

Fifty States Under God: Morality Politics & State Party Platforms

Issue Ownership & Morality Politics in US State Party Platforms

Introduction

Project Foundation

- Research Gap
- Importance of State Parties

Methodology

Data

- 80 State Party Platforms
- 2008 - 2010

Coding

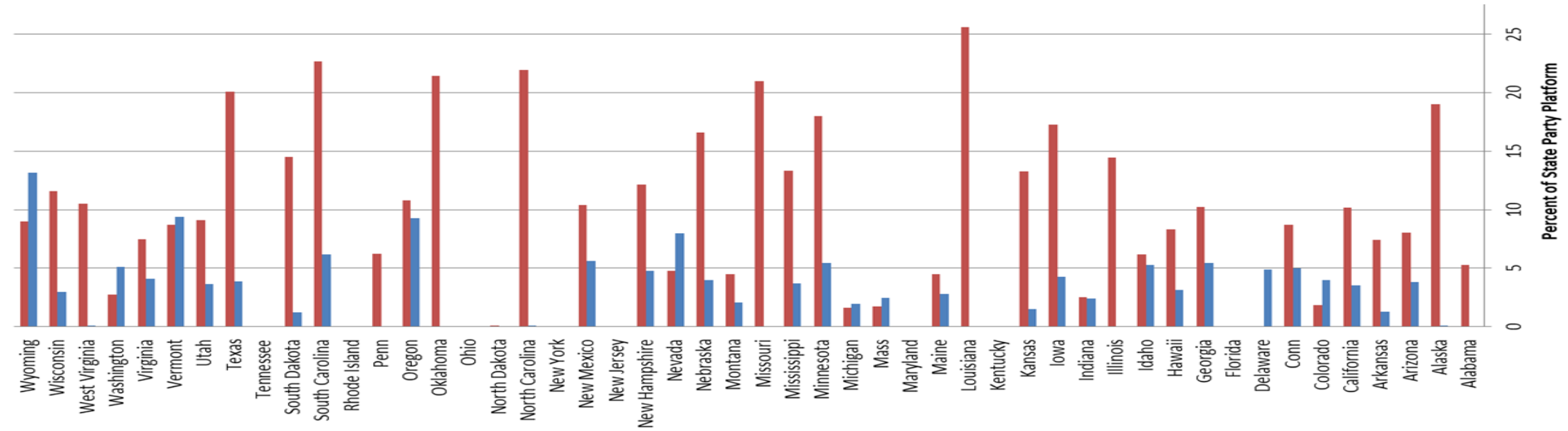
- Comparative Manifesto Project (est. 1979)
- Coding Unit
- Inter-coder Reliability: .88 CMP, .96 FK

Example: Coding Units

Therefore, the Missouri Republican Party SUPPORTS:

- Continuing efforts to build on our accomplishments on behalf of hard-working Missourians including our commitment to a fiscally responsible government that rejects tax increases, creates jobs, supports increased funding for education, believes in a health care system that best serves all Missourians, remains committed to the sanctity of human life, provides for the security of our citizens, and helps ensure that Missouri families grow and prosper.

Morality Politics in State Party Platforms



State Ideology and Morality Politics

Model 7	
Difference between Traditional and Progressive Morality Politics Mentions	
State Ideology	-12.45 ** (5.06)
Party	-13.84 *** (1.18)
District Competitiveness	-0.02 (0.05)
Population Density	-0.00 (0.00)
Coding Units	0.01 ** (.003)
Southern State	-0.11 (0.25)
Constant	33.17 *** (9.12)
Adjusted R ²	.659
N	80

* p < .10; ** p < .05; *** p < .01

Key Findings: Morality Politics

- Partisan Differences
- State Political Ideology Impact
- Conviction vs. Hedging

The Importance of Language

Strong, Unambiguous

- “Recognizing that abortion is grievously harmful to women, men, families, and society at large, as well as fatal to the unborn child, we support and strongly encourage positive alternatives to abortion, such as adoption.”

– *Louisiana Republicans, 2008*

❖ *Republican state party platforms took 1 of 2 approaches – no mention at all of abortion, or strong, unambiguous opposition.*

The Importance of Language

Balanced, Inclusive

- “Texas Democrats trust the women of Texas to make personal and responsible decisions about when and whether to bear children, in consultation with their family, their physician, personal conscience or their God... (We) support prevention measures which.... reduce the rate of abortion.”

– *Texas Democrats, 2010*

Strong, Unambiguous

- “Preserve confidential, unrestricted access to... health care services, including the full range of reproductive services, contraception and abortion, without requiring guardian, judicial, parental, or spousal consent or notification.”

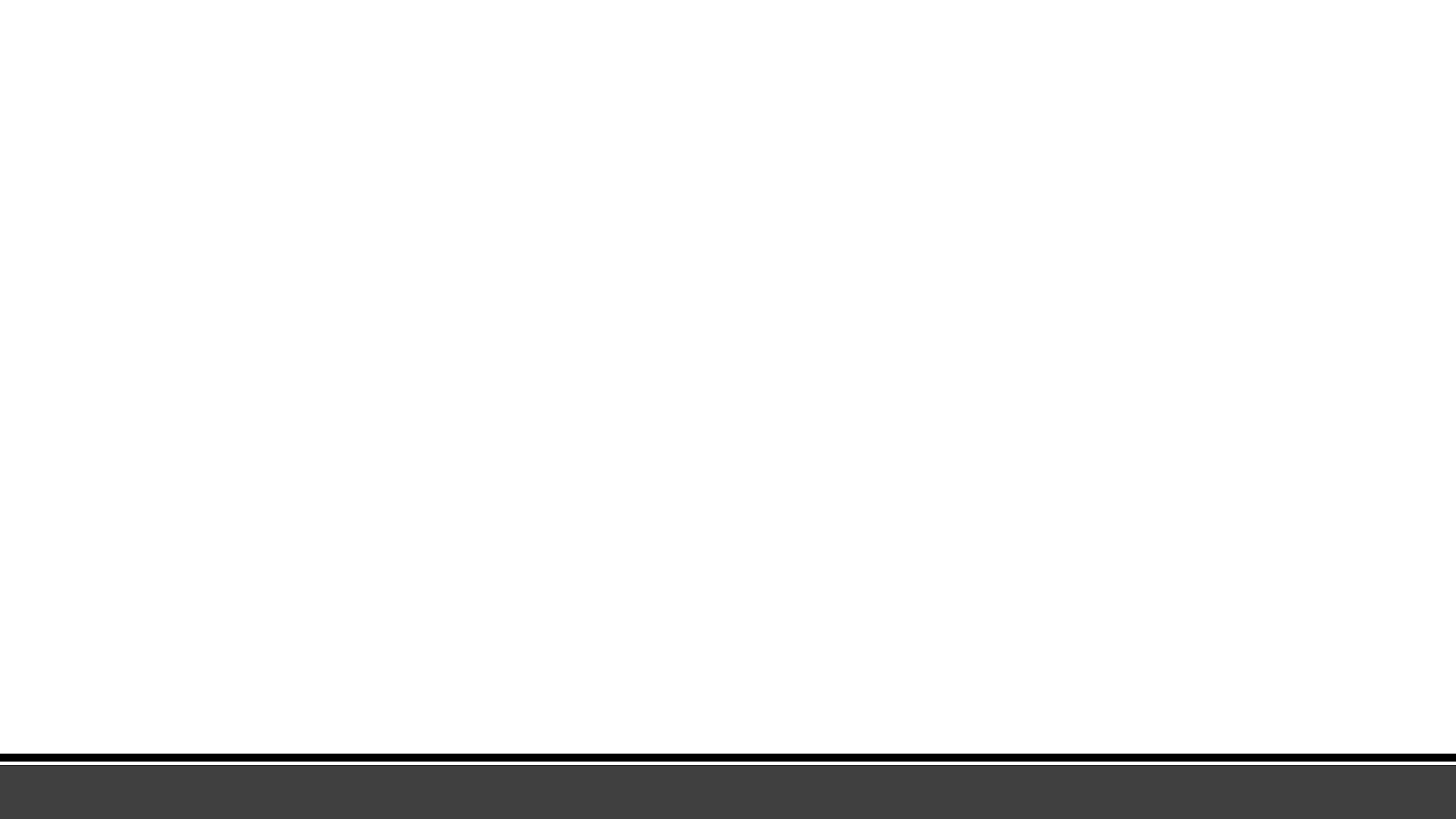
– *California Democrats, 2010*

Conclusion

- Main Contribution – *explores SPP in greater depth*
 - Previous SPP studies only looked at ideology
- Future Research – *expand time period; analyze language*

“Decentralization constitutes the most important single fact concerning the American parties. He who understands this fact, and knows nothing else, knows more about American parties than he who knows everything except this fact.”

EE Schattschneider 1942, 131.



Development of State Party Platforms

Centralized – AR-D

- Committee appointed by state party executive director.
- Committee meets, forms subcommittees for IG conferences.
- Finalize a draft.
- State convention delegates vote.

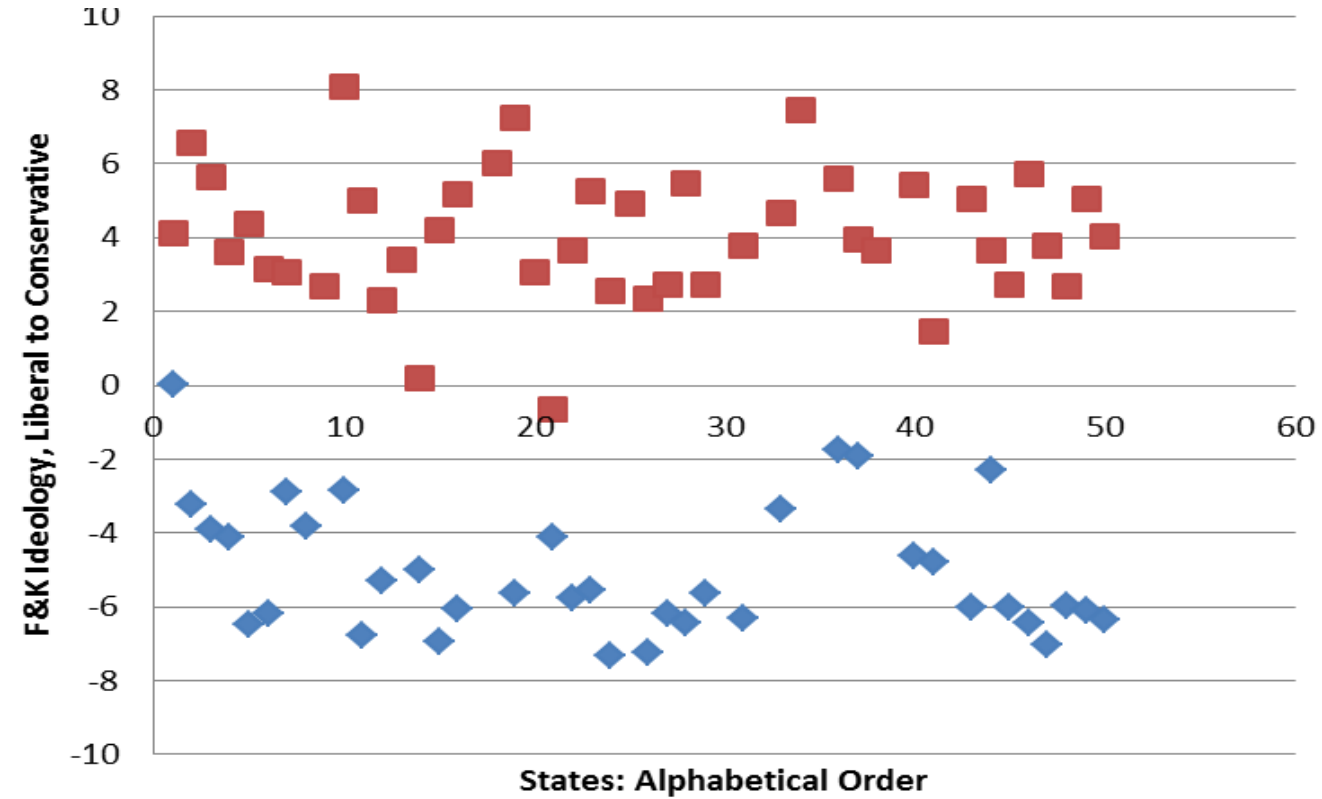
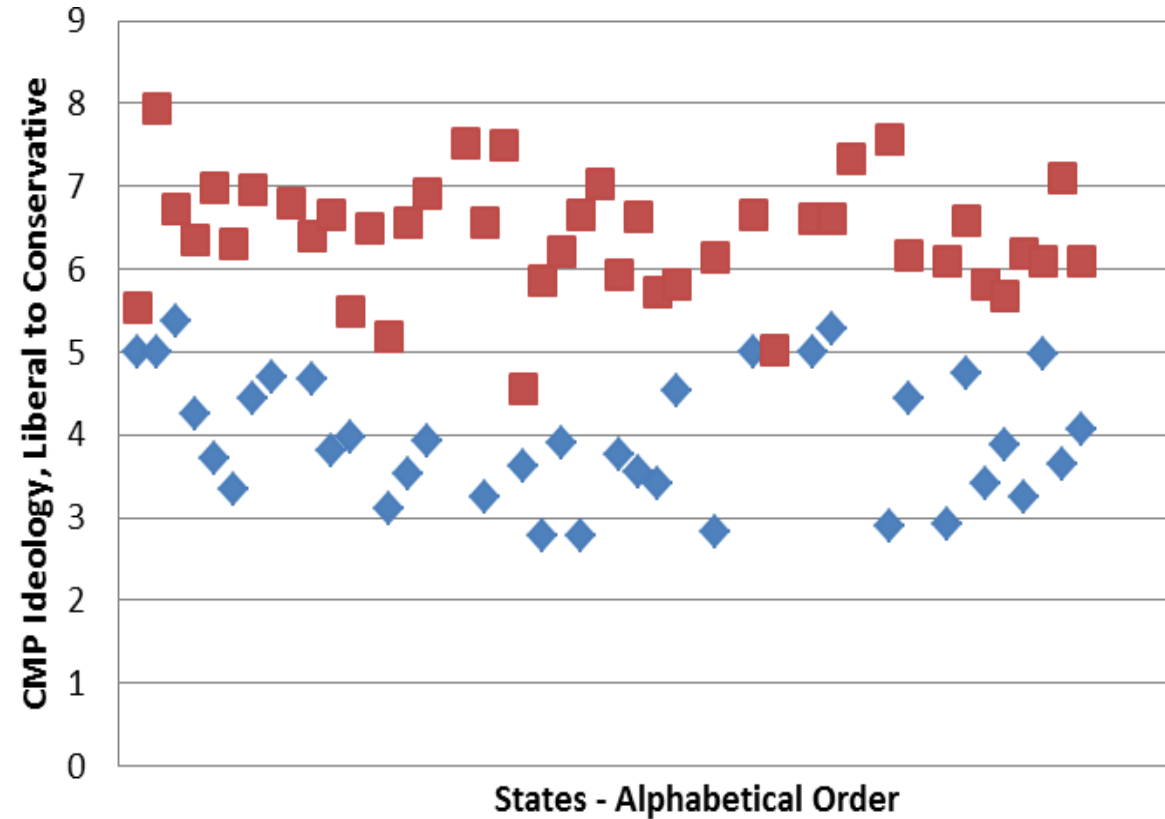
Decentralized – TX-R

- Precinct committees draft, vote on planks.
- Approved planks move to the next level in the state party system.
- Approved planks are voted on by state convention delegates.

Key Findings: Length

	Word Count			Coding Units		
	Democratic	Republican	All	Democratic	Republican	All
Mean	5,237	3,867	4,501	265	174	216
Median	2,701	2,945	2,830	163	124	158
Minimum	380	214	214	19	14	14
Maximum	23,046	16,142	23,046	1,016	777	1,016
National Platform	32,418	23,549	- - -	1,098	1,007	- - -

Key Findings: Ideology



Model 1
Coefficient
(SE)

Dependent Variable

Franzmann and Kaiser Scaled State Party
Platform Ideology

State Ideology

-4.18 ***
(1.55)

Party

-9.09 ***
(0.38)

Constant

11.75 ***
(2.85)

Adjusted R²

.88

N

80

* p < .10; ** p < .05; *** p < .01

Key Findings: Length & Ideology

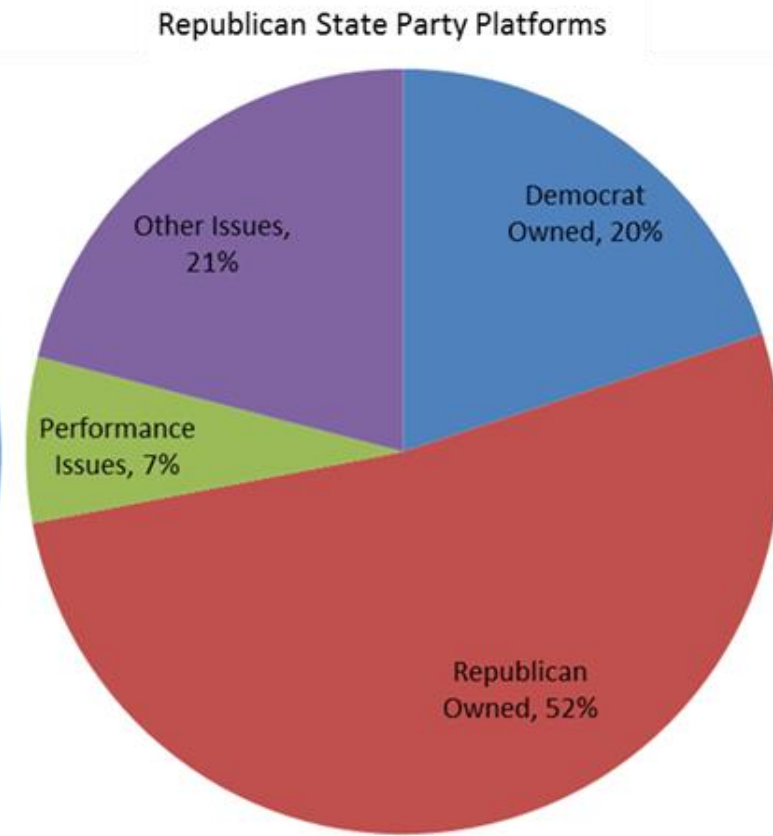
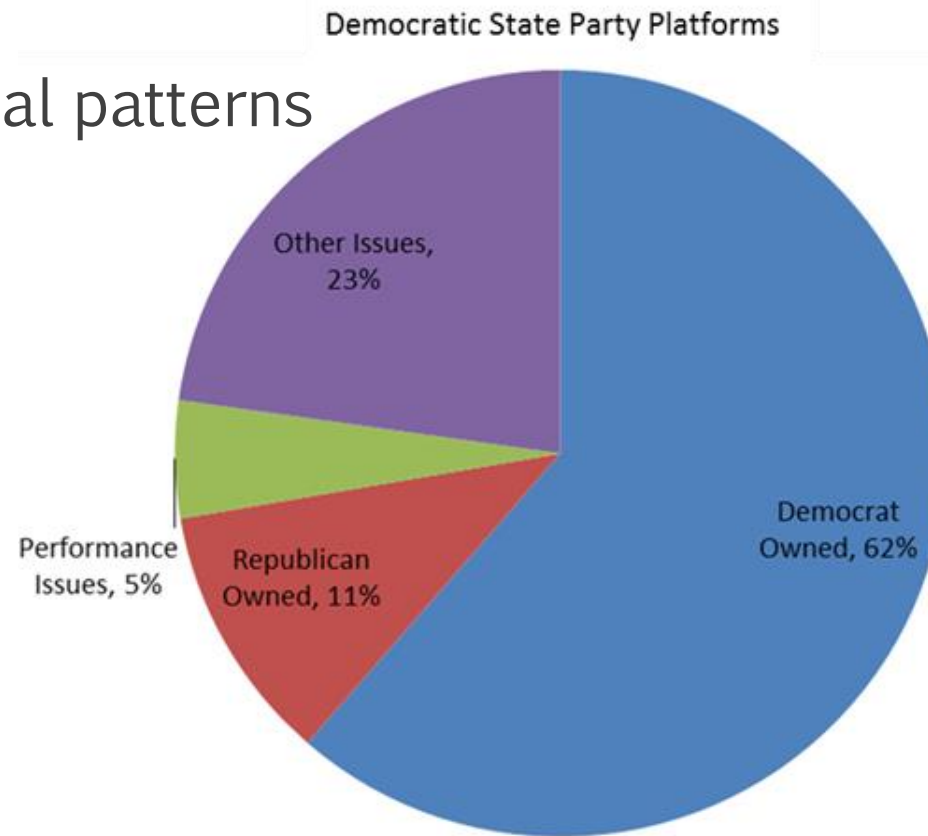
- Overview: Democrats liberal, longer
- State Political Ideology Impact
- Republicans demonstrate more ideological variation

Key Findings: Issue Ownership

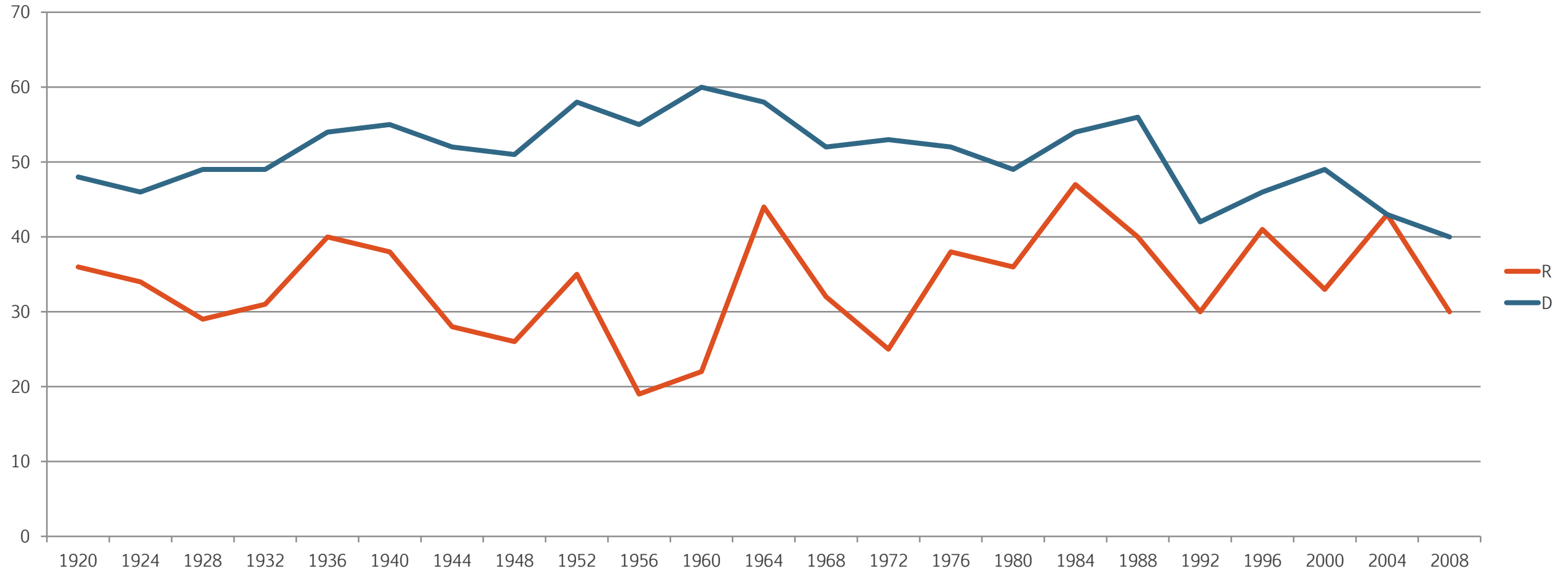
- General Support
- Divergence from national patterns

Key Findings: Issue Ownership

- General Support
- Divergence from national patterns



Issue Ownership: National Party Platforms



Project Foundation

- Research Gap
- Challenges to State Party Research
- Importance of State Parties

Background

- Previous Studies
- Purpose of State Party Platforms
- Development of State Party Platforms

Data & Coding

- Comparative Manifesto Project (est. 1979)
- Inter-coder Reliability: .88 CMP, .96 FK