization of influence by the Conservative Party played some role in affecting how Republicans in Albany reacted to this proposed policy.

The same can be said of the Independence Party. One interviewee stated that the party had a two-fold mission: promote small-d democratic reforms in the state, such as referenda and initiative, and work toward winning elections to ensure that the state government remains divided with a Democratic Assembly and a Republican Senate. While the Independence Party believes it has made strides at creating divided government, helping to block clearly partisan legislation from passing, the party has been unable to push through any of its small-d democratic policy reforms.

The Working Families Party leaders viewed their mission as one based on progressive politics. The goal of the party was not to be liberal on moral issues such as abortion and women's rights, which one interviewee said were issues that had been handled in the past. Instead, the party's goal is to improve conditions for working class residents of New York, with issues such as economic development, housing, and raising the minimum wage. Leaders did make it clear, however, that the issues of importance vary within the state; the needs of the working class in New York City and the surrounding metropolitan area are somewhat different than the concerns of workers in smaller Upstate cities such as Binghamton. To date, the party's core is largely based in the New York City area, and its greatest successes up until now have been in this area (not at the state-level). Still, the party has successfully pushed Albany politicians on supporting issues such as minimum wage legislation, providing some limited evidence of helping to create policy change. Of course, since they are aligned more closely with the

Democrats, who control the lower house, the Working Families Party is not like the Conservative or Independence Parties, who are more focused on blocking legislation.

Either way, the fusion parties are forced to adapt to the policy agendas of the major parties, limiting their strength outside the electoral arena. In both the Conservative and Working Families cases where they pushed elected state government officials on a particular issue, that policy in question was moved onto the legislative and media agendas without the fusion parties; they could only adapt to what was prominent.

This also shows that the fusion parties monitor legislative behavior and attempt to keep their politicians voting in the correct ideological direction, which comports with Expectation Five. The Conservative Party goes beyond the other parties by scoring Assemblypersons and Senators based on voting records for key bills. Still, the other parties do have their own methods for monitoring behavior, which include regular meetings with cross-endorsed officials and checking legislative vote records. In the words of one Working Families Party interviewee, the party has tried to hold "the bastards *[major party politicians]* accountable." Another Working Families Party interviewee put it best when s/he described how to cross-nominate while still retaining party distinctiveness as a process of "how to get into bed with a huge elephant without getting crushed." This interviewee noted that interviews were necessary to gauge sincerity in the party's message and to ensure that the "huge elephant" could be controlled.

Across the three organizations, it appears that all see themselves as legitimate political parties that are able to influence elections and get their endorsed candidates elected with a limited influence on the policy process. All leaders noted that elected

politicians who received their party's cross-nomination are scrutinized and questioned if they vote too often against the party's platform, and often these politicians contact party members to get clarification on a position to see whether a yea or nay vote would go against the legislative goals of a minor party.

Expectation Six: Leaders and activists in fusion parties will view themselves as partisans of their chosen party across all levels of government offices.

Finally, Expectation Six regarding interviewees and their partisan identifications have largely been borne out. Each interviewee emphatically stated that they are not only members of the party for ballot purposes, but that they identify themselves as a party member at the state and national level. This was best exemplified by a Conservative Party leader who noted that his or her statement of party identification at conservative-oriented conferences often confuses attendees, who are largely Republican Party identifiers.

Most of the interviewees also noted that they felt alienated from the major parties in the state, a hallmark of anti-major party identifiers, and many had been registered with one (or both) of the major parties at some point in their life. One Conservative Party interviewee noted how s/he started as a Democrat but left for the Republicans because of the party's sad performance at the local level. Then, this interviewee left the Republican Party about 15-20 years ago because s/he felt that the Republican Party in the state no longer stood for any particular ideology. Another Conservative Party interviewee stated that s/he moved to the party when s/he became angered by a particular Republican

candidate and felt that his/her political activities would prove more effective in a minor party. For the Independence Party, both interviewees said they became engaged in the early 1990s around the formation of the party, one in particular stating that it was Perot's United We Stand America organization that began his/her foray into New York politics. For the Working Families Party, one of the interviewees from downstate noted that s/he was a Democrat but that there was no choice in many elections, which led to corruption within the Democratic Party and a lack of accountability.

This ability to be a minor party identifier yet have an active role in the electoral process has kept many engaged for long periods of time, as much as 20 years or more in the case of some Conservative Party activists. This point is important for establishing that these fusion parties are really "political parties," as third parties at the state- and national-levels often have problems retaining support once a prominent candidate leaves. Because of the electoral arrangement, fusion parties can receive a low-level of support on their party line from election-to-election yet maintain loyal partisans who help to drive the party efforts.

Taking the six expectations together, it appears to be quite clear from the interviews that the fusion parties in New York, operating under a different set of electoral rules, are true political parties that affect the course of politics in the state and are, by their standards, electorally successful. This comports with Schattschneider's writings on political parties that indicate a true political party has electoral success and has some influence over policy outcomes (1942), even though winning office is not the main goal of these fusion parties.

Now that it is established that these fusion parties are more than "pressure groups," an interesting question arises for the study of electoral systems: Why do the major parties allow the system to continue? As noted earlier, scholars have long noted that political parties want to reduce competition in the electoral arena, and on the surface, it would appear this is the case. The major party candidates who are already ideologically-similar to the minor party that cross-nominates them takes away a party line that could be used for another candidate while offering the minor party policy representation at the state- or local-level.

But, based on the interviews, the fusion parties are not merely cross-endorsing. Instead, they are pursuing an active agenda, monitoring legislative behavior, pressuring representatives when necessary, and, at times, pushing their own candidates through major party primaries so that the Democratic or Republican candidate is really the choice of the minor party. This goes against the idea of less competition, as it forces the major parties to attend to the wants and needs of the minor fusion parties.

Based on this literature, it is unclear why this system is not eliminated, except for the fact that New York state government is typically divided. In an interview conducted in 2008 with an Independence Party leader, s/he noted that then Governor Eliot Spitzer planned on eliminating cross-endorsements should the Democrats win control of the State Senate (they already dominated the State Assembly). Apparently, the Independence Party leaders wanted confirmation from Spitzer's office that the process of fusion ballots would not be done away with should the party cross-nominate Democrats instead of

Republicans for a few State Senate seats, helping to create a unified Democratic state government and going against its own principles of maintaining divided government. Unofficially, it was claimed by the interviewee that Spitzer's office refused to make this promise. I brought this issue to the attention of people I interviewed in the Working Families Party. One interviewee was aware of the rumor but was not as concerned, as the party plans on contesting elections with or without the fusion system.

This does, however, illuminate why major parties in other states would be resistant to allowing such a system in their state. If it became a well-utilized electoral institution, fusion could place additional pressures on the major parties and increase competition within major party primaries and increase tension over the direction of policy. It already does so in New York. A recent article by a Republican columnist calls for the elimination of fusion ballots, as he believes the Conservative Party is effective in pushing Republicans statewide into taking strong stances on moral issues when conservative economics should be of utmost importance (Edelman 2008).

Members of both the Working Families and Independence Parties are aware of this potential in other states and are, to some degree, trying to exploit it by pushing themselves nationally. In the Working Families Party, the leaders noted that the organization has representation in other states that allow fusion, notably Connecticut and South Carolina. The Independence Party, which was originally tied to the Reform Party of Ross Perot (and his pseudo-political party before this, United We Stand America), has made advances into national politics. Frank MacKay, the current chair of the New York Independence Party, worked with other party leaders to launch the Independence Party of America. This new national organization is affiliated with the remaining Reform Party

remnants in states such as Minnesota and Kansas, and it has also been able to win over

several similar "independent" parties. If these attempts begin to take root, there is the

possibility that fusions systems are adopted and/or used more extensively in other states.

These attempts will likely not be welcomed by most major parties, as they want to cut

down on potential sources of competition.

The Oregon Case

Still, there at least appears to be an incentive on the part of candidates to try and

push for fusion balloting in some states. In July 2009, the governor in Oregon signed a

bill that would allow fusion balloting and make it easier for independent candidates to

have ballot access (see Oregon SB 326).   Two parties that could benefit from this new

arrangement that were noted in an article cited earlier from *The Oregonian* are the

Working Families Party, which recently organized and helped push for this legislation in

the state, and the Independent Party of Oregon, which is a nomination that both

Republicans and Democrats in the state want to seek out (Mapes 2009).

Specifically, the Oregon legislation allows a candidate to be listed with a

maximum of three party endorsements under her name on the ballot. The final version of

the bill passed in the House with a 43-16 vote and in the Senate with a 25-5 vote. In the

House, Republicans favored the bill 17-6 and Democrats favored the bill 26-10; in the

Senate, all Republicans supported the bill and the Democrats favored it 13-5. Since the

legislation was passed in July 2009, the first major election under these new rules will

take place in November 2010. It is not yet clear, though, how much it will be utilized in this first election and what affect it will have.

     The question remains as to why the legislation passed. A preliminary argument is that the party brand could be effective in winning over independent voters in a state with a strong independent streak, as was pointed out by Mapes (2009). Based on the findings from New York, the fusion system can help to "signal" to voters what candidates are adequately liberal, moderate, and conservative. Republican candidates could distance themselves from their party's image by winning the Independent Party of Oregon's nomination, helping them to win over voters who are skeptical of the Republican label.

     This appears to be a candidate-centered push, too. To quote directly from Mapes (2009): "Bob Tiernan, chairman of the Oregon Republican Party, said his party had not been involved in the fight over the bill and didn't have an opinion on it." The Democratic Party and the Oregon Education Association were opposed to the measure, fearing that minor parties might be created that are "nothing more than an attractive brand name" (Lane 2009).   Even so, the majority of Democratic legislators and senators went against the party wishes and supported SB 326. Future research will certainly need to address the role that candidates play in opposing their own political parties when it comes to adopting or expanding the role fusion plays in state politics.

The Broader Research Agenda

     The theory and findings developed above are an initial step into a larger project that will focus on fusion politics. The interviews conducted provided insights into the

process that have not been discussed in the political science literature yet have an effect on political outcomes. While the nature of New York politics made most of the interviewees skeptical and secretive about the "behind the scenes" information that would have added to this chapter, I was still able to obtain information that allows scholars to critically think about how this relatively unique electoral arrangement shapes politics.

Interviews aside, there are a number of potential studies that could build from these initial findings. Whether these would be independent from this chapter is unclear at this time, but combining empirical work with these interviews could be the start of a manuscript. Either way, it is pertinent at this time to address some of these potential studies, even if they were mentioned earlier in this chapter or will appear in the concluding chapter of this dissertation.

In regards to New York, legislative behavior could be affected by cross-endorsements. Patterns of introducing, sponsoring, and voting on legislation could exist outside the two-party dynamic, and fusion could potentially affect how polarized the two major parties become at the state-level. Instead of Republican and Democratic Party "networks" of officials, there could be close working relationships between Conservative, Independence, and Working Families Party legislators that are masked by focusing on major party labels. This could also affect legislative committees and committee assignments.

In regards to Oregon, the state's recent move to a fusion system is ripe with potential research projects. Much like the New York case, legislative behavior could be affected. However, the recent implementation of the system provides the opportunity to see what types of candidates go for cross-endorsements and from what types of districts,

whether the cross-endorsed candidates work together on legislation that crosses the traditional two-party divide, and if incumbent legislators from before the reform change behaviors (voting, sponsorship) once they accept cross-endorsements.

Similar issues can be studied in states where fusion is used but to a lesser degree (Connecticut, Vermont, and South Carolina). Additionally, studying why minor parties in some of these states are less likely to utilize fusion than in other states could prove useful in better understanding state elections, institutions, and electoral laws. While these ideas have not been pursued at this point, they at least illuminate the potential findings that could grow from this first attempt to look into the theoretical implications of fusion politics on political parties and politics in general.

Conclusions

After conducting interviews with leaders and activists in the fusion parties of New York, the findings indicate that the fusion parties are much more than interest groups that pressure the Republican and Democratic Party candidates. Instead, these parties actively participate in the electoral process, nominating candidates and attempting to push their own chosen candidates through major party primaries. They exert pressure on major party candidates to vote in accordance with their policy positions by threatening to pull their nomination. Since major party candidates prefer to decrease electoral competition and have multiple ballot lines, this is a credible threat. In this way, New York's system can be characterized as a multi-party system, even if the electoral changes do not lead to minor party-only candidates winning seats in the State Assembly or Senate.

From an electoral systems standpoint, this also shows how changing ballot structure can affect the ability of minor parties to survive in an otherwise two party-dominant environment. It does reduce the number of candidates on a ballot, but increases how much outside pressure is exerted on existing candidates. This can be viewed as detrimental to some elected major party officials, but as the Oregon case pointed out, the ability to "fuse" could provide benefits through signaling that a candidate is more/less moderate than her major party identification alone could tell a voter.

Normatively, then, this institutional arrangement can benefit third parties within the framework of a first-past-the-post system. Lest states begin to change to proportional representation systems, or some hybrids of it, fusion balloting may be the best option available for minor parties to continually contest elections and play a role in the political process. Without this system, it is improbable that minor parties will ever reach the heights of success that they were able to achieve at the state-level throughout the 1800s and into the early 1900s (see Hirano and Snyder 2007).

Chapter 5

OVERALL FINDINGS CONCERNING THIRD PARTIES

The previous three chapters have each touched upon a particular aspect of context in relation to third party support. Chapter 1 did so by studying how a "subculture" of non-major party support affects how individuals evaluate third party candidates, paying particular attention to Ralph Nader's 2000 campaign for the White House. Chapter 2 took a different angle, showing that the Liberty and Free Soil Parties in the 1840s-1850s were able to maintain high levels of support by generating and maintaining voting bases at the local level and building off these areas of past electoral successes. Chapter 3 looked at fusion balloting and how this particular institutional rule allows third parties to play an active role in the political process, influencing major party electoral behavior and, at times, policy outcomes.

These three chapters are clearly disparate in their approaches and unique in their contributions to the political science literature. However, each offers a piece to a broader theoretic puzzle about context and its effects on the success of third parties in American politics. First, I argue that the findings of the first two chapters illuminate differences in party building strategies for third parties from the 1800s to modern elections. Second, I argue that the development of stronger modern third parties is hindered by ignoring the effects of geographic context on citizen behavior and offer an example of a third party success story within a first-past-the-post electoral system (the New Democratic Party of

Canada). Third, I then explain how the use of fusion balloting, as studied in Chapter 3, alters how third parties develop and discuss how cross-nominations could advantage third parties in the long-term. Fourth, I conclude with several avenues for future research that build on Chapters 1-3 and the general findings of this dissertation.

Bottom-Up versus Top-Down Approaches to Party Building

One of the key findings of this dissertation is that third party successes in the 1800s involved the development and maintenance of localized bases of support. The examples of the Liberty and Free Soil Parties in Vermont show how the parties were able to earn the support of residents in particular towns and then spread party support to nearby towns from these "voting bases." This approach to party organization can be labeled as "bottom-up," as the goal was to establish the party within particular towns and use these towns for future electoral expansion.

This contrasts directly with modern experiences with third parties and independent political movements. In these examples, such as Nader, Perot, Anderson, and Wallace, the goal was not to build from the "bottom-up" but to structure support from the "top-down." Context still matters, as there are variations in how individuals react to such candidates based on past third party voting in their respective counties. However, these subcultures do not necessarily lead to higher levels of voting or more favorable assessments of these candidates across all ideological groups in the population.

We see from these findings that geographic context plays a crucial role in understanding support for third party candidates in both cases. The question then

becomes one of how modern third parties (and independent candidates) fail to develop

consistent bases of geographic support across election cycles, as found in Vermont during

the 1840s. To answer this, the bottom-up and top-down approaches to party building

require further elaboration.

In the 1800s, institutional and cultural factors gave third parties particular

advantages that do not exist today that allowed them to build from the bottom-up. From

the perspective of a burgeoning organization like the Liberty Party, it was logical to try

and win the support of particular towns. In Vermont especially, where each town had a

state representative, elections were yearly, and the electorate was small enough so that

winning over a handful of voters could lead to the expansion of the party message and

victory in future election cycles, the "bottom-up" strategy made sense. Such strategies

enabled the Free Soil Party and late 1800s parties, such as the Populists, to win seats in

state legislatures and in Congress. While they were not going to have the same

nationwide appeal in presidential elections as the Democrats or Republicans/Whigs, they

could elect representatives and play a substantive role in the direction of American

politics and policy.

Since the demise of the Progressives in the 1920s, no third party or independent

political movement has been very successful at the national level at establishing support

over election cycles, even for a brief period, and creating an alternative to the two-party

message. Except for a few cases, third parties and independent candidates have been

virtually shut out of positions in state legislatures and in Congress. This, I argue, is due

to the changing nature of politics. Districts have tended to increase in size and population,

the electorate has been expanded to include essentially the entire adult population over

the age of 18, career politicians have become the norm, which also leads to increases in the resources necessary to compete, and ballot access has been severely restricted for third parties. These put a damper on the ability of third parties to develop voting bases that can be consistent in support from year-to-year.

Instead, recent elections have been typified by candidate-centered third party runs and independent movements that, first and foremost, emphasize the offices of president and governor. Resources have become more crucial to electoral success, politicians are more career-oriented, and the media is more concerned with the two major parties in today's election milieu. To gain media attention and resources to run their campaigns, independent and third party movements rely on well-known personalities, those with money, and/or former major party politicians. Two third party gubernatorial wins during the 1990s were little more than major party politicians temporarily striking out at odds with their past major party identification (Lowell Weicker in Connecticut [Connecticut People's Party] and Walter Hinckel in Alaska [Alaskan Independence Party]). The other third party and independent candidate victories, Jesse Ventura in Minnesota and Angus King in Maine, were both based largely on their fame and name recognition.

All of these movements and campaigns failed to assemble the groundwork for a successful third party that could continuously campaign and win seats at the local, state, and Congressional levels. For example, the Reform Party put its emphasis on the presidential level, leading to its destruction after the 2000 election year. Without Perot to serve as the party's guiding hand, the movement collapsed into two groups, thus destroying the party as a cohesive organization. George Wallace, the former pro-segregation Democratic governor of Alabama, and Ralph Nader, a consumer advocate-

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turned-presidential candidate, both latched on to existing third parties (the American

Independent and Green Party, respectively), and neither party has been able to reach that

level of success again. Continuing this trend is the fact that minor, non-viable third

parties continue to put resources into presidential races while continuing to fail at

establishing the party in any geographic area. In other words, third parties are not

developing consistent bases of support and working at using these bases to expand their

support to other areas. To do so, third parties need to focus on areas with the greatest

potential for developing support and understanding who to target for support, thus

following the findings presented in Chapter 1.

The Effects on Third Party Success

These different approaches to party building have lasting effects on the long-term

success of third parties and their candidates from a contextual perspective. As noted in

the previous section, third parties in the 1800s and early 1900s worked at establishing

support in particular locations, leading to higher vote totals at the ballot box and elected

officials at the state and national levels. Modern third parties have failed to do so,

focusing efforts on charismatic Presidential and gubernatorial candidates instead of the

party itself.

Still, context plays a role in modern elections, albeit much different than in the

1800s. Today, the contextual effect of a strong third party "subculture" affects individual

survey respondents yet it does not always push individuals to vote for third party

candidates. This is distinctly different from the case of Vermont in the 1840s, where

consistent patterns of voting for a third party were linked directly to past support for said third party at the town level. Certain communities were more prone to support and vote for third parties.

In modern third party "subcultures" of third parties, a candidate that is viewed quite favorably by a potential voter does not always lead to a vote for that candidate. To understand why, the answer lies in the strategies of party-building pursued by modern third party movements. It appears from the detail laid out in the previous section that the emphasis on large, candidate-centered campaigns, even if the norm in modern politics, significantly limits third parties from developing over time. First, a party that cannot internally generate experienced, charismatic candidates to compete against career politicians is likely to continuously lose; even individuals in more supportive subcultures may be reluctant to vote for candidates who they like but feel are unable to govern properly. Second, third parties are not focusing solely on those areas where they could build a stronger local and state party base.

Third parties in the United States need to address these concerns if they want to be stable, electorally successful organizations. Other political parties in first-past-the-post systems have learned these lessons. In Canada, the New Democratic Party (NDP) is the traditional national third party, having won seats at the national and provincial levels dating back to the 1960s. They have done so by focusing on Western and urban areas, especially in the Maritime provinces, that feel alienated by the prevailing strength of the Liberal Party in representing the interests of Ontario and Quebec. Its current party leader at the national level, Jack Layton, is, on average, rated more favorable than all the other national party leaders in survey after survey, including in the 2003 and 2006 Canadian

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Election Studies. The NDP continues to be the party with the fourth highest seat total in Parliament, reflecting a reality for third parties: favorability does not always translate into victory.

NDP, unlike their US counterparts, elect local and provincial candidates, have resources more comparable to the other major Canadian parties, and understand where they can generate the most potential support (and do so). Yet, even with this knowledge and with a well-liked party leader, the NDP is still not involved in forming the Canadian government. This is an underlying lesson that grows from the findings in this dissertation and the experience of one third party in Canada: the current emphasis on top-down, candidate-centered campaigning has limited modern day successes for third parties in the United States while the regional, bottom-up development did help third party successes in the 1800s and early 1900s.

How Fusion Parties Fit In

This perspective on third parties and their ability to succeed by building on contextual support changes when we look at states that allow fusion balloting. In the dissertation, Chapter 3 focuses solely on the case of New York, where fusion balloting is used most prominently, and investigates how this different electoral context circumvents some of the issues faced by third parties who must compete without the ability to cross-endorse candidates.

First, from a party building perspective, fusion parties do not necessarily need to generate high levels of support to be "successful." By either winning enough votes to

help their cross-endorsed candidates win, or by pushing their chosen candidates through major party primaries, fusion parties are able to have a direct effect on actual electoral outcomes without having to win in a traditional sense. Unlike the third parties of the 1800s and early 1900s, there does not need to be as much of an initial push to develop and spread the party message, so long as a minimum state-level requirement can be reached to maintain ballot access. Unlike modern third party and independent campaigns at the national level, they do not have the same issues with finding qualified candidates and can function like legitimate political parties, endorsing candidates from the local to the presidential-level while still playing an active role in state and local governance.

This does not mean that the fusion parties in New York have not developed an organizational structure and a party message. The possibility of the fusion system being eliminated spurred quick commentary from those interviewed, and the interviewees tended to be quite positive about traditional electoral success in the future. Both the Independence and Working Families Party interviewees expressed a willingness to start competing as lone entities, especially at the local level where each has had limited success. One Independence Party interviewee even noted that s/he had pushed for emphasizing local races and building party support in certain locations back when the party was still associated with the national Reform Party, which was noted earlier in this chapter as being one that emphasized a "top-down" approach. In fact, this particular person claimed to have thrown his/her hat in the ring for the 2000 vice presidential candidacy at the Reform Party convention for the sole purpose of delivering a speech which lambasted members of the party for caring too little about state and local party development.

This strategy that the interviewee supported, and that is currently being implemented to varying degrees by the fusion parties in New York, is more in-line with earlier third party movements than modern third parties. It parallels the NDP example, as the fusion parties are identifying the geographic areas where they are most successful and working to develop stand-alone support in these contexts. The Working Families and Conservative Parties are also working to define themselves as distinct political organizations with a platform that is not represented by either major party, thus following in the footsteps of most third parties in addressing major party failure.

It therefore appears that the parties being nurtured in a fusion arrangement could advantage themselves when, or if, they attempt to push more of their own candidates rather than relying on cross-endorsement. Regardless of this possibility, the fusion arrangement allows third parties to develop in such a way as to fit between the "bottom-up" or "top-down" approaches, but does not necessarily preclude them from focusing more on a "bottom-up" approach in the future. At the very least, the arrangement provides fusion parties and their activists with valuable political experience, allows them to make important contacts in the political world, and provides a groundwork upon which the parties could develop independently of cross-endorsement.

Final Thoughts

The empirical chapters of this dissertation show how support for, the development of, and the political strength of third parties in the United States has been structured by context. These findings also speak to scholars interested in political parties, contextual

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effects, historical political science, state politics, voting, and elections. Sections of this dissertation should be of interest to a broad swath of American political scientists.

These statements should not be interpreted as evidence that this dissertation addressed all that had yet to be studied about third parties; plenty of questions remain. Each chapter has illuminated different areas of potential future research that I, or some other enterprising scholar, could endeavor to study. Highlighting the potential projects that can branch off from these dissertation chapters will further emphasize the importance of my work to the broader literature (and the literature on third parties).

Chapter 1 uncovered how individual respondents were affected by their third party voting context in modern presidential races, finding differential effects across ideology and partisanship. Moving beyond the individual-level, this chapter cannot speak to what makes particular counties more prone to such voting. The measure of context was the average vote at the county-level for Perot in both presidential runs and John Anderson in 1980. No other county-level factors were presented in the models.

One potential study from this chapter would look for demographic differences between counties with above average third party voting in these elections compared to below and about average counties. If third party and independent candidacies attract certain types of voters and certain counties have a greater propensity to vote for said candidates, then trying to isolate underlying demographic differences between low and high third party voting counties could prove to be a useful endeavor. A survey could also be distributed to residents in a random sample of the lowest, highest, and average counties to compare political attitudes across third party subcultures.

Chapter 2 showed how third parties in the 1800s were able to develop geographic bases of support and spread such support to neighboring towns over several election cycles. In generating this support, third parties were able to win state offices and take part in making government policy, sometimes taking majority control of state governments. Future work could explore the ability of these parties to control the voting activities of their members in the state legislature and if third party representatives voted in a way that more closely aligned with their constituency's partisan leanings than their major party counterparts.

Chapter 3 found that the "fusion" parties of New York behave like legitimate political parties in an electoral system whereby victory can be quantified without winning a majority of votes on their party line. From this chapter, two potential projects seem fruitful. First, the effect of cross-endorsement on state legislative voting patterns could be tested in New York, Vermont, South Carolina, and Connecticut. These states that utilize fusion provide different district dynamics, systems of fusion balloting, levels of partisan competitiveness, levels of professionalism, and, most importantly, varying levels of the use of fusion elections.

Second, with the adoption of a fusion system in Oregon, we have a modern switch to the system that was adopted by the state government itself and signed into law by the governor. This creates a natural experiment with legislators being voted back into office with a new additional "party brand" attached to their name after they legally went back and changed the law to allow this. Studies could look at a host of issues related to voting in the legislature, representing constituency interests, and legislative coalitions that transcend major party boundaries.

All these potential projects branch off from the empirical chapters of my dissertation that argue that the study of third parties in the United States must not neglect the issues of geographic and electoral context. I have found that context affects individual behavior towards, and the organizational behavior of, third parties. These contextual effects also affect the ability of third parties to compete and be successful in a two-party dominant environment.

The findings here can have an effect inside the subfields of contextual, historical, and third party studies, but they could also be of importance to those outside the academy. Current and future third parties should pay heed to context when considering where to campaign, what individuals to target in particular areas, how to develop a party base over several elections, and what institutional arrangements can help them to play an active political role. Therefore, this dissertation and its findings have scholarly and practical value that I hope will shape the course of research and real-world political outcomes.

Table 1A: Predicting Perot Support in the 1996 NES Pre-Election Sample

Predictors	Baseline Model (Perot 1992)	Baseline Model (Perot 1992/Anderson 1980)	Full Model (Perot 1992)	Full Model (Perot 1992/Anderson 1980)
Context (Percentage)	-.08 (.10)	-.26 (.16)	.04 (.61)	-.26 (.99)
Democrat	-27.57 (1.34)**	-27.63 (1.33)**	-24.97 (4.43)**	-24.28 (4.59)**
Independent	-17.75 (1.44)**	-17.74 (1.44)**	-14.90 (4.94)**	-15.57 (5.15)**
No Preference/Other	-20.32 (2.12)**	-20.41 (2.12)**	-16.53 (7.30)*	-13.38 (7.44)
Conservative Ideology	5.23 (3.57)	5.39 (3.57)	1.79 (11.85)	-1.18 (12.66)
Slightly Conservative Ideology	7.12 (3.57)	7.27 (3.57)*	6.02 (11.76)	5.44 (12.59)
Moderate Ideology	5.02 (3.49)	5.19 (3.49)	3.89 (11.54)	1.17 (12.35)
Slightly Liberal Ideology	4.67 (3.68)	4.87 (3.68)	7.87 (12.23)	5.68 (13.15)
Liberal Ideology	3.07 (3.84)	3.24 (3.84)	6.54 (12.43)	4.97 (13.41)
Extreme Liberal Ideology	2.91 (5.46)	3.05 (5.46)	16.86 (16.80)	14.16 (18.34)
Not Political	5.98 (3.51)	5.94 (3.50)	7.37 (11.44)	4.37 (12.17)
Democrat x Context	---	---	-.13 (.22)	-.26 (.35)
Independent x Context	---	---	-.14 (.25)	-.16 (.39)

No Preference/Other x Context	---	---	-.20 (.39)	-.57 (.60)
Conservative x Context	---	---	.18 (.64)	.54 (1.04)
Slightly Conservative x Context	---	---	.06 (.64)	.17 (1.03)
Moderate x Context	---	---	.06 (.62)	.34 (1.02)
Slightly Liberal x Context	---	---	-.17 (.66)	-.04 (1.07)
Liberal x Context	---	---	-.19 (.67)	-.11 (1.09)
Extreme Liberal x Context	---	---	-.79 (.91)	-.90 (1.49)
Not Political x Context	---	---	-.08 (.62)	.14 (1.01)
Sex (Men=1)	1.74 (1.05)	1.76 (1.05)	1.71 (1.06)	1.77 (1.06)
Age	.02 (.03)	.02 (.03)	.02 (.03)	.02 (.03)
Education	-.21 (.34)	-.18 (.34)	-.21 (.34)	-.15 (.34)
Race (White=1)	-.74 (1.54)	-.34 (1.55)	-.55 (1.56)	-.09 (1.58)
Urban to Rural	-.34 (.85)	-.09 (.86)	-.43 (.86)	-.16 (.87)
Attention to Campaign	-1.77 (.80)*	-1.76 (.80)*	-1.80 (.81)*	-1.75 (.80)*
Care Who Wins Election	-2.02 (1.41)	-2.00 (1.41)	-2.05 (1.42)	-2.10 (1.42)
Voted for Perot in 1992	2.09 (1.63)	2.18 (1.63)	2.06 (1.64)	2.11 (1.64)
Margin of Major Party Vote	-.05 (.07)	-.01 (.08)	-.05 (.07)	-.02 (.08)
Constant	70.61 (4.78)**	71.23 (4.74)**	68.18 (11.77)**	70.75 (12.46)**

	N=1608	N=1608	N=1608	N=1608
	F=25.11	F=25.23	F=16.79	F=16.88
	Prob.>F=.000	Prob.>F=.000	Prob.>F=.000	Prob.>F=.000
	Adj. R-Sq.=.2308	Adj. R-Sq.=.2317	Adj. R-Sq.=.2276	Adj. R-Sq.=.2287

Ordinary least squares regression coefficients with standard errors. Two-tailed tests.
**p<.01; *p<.05.

Figure 1A: Ideology's Effect on Perot Favorability Based on Perot's 1992 County Vote
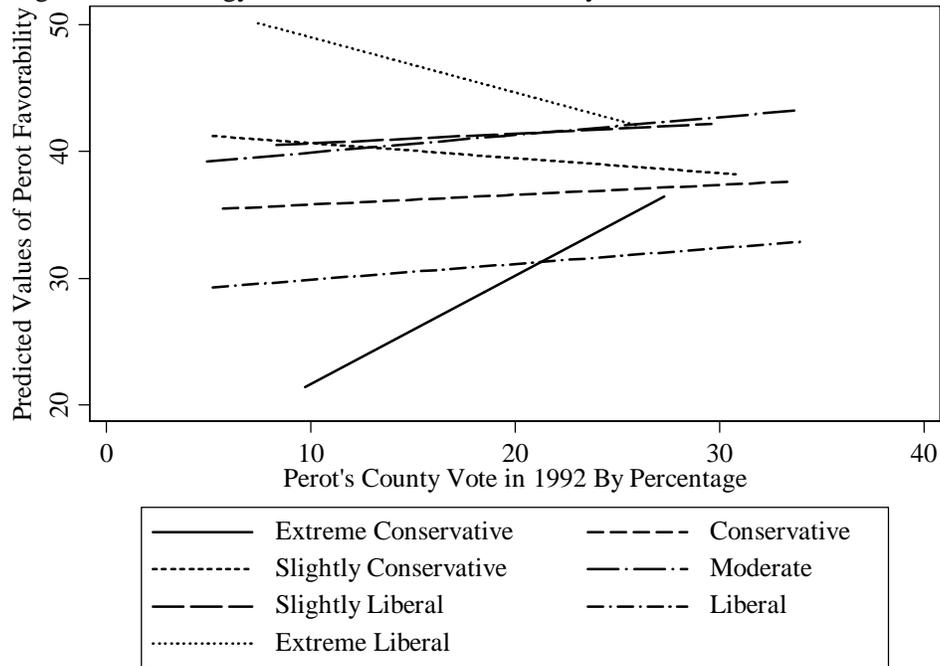
Source: 1996 NES Pre-Election Sample

Figure 2A: Partisanship's Effect on Perot Favorability Based on Perot's 1992 County Vote
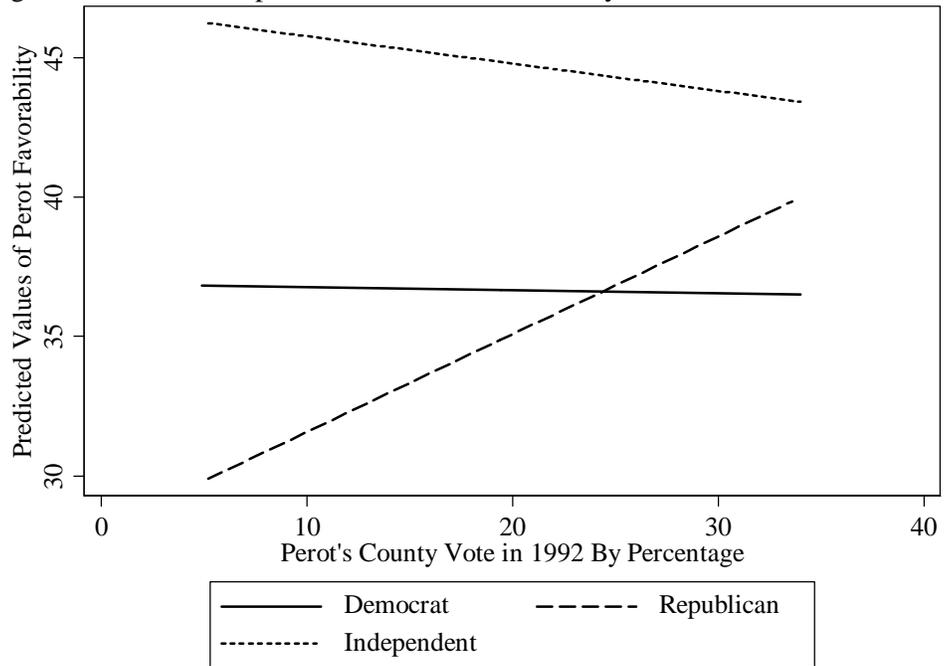
Source: 1996 NES Pre-Election Sample

Table 2A: Predicting Perot Favorability in 1992 with Anderson 1980 Context in the 1992
National Election Study (NES) Pre-Election Sample

Predictors	Baseline Model	Full Model
Context (Percentage)	.08 (.21)	4.11 (1.12)**
Democrat	.93 (1.85)	5.83 (3.93)
Independent	7.67 (1.71)**	11.55 (3.79)**
No Preference/Other	3.30 (3.42)	7.07 (7.14)
Conservative Ideology	1.30 (3.84)	25.07 (8.18)**
Slightly Conservative Ideology	2.04 (3.80)	26.67 (8.18)**
Moderate Ideology	3.06 (3.71)	22.78 (8.00)**
Slightly Liberal Ideology	4.56 (3.97)	29.05 (8.57)**
Liberal Ideology	-1.86 (4.07)	26.12 (8.91)**
Strong Liberal Ideology	-1.58 (5.28)	2.05 (11.11)
Democrat x Context	---	-.78 (.54)
Independent x Context	---	-.61 (.52)
No Preference/Other x Context	---	-.71 (1.04)
Conservative x Context	---	-3.83 (1.17)**
Slightly Conservative x Context	---	-3.94 (1.16)**
Moderate x Context	---	-3.17 (1.13)**
Slightly Liberal x Context	---	-3.85 (1.20)**
Liberal x Context	---	-4.25 (1.21)**
Extreme Liberal x Context	---	-.91 (1.48)

Sex (Men=1)	2.73 (1.29)*	2.81 (1.29)*
Age	-.20 (.04)**	-.20 (.04)**
Education	-.39 (.41)	-.31 (.41)
Race (White=1)	2.44 (2.06)	1.93 (2.08)
Urban to Rural	2.13 (.90)*	2.53 (.91)**
Attention to Campaign (-)	-1.59 (.53)**	-1.49 (.53)**
Care Who Wins Election (No=1)	.10 (.89)	-.06 (.89)
Margin of Major Party Vote	.09 (.13)	.08 (.13)
Constant	45.66 (5.59)**	19.84 (8.83)*
	N=1667 F=4.99 Prob.>F=.0000 Adj. R-Sq.=.0413	N=1667 F=4.26 Prob.>F=.0000 Adj. R-Sq.=.0502

Ordinary least squares regression coefficients with standard errors. Two-tailed tests.
**p<.01; *p<.05.

Figure 3A: Ideology's Effect on Perot Favorability Based on Anderson's 1980 County Vote
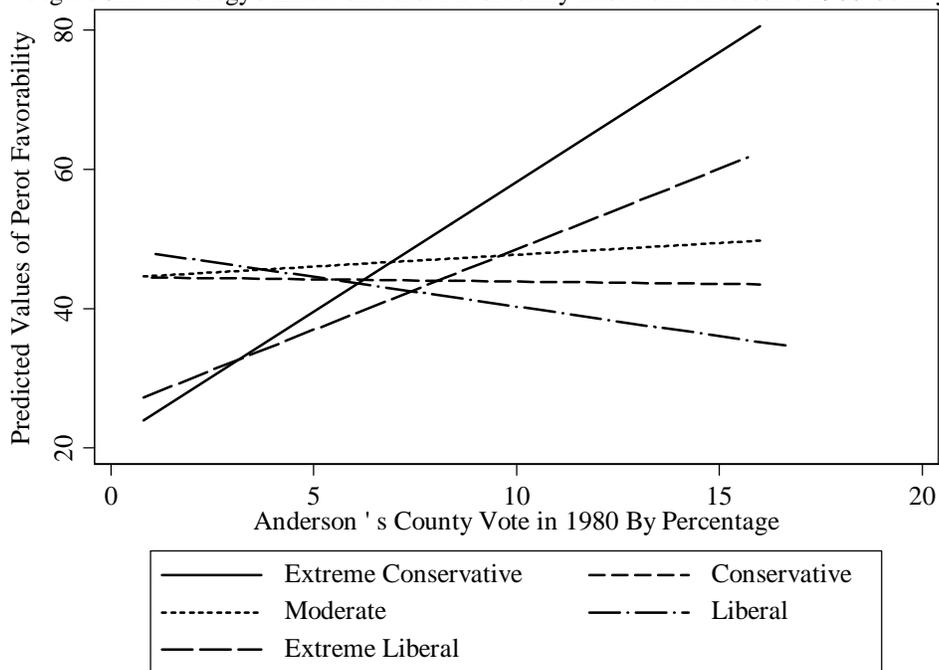
Figure 4A: Partisanship's Effect on Perot Favorability Based on Anderson's 1980 County Vote
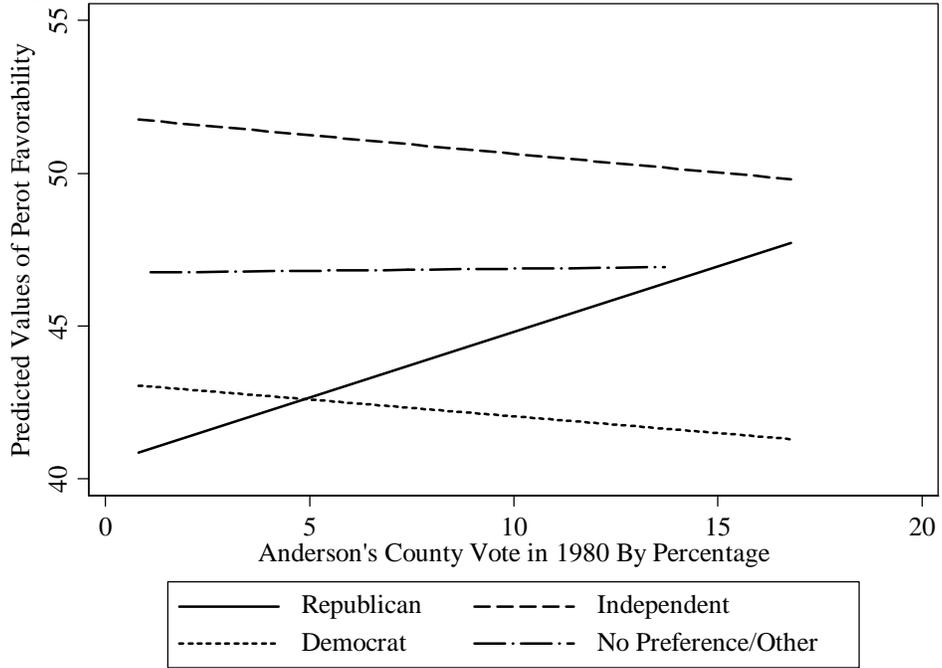
Table 3A: Predicting Buchanan Favorability

Predictors	NAES Rolling Cross-Section, 1999-April 2000	NAES Rolling Cross-Section, Last Month Before Election
Perot's 1996 County Vote (Percentage)	.45 (.65)	-.47 (.47)
Democrats	-4.65 (4.38)	-6.95 (3.06)*
Independents	.11 (3.96)	-11.74 (2.88)**
Conservative Ideology	-6.36 (6.64)	-12.56 (4.69)**
Moderate Ideology	-17.11 (6.66)**	-21.83 (4.73)**
Liberal Ideology	-21.32 (7.30)**	-29.04 (5.17)**
Strong Liberal Ideology	-30.24 (10.62)**	-30.39 (6.98)**
Democrat x Perot County	-.02 (.48)	-.11 (.33)
Independent x Perot County	-.33 (.43)	.90 (.32)**
Conservative x Perot County	-.15 (.71)	.23 (.52)
Moderate x Perot County	.06 (.71)	.40 (.52)
Liberal x Perot County	.27 (.79)	.97 (.57)
Strong Liberal x Perot County	.15 (1.24)	.46 (.81)
Sex (Men=1)	2.58 (1.04)*	.33 (.73)
Age	-.16 (.04)**	-.18 (.02)**
Race (White=1)	-1.53 (1.63)	-5.42 (1.35)**
Education	-1.34 (.24)**	-1.57 (.17)**
Suburban	-4.65 (4.38)	1.71 (.87)*
Rural	-1.74 (1.58)	2.53 (1.13)*
Interest in Government	3.42 (.62)**	3.75 (.46)**
Care Who Wins Elections	-.07 (1.19)	1.94 (.93)*

|		
Margin Between Major Parties in 2000	---	-.02 (.04)
Constant	73.90 (6.88)**	70.43 (4.90)**
	N=2408	N=4866
	Adjusted R-Sq.=.1218	Adjusted R-Sq.=.1457
	F=16.90	F=38.71
	Prob.>F=.0000	Prob.>F=.0000

Ordinary least squares regression coefficients with standard errors in parenthesis. Two-tailed tests. **p<.01; *p<.05.

Figure 5A: Ideology's Effect on Buchanan Favorability Based on Perot's 1996 County Vote
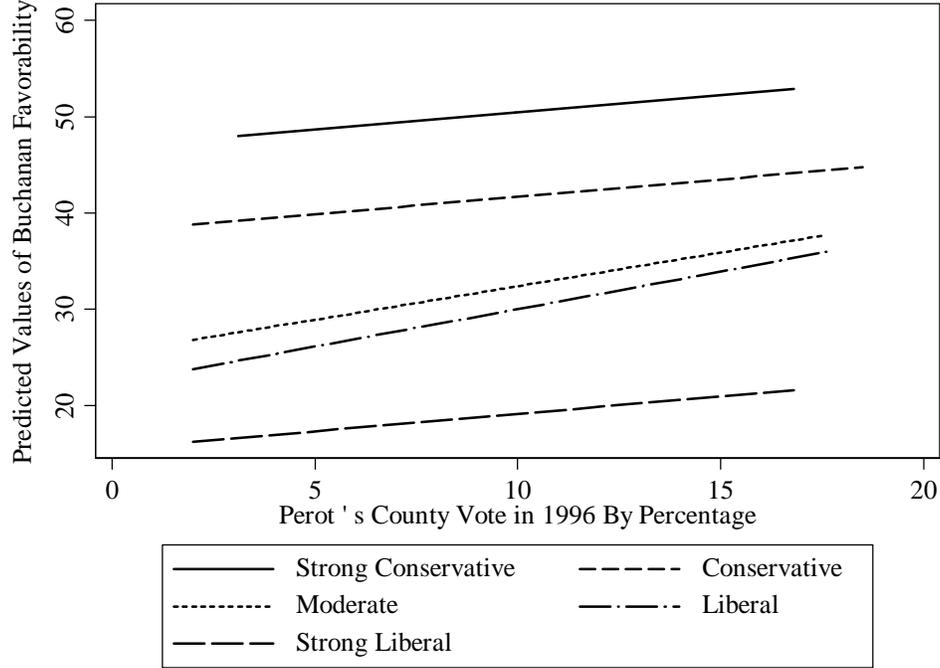

Source: NAES Cross-Section, December 1999-April 2000

Figure 6A: Partisanship's Effect on Buchanan Favorability Based on Perot's 1996 County Vote
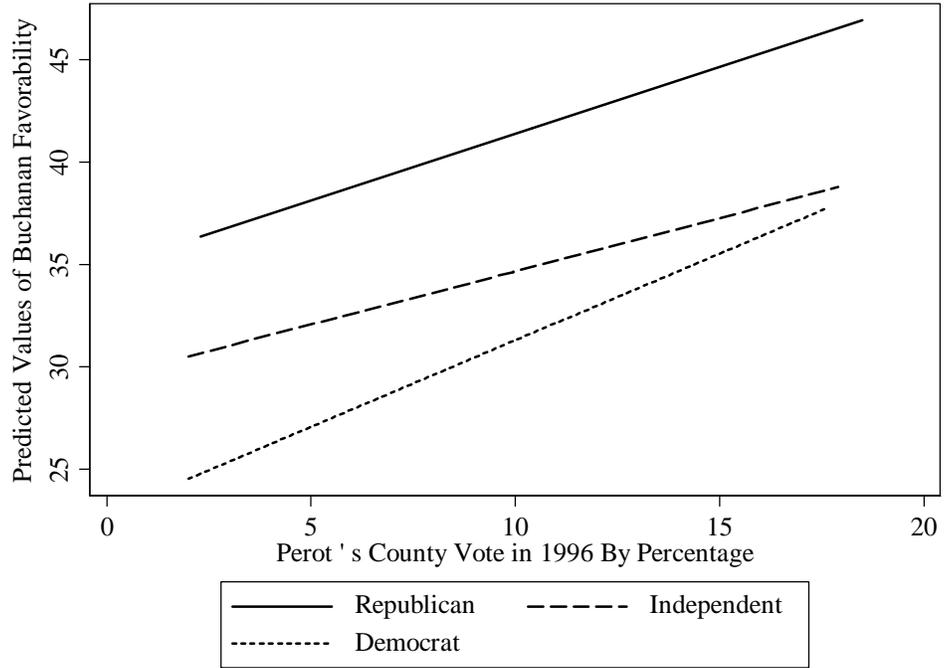

Source: NAES Cross-Section, December 1999-April 2000

Figure 7A: Ideology's Effect on Buchanan Favorability Based on Perot's 1996 County Vote
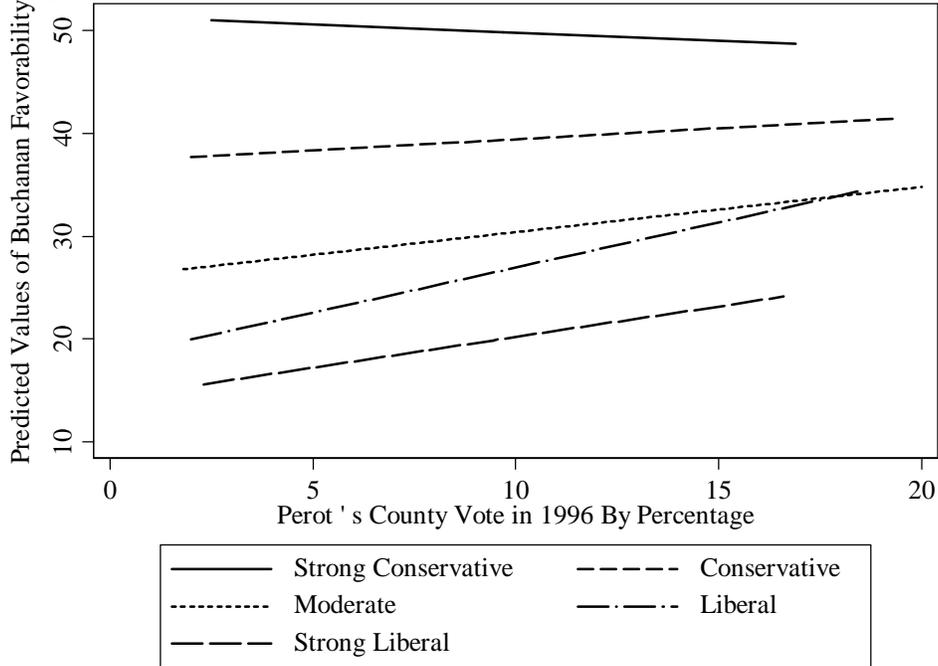
Source: NAES Cross-Section, October 2000 to Election Day 2000

Figure 8A: Partisanship's Effect on Buchanan Favorability Based on Perot's 1996 County Vote
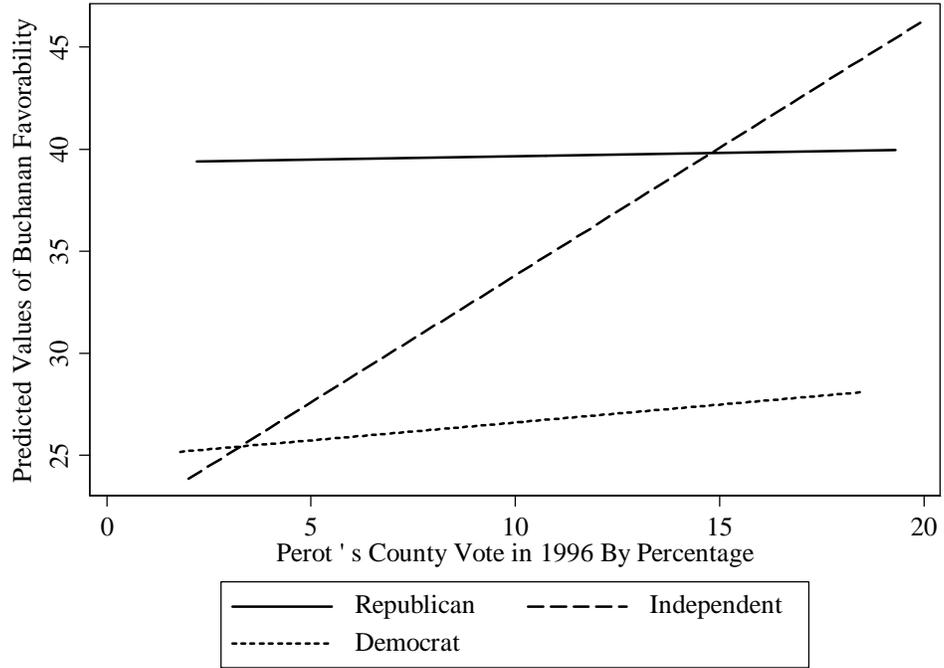
Source: NAES Cross-Section, October 2000 to Election Day 2000

Table 4A: Predicted Probabilities of Buchanan Vote Choice, by Ideology and Partisanship, Across Contexts

Scenarios	Strong Conservative Republican	Conservative Republican	Conservative Independent	Moderate Independent	Liberal Independent	Liberal Democrat	Strong Liberal Democrat
Suburban, Minimum Context	1.6%	1.2%	2.2%	1.9%	1.1%	1.6%	11.7%
Suburban, Mean Context	1.6%	1.2%	3.8%	1.7%	2.0%	0.7%	1.2%
Suburban, Maximum Context	5.8%	2.6%	12.4%	2.5%	13.0%	1.1%	0.9%
Δ Min-Max	**+4.2%**	**+1.4%**	**+10.2%**	**+.6%**	**+11.9%**	**-.5%**	**-10.8%**

Predicted probabilities generated using CLARIFY (King et al. 2000; Tomz et al. 2001). All other control variables are set to their mean or median values except for the suburban and rural dummies, with suburban=1 and rural=0.

APPENDIX B: CHAPTER 3

Table 1B: Summary Statistics for Liberty/Free Soil Vote Percentages, Absolute Differences in Major Party Vote Percentages, and Average Liberty/Free Soil Vote Percentages for Neighboring Towns

Predictors	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Liberty/Free Soil %					
1841	228	6.21	9.13	0	70.7
1842	237	3.77	4.98	0	29.8
1843	234	7.74	9.72	0	43.75
1844	237	10.89	11.17	0	57.14
1845	236	14	13.17	0	61.15
1846	236	14.46	12.41	0	55.34
Absolute Differences in Major Party Vote %					
1840	235	29.54	22.7	0	100
1841	228	25.82	21.21	0	95.24
1842	237	26.62	22.39	0	100
1843	234	27.94	22.68	0	100
1844	237	28.44	21.93	0	100
1845	236	26.65	21.77	.3	100
1846	236	29.22	22.6	0	100
Average Liberty/Free Soil % for Neighboring Towns					
1841	239	6.41	4.85	0	25.56
1842	239	3.88	2.73	0	13.11
1843	239	7.97	6	0	30
1844	239	11.06	6.59	0	28.9
1845	239	14.43	8.19	0	36.93

Table 2B: Summary Statistics for Predictors from 1840 Census

Predictors	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Population	240	1214.65	726.68	53	4271
% in Agriculture	240	26.1	8.32	5.43	64.94
% in Manufacturing/Trade	240	3.57	2.61	0	14.16
% Literate	240	99.29	1.42	91.06	100

Table 3B: Predicting Percentage of Liberty Party votes, by year and by town, without accounting for past Liberty Party voting at t-1 or past Liberty Party voting in neighboring towns at t-1

Predictors	1841	1842	1843	1844	1845	1846
Absolute Difference in Major Party Vote, t-1	.12 (.04)**	-.02 (.01)	-.04 (.02)*	-.01 (.03)	-.02 (.04)	-.06 (.03)*
Agriculture	.06 (.04)	-.03 (.03)	.03 (.12)	.11 (.1)	.22 (.11)*	.2 (.11)
Manufacturing and Trade	.13 (.17)	.12 (.08)	.17 (.27)	-.08 (.19)	-.25 (.26)	-.5 (.2)**
Literate	.78 (.22)***	.48 (.12)***	.74 (.32)**	.2 (.61)	.27 (.79)	.21 (.78)
Town Population	.002 (.001)**	.0005 (.0005)	.00001 (.001)	-.0007 (.002)	.00002 (.002)	.002 (.002)
Constant	-79.25 (21.61)***	-43.67 (10.54)***	-66.54 (28.40)**	-10.25 (60.14)	-16.49 (77.91)	-10.12 (77.34)
N=	223	225	231	231	231	231
F=	6.7	8.52	3.8	.76	2.39	6.6
Prob.>F=	.00	.00	.02	.59	.1	.00
R-Sq.=	.13	.05	.03	.01	.03	.04

Ordinary least squares coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Standard errors are clustered by county. ***$p<.01$, **$p<.05$, * $p<.10$.

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