

Georgia State University

ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University

Political Science Theses

Department of Political Science

Fall 12-11-2012

Southern Lag Voting Trends in Florida U.S. Senate and Gubernatorial Elections

Marie Frederickson
Georgia State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/political_science_theses

Recommended Citation

Frederickson, Marie, "Southern Lag Voting Trends in Florida U.S. Senate and Gubernatorial Elections." Thesis, Georgia State University, 2012.
doi: <https://doi.org/10.57709/3490172>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Department of Political Science at ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Political Science Theses by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University. For more information, please contact scholarworks@gsu.edu.

SOUTHERN LAG VOTING TRENDS IN FLORIDA U.S. SENATE AND GUBERNATORIAL
ELECTIONS

by

MARIE FREDERICKSON

Under the Direction of Amy McKay

ABSTRACT

For the past several decades the South has moved toward one-party Republican control, and yet the mega-southern state of Florida has not kept pace with the greater Southern Republican realignment for candidates running for statewide office. Instead, Florida has exhibited a Southern lag, where rural counties maintain higher Democratic registration than voting levels in supporting Democratic candidates for governor and U.S. Senate in the same general election year. There has been a gradual regional dealignment occurring in rural counties that are closer to the Deep Southern states of Alabama and Georgia. Using a range of aggregate Florida county election and registration data, research found the percentage of white voters and percentage of registered Democrats that comprise counties effect the Democratic deviation. These results have implications for campaign strategy and can be used in campaign targeting efforts.

INDEX WORDS: Southern politics, General elections, Florida, Partisan change, Voting trends, Republican realignment, Democratic dealignment, Democratic deviation

SOUTHERN LAG VOTING TRENDS IN FLORIDA U.S. SENATE AND GUBERNATORIAL
ELECTIONS

by

MARIE FREDERICKSON

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

At Georgia State University

2012

Copyright by
Marie Frederickson
2012

SOUTHERN LAG VOTING TRENDS IN FLORIDA U.S. SENATE AND GUBERNATORIAL
ELECTIONS

by

MARIE FREDERICKSON

Committee Chair: Amy McKay

Committee: Toby Bolsen

Jeffery Lazarus

Electronic Version Approved: 11/26/2012

Office of Graduate Studies
College of Arts and Sciences
Georgia State University
December 2012

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the following people for help, guidance and support on this endeavor to study electoral trends in Florida: David Beattie of Hamilton Campaigns without whom I would not know the many nuances of Florida politics nor have the passion of it, and gratitude for sharing the mapping software to illustrate data visually.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	iv
List of Tables.....	vi
List of Figures.....	vii
1. Introduction	1
<i>1.1 Purpose of the study</i>	7
<i>1.2 Expected Results</i>	9
2. Southern lag	10
<i>2.1 Dealignment</i>	11
<i>2.2 Factors Influencing Realignment</i>	16
<i>2.3 Florida Election Results</i>	24
3. Hypothesis	29
<i>3.1 Data and measures</i>	29
<i>3.2 Statistical Results of OLS</i>	31
<i>3.3 Findings</i>	38
4. Conclusion	40
References.....	41

List of Tables

Table 1.1	Net Difference of Democrats and Republican Florida Voters, 1994-2006.....	8
Table 2.1	Table 2.1 Florida Voter Registration by Party and Region.....	13
Table 2.2	Florida Voter Registration by Media Market and Party.....	14
Table 2.3	Florida Voter Registration by Ethnicity and Region.....	17
Table 2.4	Florida Voter Registration by Media Market and Ethnicity.....	20
Table 2.5	1994 Florida Statewide General Election Results, by media market.....	25
Table 2.6	1998 Florida Statewide General Election Results, by media market.....	26
Table 2.7	2006 Florida Statewide General Election Results, by media market.....	27
Table 3.1	Explaining Florida County-level Democratic deviation	37

List of Figures

Figure 1.1	Florida Regional Map.....	3
Figure 2.1	Florida media market map.....	23
Figure 2.2	Florida Senatorial General Elections, 1994-2006.....	28
Figure 2.3	Florida Gubernatorial Elections, 1994-2006.....	28

1. Introduction

In a span of 50 years, the South has experienced a political transition away from being so staunchly Democratic, where voters would rather “vote for a yellow dog” than a Republican, to being the Republican base that has redefined Southern, and American, politics. Southern states went from supporting President Franklin Roosevelt and his populist agenda to splintering off¹ on racial issues with President Harry Truman’s desegregation of the military, to gradually embracing the more conservative paradigm of religion and economic agenda of the Republican Party. The South eventually became the stronghold of Republican support and produced some of its most notable players from Georgians Newt Gingrich and Ralph Reed in the mid 1990’s to Senator Jim DeMint of South Carolina today.

Throughout this thesis the South is defined as the eleven ex-Confederate, or secession, states of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. It is a standard definition that many respected researchers on elections and partisanship have used (see, Black and Black 1982, 1987, 1992, 2002; Key 1949, 1958; Miller and Shanks 1996; Sundquist 1973). The South is divided into two sub-regions: the Deep South and the Peripheral South. The Deep South is comprised of Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina which possess the largest black populations², are the most insular, and contain the most reactionary white populations (McKee, 2012). The Peripheral South is made up of Florida,

¹ Southern politicians and voters briefly left the Democratic Party to become Dixiecrats or the States’ Rights Party.

² For more on these classifications see V. O. Key, 1949 and Black and Black, 1987.

as well as Arkansas, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia, which comprise relatively smaller black populations. The Deep South states of Alabama and Georgia and the Peripheral South state of Florida are the focus of this study. And unlike other states in the Peripheral South, Florida became the first Southern state with an urban majority and was most unique in attracting many military installations and high number of Northern transplants for its climate for retirement (Black and Black, 1987) which further define it from the other Peripheral states.

In addition to these categories, the state of Florida will be described in five regional terms throughout the paper to address geographic areas and voting trends between areas: Panhandle/Northeast, Central, West Coastal, East Coastal, and South Florida. The Panhandle/Northeast³ refers to the northernmost counties in the state with large black populations, but low representation of other minority voters; in this way the Panhandle/Northeast resembles the Deep South demographics more than other regions. Duval County (home to Jacksonville) is its largest urban area with 537,462 voters as of 2006, with 143,909 registered black voters (26.8%). And due to Duval's proximity to Georgia, it is expected to exhibit similar voting trends. Moving southward down into the state is the Central region, which includes Orlando as its metropolitan city, a growing (non-Cuban) Latino population, as well as agricultural areas. The West Coastal region includes Tampa, St. Petersburg and Ft. Myers, while the East Coastal includes the NASA⁴ Space Coast. And finally South Florida which includes the metropolitan cities of Ft. Lauderdale, West Palm Beach and Miami, high population of blacks, and Latinos and Cubans (see figure

³ Interestingly, the number of registered voters in the Panhandle/Northeast is nearly the same as that of the entire state of Alabama.

⁴ National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

1.1). Most transplants moved to Central, Coastal and South Florida; while the Panhandle/Northeast maintained its roots and received transplants from the neighboring Southern states (Black and Black, 2002; Jeffreys, 2005).

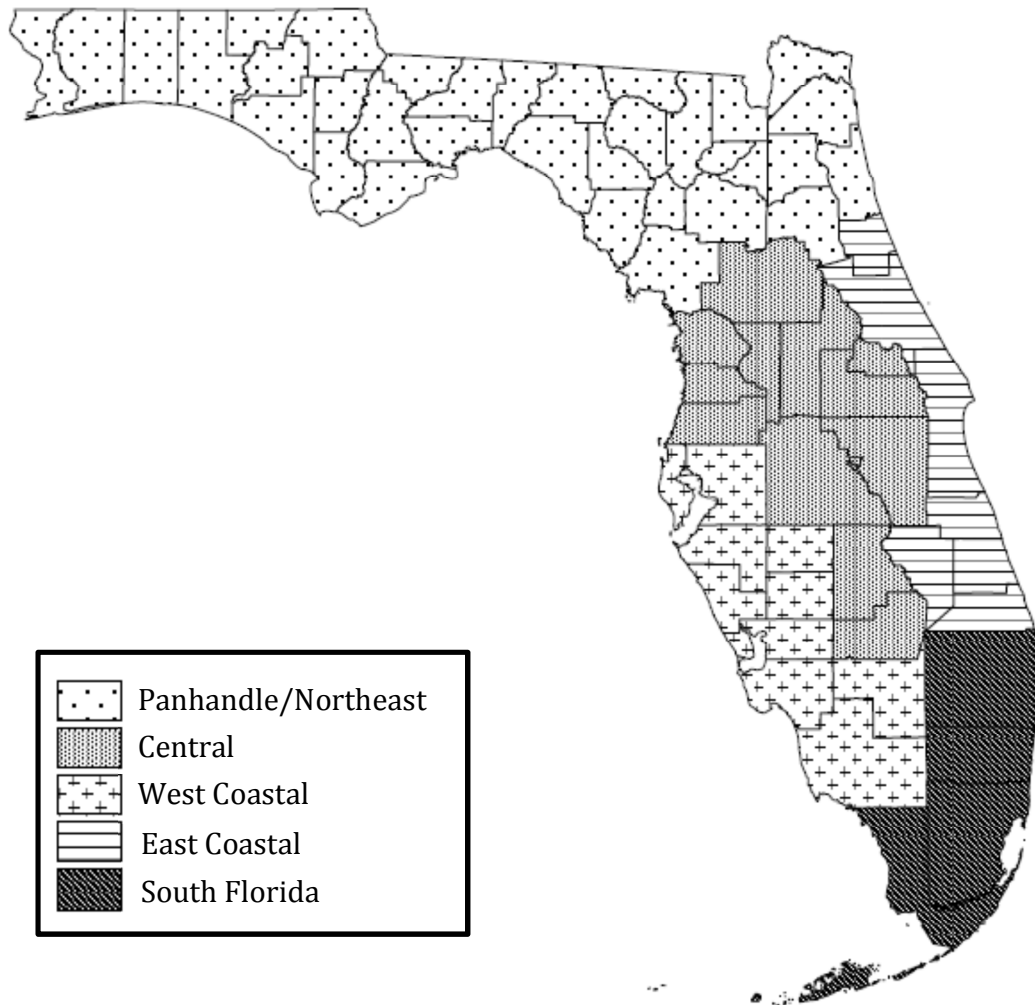


Figure 1.1 Florida Regions, by county

In those decades between Dixiecrats and the Contract with America (1994), the South began to dealign itself with Democrats, and began switching party identification⁵ and

⁵ Many Southern states do not require registration by party – Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. Of the Deep South states, only Louisiana records registration by party.

voting for candidates of both parties. Political scientists have devoted a good deal of research into identifying and understanding Southern voting trends and patterns in states and in the electorate with the aim to determine significant factors that motivate voters, both individually or in aggregate, to switch party allegiance (Black and Black 1992; Carmines and Stanley 1990; Miller and Shanks 1996; Petrocik 1987; Stanley 1988). Much of the research has been conducted on federal offices- comparing presidential results with those of specific United States (U.S.) congressional representative outcomes (Bullock, Hoffman and Gaddie 2005; Carsey 2004; Highton 2000; Kenney and Tom 1984). There have only been a handful of studies that have conducted ticket splitting research on a state level (Beck et al., 1992; Craig et al, 1999; Mulligan, 2011). While this type of comparison is useful, there has been little research on county aggregate election results on the willingness of voters to swing support for both Republicans and Democrats for statewide offices in the same years. This lack of attention given to state and county dynamics in elections can largely be attributed to the difficulty of obtaining data due to state election laws or difficulty obtaining results. The lack of analysis at the state level, Florida in particular and countywide level is the impetus to this research. Offices such as U.S. Senate and governors have been infrequently studied together. But this pairing should be included in the research evaluating the voting deviations (here using Democratic candidates in the South) since these offices avoid the complications surrounding gerrymandered districts typically found in Congressional races, or ideologically extreme districts, which may skew analysis.

Comparing senatorial and gubernatorial elections should provide insight into voting trends at the county level. This is in part due to their similarities: statewide constituency,

highly visible candidates, and high levels of campaign spending, as well as their differences, the responsibility of the office differs in the branch and level of government each represent. Atkeson and Randall (1995) found that state electorates hold their governors accountable for state economic conditions to the exclusion of national forces such as presidential approval and evaluations of the national economy which were more attributed to senators. Where Stein (1990) stated that expectations are consistent with a federalist perspective of vote choice in midterm elections whereby voters recognize and react to the differing responsibilities and circumstances of different branches and levels of government. A majority of research narrowly focuses attention to the president and congressional contests. However, in doing so researchers have selected a pair that is quite unrepresentative of the situation voters typically faces (Burden, 1998). By evaluating countywide aggregate data, this analysis eliminates the effects of gerrymandering between precincts and congressional lines commonly used to examine two offices. This analysis also compares between federal and state level offices rather than the more common federal and federal offices. There is an expectation that voters differentiate between federal policies undertaken by senatorial candidates and economic issues from gubernatorial candidates.

Florida gubernatorial races occur during midterm election years and typically have lower turnout than Presidential year elections. This provides an additional layer in evaluating county-level support for the Democratic candidates running for statewide offices. For one thing, divided control emerges from time to time, usually as a result of midterm election reversals for presidential approval (Beck, 1992). Evidence of this trend can be seen in the election years examined here. And empirical studies by Alesina and Rosenthal (1989), Erikson (1990), and Alesina, Londregan, and Rosenthal (1993) have

shown the model of midterm effect performs at least as well and often better than the traditional empirical voting models that emphasize incumbency advantage and retrospective voting on the state of economy (Burden and Kimball, 1998).

Here these effects will be evaluated by analyzing the absolute value of the percent of votes for the Democratic office minus the percent Democratic registration of the same year for each county. The senatorial and gubernatorial candidate vote percentages are evaluated for each of the following years: 1994, 1998, and 2006 which were when a federal race and a statewide race were occurring at the same time without the presence of presidential candidates.

Florida has the distinction of being a Southern state that operates outside of traditional Southern trends at the statewide level. Until 2010, Florida had not voted straight Republican when both office of Senate and Governor were on the ballot, unlike other states in the South. It is large in both land mass and population which includes a dense universe of voters and counties with a comprehensive election and registration data available for studying the aggregate effects election results. Florida provides an interesting universe to study voting patterns since it is in the South and has both Southern and non-Southern regions, qualities and populations. As of July 2012, Florida⁶ had 11,483,461 registered voters, with as few as 4,538 in Lafayette County to 1,249,428 in Miami-Dade County. Small counties like Lafayette are expected to act similarly to traditional southern conservative states with a Southern lag effect of moving toward solid Republican support, whereas counties like Miami-Dade and Broward are expected to continue to vary support,

⁶ From the Florida Department of Elections. <https://doe.dos.state.fl.us/voter-registration/statistics/elections.shtml#top>

due in part to high population and high diversity. Unlike other Southern states, generational replacement and partisan conversion are not the key factor in transforming Florida politics (Jeffreys, 2005). By using Florida counties to drill down into election data and examine voting trends in geographic regions that border the Deep South, this research studies aggregate voting patterns in whole counties rather than the more commonly districted, gerrymandered-centered research.

1.1 Purpose of the study

The South turned from a solid Democratic to a Republican stronghold. The splintering divide that began with Truman took hold, in earnest, at the presidential level in 1980 with the election of Ronald Reagan, and then continued to move down the ballot over the decades to Congressman, governors and finally to state legislatures. Now the majority of these states are solidly Republican. Florida, however, has not kept pace with these other Southern states in their realignment toward Republican representation. Florida did move along with the South in its support for Reagan in 1980 but, unlike most Southern states, it continues to elect Democratic candidates for statewide office. Florida maintains Democratic representation at the statewide level: with both a Democratic Senator and governor until 1994 and then a Democratic Senator with a Republican governor and Senator.

Whereas Florida is one of the nation's top five most populous states, it still has many small rural counties⁷ (in 2006, 34 counties, or 51%, fell into this criteria) that share traits with traditional Southern states (e.g., agricultural, high percentage white population, etc.),

⁷ Rural counties being defined as having less than 70,000 registered voters.

especially in those adjacent to the Deep South states. According to McKee (2010) the political behavior of rural residents has been conspicuously absent thus far in a growing literature on the political role of place. It is anticipated these counties have been moving similarly to the South's support for Republican political leadership, but many of these counties have not fully dealigned with Democratic candidates at the statewide level and still maintain high Democratic registration, even though it is steadily on the decline (see table 1.1). In fact, in as late as 2006, 82% of its rural counties still sustained Democratic registration of over 50%. Yet these rural counties are shifting away from Democrats in statewide representation, and it is anticipated that they will eventually realign with Republicans because they share: geographic proximity, economic and racial similarities, and in some case media markets which permeate Deep Southern political rhetoric and campaign communications.

Table 1.1 Net Difference of Democrats and Republican Florida Voters, 1994-2006

Media Market	Net Democrat		
	1994	1998	2006
Miami	15.3	13.7	15.2
West Palm Beach	0.7	2.4	6.6
Ft. Myers	-17.6	-16.4	-17.3
Tampa	-0.8	-1.4	-1.5
Orlando	-4.3	-3.5	-1.8
Jacksonville	24.7	13.1	-0.1
Gainesville	38.6	33.9	24.3
Tallahassee	54.1	49.2	38.7
Panama City	52.8	38.9	9.9
Pensacola	9.5	-4.8	-19.4
TOTAL	7.1	5.0	2.7

1.2 Expected Results

It is expected that rural counties, will demonstrate a Southern lag that illustrates Democratic deviation between Democratic registration versus Democratic vote for candidates. Even as Democratic registration declines, this deviation will continue to be evident as these counties move toward Republican realignment following the Deep South model. By using Democratic absolute deviation voting trends for both parties for senatorial and gubernatorial candidates beginning in 1994 to 2006 will attempt to prove this hypothesis. These results should be concentrated in the Panhandle/Northeast region of the state which, as previously noted, is adjacent to Deep South states and in other rural, predominantly white counties. Urban counties which are further away from the Deep South will be less likely to follow traditional Southern voting trends of Democratic dealignment due in part to their demographics which do not reflect traditional Southern counties with its higher numbers of transplants, Latinos, tourism and a host of other factors. By analyzing the highly visible statewide races of senate and governor, there should be discernible evidence of Democratic deviation in counties which are rural, with high percentage of white voters, Democratic voters and voters in the Pensacola-Mobile, AL, Tallahassee-Thomasville-GA, Panama City, Jacksonville, and Gainesville media markets with particular emphasis on the two which share media markets with Alabama and Georgia.

Counties with high white voter percentages should effect the deviation, particularly those with higher black voter populations (those with 10% or more black registration) because this demographic make-up mirrors that seen in the Deep South- which also have a history of racial tensions dating back to slavery, the Confederacy, and segregation. The media markets group geographic areas which are close to one another and receive the

same TV campaign communication which should effect candidate support. And two of the media markets in the Panhandle region have overlapping borders with the Deep South. So the Pensacola-Mobile, AL should demonstrate even greater Democratic deviation due to it bordering Alabama on two sides (west and north) and it receives additional Alabama campaign ads or communication, and Alabama has realigned to the Republican Party. While the Tallahassee-Thomasville, GA media market should display, although less so, similar changes, because Georgia was slower to move to complete Republican representation at the statewide level and some of the counties in this market have high percentages of black voters.

In short, this study will explain a trend of Democratic deviation between registration and support for Democratic candidates in rural, high white counties due to a Southern lag effect and dealignment from the Democratic Party.

2. Southern lag

There is a vast amount of political science research devoted to the dealignment of the Democratic Party and the momentum to support the Republican Party and the surge of Republican voting in the South is well documented (Aistrup, 1996; Black and Black 1982, 1987, 1992, 2002, 2007; Lubin 2004; Osborne 2011; Stanley 1988). Yet as V.O. Key (1949) pointed out, it has been top down politics in the South beginning with president and trickling down the ballot.

The history of partisan change over the last 50 years involves the reversal of the Democratic Party's popularity and strength in the South to the transfer of power to the Republican Party due to white conservative voters (or traditional Southern voters)

(Carmines and Stanley, 1990). Republicans have attracted huge majorities of white conservatives and have neutralized the advantages of Democrats with white moderates (Black and Black, 2007). As suggested by Born (2000), white Southerners since as early as *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) began moving toward Republicans for president, but maintained their loyalty toward local or “home-grown” Democrats. Today there is little party deviation between president and congress in the South (outside of metropolitan areas) and more are voting in Republican statewide blocs similar to those held by Democrats pre-*Brown v. Board of Education*. Voters convinced that their local Democratic nominee was cut from the national liberal mold are more likely to vote Republican (Black and Black 1987; Glaser 1996).

2.1 Dealignment

The South used Democratic partisan cues for straight Democratic ticket voting for decades. Often most elections were decided during the primaries because there were no Republican challengers (Black and Black, 1982). But over the past 30 years, Southern states and counties began to shift away from straight Democratic tickets to straight Republican tickets. The culminating factors in Democratic dealignment in the South began with racial tension intensified by *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Civil Rights Act of 1957, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Political realignments generally depend on two factors- one is a change among party elites, and the other is fertile soil in the mass public's attitudes (Valentino and Sears, 2005). President Richard Nixon is credited for devising the Southern Strategy by exploiting racial tensions to gain Southern support from Democrats who felt disenfranchised by President Johnson's Civil Rights Act. The party elites had been working on its strategy for a decade when it finally gained its footing among

Southern white voters during Reagan's bid for the White House, which proved pivotal as the Republican turning point in the South. Now things have changed so much that the South is once again exceptional, but this time because it is so overwhelmingly Republican (McKee, 2012).

Alabama's realignment to the Republican Party began in 1980 by supporting Reagan and electing Jeremiah Denton as its first Republican governor since Reconstruction. And since 1980, Alabama has consistently supported Republican presidential candidates. In 1980, Georgia also voted its first Republican Senator (Mack Mattingly) since Reconstruction but it lagged behind Alabama, and the rest of the South, and swung its support to native-son President Jimmy Carter. But only four years later, Georgia gave its support to Reagan, yet in 1992 it cast its electoral votes for Bill Clinton- which would be the last time Georgia would support a Democratic presidential candidate.

The midterm election of 1994 was a terrible year for Democrats, particularly in the South. But it would be a changing of the tides for Republicans in the South, a trend which would continue and strengthen throughout the decade into the present. In 1994, Southern white support for Republican (GOP) candidates surged to record levels enabling the GOP to achieve majority status in the region's U.S. Senate and House delegations, and make substantial gains in southern state legislatures (Black and Black 2002). In fact, the exceptional 16-seat Southern shift to the GOP in 1994 constituted more seats than Republicans had gained in the three previous Democratic mid-terms combined (Bullock et al., 2005). The Southern realignment toward Republicans had taken hold and after the Republicans won control of both houses, Alabama Democratic U.S. Senator Richard Shelby switched his party affiliation to Republican, in what would mark a growing trend in the

Democratic Party's Southern defection. By 2002, both Alabama and Georgia would solidly vote for Republican candidates at the statewide level. The South's political landscape is shifting in ways that make it worthwhile to ask whether Democrats will, in the foreseeable future, be able to compete effectively in Southern statewide elections (Hayes and McKee, 2008).

Table 2.1 Florida Voter Registration by Party and Region

Party Registration	Statewide			<u>Panhandle/NE</u> (19%)			<u>Rest of Florida</u> (81%)		
	1994	1998	2006	1994	1998	2006	1994	1998	2006
Democrat	49.0	45.0	40.4	61.9	54.1	44.0	45.9	42.8	39.6
Republican	41.9	40.0	37.7	31.5	34.6	39.7	44.3	41.4	37.3
Independent	8.6	15.0	21.8	6.0	11.3	16.3	9.3	15.8	23.2
Net Dem-Rep	7.1	5.0	2.7	30.4	19.6	4.4	1.6	1.4	2.3

Placed in the red state - blue state context in the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections, it is apparent that the polarization of rural and urban voters contributed to lopsided election outcomes in these states, whereas the most competitive states exhibited no rural-urban divide in vote choice (McKee, 2008). But the tides really began to turn with the initial desertion and continued realignment of about one-sixth of the white voters in the South who, until 1994, stood by Democratic congressional candidates even as they voted for Republican presidential nominees. Prior to 1994, a sizable share of the white electorate distinguished between Democratic congressional candidates and presidential candidates; since 1994 that distinction has been swept away (Bullock et al., 2005).

According to Craig et al. (1999), Floridians do not always see their own states political leaders as falling within the overarching bonds of traditional partisanship, and on

the whole, continue to appraise leaders largely according to their partisan affiliation “(or lack of it).” Parties adjust their policies and candidacies to counteract losses in support among their electorate, and as a result, former party followers who have left the ranks revise their evaluations and return (Fiorina 2002). Thereby creating a party lag in which it takes time for the party to react to the changing electorate. It is possible that the issues associated with party transformations may help to change the social images of the parties for many citizens (Carsey and Layman 2006). Similar to party lag, there is expected to be a regional lag in voting trends, particularly in rural and high white voter concentrated counties.

Table 2.2 Florida Voter Registration by Media Market and Party

Media Market	Democrat			Republican			Independent		
	1994	1998	2006	1994	1998	2006	1994	1998	2006
Miami	52.6	49.1	45.8	37.3	35.4	30.6	9.6	15.5	23.7
West Palm Beach	44.6	42.8	41.6	43.9	40.5	35.1	11.0	16.7	23.3
Ft. Myers	36.9	33.9	29.4	54.5	50.4	46.8	8.3	15.7	23.8
Tampa	44.7	41.2	37.9	45.5	42.6	39.4	9.3	16.2	22.7
Orlando	43.6	40.6	37.6	47.8	44.1	39.4	7.9	15.3	22.9
Jacksonville	59.2	50.6	41.3	34.4	37.4	41.4	6.0	12.0	17.4
Gainesville	64.7	60.2	52.3	26.1	26.3	28.0	8.3	13.5	19.7
Tallahassee/GA	73.4	70.4	63.5	19.3	21.3	24.8	6.5	8.3	11.7
Panama City	74.1	64.8	48.3	21.3	25.8	38.3	3.8	9.4	13.4
Pensacola/Mobile	51.8	41.6	31.9	42.2	46.5	51.3	5.7	11.9	16.8
TOTAL	49.0	45.0	40.4	41.9	40.0	37.7	8.6	15.0	21.8

The number of Florida voters with loose partisan ties has contributed to increasing competitiveness in the state (Jefferys, 2005). Voters mix and match partisan candidates based on their policy shopping list for their desired policy or ideological outcomes. Voters use different criteria to gauge their expectations of the office or race at that point in time based on one or more factors which could include candidate ideology, issue voting,

candidate communication and various other variables. So candidates are measured on evaluation variables, with each the voter comparing the Republican and Democratic candidates in terms of their “good points” (Lewis-Beck et al, 2008). Unlike the rest of the South, the diversity and size of Florida necessitates its candidates to be less extreme at the statewide level and more moderate which has insulated it from the Southern Republican realignment, particularly in the Deep South. Candidates for senate and governor are compelled to position themselves as centrist to appeal to a broad spectrum of persuadable voters.

Many residents in densely populated [Florida] counties share a common political rootlessness; they are not blinded by Southern tradition and often have weaker partisan ties derived from their home state (Jeffreys, 2005). Less populated counties may still have the remnants of Southern Democrats (pre-Reagan) but also be decreasing in its partisan intensity; the Democratic vote deviation should demonstrate this trend. In so far as Florida’s total registered voters are concerned, it had 6.6 million in 1994, 8.2 million in 1998, and 10.2 million in 2006. In comparison, in 1994 and 1998 Florida had approximately the same number of registered voters as the Deep South states of Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina combined. And by 2006, it was nearly equal to those three states plus half the state of Mississippi⁸. Even as the Deep South grows, Florida continues to surpass them and attract more citizens. And the 20th century transformation of state demographics created a Florida population that is a departure from traditional Southern populations (Jeffreys, 2005).

⁸ Voter registration information obtained from the South Carolina Secretary of State website. <http://www.state.sc.us/scsec/sta98.htm>.

2.2 Factors Influencing Realignment

The white South has not only given up its solid support for the Democrats, but had become distinctly more Republican than the rest of the country (Osborne et al., 2011). As white Southerners have, in increasing numbers, moved into the Republican Party, African Americans have become a solidly Democratic constituency. This has dramatically reshaped the distribution of party identification in the South (Hayes and McKee, 2008). Black voters make up a high percentage of the minority population in the Deep South, and at higher numbers proportionally. It is these same demographic characteristics that are seen in the Panhandle/Northeast. But as a whole, Hispanics are the “majority minority” in Florida.

The Republican reversal of party control has entailed the realignment of white voters. Republicans have attracted huge majorities of white conservatives and have neutralized the advantages of Democrats with white moderates (Black and Black, 2007). These changes have typically occurred in regions where there are high percentages of black voters in the region. Republicans are almost all white, and blacks are the dominant core of the southern Democratic Party (Black and Black 2002). By 2006, white voters made up 84% of the Florida Republican Party, while Hispanic accounted for 11%, and blacks comprised 2%. Contrast that with the Democratic Party of Florida in the same year which was comprised of 63% white voters, nearly a quarter of whom were black voters (24%) and 9% were Latino.

Florida’s traditional Southern counties (those which are low in diversity, low population, rural, etc.) have dealigned with Democrats as seen through registration numbers and candidate vote percentage. This can be attributed in part to the fact that the Democratic registration in this region has dropped -26 net points from Republican

registration from 1994 to 2006, while the rest of the state has not seen a significant change. These counties have been gradually losing strength in supporting Democratic candidates beyond what their county registration numbers indicate.

Many of the counties in this region are rural and lack diversity of non-black minority voters which is below 7.5% in as late as 2006. There are counties in the Panhandle/Northeast region with high black registration; and overall, the region has higher percentage of black voters than does the rest of the state, with 15 to 16% during the years being examined. A few counties⁹ in the Tallahassee metro area that have black registration above 30% should show little to no effects from any Southern lag effects, although the Tallahassee media market is shared with parts of Georgia (see table 2.3).

Table 2.3 Florida Voter Registration by Ethnicity and Region

Ethnicity (%)	<u>Statewide</u>			<u>Panhandle/Northeast</u>			<u>Rest of Florida</u>		
	1994	1998	2006	1994	1998	2006	1994	1998	2006
White Voters	89.1	80.5	72.0	83.9	81.0	76.6	90.3	80.4	70.9
Black Voters	9.4	10.6	12.0	14.9	15.6	16.3	8.1	9.4	10.9
Other Voters	1.5	9.4	16.1	1.2	4.0	7.1	1.6	10.7	18.2

Levernier and Barilla’s (2006) study on determining how region, demographics, and economic characteristics affected county-level voting patterns in the 2000 presidential election indicated that although economic and demographic characteristics were important causes of the voting patterns, the regional location of a county was also important; suggesting that unobserved region-specific cultural characteristics were at play. This study supports the theory that counties located adjacent to the Deep South should expect to

⁹ For example, Gadsden County in the Tallahassee area had the highest black percentage of any county in the state at 55% in 1998 and 2006.

exhibit similar cultural tendencies that would add to the explanation of why counties in Panhandle/Northeast region have continued to support mixed statewide representation and how it is changing toward Republican domination. Because partisanship is an enduring political characteristic usually resistant to sudden alteration (Campbell et al. 1960; Green et al. 2002), the long-term pattern of partisanship shows strong evidence of political change among rural voters. Rural voters tend to be morally and socially conservative, but they might also have good reasons to vote with Democrats on matters of economic importance. Nevertheless, data show that their voting loyalty is growing more Republican (Gimpel and Karnes, 2006)

McCarty et al. (2005) put forth that geographic relocation from a community in which one's party identification is in the majority to a community in which one's partisanship is in the minority triggers changes in one's partisanship and found that Democrats who moved to social environments in which their predispositions met greater Republican opposition than in the environments in which they grew up were more likely to become Republicans. This is especially relevant to Florida which attracts new population growth through immigration, retirees, who have greater flexibility in choosing where they live, and job seekers, who have less flexibility; this continuous flow of transplants, which tend to reside near each other and carry their native voting behaviors with them, can influence county voting trends. Americans have become more mobile, they have consciously chosen to relocate into communities with politically likeminded neighbors (Oppenheimer, 2005). From this it is supposed that as more voters move into areas faster than the local county population is growing, the new voters will either influence or usurp local voting tendencies. For example, in Orange County (home to Orlando) the inflow of

non-Cuban Latinos, who are Democratic leaning supporters, has altered the once Republican area to one which swings support to both parties. This kind of self-sorting reinforces political similarities within counties and compounds the observable regional electoral effects such as moving toward Republican realignment. As counties move their support it becomes a predictive indicator of partisan change. If the support from counties for the Democratic Party continues to dwindle, eventually expectations shift for these counties to completely dealign, if not realign.

As discussed earlier, these counties share common geographic and demographic traits. This paper tests the effects of counties grouped by media markets which political campaigns use to target television communication. There is substantial research (Beck et al., 1992; Burden and Kimball, 2002; Roscoe, 2003; Gimpel, et al., 2004; Mulligan, 2011) supporting that fact that increased campaign media (i.e., print, radio, and TV advertisements) is a significant factor for voters to deviate from party allegiance and support candidates regardless of party. And although increased TV media will certainly increase a candidate's ability to persuade weak partisans to vote contrary to their party affiliations, it may not be observable why – if it is from incumbency, name recognition, issue alignment, ad repetition or some other reason. This is due to the limitation on gathering information to adequately study the effects given the difficulties obtaining the amounts of media used and paid for by candidates and third-party supporters. Past research has uncovered several aspects of the influence of media on voting. Roscoe (2003) cites evidence that voters are more willing to swing support when individuals are more reliant on a vast variety of media and messages. Suggesting that the more candidates utilize media, the more it will attract voters to abandon party ties and pick up support. And so,

candidates who outspend their opponents are more visible to voters and better able to attract voters from the other party and creating more deviation (Mulligan, 2001). It is expected that counties in a defined media market will operate similarly, although not the same, in part because they receive the same targeted messages (or lack thereof, if candidates choose not to communicate there through TV). This paper focuses on the effects campaign communications counties are likely to receive as a group and posits that those counties within the Panhandle/Northeast region which share media markets with the Deep South will be more inclined to exhibit Southern lag demonstrated through the Democratic deviation variable.

Table 2.4 Florida Voter Registration by Media Market and Ethnicity

Media Market	White Voters			Black Voters			All Other Voters		
	1994	1998	2006	1994	1998	2006	1994	1998	2006
Miami	83.6	58.0	43.2	14.4	16.2	18.9	2.0	26.1	37.8
West Palm Beach	93.3	88.7	80.7	6.5	7.9	9.6	0.2	4.0	9.7
Ft. Myers	95.8	92.2	87.3	3.0	3.6	3.8	1.3	5.0	8.9
Tampa	93.1	89.1	81.9	5.8	6.7	7.9	1.1	4.3	10.1
Orlando	90.5	85.2	74.2	6.6	8.0	9.6	2.9	7.8	16.2
Jacksonville	81.8	79.2	73.8	17.1	17.4	18.6	1.1	4.2	7.6
Gainesville	87.7	82.9	75.8	10.8	12.0	13.0	1.5	5.4	11.2
Tallahassee	75.5	72.2	68.5	23.1	24.9	25.4	1.4	3.5	6.2
Panama City	90.1	88.1	86.6	9.6	9.8	9.2	0.4	2.6	4.2
Pensacola	89.3	86.0	82.8	9.3	10.7	10.9	1.4	4.0	6.3
TOTAL	89.1	80.5	72.0	9.4	10.6	12.0	1.5	9.4	16.1

There are ten media markets in the state of Florida. Each surrounds a general population for candidates to target and each varying in cost to advertise (being most expensive in the Tampa and Miami media markets and least expensive in Gainesville). The media markets are described below with the counties in each, voter population, percent

white voters, and political party registration lead. The Florida media markets are (moving from the southern part of the state northward):

- Miami-Ft. Lauderdale (“Miami”) encompasses 3 counties – Broward, Miami-Dade and Monroe. In 2006, it had 2,060,875 registered voters, and white voters held a +5 point plurality over Hispanic voters (43% to 38%), while black voters accounted for 19% of the market. In 1994 and 2006, Democrats held a +15 point advantage over Republicans.
- West Palm Beach-Ft. Pierce (“West Palm Beach”) contains 5 counties- Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, Palm Beach, and St. Lucie. In 2006, it had 1,115,474 registered voters, and white voters accounted for 81% of the market. In 1994, Democrats only held a +1 point advantage, while in 2006, Democrats held a +7 point advantage over Republicans.
- Ft. Myers-Naples (“Ft. Myers”) includes 5 counties – Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Glades, Hendry, and Lee. In 2006, it had 667,927 registered voters, and white voters represented 87% of the market. In 1994 and 2006, Republicans held a +18 point advantage over Democrats.
- Tampa-St. Petersburg (“Tampa”) encompasses 10 counties – Citrus, Hardee, Hernando, Highlands, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, and Sarasota. In 2006, it had 2,547,674 registered voters, and white voters represented 82% of the market. In 1994 and 2006, Republicans held a +1 point advantage over Democrats.
- Orlando-Daytona Beach-Melbourne (“Orlando”) includes counties- Brevard, Flagler, Lake, Marion, Orange, Osceola, Seminole, Sumter, and Volusia. In 2006, it had 2,026,101 registered voters, and white voters represented 74% of the market, while

Latinos represented 16%. In 1994, Republicans held a +4 point advantage, while in 2006, Republicans held a +1 point advantage over Democrats.

The next five media markets are all located within the Panhandle/Northeast region of the state.

- Jacksonville contains 9 counties- Baker, Bradford, Clay, Columbia, Duval, Nassau, Putnam, St. Johns, and Union. In 2006, it had 931,879 registered voters, and white voters accounted for 74% of the market while black voters represented 19%. In 1994 Democrats held a +25 point advantage, but by 2006, there was no net advantage between Democrats and Republicans.
- Gainesville includes 4 counties- Alachua, Dixie, Gilchrist, and Levy. In 2006, it had 191,710 registered voters, and white voters accounted for 76% of the market while black voters represented 13%. In 1994 it was a +39 point advantage for Democrats, and then in 2006, Democrats held a +24 point advantage over Republicans.
- Tallahassee, FL-Thomasville, GA (“Tallahassee”) encompasses 10 counties- Gadsden, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lafayette, Leon, Madison, Suwannee, Taylor, and Wakulla. In 2006, it had 258,002 registered voters, and white voters accounted for 68% of the market while black voters represented 25%. In 1994, Democrats had a +54 point advantage over Republicans, while in 2006, Democrats held a +39 point advantage over Republicans.
- Panama City holds 9 counties- Bay, Calhoun, Franklin, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Liberty, Walton, and Washington. In 2006, it had 223,918 registered voters, and white voters accounted for 87% of the media market. In 1994 it had a +53 point advantage, but by 2006, Democrats held a +10 point advantage over Republicans.

- Mobile, AL-Pensacola-Ft. Walton (“Pensacola”) includes 3 counties – Escambia, Okaloosa, and Santa Rosa. In 2006, it had 410,289 registered voters, and white voters represented 83% of the market, while black voters represented 11%. In 1994, Democrats held a +10 point advantage, but in 2006, Republicans held a +19 point advantage over Democrats.

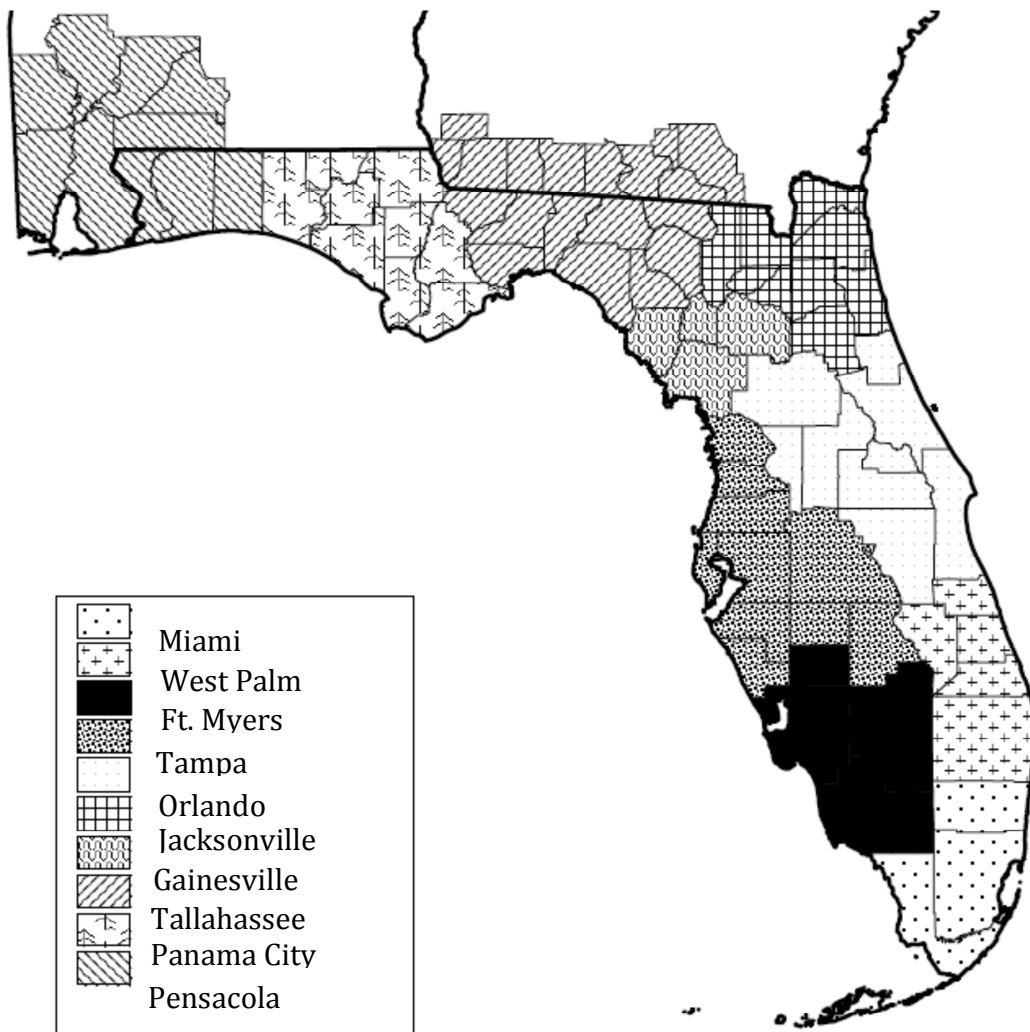


Figure 2.1 Florida Media Markets, by county, including Alabama and Georgia overlap

In as late as 2006, three media markets (Tampa, Miami, and Orlando) accounted for nearly two-thirds (64%) of the state's 10.4 million registered voters. These metropolitan markets contain voters who are the antithesis of typical Southern regions (high percentage of Hispanic and African American voters combined, more affluent voters, etc.). While the five media markets in the Panhandle/Northeast only accounted for 19% of the state's total registered voters. However, it is expected the counties in these low population media markets that adhere closer to the Southern political paradigm will deviate at a greater rate from their Democratic registration than other areas of the state.

2.3 Florida Election Results

It is important to understand the candidates who ran for the office in the races being analyzed, at least on a cursory level. 1994 was a year for change. Hugh Rodham, a Miami-Dade County public defender and brother to First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, ran for Senate against incumbent Republican Senator Connie Mack III. Though President and Mrs. Clinton campaigned for Rodham, he did not raise much money and received little help from Florida's Democratic establishment; additionally, he only ran one television ad¹⁰, an anti-gun spot (CNN, 1996). Not surprisingly, Senator Mack had a landslide victory of 70% to 30% (see figure 2.2 for senatorial election results), winning every county in the state, by 2,454,460 votes. Even in the closest county contest in the state, Gadsden County, Rodham lost by -3 percentage points. Meanwhile the race for governor was between the incumbent

¹⁰ It is not clear if the ad was run statewide or only in specific media markets, or how often the ad was run.

Democrat Lawton Chiles¹¹ and former President George H.W. Bush’s son, Jeb Bush who had been appointed Secretary of Commerce under Governor Bob Martinez in 1987-1988. Chiles narrowly won a victory by 51% to 49% (see figure 2.3 for all gubernatorial elections), winning only 27 of 67 counties (37%) with 63,940 votes. So in 1994, Florida had (re)elected a Republican Senator and Democratic Governor.

Table 2.5 1994 Florida Statewide General Election Results, by media market.

Media Market	<u>U.S. Senate</u>		<u>Governor</u>	
	Dem.	Rep.	Dem.	Rep.
Miami	40.1	59.9	58.6	41.4
West Palm Beach	33.6	66.4	56.9	43.1
Ft. Myers	22.4	77.6	43.3	56.7
Tampa	26.6	73.4	49.5	50.5
Orlando	25.7	74.3	48.0	52.0
Jacksonville	25.5	74.5	40.1	59.9
Gainesville	34.3	65.7	59.2	40.8
Tallahassee	34.7	65.3	60.6	39.4
Panama City	23.9	76.1	46.2	53.8
Pensacola	18.8	81.2	38.7	61.3

In the 1998 Senate race, Democrat incumbent Bob Graham faced state senator (District 20, Tampa) Charlie Crist. Graham handily won by 62% to 38%, winning 63 of the 67 counties (94% of the state) by 972,652 votes. And in the 1998 governor’s race, Republican Jeb Bush ran again, this time against Lieutenant Governor Buddy MacKay and won with a +10 point margin (55% to 45%), this time securing 61 (21 more than his previous run) of the state’s 67 counties (91%), with 418,051 vote margin. Again Florida elected opposing parties for statewide offices.

¹¹ Lawton became well-known as “Walkin’ Lawton” for his walk from Key West to Pensacola in 1970 to gain attention for his successful bid for U.S. Senate. He served as a U.S. Senator until his successful bid for governor in 1990.

Table 2.6 1998 Florida Statewide General Election Results, by media market.

Media Market	<u>U.S. Senate</u>		<u>Governor</u>	
	Dem.	Rep.	Dem.	Rep.
Miami	77.3	22.7	54.3	45.7
West Palm Beach	68.1	31.9	53.6	46.4
Ft. Myers	51.1	48.9	34.8	65.2
Tampa	57.2	42.8	43.2	56.8
Orlando	58.6	41.4	41.0	59.0
Jacksonville	56.6	43.4	36.0	64.0
Gainesville	70.4	29.6	52.5	47.5
Tallahassee	75.4	24.6	53.5	46.5
Panama City	59.7	40.3	34.2	65.8
Pensacola	47.4	52.6	28.1	71.9

In order to describe Florida’s electoral environment, one cannot discuss contemporary Florida politics without addressing the 2000 presidential election, even though that election year is not being analyzed here. Texas Republican Governor George W. Bush, and brother to Governor Jeb Bush, defeated Democratic Vice President Al Gore in a hotly contested battle that ended in front of the U.S. Supreme Court in *Bush v. Gore*. Ultimately, George W. Bush was judged to win by a recount of 537 Florida votes (out of 5,963,110 votes cast for president), and won 51 of the 67 counties (76%). And while not at the same level of intensity or scrutiny, the 2004 Senatorial race between Republican and former U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Mel Martinez and former Florida Education Commissioner and University of South Florida president Betty Castor was also very close. Martinez won with 1.1% of the vote (49.4% to 48.3%) winning by 82,663 votes and with support of 44 of the 67 counties (66%). These two presidential year statewide elections further illustrate the volatility in the Florida electorate.

And finally in 2006, Democratic incumbent Senator Bill Nelson, handily beat former Republican former Florida Secretary of State and U.S. Congresswoman (District 13, Sarasota) Katherine Harris, 60% to 38%, winning 57 of the 67 counties (85%) by 1,064,421 votes. In the governor's race, then Republican Florida Attorney General Charlie Crist won against Democratic U.S. Congressman (District 11, Tampa) Jim Davis by +7 percentage points (52% to 45%), Crist won support in 59 counties (88%), by 341,556 votes. And once again in the midterm election, Florida elected both a Republican and a Democrat for statewide offices. But in the midterm election of 2010 Florida changed the electoral pattern of mixed partisan representation on the same ballot for statewide offices¹² and voted for Republican leadership in both for senate and for governor.

Table 2.7 2006 Florida Statewide General Election Results, by media market.

Media Market	<u>U.S. Senate</u>		<u>Governor</u>	
	Dem.	Rep.	Dem.	Rep.
Miami	68.4	31.6	58.8	41.2
West Palm Beach	69.3	30.7	55.2	44.8
Ft. Myers	52.7	47.3	35.0	65.0
Tampa	61.0	39.0	44.3	55.7
Orlando	60.3	39.7	43.2	56.8
Jacksonville	50.5	49.5	35.9	64.1
Gainesville	66.6	33.4	52.8	47.2
Tallahassee	72.5	27.5	54.3	45.7
Panama City	52.8	47.2	36.0	64.0
Pensacola	44.6	55.4	32.2	67.8

¹² The next observable occurrence for examining both offices will not happen again until 2018.

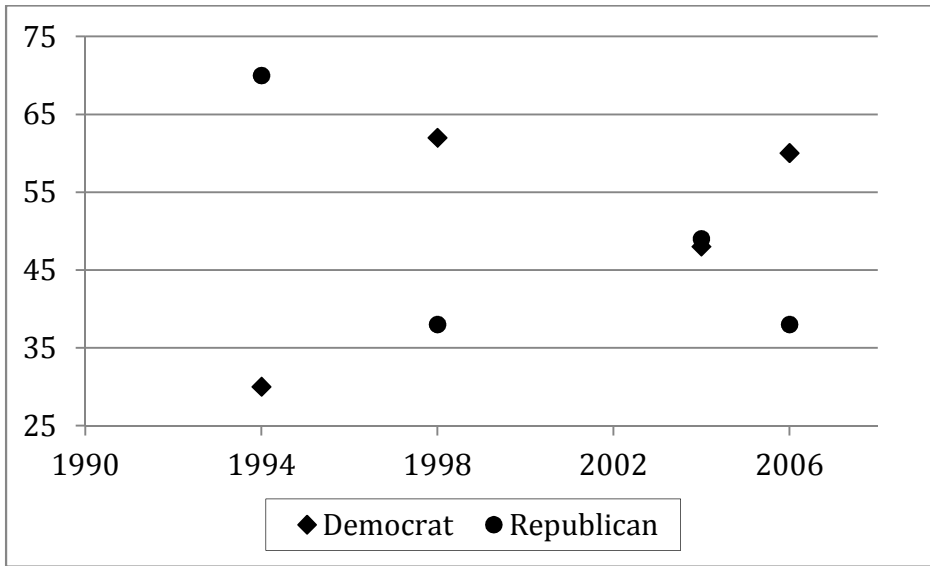


Figure 2.2 Florida Senatorial General Elections, 1994-2006

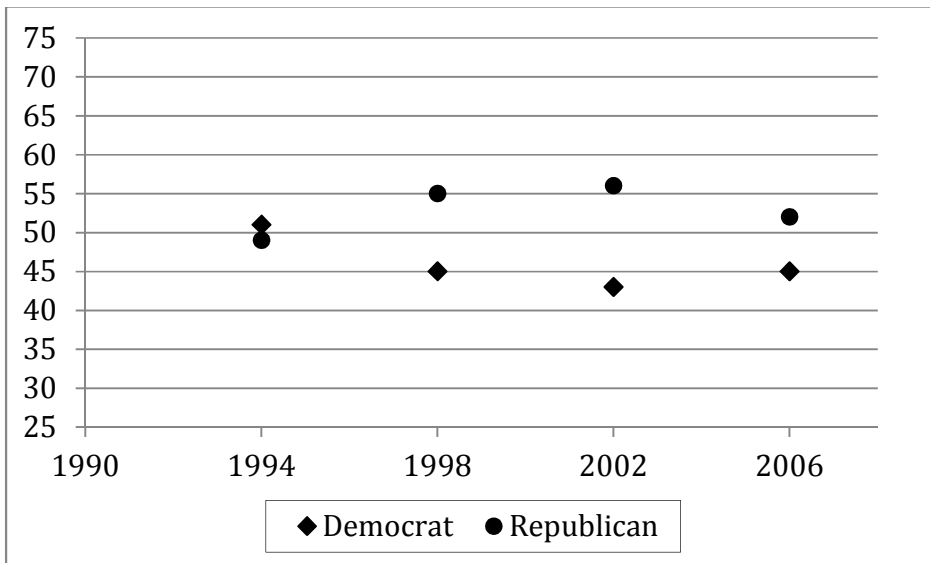


Figure 2.3 Florida Gubernatorial Elections, 1994-2006

3. Hypothesis

Rural, Democratic counties in Florida are more likely than urban, Democratic counties to vote for Democratic candidates in a lower percentage than their Democratic registration. The following races will be examined for Democratic deviation: U.S. Senatorial and gubernatorial races during the 1994, 1998 and 2006 general elections. The Democratic deviation occurs due to the following reasons: continued decrease in the percentage of registered Democrats, percentage of white voters, population log, population density, and media market.

3.1 Data and measures

This analysis focuses on the absolute deviation of Democratic votes for senate and governor from Democratic registration based on the effects of geography, population, and ethnicity for each election both offices were on the same ballot. To test the propositions, Florida aggregate election results and voter registration statistics by county were gathered from the Florida Secretary of State Division of Elections office for the 1994, 1998, and 2006 general elections.

The dependent variable is the absolute value of the Democratic percentage of the office (senate or governor) vote ($\%D_{office}$) minus the Democratic registration percentage ($\%D_{RV}$) for each county (for the midterm elections of 1994, 1998, 2006), or the absolute Democratic deviation ($|D_d|$). Or:

$$|\%D_{office} - \%D_{RV}| = D_d$$

Democratic deviation reflects the absolute distance of the candidate's total county vote percentage from the percentage of registered Democrats in the county. For example, if the percent registered Democratic voters was 64 and the Democratic candidate vote percentage were 36, the Democratic deviation would be [absolute value of 36 - 64] = 28.

To evaluate the impact of Deep South politics had through TV media on Florida county Democratic dealignment, media markets were used as dummy variables- scored 1 if the condition is met and 0 otherwise. These variables allow for the possibility that some years are more favorable to the candidates of one party or the other. Four media markets are adjacent to Alabama and Georgia and two share a media market with the Deep Southern states (Tallahassee, FL-Thomasville, GA and Pensacola, FL, Mobile, AL). Ft. Myers media market was excluded from the analysis since it is located in the southern part of Florida; it is most rural for that region, and heavily Republican. In all of the midterm elections reviewed, both the Democratic Senate and Gubernatorial candidates preformed best in terms of vote percentage in South Florida (Miami media market and West Palm Beach media market) and in the Panhandle/Northeast (Gainesville media market and Tallahassee media market).

To evaluate the rural effects on Democratic deviation two variables were used. First, total voter population was converted into a natural logarithm because population is not static and this is a better choice to evaluate exponential growth. The other predictor used to determine the effects of rural counties was voter density. The total number of registered voters per county was divided by the square miles of the county size. To demonstrate: the least dense county, Liberty, had a density of 4.8 voters/square miles in 2006 (4,042 total voters divided by the county size of 836.6 square miles), while the densest county, Pinellas,

had a density of 2,256.9 voters/square miles in 2006 (total registration of 617,939 voters divided by 273.8 square miles).

The percentage of Democrats (total number of registered Democrats divided by the total number of registered voters) in the counties was used to evaluate partisan intensity. And the percentage of white voters (total number of registered voters self-identifying as white divided by the total number of registered voters) in the counties was used to determine the effects white voters had on deviation.

3.2 Statistical Results of OLS

The findings presented are for six ordinary least squares regression (OLS) analysis of county level absolute Democratic deviation utilizing SPSS 21.0 for Windows. Given that the units of analysis are not individuals, it is not necessarily expected to see the same relationships adhere that would be seen if analyzing a survey of voters (Robinson 1950).

1994 Senate

The overall 1994 Senate model was significant ($F(13,53) = 169.68, p < 0.001$). The Miami media market, Gainesville media market, Pensacola media market, percentage Democratic registration, and percentage white registration were significant in predicting the Democratic deviation (percent 1994 Democratic Senatorial Candidate Rodham received minus percent 1994 Democratic registration).

- Miami media market significantly predicted Democratic deviation ($p = 0.002$) and being in the Miami media market, decreases Democratic deviation by 8.665 points.

- Gainesville media market significantly predicted Democratic deviation ($p=0.047$ and being in the Gainesville media market, decreases Democratic deviation by 4.954 points.
- Pensacola-Mobile, AL media market significantly predicted Democratic deviation ($p=0.002$) and being in the Pensacola media market, increases Democratic deviation by 8.366 points.
- Percentage Democratic registered voters significantly predicted Democratic deviation ($p<0.001$) and each percent increase in Democratic registration, increases Democratic deviation by 0.871 points.
- Percentage white registered voters significantly predicted Democratic deviation ($p<0.001$) and each percent increase in white registration, increases Democratic deviation by 0.411 points.

The entire regression model, including the Miami, West Palm Beach, Tampa, Orlando, Jacksonville, Gainesville, Tallahassee, Panama City and Pensacola media markets, natural log for total registered voters, registered voters per square mile, Democratic voters, and white voters accounted for 97.7% of the variance in Democratic deviation.

1994 Governor

The overall 1994 Gubernatorial model was significant ($F = 21.31, p<0.001$). The natural log of total registered voters, percentage Democratic registration, and percentage white registration were significant in predicting the Democratic deviation (percent 1994 Democratic Gubernatorial Candidate Chiles received minus percent 1994 Democratic registration).

- Natural log of the total registered voters significantly predicted Democratic deviation ($p=0.050$) and for each unit increase in the natural log of total registered voters, Democratic deviation decreased by 2.921 points.
- Percentage Democratic registered voters significantly predicted Democratic deviation ($p<0.001$) and each percent increase in Democratic voter registration, causes the Democratic deviation to increase by 0.592 points.
- Percentage white registered voters significantly predicted Democratic deviation ($p<0.05$) and with each one percent increase in white registration, Democratic deviation increased by 0.395 points.

The entire regression model, including the Miami, West Palm Beach, Tampa, Orlando, Jacksonville, Gainesville, Tallahassee, Panama City and Pensacola media markets, natural log for total registered voters, registered voters per square mile, Democratic voters, and white voters accounted for 83.9% of the variance in Democratic Deviation.

1998 Senate

The overall 1998 Senate model was not significant ($F = 1.473$, $p=.159$). The Miami media market demonstrated the only significant predictor in this weak model. The entire regression model, including the Miami, West Palm Beach, Tampa, Orlando, Jacksonville, Gainesville, Tallahassee, Panama City and Pensacola media markets, natural log for total registered voters, registered voters per square mile, Democratic voters, and white voters accounted for 26.5% (8.5% adjusted R squared) of the variance in Democratic deviation seen in counties.

1998 Governor

The overall 1998 Governor model was significant ($F = 52.6, p < 0.001$). The Gainesville media market, percentage Democratic registration and percentage white registration were significant in predicting the Democratic deviation (percent Democratic Gubernatorial Candidate MacKay received minus percent 1998 Democratic registration).

- Gainesville media market significantly predicted Democratic deviation ($p < 0.05$) and being in the Gainesville media market, decreased the Democratic deviation by 7.712 points.
- Percentage Democratic registered voters significantly predicted Democratic deviation ($p < 0.001$) and for each percent increase in Democratic voters, the Democratic deviation increased by 0.759 points.
- Percentage white registered voters significantly predicted Democratic deviation ($p < 0.001$) and a percent increase in white registration, increased the Democratic deviation by 0.329 points.

The entire regression model, including the Miami, West Palm Beach, Tampa, Orlando, Jacksonville, Gainesville, Tallahassee, Panama City and Pensacola media markets, natural log for total registered voters, registered voters per square mile, Democratic voters, and white voters accounted for 92.8% of the variance in Democratic Deviation.

2006 Senate

The overall 2006 Senate model was significant ($F = 6.41, p < 0.001$). The Miami media market, natural log of the total registered voters, and percentage white registration were significant in predicting the Democratic deviation (percent 2006 Democratic Senatorial Candidate Nelson received minus percent 2006 Democratic registration).

- Miami media market significantly predicted Democratic deviation ($p < 0.05$) and being located in the Miami media market, decreased Democratic deviation by 10.334 points.
- Natural log of the total registered voters significantly predicted Democratic deviation ($p < 0.01$) and for each unit increase in natural log of total registered voters, Democratic deviation increased by 3.486 points.
- White voters significantly predicted Democratic deviation ($p = 0.001$) and a one percent increase in white registered voters, resulted in a 0.293 point Democratic deviation increase.

The entire regression model, including the Miami, West Palm Beach, Tampa, Orlando, Jacksonville, Gainesville, Tallahassee, Panama City and Pensacola media markets, natural log for total registered voters, registered voters per square mile, Democratic voters, and white voters accounted for 61.1% of the variance in Democratic Deviation.

2006 Governor

The overall 1994 Senate model was significant ($F = 169.68, p < 0.001$). Miami media market, Gainesville media market, Pensacola media market, percentage Democratic registration, and percentage white registration were significant in predicting the Democratic deviation (percent 2006 Democratic Gubernatorial Candidate Davis received minus 2006 percent Democratic registration).

- Miami media market significantly predicted Democratic deviation ($p < 0.05$) and being located within the Miami media market, increased the Democratic deviation by 9.24 points.

- Percentage Democratic registered voters significantly predicted Democratic deviation ($p < 0.001$) and with each percent increase in Democratic voters, the Democratic deviation increased by 0.565 points.
- Percentage white registered voter significantly predicted Democratic deviation ($p = 0.001$) and a percent increase in white voters, increased Democratic deviation by 0.27 points.

The entire regression model, including the Miami, West Palm Beach, Tampa, Orlando, Jacksonville, Gainesville, Tallahassee, Panama City and Pensacola media markets, natural log for total registered voters, registered voters per square mile, Democratic voters, and white voters accounted for 80.7% of the variance in Democratic deviation.

Table 3.1 Explaining Florida County-level Democratic deviation

	<u>1994</u>		<u>1998</u>		<u>2006</u>	
	Senate	Gov	Senate	Gov	Senate	Gov
Intercept	-41.624 (13.38)	-20.189 (27.769)	-17.632 (27.741)	-27.550 (19.859)	-51.357 (21.336)	-28.849 (18.664)
Miami-Ft. Lauderdale	-8.665* (2.729)	-4.909 (5.663)	15.434 (6.100)	.268 (4.367)	10.334* (4.658)	9.24* (4.075)
West Palm Beach- Ft. Pierce	-3.924 (2.150)	2.149 (4.463)	6.195 (4.776)	.88 (3.419)	6.668 (3.720)	.99 (3.254)
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Sarasota	-3.924 (1.932)	2.149 (4.01)	6.195 (4.245)	.88 (3.039)	6.668 (3.299)	.99 (2.886)
Orlando-Daytona Beach-Melbourne	-.528 (1.892)	-4.467 (3.927)	4.285 (4.205)	-4.241 (-3.01)	5.756 (3.287)	-.212 (2.875)
Jacksonville	3.685 (1.954)	6.049 (4.056)	.062 (4.233)	4.868 (3.031)	-1.91 (3.198)	.711 (2.797)
Gainesville	-4.954* (2.441)	-8.171 (5.067)	-.279 (5.358)	-7.712* (3.836)	-4.081 (4.080)	-4.311 (3.569)
Tallahassee, FL-Thomasville, GA	2.307 (2.229)	-3.334 (4.626)	.47 (4.856)	-3.08 (3.476)	1.583 (3.675)	-2.484 (3.215)
Panama City	2.804 (2.141)	-3.218 (4.444)	.269 (4.692)	1.221 (3.359)	.082 (3.535)	-1.401 (3.092)
Pensacola/Ft. Walton,FL-Mobile, AL	8.366* (2.525)	-.882 (5.241)	-6.067 (5.551)	6.895 (3.974)	-3.327 (4.325)	-2.186 (3.783)
Voter Population-LN	-1.372 (0.703)	-2.921* (1.459)	.733 (1.604)	-2.249 (1.148)	3.486* (1.224)	-.674 (1.071)
Voter Density (Voters per square mile)	.001 (0.002)	.01 (0.005)	.004 (0.005)	.006 (0.003)	.001 (0.003)	.003 (0.003)
Percent Democrat Registered Voters	.871** (0.051)	.592** (0.107)	.102 (0.114)	.759** (0.082)	.058 (-0.100)	.565** (0.087)
Percent White Registered Voters	.411** (0.069)	.395* (0.144)	.189 (0.116)	.329** (0.083)	.293** (0.084)	.27** (0.074)
<i>N</i>	67	67	67	67	67	67
<i>F-test</i>	169.682	21.313	1.473	52.596	6.410	17.088
<i>Sig. of F</i>	p ≤ .001	p ≤ .001	0.159	p ≤ .001	p ≤ .001	p ≤ .001
<i>R²</i>	0.977	0.839	0.265	0.928	0.611	0.807
<i>Adj. R²</i>	0.971	0.800	0.085	0.910	0.516	0.760

Ordinary Least Squares Estimates. Standard Errors in Parentheses.

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.001$

3.3 Findings

Various media markets were significant in four of the models but aside from the 1994 senate model, no media market adequately explains the theory that counties which share media markets with Deep South counties will result in a Southern lag. Pensacola and Gainesville were both statistically significant in the 1994 senate model. Not surprisingly, deviation increases when voters live in the Pensacola media market and Democrats still maintained a net +9.5 point advantage over Republicans. Voters in the Gainesville media market had the inverse effect on deviation- reducing it by nearly 5 points (-4.95). And while this 1994 senate model points toward the validity of the Southern lag theory based on cross TV media influencing Democratic deviation, unfortunately neither of the other media markets of Jacksonville, Tallahassee, or Panama City media markets show significance in any of the other models. The Gainesville media market is a significant predictor in the decline of Democratic deviation in the 1998 governor model, but it is insufficient to make extrapolations based on two occurrences. And the South Florida Miami media market was a significant predictor of deviation in three of the five relevant models, but is well outside the Deep South proximity.

Neither of the population variables created to test the influence of rural counties on deviation indicated consistent significance. In fact, voter density exhibited no significance in any model run. Voter population-LN did demonstrate significance in two of the modes: the 1994 governor model and the 2006 senatorial race. But again, this is not sufficient to support the Southern lag theory. Previous research supports that voters in rural counties are realigning to the Republican Party (Black and Black 2002; Gimpel and Karnes 2006;

McKee 2010); however, these rural variables were not adequate to determine Democratic deviation in Florida.

The percent of Democratic voters in a county was a significant predictor in four of the five relevant models. It demonstrated consistent significance in all three governor models and the 1994 senate model. It indicates that superficially high percentages of Democratic registration will result in more deviation in the votes for the Democratic candidate. This supports part of the Southern lag theory that voters are remaining as registered Democrats but in name only. Counties with inflated levels of Democrats do not support their party candidates.

Expectedly when analyzing Southern politics white voters play a prominent role. The percent of white voters in a county was the most significant indicator of Democratic deviation in five out of the five pertinent models run in this analysis. As discussed earlier, the Republican reversal of party control has brought with it the realignment of white voters. Republicans have appealed to, and peeled away white conservatives which have defused the advantages of white moderates among Democrats. Looking at this analysis over time supports the contention that the intensity of the impact of white voters on the Democratic vote is gradually declining. Comparing the difference between senate and gubernatorial candidates in the same election year is negligible, but the intensity of whites on deviation gradually declines from 1994 to 2006. The percent of white voters in a county in the 1994 senate model increased Democratic deviation by .411, and in the 2006 senate model, each percentage of white voters were responsible for .293 increase in deviation. These findings support that whites play an important role in Democratic deviation occurrence and that the less diverse a county is the higher the deviation. This supports the

Southern lag theory that counties which have similar demographics to the Deep South will follow those voting trends. Many counties in the Panhandle/Northeast have a high percentage of white voters, but so do counties in the West Coastal region of the state. Florida is exhibiting some Southern voting trends, and with it the share of Southern white voters with strong long-term ties to the Democrats has shrunk (Lubin, 2004).

4. Conclusion

Over the six OLS regressions performed to study the effects of Democratic deviation, the theory of rural counties near the Deep South, with low populations and high Democratic and high white registration did not fully realize. When all statistically significant regressions (5) are compared, the percentage of white voters is a constant predictor of deviation. And percentage of Democratic voters is a significant predictor variable in four out of five working models. However, the other variables were not successful causes in Democratic deviation.

There are may have been unobserved characteristics which influenced the findings. Most importantly, are the candidates and the effects they have on vote percentage was not factored into the analysis. All three of the senate races had large vote margins which may have unduly inflated the deviation. For example, Hugh Rodham was a low profile candidate with ties to the Clintons; Katherine Harris was a polarizing figure who ran a shoddy campaign, and Charlie Crist was a virtual unknown against a popular incumbent. All these could be additional factors effecting deviation. As well as the incumbency effect candidates use as political capital.

There are strategic implications that can be taken from this research. Republicans can increase their vote margins and exploit the Democratic deviation by targeting counties with high percentage of white voters, and identifying conservative white voters who are receptive to deviate from their Democratic registration. Republican strategists should target counties with low non-white voters and inflated Democratic registration; counties with more competitive Democratic registration advantage (less than 15%) will be more difficult in persuasion. On the hand, Democratic strategists would do well to focus on the counties within the Miami and Gainesville media markets, and to identify moderate white voters in high white voter counties who deviate less from the Democratic Party than do conservative whites.

References

- Alesina, Alberto, and Howard Rosenthal. 1996. "A Theory of Divided Government." *Econometrica: Journal of the Econometric Society*, 1311-1341.
- Beck, Paul Allen, Lawrence Baum, Aage Clausen, and Charles Smith, Jr. 1992. "Patterns and Sources of Ticket Splitting in Subpresidential Voting." *The American Political Science Review*, 86:4, 916-928.
- Black, Earl and Merle Black. 2007. *Divided America*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- 2002. *The Rise of Southern Republicans*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- 1992. *The Vital South: How Presidents are Elected*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- 1987. *Politics and Society in the South*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- 1982. "Successful Durable Democratic Factions in Southern Politics." *Contemporary Southern Political Attitudes and Behavior*, eds. Laurence W. Moreland, Tod A. Baker, and Robert P. Steed. New York: Praeger.
- Born, Richard. 2000. "Congressional Incumbency and the Rise of Split-Ticket Voting." *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 25:3, 365-387.
- Brown v. Board of Education*. 1954. 347 U.S. 483

- Burden, Barry, and David Kimball. 1998. "A New Approach to the Study of Ticket Splitting." *The American Political Science Review*; 92:3; 533-544.
- Bush v. Gore*. 2000. 531 U.S. 98
- Campbell, Angus, Philip Converse, Warren Miller, and Donald Stokes. 1960. *The American Voter*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Carmines, Edward G., and Harold Stanley. 1990. "Ideological Realignment in the Contemporary South: Where Have All The Conservatives Gone?" In *The Disappearing South? Studies in Regional Change and Continuity*, ed. Robert Steed, Laurence Moreland, and Tod Baker. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, pp. 21-33.
- Carsey, Thomas and Geoffrey Layman. 2006. "Changing Sides or Changing Minds? Party Identification and Policy Preferences in the American Electorate." *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 50: 2, 464-477.
- CNN. 1996. Allpoltics.
<http://cgi.cnn.com/ALLPOLITICS/1996/conventions/chicago/players/clinton/rodham.shtml>
- Craig, Stephen, Michael Martinez, and James Kane. 1999. "The Structure of Political Competition: dimensions of Candidate and Group Evaluation Revised." *Political Behavior*, 21:4, 283-304.
- Erikson, Robert. 1988. "The Puzzle of Midterm Loss." *Journal of Politics*, 50, 1011-1029.
- Erikson, Robert, Michael MacKuen, and James Stimson. 2002. *The macro polity*. Cambridge University Press.
- Fiorina, Morris. 2002. "Parties and Partisanship: A 40-Year Retrospective." *Political Behavior*, 24:2, 93-115.
- Florida Annual Policy Survey. 2002. Florida State University Survey Research Laboratory.
<http://www.fsu.edu/~survey/Reports/FAPS2002.pdf>
- Gimpel, James and Kimberly Karnes. 2006. "The rural side of the urban-rural gap." *PS-WASHINGTON-*, 39:3, 467-472.
- Gimpel, James, Joshua Dyck and Daron Shaw. 2004. "Registrants, Voters, and Turnout Variability across Neighborhoods." *Political Behavior*. 26:4, 343-375.

- Green, Donald, Bradley Palmquist and Eric Schickler. 2002. *Partisan hearts and minds: Political parties and the social identities of voters*. New Haven/London: Yale University Press.
- Green, Donald and David Yoon. 2002. "Reconciling individual and aggregate evidence concerning partisan stability: Applying time-series models to panel data." *Political Analysis*, 10, 1-24.
- Jefferys, Matthew. 2005. "Florida: Presidential elections and partisan change, 1952-2004." Graduate School Theses and Dissertations; University of South Florida.
<http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3939&context=etd>
- Key, V.O. Jr. [1949] 1984. *Southern Politics in State and Nation*. Reprint. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press.
- Key, V.O., Jr. 1958. *Politics, Parties, and Pressure Groups*. New York: Crowell.
- Levernier, William and Anthony Barilla. 2006. "The Effect of Region, Demographics, and Economic Characteristics on County-Level Voting Patterns in the 2000 Presidential Election." *The Review of Regional Studies*, 36: 3, 427 - 447.
- Lewis-Beck, Michael, Helmut Norpoth, William Jacoby, and Herbert Weisberg. 2008. *The American voter revisited*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Lublin, David. 2004. *The Republican South: Democratization and Partisan Change*. Princeton University Press.
- McKee, Seth. 2012. "The Past, Present, and Future of Southern Politics." *Southern Cultures*, 18:3, 95-117.
- McKee, Seth. 2008. "Rural voters and the polarization of American presidential elections." *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 41:1, 101-108.
- Miller, Warren and J. Merrill Shanks. 1996. *The New American Voter*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Oppenheimer, Bruce. 2005. "Deep Red and Blue Congressional Districts: The Causes and Consequences of Declining Party Competitiveness." In *Congress Reconsidered*, 8th ed., eds. Lawrence Dodd and Bruce Oppenheimer. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 135-57.
- Petrocik, John. 1987. "Realignment: New Party Coalitions and the Nationalization of the South." *Journal of Politics*, 49:2347-75.

- Roscoe, Douglas. 2003. "The Choosers or the Choices? Voter Characteristics and the Structure of Electoral Competition as Explanations for Ticket Splitting." *Journal of Politics*, 65:4, 1147–1164.
- Stanley, Harold. 1988. "Southern partisan changes: Dealignment, realignment, or both?" *Journal of Politics*, 50:1, 64-88.
- Stein, Robert. 1990. "Economic Voting for Governor and U.S. Senator: The Electoral Consequences of Federalism." *Journal of Politics*, 52:29-53.
- Sundquist, James L. 1973. *Dynamics of the Party System: Alignment and Realignment of Political Parties in the United States*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute.
- United States Census Bureau. 2012. <http://www.census.gov>
- Woodard, J. David. 2006. *The new Southern politics*. L. Rienner Publishers.